



Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy

Kenneth Katzman

Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs

May 22, 2009

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

RL30588

Summary

Upon taking office, the Obama Administration faced a deteriorating security environment in Afghanistan, including an expanding militant presence in some areas, increasing numbers of civilian and military deaths, growing disillusionment with corruption in the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and Pakistan's inability to prevent Taliban and other militant infiltration into Afghanistan. The Obama Administration conducted a "strategic review," the results of which were announced on March 27, 2009, in advance of a March 31, 2009 international meeting in the Netherlands and an April 3-4, 2009, NATO summit. This review built upon assessments completed in the latter days of the Bush Administration which led to decisions in 2008 to plan a build-up of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

In part because of the many different causes of continued instability in Afghanistan, there reportedly were some differences within the Obama Administration on a new strategy. Apparently leaning toward those in the Administration who do not believe that more combat troops will reverse U.S. difficulties, the review focuses not on adding U.S. troops—although at least 21,000 are being added in 2009— but rather on enhancing non-military steps. The thrust of the strategy is to increase the resources devoted to economic development and coordination among international donors, building Afghan governing structures primarily at the local level, reforming the Afghan government, expanding and reforming the Afghan security forces, and trying to improve Pakistan's efforts to curb militant activity on its soil. The review also backs Afghan efforts to negotiate with Taliban figures who are willing to enter the political process, and Afghan-led reconciliation talks reportedly have expanded since the strategy was announced. Still, the Administration decided that more innovative counter-insurgency tactics are needed and in May 2008, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. David McKiernan, was removed and Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal was named to succeed him. Although U.S. officials have become disillusioned with the leadership of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, some experts believe there is substantial progress to build on, including completion of the post-Taliban political transition with adoption of a new constitution in January 2004, presidential elections in October 2004, parliamentary elections in September 2005, and the relative absence of violent ethnic conflict. The parliament has become an arena for formerly armed factions to resolve differences, as well as a center of political pressure on Karzai. Afghan citizens, including women, are enjoying personal freedoms forbidden by the Taliban. Karzai will be tested politically in the presidential and provincial elections planned for August 20, 2009, although the field of opponents is divided and relatively weak.

The United States and partner countries deploy a 58,000 troop NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that commands peacekeeping throughout Afghanistan. Of those, about 26,000 of the 40,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan are part of ISAF; the remainder (about 14,000) are under Operation Enduring Freedom. U.S. and partner forces also run 26 regional enclaves to secure reconstruction (Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs), and are expanding an Afghan National Army and reforming an Afghan National Police force—the two combined now total about 165,000. The United States has given Afghanistan well over \$32 billion since the fall of the Taliban, of which about \$15 billion was to equip and train the security forces. Breakdowns are shown in the tables at the end. See also CRS Report RL33627, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, by Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin; and CRS Report RL32686, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy*, by Christopher M. Blanchard.

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Background

From Early History to the 19th Century

From the third to the eighth century, A.D., Buddhism was the dominant religion in Afghanistan. In the 10th century, Muslim rulers called Samanids, from Bukhara (in what is now Uzbekistan), extended their influence into Afghanistan. In 1504, Babur, a descendent of the conquerors Tamarlane and Genghis Khan, took control of Kabul and then moved onto India, establishing the Mughal Empire. (Babur is buried in Kabul city). Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, Afghanistan was fought over by the Mughal Empire and the Safavid Dynasty of Persia (now Iran), with the Safavids mostly controlling Herat and western Afghanistan, and the Mughals controlling Kabul and the east. A monarchy ruled by ethnic Pashtuns was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani, who was a senior officer in the army of Nadir Shah, ruler of Persia, when Nadir Shah was assassinated and Persian control over Afghanistan weakened.

A strong ruler, Dost Muhammad Khan, emerged in Kabul in 1826 and created concerns among Britain that the Afghans were threatening Britain's control of India; that fear led to a British decision in 1838 to intervene in Afghanistan, setting off the first Anglo-Afghan War (1838-1842). Nearly all of the 4,500 person British force was killed in that war. The second Anglo-Afghan War took place during 1878-1880.

Early 20th Century and Cold War Era

King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) launched attacks on British forces in Afghanistan (Third Anglo-Afghan War) shortly after taking power and won complete independence from Britain as recognized in the Treaty of Rawalpindi (August 8, 1919). He was considered a secular modernizer presiding over a government in which all ethnic minorities participated. He was succeeded by King Mohammad Nadir Shah (1929-1933), and then by King Mohammad Zahir Shah. Zahir Shah's reign (1933-1973) is remembered fondly by many older Afghans for promulgating a constitution in 1964 that established a national legislature and promoting freedoms for women, including freeing them from covering their face and hair. However, possibly believing that he could limit Soviet support for Communist factions in Afghanistan, Zahir Shah also entered into a significant political and arms purchase relationship with the Soviet Union. The Soviets also began to build large infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's slide into instability began in the 1970s when the diametrically opposed Communist Party and Islamic movements grew in strength. While receiving medical treatment in Italy, Zahir Shah was overthrown by his cousin, Mohammad Daoud, a military leader who established a dictatorship with strong state involvement in the economy. Daoud was overthrown and killed¹ in April 1978 by People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA, Communist party) military officers under the direction of two PDPA (Khalq faction) leaders, Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammad Taraki, in what is called the *Saur* (April) Revolution. Taraki became President, but he was displaced in September 1979 by Amin. Both leaders drew their strength from rural ethnic Pashtuns and tried to impose radical socialist change on a traditional society, in part by

¹ Daoud's grave was discovered outside Kabul in early 2008. He was reburied in an official ceremony in Kabul in March 2009.

redistributing land and bringing more women into government. The attempt at rapid modernization sparked rebellion by Islamic parties opposed to such moves. The Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, to prevent a seizure of power by the Islamic militias, known as the *mujahedin* (Islamic fighters). Upon their invasion, the Soviets replaced Amin with another PDPA leader perceived as pliable, Babrak Karmal (Parcham faction of the PDPA), who was part of the 1978 PDPA takeover of Afghanistan but was later exiled by Taraki and Amin.

