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Meet Our Minister: He's Incompetent and Corrupt

By Virginia M. Moncrieff

9/12/2011

The [Afghanistan Embassy in Norway](#) apparently gave a frank character assessment of the Minister for Counter Narcotics when it posted the following biography:

Zarar Ahmad Moqbel was born in 1966 in Parwan central province. He studied at the Habibia High School before doing graduation from the Pedagogy Institute in his native province. It is not proofed that he is a graduate from Kabul Polytechnic University.

He joined the Jihad against the USSR in 1988 and was in charge of construction of Shura-i-Nazar in northern Takhar province. From 1992 to 2003, Moqbel worked as Kabul police chief and secretary at Afghanistan's Embassy in Tehran.

Moqbel served as deputy interior minister under President Karzai from 2004 to 2006 and then briefly served as interior minister. He worked earlier in the police department of Parwan province, was Governor of Parwan and an ambassador.

Engineer Zarar Ahmad Moqbel briefly served as the Interior Minister under President Karzai. During his tenure the ministry became infamous for selling senior police positions. Provincial police chiefs would then make a return on their investments by extorting bribes from civilians and protecting narcotics and kidnap gangs. Moqbel was sacked and replaced with Mohammad Hanif Atmar.

President Karzai tried to appoint Moqbel instead as the Minister of Refugees after a cabinet shuffle on October 11, 2008. Moqbel did not show up to his confirmation by the Parliament.

He is seen by many outsider observers and Afghans as an incompetent and corrupt civil servant. He has the backing of Vicepresident Fahim.

A former Shura-ye Nazar commander, Moqbel has turned into a Karzai loyalist. But he is still close to Vice President Muhammad Qasem Fahim.

Moqbel was confirmed as Minister Counternarcotics by Wolsesi Jirga in January 2010 (161 for, 56 against, 4 blank, 1 invalid).

He can speak Dari, Pashto and English.