Soviet occupation forces, which numbered about 120,000, were never able to pacify the outlying areas of the country. The *mujahedin* benefited from U.S. weapons and assistance, provided through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in cooperation with Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence directorate (ISI). The *mujahedin* were also relatively well organized and coordinated by seven major parties that in early 1989 formed a Peshawar-based "Afghan Interim Government" (AIG). The seven party leaders were: Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi; Sibghatullah Mojaddedi; Gulbuddin Hikmatyar; Burhanuddin Rabbani; Yunus Khalis; Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf; and Pir Gaylani. Many of these leaders are still active today, both loyal to the current government or fighting it, as discussed throughout. Their weaponry included portable shoulder-fired anti-aircraft systems called "Stingers," which proved highly effective against Soviet aircraft. The *mujahedin* also hid and stored weaponry in a large network of natural and manmade tunnels and caves throughout Afghanistan. The Soviet Union's losses mounted—about 13,400 Soviet soldiers were killed in the war, according to Soviet figures), and Soviet domestic opinion turned anti-war. In 1986, after the reformist Mikhail Gorbachev became leader, the Soviets replaced Karmal with the director of Afghan intelligence, Najibullah Ahmedzai (known by his first name). Najibullah was a Ghilzai Pashtun.

Geneva Accords (1988) and Soviet Withdrawal

On April 14, 1988, Gorbachev agreed to a U.N.-brokered accord (the Geneva Accords) requiring it to withdraw. The withdrawal was completed by February 15, 1989, leaving in place the weak Najibullah government. A warming of relations moved the United States and Soviet Union to try for a political settlement to the Afghan conflict, a trend accelerated by the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, which reduced Moscow's capacity for supporting communist regimes in the Third World. On September 13, 1991, Moscow and Washington agreed to a joint cutoff of military aid to the Afghan combatants.

The State Department has said that a total of about \$3 billion in economic and covert military assistance was provided by the U.S. to the Afghan *mujahedin* from 1980 until the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989. Press reports say the covert aid program grew from about \$20 million per year in FY1980 to about \$300 million per year during FY1986-FY1990. The Soviet pullout decreased the perceived strategic value of Afghanistan, causing a reduction in subsequent covert funding.² As indicated below in **Table 5**, U.S. assistance to Afghanistan remained at relatively low levels from the time of the Soviet withdrawal, validating the views of many that the United States largely considered its role in Afghanistan "completed" when Soviets troops left, and there was little support for a major U.S. effort to rebuild the country. The United States closed its

² For FY1991, Congress reportedly cut covert aid appropriations to the *mujahedin* from \$300 million the previous year to \$250 million, with half the aid withheld until the second half of the fiscal year. See "Country Fact Sheet: Afghanistan," in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, vol. 5, no. 23 (June 6, 1994), p. 377.

embassy in Kabul in January 1989, as the Soviet Union was completing its pullout, and it remained so until the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

With Soviet backing withdrawn, Najibullah rallied the PDPA Army and the party-dominated paramilitary organization called the *Sarandoy*, and successfully beat back the post-Soviet withdrawal *mujahedin* offensives. Although Najibullah defied expectations that his government would immediately collapse after a Soviet withdrawal, military defections continued and his position weakened in subsequent years. On March 18, 1992, Najibullah publicly agreed to step down once an interim government was formed. That announcement set off a wave of rebellions primarily by Uzbek and Tajik militia commanders in northern Afghanistan—particularly Abdal Rashid Dostam, who joined prominent *mujahedin* commander Ahmad Shah Masud of the Islamic Society, a largely Tajik party headed by Burhannudin Rabbani. Masud had earned a reputation as a brilliant strategist by preventing the Soviets from occupying his power base in the Panjshir Valley of northeastern Afghanistan. Najibullah fell, and the *mujahedin* regime began April 18, 1992.³

³ After failing to flee, Najibullah, his brother, and aides remained at a U.N. facility in Kabul until the Taliban movement seized control in 1996 and hanged them.

Table I. Afghanistan Social and Economic Statistics

Population:	31 million +. Kabul population is 3 million, up from 500,000 in Taliban era.
Ethnic Groups:	Pashtun 42%; Tajik 27%; Uzbek 9%; Hazara 9%; Aimak 4%; Turkmen 3%; Baluch 2%; other 4%
Religions:	Sunni Muslim (Hanafi school) 80%; Shiite Muslim (Hazaras, Qizilbash, and Isma'ilis) 19%; other 1%
Size of Religious Minorities	Christians-estimated 500-8,000 persons; Sikh and Hindu-3,000 persons; Bahai's-400 (declared blasphemous in May 2007); Jews-1 person; Buddhist-unknown, but small numbers, mostly foreigners. No Christian or Jewish schools. One church, for expatriates.
Literacy Rate:	28% of population over 15 years of age
GDP:	\$13 billion est. for 2008. Value of opium production in 2008 est. \$732 million (7% of GDP), down from 13% of GDP for 2007. (Aug. 2008 UNODC report.)
GDP Per Capita/Growth Rate:	\$400/yr; (\$800 purchasing power parity, 2008). Up from \$150 year per capita when Taliban was in power. 9% average GDP growth for every year since the fall of the Taliban.
Unemployment Rate:	40%
Children in School/Schools Built	5.7 million, of which 35% are girls. Up from 900,000 in school during Taliban era. 8,000 schools built; 140,000 teachers hired since Taliban era. 17 universities, up from 2 in 2002. 75,000 Afghans in universities in Afghanistan; 5,000 when Taliban was in power. 35% of university students in Afghanistan are female.
Afghans With Access to Health Coverage	85% with basic health services access-compared to 8% during Taliban era. Infant mortality down 18% since Taliban to 135 per 1,000 live births. 680 clinics built with U.S. funds.
Roads Built	About 2,500 miles paved post-Taliban, including re-paving of "Ring Road" (73% complete) that circles the country. Now possible to drive from Kabul to Qandahar in 6 hours.
Judges/Courts	750 sitting judges trained since fall of Taliban; 40 provincial courthouses built
Afghan Airlines	Ariana (national) plus three privately owned, opened since 2002: Safi, Kam, and Pamir.
Banks Operating	14, including branches in some rural areas. Zero operating during Taliban era. Some limited acceptance of credit card transactions.
Access to Electricity	15%-20% of the population. Third turbine delivered to Kajaki dam (Helmand), Sept. 2008
Revenues:	About \$900 million in 2008; \$715 million in 2007; \$550 million 2006
Expenditures	About \$2.7 billion in 2008; \$1.2 billion in 2007; 900 million in 2006. Afghan government to contribute \$6.8 billion during 2008-2013 for \$50 billion Afghan National Development Strategy; the remainder to come from international donors.
External Debt:	\$8 billion bilateral, plus \$500 million multilateral. U.S. forgave \$108 million in debt to U.S.
Foreign Exchange:	\$3 billion
Foreign Investment	\$500 billion est. for 2007; about \$1 billion for 2006
Major Legal Exports:	fruits, raisins, melons, pomegranate juice (Anar), nuts, carpets, semi-precious gems, hides
Oil Proven Reserves:	3.6 billion barrels of oil, 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. Current oil production negligible
Major Imports:	food, petroleum, capital goods, textiles, autos
Import Partners:	Pakistan 38.6%; U.S. 9.5%; Germany 5.5%; India 5.2%; Turkey 4.1%; Turkmenistan 4.1%
Cellphones	About 8 million, up from several hundred used by Taliban government officials

Source: CIA World Factbook, January 2009, Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, DC; International Religious Freedom Report, September 19, 2008; Afghan National Development Strategy; DoD "Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan" report, January 2009.

The *Mujahedin* Government and Rise of the Taliban

The fall of Najibullah exposed the differences among the *mujahedin* parties. The leader of one of the smaller parties (Afghan National Liberation Front), Islamic scholar Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, was president during April-May 1992. Under an agreement among the major parties, Rabbani became President in June 1992 with agreement that he would serve until December 1994. He refused to step down at that time, saying that political authority would disintegrate without a clear successor. Kabul was subsequently shelled by other *mujahedin* factions, particularly that of nominal “Prime Minister” Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Pashtun, who accused Rabbani of monopolizing power. Hikmatyar’s radical Islamist Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party)-Gulbuddin had received a large proportion of the U.S. aid during the anti-Soviet war. (Yunus Khalis led a more moderate faction of Hizb-e-Islami during that war.)

In 1993-1994, Afghan Islamic clerics and students, mostly of rural, Pashtun origin, formed the Taliban movement. Many were former *mujahedin* who had become disillusioned with conflict among *mujahedin* parties and had moved into Pakistan to study in Islamic seminaries (“madrassas”) mainly of the “Deobandi” school of Islam.⁴ Some say this Islam is similar to the “Wahhabism” that is practiced in Saudi Arabia. Taliban practices were also consonant with conservative Pashtun tribal traditions.

The Taliban viewed the Rabbani government as corrupt, anti-Pashtun, and responsible for civil war. The four years of civil war (1992-1996) created popular support for the Taliban as a movement that could deliver Afghanistan from the warfare. With the help of defections, the Taliban seized control of the southeastern city of Qandahar in November 1994; by February 1995, it had reached the gates of Kabul, after which an 18-month stalemate around the capital ensued. In September 1995, the Taliban captured Herat province, bordering Iran, and imprisoned its governor, Ismail Khan, ally of Rabbani and Masud, who later escaped and took refuge in Iran. In September 1996, Taliban victories near Kabul led to the withdrawal of Rabbani and Masud to the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul with most of their heavy weapons; the Taliban took control of Kabul on September 27, 1996. Taliban gunmen subsequently entered a U.N. facility in Kabul to seize Najibullah, his brother, and aides, and then hanged them.

Taliban Rule (September 1996- November 2001)

The Taliban regime was led by Mullah Muhammad Umar, who lost an eye in the anti-Soviet war while fighting under the banner of the Hizb-e-Islami of Yunis Khalis. Umar held the title of Head of State and “Commander of the Faithful,” but he remained in the Taliban power base in Qandahar, almost never appearing in public. Umar forged a close bond with bin Laden and refused U.S. demands to extradite him. Like Umar, most of the Taliban were Ghilzai Pashtuns, which predominate in eastern Afghanistan. They are rivals of the Durrani Pashtuns, who are predominant in the south.

The Taliban progressively lost international and domestic support as it imposed strict adherence to Islamic customs in areas it controlled and employed harsh punishments, including executions. The Taliban authorized its “Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice” to

⁴ The Deobandi school began in 1867 in a seminary in Uttar Pradesh, in British-controlled India, that was set up to train Islamic clerics and to counter the British educational model.

use physical punishments to enforce strict Islamic practices, including bans on television, Western music, and dancing. It prohibited women from attending school or working outside the home, except in health care, and it publicly executed some women for adultery. In what many consider its most extreme action, and which some say was urged by bin Laden, in March 2001 the Taliban blew up two large Buddha statues carved into hills above Bamiyan city, considering them idols.

The Clinton Administration held talks with the Taliban before and after it took power, but was unable to moderate its policies. The United States withheld recognition of Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, formally recognizing no faction as the government. The United Nations continued to seat representatives of the Rabbani government, not the Taliban. The State Department ordered the Afghan embassy in Washington, DC, closed in August 1997. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1193 (August 28, 1998) and 1214 (December 8, 1998) urged the Taliban to end discrimination against women. Women's rights groups urged the Clinton Administration not to recognize the Taliban government. In May 1999, the Senate-passed S.Res. 68 called on the President not to recognize an Afghan government that oppresses women.

The Taliban's hosting of Al Qaeda's leadership gradually became the Clinton Administration's overriding agenda item with Afghanistan. In April 1998, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson (along with Asst. Sec. of State Karl Indurfurth and NSC senior official Bruce Riedel) visited Afghanistan but the Taliban refused to hand over bin Laden. After the August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Clinton Administration progressively pressured the Taliban, imposing U.S. sanctions and achieving adoption of some U.N. sanctions as well. On August 20, 1998, the United States fired cruise missiles at alleged Al Qaeda training camps in eastern Afghanistan, but bin Laden was not hit.⁵ Some observers assert that the Administration missed several other opportunities to strike him, including following a purported sighting of him by an unarmed Predator drone at his Karnak Farms camp in Afghanistan in mid-2000. Clinton Administration officials say they did not try to oust the Taliban militarily because domestic and international support for doing so was lacking.

The “Northern Alliance” Congeals

The Taliban's policies caused different Afghan factions to ally with the ousted President Rabbani and Masud and their ally in the Herat area, Ismail Khan—the Tajik core of the anti-Taliban opposition—into a broader “Northern Alliance.” In the Alliance were Uzbek, Hazara Shiite, and even some Pashtun Islamist factions discussed in **Table 18**.

- **Uzbeks/General Dostam.** One major faction was the Uzbek militia (the Junbush-Melli, or National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) of General Abdul Rashid Dostam. Frequently referred to by some Afghans as one of the “warlords” who gained power during the anti-Soviet war, Dostam first joined those seeking to oust Rabbani during his 1992-96 presidency, but later joined Rabbani's Northern Alliance against the Taliban.
- **Hazara Shiites.** Members of Hazara tribes, mostly Shiite Muslims, are prominent in Bamiyan Province (central Afghanistan) and are always wary of repression by Pashtuns and other larger ethnic factions. During the various

⁵ A pharmaceutical plant in Sudan (Al Shifa) believe to be producing chemical weapons for Al Qaeda also was struck that day, although U.S. reviews later corroborated Sudan's assertions that the plant was strictly civilian in nature.

Afghan wars, the main Hazara Shiite militia was Hizb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party, composed of eight different groups). Hizb-e-Wahdat suffered a major setback in 1995 when its leader Abdul Ali Mazari was captured and killed by the Taliban.

- **Pashtun Islamists/Sayyaf.** Abd-I-Rab Rasul Sayyaf, now a parliament committee chairman, headed a Pashtun-dominated *mujahedin* faction called the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet war. Even though his ideology is similar to that of the Taliban, Sayyaf joined the Northern Alliance.

Policy Pre-September 11, 2001

Throughout 2001 (but prior to the September 11 attacks), Bush Administration policy differed little from Clinton Administration policy—applying economic and political pressure while retaining dialogue with the Taliban, and refraining from militarily assisting the Northern Alliance. The September 11 Commission report said that, in the months prior to the September 11 attacks, Administration officials leaned toward such a step and that some officials wanted to assist anti-Taliban Pashtun forces. Other covert options were under consideration as well.⁶ In a departure from Clinton Administration policy, the Bush Administration stepped up engagement with Pakistan to try to end its support for the Taliban. In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, in February 2001 the State Department ordered the Taliban representative office in New York closed, although the Taliban representative continued to operate informally. In March 2001, Administration officials received a Taliban envoy to discuss bilateral issues.

Fighting with some Iranian, Russian, and Indian financial and military support, the Northern Alliance nonetheless continued to lose ground to the Taliban after it lost Kabul in 1996. By the time of the September 11 attacks, the Taliban controlled at least 75% of the country, including almost all provincial capitals. The Alliance suffered a major setback on September 9, 2001, two days before the September 11 attacks, when Ahmad Shah Masud was assassinated by alleged Al Qaeda suicide bombers posing as journalists. He was succeeded by his intelligence chief, Muhammad Fahim, a veteran figure but who lacked Masud's undisputed authority.

September 11 Attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom

After the September 11 attacks, the Bush Administration decided to militarily overthrow the Taliban when it refused to extradite bin Laden, judging that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to enable U.S. forces to search for Al Qaeda activists there. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368 of September 12, 2001 said that the Security Council:

“expresses its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond” (implying force) to the September 11 attacks.

This is widely interpreted as a U.N. authorization for military action in response to the attacks, but it did not explicitly authorize Operation Enduring Freedom to oust the Taliban. Nor did the Resolution specifically reference Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which allows for responses to threats to international peace and security.

⁶ Drogin, Bob. “U.S. Had Plan for Covert Afghan Options Before 9/11.” *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 2002.

In Congress, S.J.Res. 23 (passed 98-0 in the Senate and with no objections in the House, P.L. 107-40), was somewhat more explicit than the U.N. Resolution, authorizing:⁷

all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 *or harbored such organizations or persons.*

Major combat in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF) began on October 7, 2001. It consisted primarily of U.S. air-strikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, facilitated by the cooperation between small numbers (about 1,000) of U.S. special operations forces and the Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces. Some U.S. ground units (about 1,300 Marines) moved into Afghanistan to pressure the Taliban around Qandahar at the height of the fighting (October-December 2001), but there were few pitched battles between U.S. and Taliban soldiers; most of the ground combat was between Taliban and its Afghan opponents. Some critics believe that U.S. dependence on local Afghan militia forces in the war strengthened them for the post-war period, setting back post-war democracy building efforts.

The Taliban regime unraveled rapidly after it lost Mazar-e-Sharif on November 9, 2001, to forces loyal to Dostam. Other, mainly Tajik, Northern Alliance forces—the commanders of which had initially promised U.S. officials they would not enter Kabul—entered the capital on November 12, 2001, to popular jubilation. The Taliban subsequently lost the south and east to pro-U.S. Pashtun leaders, such as Hamid Karzai. The end of the Taliban regime is generally dated as December 9, 2001, when the Taliban surrendered Qandahar and Mullah Umar fled the city, leaving it under tribal law administered by Pashtun leaders such as the Noorzai clan. In December 2001, U.S. Special Operations Forces and CIA officers reportedly narrowed Osama bin Laden’s location to the Tora Bora mountains in Nangarhar Province (30 miles west of the Khyber Pass), but the Afghan militia fighters who were the bulk of the fighting force did not prevent his escape. Some U.S. military and intelligence officers (such as Gary Berntsen and “Dalton Fury, who have written books on the battle) have questioned the U.S. decision to rely mainly on Afghan forces in this engagement. Subsequently, U.S. and Afghan forces conducted “Operation Anaconda” in the Shah-i-Kot Valley south of Gardez (Paktia Province) during March 2-19, 2002, against 800 Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. In March 2003, about 1,000 U.S. troops raided suspected Taliban or Al Qaeda fighters in villages around Qandahar (Operation Valiant Strike). On May 1, 2003, then Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld announced an end to “major combat.”

Post-Taliban Nation Building⁸

With Afghanistan devastated after more than 20 years of warfare, the fall of the Taliban paved the way for the success of a long-stalled U.N. effort to form a broad-based Afghan government and for a U.S.-led coalition to begin building legitimate governing institutions. The policy of the Bush Administration was predicated on the assumption that preventing Afghanistan from again becoming a terrorism safehaven required the building of strong governing institutions, functioning democracy, and economic development. This task has proved more difficult than

⁷ Another law (P.L. 107-148) established a “Radio Free Afghanistan” under RFE/RL, providing \$17 million in funding for it for FY2002.

⁸ More information on some of the issues in this section can be found in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Government Formation and Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.

anticipated because of the effects of the years of war, the low literacy rate of the population, the difficult terrain and geography, and the relative lack of trained government workers. The Obama Administration's "strategic review" of Afghanistan policy—the results of which were announced on March 27, 2009—narrowed official U.S. goals to preventing terrorism safehaven in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the strategy, in many ways, tries to enhance nation building by providing more civilian advisers and mentors to expand and reform the Afghan government, security forces, and develop the economy. In an interview with "60 Minutes" on March 22, 2009, President Obama also mentioned the need for an "exit strategy."

Political Transition

In the formation of the first post-Taliban transition government, the United Nations was viewed as a credible mediator by all sides largely because of its role in ending the Soviet occupation. During the 1990s, proposals from a succession of U.N. mediators incorporated many of former King Zahir Shah's proposals for a government to be selected by a traditional assembly, or *loya jirga*. However, U.N.-mediated cease-fires between warring factions always broke down. Non-U.N. initiatives made little progress, particularly the "Six Plus Two" multilateral contact group, which began meeting in 1997 (the United States, Russia, and the six states bordering Afghanistan: Iran, China, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan). Other failed efforts included a "Geneva group" (Italy, Germany, Iran, and the United States) formed in 2000; an Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) contact group; and Afghan exile efforts, including discussion groups launched by Hamid Karzai's clan and Zahir Shah ("Rome process).

Bonn Agreement

Immediately after the September 11 attacks, former U.N. mediator Lakhdar Brahimi was brought back (he had resigned in frustration in October 1999). U.N. Security Council Resolution 1378 was adopted on November 14, 2001, calling for a "central" role for the United Nations in establishing a transitional administration and inviting member states to send peacekeeping forces to promote stability and aid delivery. After the fall of Kabul in November 2001, the United Nations invited major Afghan factions, most prominently the Northern Alliance and that of the former King—but not the Taliban—to a conference in Bonn, Germany.

On December 5, 2001, the factions signed the "Bonn Agreement."⁹ It was endorsed by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1385 (December 6, 2001). The agreement, reportedly forged with substantial Iranian diplomatic help because of Iran's support for the Northern Alliance faction:

- formed the interim administration headed by Hamid Karzai.
- authorized an international peace keeping force to maintain security in Kabul, and Northern Alliance forces were directed to withdraw from the capital. Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001) gave formal Security Council authorization for the international peacekeeping force (International Security Assistance Force, ISAF).
- referred to the need to cooperate with the international community on counter narcotics, crime, and terrorism.

⁹ Text of Bonn agreement at <http://www.ag-afghanistan.de/files/petersberg.htm>.

- applied the constitution of 1964 until a permanent constitution could be drafted.¹⁰

Permanent Constitution

A June 2002 “emergency” *loya jirga* put a representative imprimatur on the transition; it was attended by 1,550 delegates (including about 200 women) from Afghanistan’s 364 districts. Subsequently, a 35-member constitutional commission drafted the permanent constitution, and unveiled in November 2003. It was debated by 502 delegates, selected in U.N-run caucuses, at a “constitutional *loya jirga* (CLJ)” during December 13, 2003-January 4, 2004. The CLJ, chaired by Mojadeddi (mentioned above), ended with approval of the constitution with only minor changes. The Northern Alliance faction failed in its effort to set up a prime minister-ship, but they did achieve a fallback objective of checking presidential powers by assigning major authorities to the elected parliament, such as the power to veto senior official nominees and to impeach a president. The constitution made former King Zahir Shah honorary “Father of the Nation,” a title that is not heritable. Zahir Shah died on July 23, 2007.¹¹ The constitution also set out timetables for presidential, provincial, and district elections (by June 2004) and stipulated that, if possible, they should be held simultaneously.

Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Hamid Karzai, about 51, was selected to lead Afghanistan because he was a credible Pashtun leader who seeks factional compromise rather than intimidation through armed force. However, some observers consider his compromises a sign of weakness, and criticize what they allege is his toleration of corruption among members of his clan and his government. From Karz village in Qandahar Province, Hamid Karzai has led the powerful Popolzai tribe of Durrani Pashtuns since 1999, when his father was assassinated, allegedly by Taliban agents, in Quetta, Pakistan. Karzai attended university in India. He was deputy foreign minister in Rabbani’s government during 1992-1995, but he left the government and supported the Taliban as a Pashtun alternative to Rabbani. He broke with the Taliban as its excesses unfolded and forged alliances with other anti-Taliban factions, including the Northern Alliance. Karzai entered Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks to organize Pashtun resistance to the Taliban, supported by U.S. special forces. He became central to U.S. efforts after Pashtun commander Abdul Haq entered Afghanistan in October 2001 without U.S. support and was captured and hung by the Taliban. Karzai was slightly injured by an errant U.S. bomb during major combat of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Some of his several brothers have lived in the United States, including Qayyum Karzai. Qayyum Karzai won a parliament seat in the September 2005 election but resigned his seat in October 2008 due to health reasons. Another brother, Ahmad Wali Karzai, is chair of the provincial council of Qandahar and is a powerful figure in that province, but was accused in a New York Times story (October 5, 2008) of involvement in narcotics trafficking. Another brother, Mahmoud Karzai, is a businessman, reportedly has extensive business interests in Qandahar and Kabul, including auto dealerships and apartment houses. With heavy protection, President Karzai has survived several assassination attempts since taking office, including rocket fire or gunfire at or near his appearances. His wife, Dr. Zenat Karzai, is a gynecologist by profession. They have several children, including one born in 2008.

First Post-Taliban Elections

Security conditions precluded the holding of all elections simultaneously. The first election, for president, was held on October 9, 2004, slightly missing a June deadline. Turnout was about 80%. On November 3, 2004, Karzai was declared winner (55.4% of the vote) over his seventeen challengers on the first round, avoiding a runoff. Parliamentary and provincial council elections

¹⁰ The last *loya jirga* that was widely recognized as legitimate was held in 1964 to ratify a constitution. Najibullah convened a *loya jirga* in 1987 to approve pro-Moscow policies; that gathering was widely viewed by Afghans as illegitimate.

¹¹ Text of constitution: <http://arabic.cnn.com/afghanistan/ConstitutionAfghanistan.pdf>.

were intended for April-May 2005 but were delayed until September 18, 2005. Because of the difficulty in confirming voter registration rolls and determining district boundaries, elections for the 364 district councils, each of which will likely have contentious boundaries because they will inevitably separate tribes and clans, have not been held to date.

For the parliamentary election, voting was conducted for individuals running in each province, not as party slates. (There are now 90 registered political parties in Afghanistan, but parties remain unpopular because of their linkages to outside countries during the anti-Soviet war.) When parliament first convened on December 18, 2005, the Northern Alliance bloc achieved selection of one of its own—who was Karzai’s main competitor in the presidential election—Yunus Qanooni, for speaker of the all-elected 249 seat lower house (*Wolesi Jirga*, House of the People). In April 2007, Qanooni and Northern Alliance political leader Rabbani organized this opposition bloc, along with ex-Communists and some royal family members, into a party called the “United Front” (UF) that wants increased parliamentary powers and direct elections for the provincial governors.

The 102-seat upper house (*Meshrano Jirga*, House of Elders), selected by the elected provincial councils and Karzai, consists mainly of older, well known figures, as well as 17 females (half of Karzai’s 34 appointments, as provided for in the constitution). The leader of that body is Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, a pro-Karzai former *mujahedin* party leader and elder statesman. With his bloc of 17 non-female slots, Karzai appointed many of his allies, but also some of his perceived political adversaries, to the upper house.

2009 and 2010 Elections and Candidates

The next major political milestone in Afghanistan is the 2009 presidential and provincial elections. On February 3, 2009, Afghanistan’s Independent Election Commission (IEC) set August 20, 2009 as the election date – a change from a date mandated by one section of the Constitution (Article 61) as taking place by April 21, 2009, in order to allow at least 30 days before Karzai’s term expires on May 22, 2009. The IEC decision on the latter date cited another article of the Constitution (Article 33) mandating universal accessibility to the voting—and saying that the April 21 date was precluded by difficulties in registering voters, printing ballots, training staff, making the public aware of the elections, and the dependence on international donations to fund the elections, in addition to the security questions.¹² This decision caused the UF bloc to say it would not “recognize” Karzai’s presidency after May 22. As expected, the IEC reaffirmed on March 4, 2009 that the election must be held on August 20, 2009.

The official decision did not stop the UF from insisting that Karzai step down on May 22 in favor of a caretaker government, which presumably would be headed by Upper House speaker Sibghatullah Mojadeddi. Karzai argued that the Constitution does not provide for any transfer of power other than in case of election or death of a President. The Afghan Supreme Court backed that decision on March 28, 2009. The Obama Administration publicly backed both the IEC and the Supreme Court rulings, even though, according to U.S. officials, that backing could be interpreted as a U.S. endorsement of Karzai. Obama Administration Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke says the United States favors no candidate and

¹² Statement of the Independent Election Commission Secretariat. February 3, 2009, provided to CRS by a Karzai national security aide.

Ambassador Tim Carney has been appointed to coordinate U.S. support for the elections process – and to ensure U.S. neutrality – from U.S. Embassy Kabul.

Despite the political dispute between Karzai and his opponents, enthusiasm among the public appears to be high. Registration (updating of 2005 voter rolls) began in October 2008 and was completed as of the beginning of March 2009. However, there were also reports of some registration fraud, with some voters registering on behalf of women who do not, by custom, show up at registration sites. U.S./NATO military operations in some areas, including in Helmand in January 2009, were conducted to secure registration centers.

The elections are expected to cost about \$200 million; on March 31, 2009. At a U.N.-led conference in the Netherlands, the United States committed \$40 million of that amount, which is part of a planned \$175 million U.S. funding for elections in FY2009.

Outlines of the Contest

Politically, Karzai has benefitted from the August 2009 date because it gives him more time to restore his popularity and gives more time for the infusion of U.S. troops to secure the Pashtun areas which will be the source of many Karzai votes. With the August date set, candidates registered their candidacies during April 24 - May 8, 2009.

In election-related political jockeying,¹³ Karzai obtained an initial agreement from Muhammad Fahim, formerly his antagonist and a key member of the ethnic minority dominated United Front (UF), to run as one of his Vice Presidents. He, Fahim, and incumbent second vice president Karim Khalili (Hazara senior figure) registered their ticket on May 4, 2009, just before Karzai left to visit the United States for the latest round of three way strategic talks (U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan). The Fahim choice was criticized by human rights and other groups because of Fahim's long identity as a mujahedin commander/militia faction leader, but the selection, and Fahim's acceptance, was viewed as a major political coup for Karzai by splitting the UF bloc. Karzai is now viewed as the clear favorite for re-election.

Anti-Karzai Pashtuns attempted, unsuccessfully, to coalesce around one challenger. In the end, former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani registered his candidacy, but without explicit endorsement of another strong Pashtun, former Interior Minister Jalali, or strong representation from other ethnicities in his vice presidential slots. Ghani has criticized Karzai for failing to establish legitimate and successful governance, but he has spent much time in the United States and Europe and might lose support among some average Afghans who might view him as out of touch with day-to-day problems in Afghanistan.

Neither was the UF successful in forging a united front to challenge Karzai. Observers in Kabul say the UF had always leaned toward former Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah Abdullah to its slate, but there were others purportedly challenging Abdullah for the UF mantle. Dr. Abdullah did register to run, but his running mates are Dr. Cheragh Ali Cheragh, a Hazara who did poorly in the 2004 election, and a little known Pashtun, Homayoun Wasefi. Fahim, as noted above, made a deal with Karzai to join his ticket, thus fracturing the UF's unity.

¹³ Some of the information in this section obtained in CRS interviews with a Karzai national security aide. December 2008.

Subsequent to the filing deadlines, it has been reported that Ghani and Dr. Abdullah are in discussions to unify their tickets. That would necessitate one or the other dropping their candidacies for president and endorsing or joining (in a vice presidential slot) the other's slate. In addition, with Karzai now the clear favorite in the race, former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad declined to run himself or endorse another ticket, and is said to be in talks with Karzai to possibly serve as his chief administrator if Karzai is re-elected.¹⁴

Governance Issues

The Obama Administration review strongly emphasizes providing new U.S. and international resources to improve Afghan governance. Since its formation in late 2001, Karzai's government has grown in capabilities and size, although more slowly than expected. At the same time, it has narrowed ethnically, progressively dominated by ethnic Pashtuns, who have traditionally governed Afghanistan. Among the key security bodies, only the Intelligence Directorate continues to be headed by a non-Pashtun (Amrollah Saleh, a Tajik). Adhering to a tacit consensus, the other security ministries (Defense, Interior) tend to have Pashtun leadership but with non-Pashtuns in key deputy or subordinate positions. One prominent example is the defense ministry, in which the chief of staff is a Tajik (Bismillah Khan), who reports to a Pashtun Defense Minister (Abdul Rahim Wardak).

The parliament has emerged, unexpectedly to some, as a relatively vibrant body that creates accountability and has asserted itself politically. Some criticize it for the large presence of *mujahedin* leaders—figures who gained prominence from their anti-Soviet war effort. In 2007, the parliament compelled Karzai to oust several major conservatives from the Supreme Court in favor of those with more experience in modern jurisprudence. In mid-2007, parliament enacted a law granting amnesty to former *mujahedin* commanders—an attempt to put past schisms to rest in building a new Afghanistan. The law was rewritten to give victims the ability to bring accusations of past abuses; its status is unclear because Karzai did not veto it but he did not sign it either.

In May 2007, the UF bloc engineered a vote of no confidence against Foreign Minister Rangeen Spanta for failing to prevent Iran from expelling 50,000 Afghan refugees. Karzai opposed Spanta's dismissal on the grounds that refugee affairs are not his ministry's prime jurisdiction. The Afghan Supreme Court has sided with Karzai and Spanta remains in position.

On the other hand, on some less contentious issues, the executive and the legislature appear to be working well. Since the end of 2007, parliament has passed several laws, including a labor law, a mines law, a law on economic cooperatives, and a convention on tobacco control. The *Wolesi Jirga* also has confirmed Karzai nominees in several cabinet shifts, as well as for the one remaining justice to fill out the Supreme Court. In April 2009, parliament enacted a personal status law for Shiites that caused an outcry in the international community, as discussed below.

Expanding and Reforming Central Government/Corruption

With a permanent national government fully assembled, U.S. policy has been to expand governance throughout the country, and this policy will receive increased U.S. financial and

¹⁴ Chandrasekaran, Rajiv and Karen DeYoung. "Khalilzad Said to Be in Talks With Karzai." *Washington Post*, May 20, 2009.

advisory resources under the new Obama Administration strategy. The Karzai government is widely estimated by U.S. officials to control about 30% of the country, while the Taliban controls 10%, and tribes and local groups control the remainder. U.S. commanders and officials assert that Taliban militants are able to infiltrate “un-governed space,” contributing to the persistence and in some areas the expansion of the Taliban insurgency. In part because building the central government has gone slowly, there was a U.S. shift during 2008 away from reliance only on strengthening central government, toward promoting local governance. Some argue that doing so is more in synch with Afghan traditions, because Afghans have always sought substantial regional autonomy and resisted strong governance from Kabul.

Marginalization of Regional Strongmen

A key to U.S. strategy, particularly during 2002-2006, was to strengthen the central government by helping Karzai curb key regional strongmen and local militias—whom some refer to as “warlords.” These actors have been considered a threat to Afghan stability because of their arbitrary administration of justice, and the popular resentment of their use of their position to enrich themselves and their supporters. However, Karzai has, to some extent, succeeded in marginalizing the largest regional leaders.

- Ismail Khan was removed as Herat governor in September 2004 and later appointed Minister of Water and Energy. On the other hand, Khan was tapped by Karzai to help calm Herat after Sunni-Shiite clashes there in February 2006, and some believe he should be reappointed to curb growing Taliban encroachment into the province.
- In April 2005, Dostam was appointed Karzai’s top military advisor, and in April 2005 he “resigned” as head of his Junbush Melli faction. However, in May 2007 his followers in the north conducted large demonstrations in attempting to force out the anti-Dostam governor of Jowzjan Province. In February 2008, Afghan police surrounded Dostam’s home in Kabul, but did not arrest him, in connection with the alleged beating of a political opponent by Dostam supporters. Some outside observers have cited Karzai’s refusal to order an arrest as a sign of weakness of his leadership. However, in December 2008, Karzai reportedly agreed to drop the charges in exchange for stripping Dostam of his chief of staff title and his going into exile in Turkey.
- Another key figure, former Defense Minister Fahim (Northern Alliance) has been coopted by Karzai to the extent that he is now his running mate in the August 2009 elections. Fahim was appointed by Karzai to the *Meshrano Jirga*, although he remained in that body only a few months. The appointment was intended to give him a stake in the political process and reduce his potential to activate Northern Alliance militia loyalists. Fahim continues to turn heavy weapons over to U.N. and Afghan forces (including four Scud missiles), although the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) says that large quantities of weapons remain in the Panjshir Valley.
- Two other large militia leaders, Hazrat Ali (Jalalabad area) and Khan Mohammad (Qandahar area) were placed in civilian police chief posts in 2005; Hazrat Ali was subsequently elected to the *Wolesi Jirga*.

Militia Disarmament: DDR and DIAG Programs

A cornerstone of the effort to strengthen the central government were programs to dismantle identified and illegal militias that were empowered by Afghanistan's years of warfare. The main program, run by UNAMA, was called the "DDR" program: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration" and it formally concluded on June 30, 2006. The program got off to a slow start because the Afghan Defense Ministry did not reduce the percentage of Tajiks in senior positions by a July 1, 2003, target date, dampening Pashtun recruitment. In September 2003, Karzai replaced 22 senior Tajiks in the Defense Ministry officials with Pashtuns, Uzbeks, and Hazaras, enabling DDR to proceed.

The DDR program was initially been expected to demobilize 100,000 fighters, although that figure was later reduced. Figures for accomplishment of the DDR and DIAG programs are contained in the "security indicators table" below. Of those demobilized, 55,800 former fighters have exercised reintegration options provided by the program: starting small businesses, farming, and other options. U.N. officials say at least 25% of these found long-term, sustainable jobs. Some studies criticized the DDR program for failing to prevent a certain amount of rearmament of militiamen or stockpiling of weapons and for the rehiring of some militiamen.¹⁵ Part of the DDR program was the collection and cantonment of militia weapons, but generally only poor quality weapons were collected. The major donor for the program was Japan, which contributed about \$140 million. Figures for collected weapons are contained in the security indicators table, and U.S. spending on the program are in the U.S. aid tables at the end of this paper.

Since June 11, 2005, the disarmament effort has emphasized another program called "DIAG"—Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups. It is run by the Afghan Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, headed by Vice President Khalili. Under the DIAG, no payments are available to fighters, and the program depends on persuasion rather than use of force against the illegal groups. DIAG has not been as well funded as was DDR: it has received \$11 million in operating funds. As an incentive for compliance, Japan and other donors have made available \$35 million for development projects where illegal groups have disbanded. These incentives were intended to accomplish the disarmament of a pool of as many as 150,000 members of 1,800 different "illegal armed groups": militiamen that were not part of recognized local forces (Afghan Military Forces, AMF) and were never on the rolls of the Defense Ministry. These goals were not met by the December 2007 target date in part because armed groups in the south say they need to remain armed against the Taliban, but UNAMA reports that some progress continues to be achieved.

Anti-Corruption Efforts

An accelerating trend in U.S. policy—and emphasized by the Obama Administration's review—is to press Karzai to weed out official corruption. The Administration plans to develop and submit to Congress "metrics" to measure Afghan progress against corruption and overall effectiveness. The widespread corruption has severely tainted Karzai's image in the United States and is widely perceived as a cause of security deterioration as Afghans lose faith in the government and turn to the Taliban as sources of impartial justice and protection. At the highest levels of the Afghan government, it is widely believed that Karzai has tolerated his brothers' use of his position to further their business dealings. (The brothers are discussed in the biography box on Karzai,

¹⁵ For an analysis of the DDR program, see Christian Denny. *Disarmament, Demobilization and Rearmament?*, June 6, 2005, <http://www.jca.apc.org/~jann/Documents/Disarmament%20demobilization%20rearmament.pdf>.

above.) However, most allegations of corruption focus on lower level government bureaucrats and Afghan police officers who routinely demand bribes to perform services, or who sell some of the equipment provided to them by international donors.

U.S. policy may be starting to yield results. In August 2008, reportedly at U.S. prodding, Karzai formed a “High Office of Oversight for the Implementation of Anti-Corruption Strategy” with wide powers to investigate civilian and security officials. The body is attempting to determine which officials have assets abroad. Karzai attends weekly meetings of the officials of this body. On March 27, 2009, to set an example for other senior officials, Karzai publicly declared his assets. In October 2008, Karzai shuffled his cabinet, appointing former Communist era official Muhammad Hanif Atmar—avowedly committed to reducing police corruption—as Interior Minister, and placing a widely praised official, Gulam Wardak, as new Education Minister. The Minister of Commerce, Amin Farhang, was voted out of office by the parliament in December 2008 for alleged misfeasance. Karzai told journalists in March 2009 that the government every day arrests officials for alleged corruption. The U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said in his April 2009 report that Karzai has asked the SIGAR to help design additional anti-corruption programs.

Partly because of the corruption issue, the Obama Administration has not given Karzai the access and public support that was given by the Bush Administration. A meeting between Vice President-elect Joseph Biden and Karzai in mid-January 2009 reportedly was tense because of Karzai’s failure thus far to curb corruption. However, no tension was evident on this issue during Karzai’s May 5-8, 2009 visit to the United States.

U.N.Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

The international community is extensively involved in Afghan governance and national building, primarily in factional conflict resolution and coordination of development assistance. The coordinator of U.N. efforts is the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), headed as of March 2008 by Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1806 of March 20, 2008, extended UNAMA’s mandate for another year and, more significantly, expanded its authority to coordinating the work of international donors and strengthening cooperation between the international peacekeeping force (ISAF, see below) and the Afghan government. In keeping with its expanding role, U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith reportedly is to be named as Eide’s deputy. Under the Obama Administration strategy review, UNAMA is to open offices in as many of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces as financially and logistically permissible.

UNAMA is co-chair of the joint Afghan-international community coordination body called the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMBUNAMA is helping implement the five-year development strategy outlined in a “London Compact,” (now called the Afghanistan Compact) adopted at the January 31-February 1, 2006, London conference on Afghanistan. The priorities developed in that document comport with Afghanistan’s own “National Strategy for Development,” presented on June 12, 2008, in Paris, as discussed further below under “assistance.” In Washington, D.C., in April 2008 and after, Eide was urging the furnishing of additional capacity-building resources, and he complained that some efforts by international donors are redundant or tied to purchases by Western countries. In several statements and press conferences, Eide has continued to note security deterioration but also progress in governance and in reduction of drug cultivation. UNAMA also often has been involved in local dispute resolution among factions, and it is helping organize the coming elections.

The difficulties in coordinating U.N. with U.S. and NATO efforts were belied in a 2007 proposal to create a new position of “super envoy” that would represent the United Nations, the European Union, and NATO in Afghanistan. The concept advanced and in January 2008, with U.S. support, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon tentatively appointed British diplomat Paddy Ashdown as the “super envoy.” However, Karzai rejected the appointment reportedly over concerns about the scope of authority of such an envoy, including the potential to dilute the U.S. role. Karzai might have also sought to show independence from the international community. Ashdown withdrew his name on January 28, 2008. However, at a speech at an international security conference in Munich on February 8, 2009, the newly appointed Obama Administration special representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, asserted that the “super-envoy” concept still might have merit for better coordinating donors.

Enhancing Local Governance

Since the beginning of 2008, there has been a major U.S.-Afghan push to build up local governance, reflecting a shift from the 2001-2007 approach of building only the central government. The approach represents an attempt to rebuild some of the tribal and other local structures, such as “*jirgas*” and “*shuras*”—traditional local councils—that were destroyed in the course of constant warfare over several decades. The leader in this initiative has been the “Independent Directorate of Local Governance” (IDLG), formed in August 2007 and headed by Jelani Popal (a member of Karzai’s Popolzai clan). The IDLG reports to Karzai’s office, and its establishment was intended to institute a systematic process for selecting capable provincial and district governors by taking the screening function away from the Interior Ministry. The IDLG is also selecting police chiefs and other local office holders, and in many cases has already begun removing allegedly corrupt local officials.

Part of its mission is to empower localities to decide on development projects by forming local “Development Councils” that decide on local development projects and are key to the perceived success of the “National Solidarity Program” discussed later. There are 30,000 such elected positions nationwide.

In 2008, with the support of the Bush Administration, the IDLG launched the government’s “Social Outreach Program,” intended to draw closer connections between tribes and localities to the central government. The program includes small payments (about \$200 per month) to tribal leaders and other participants, in part to persuade them to inform on Taliban insurgent movements. Since its formation, the United States has provided over \$100 million to the IDLG for its strategic work plan and its operations and outreach (as of early 2009). Of that, about \$8.5 million in FY2009 funds will assist the Social Outreach Program and related “Governor’s Performance Fund.” The Social Outreach program’s security dimensions—primarily the “Afghan Public Protection Force”—are discussed later in this report.

Among the notable successes of the IDLG leadership on gubernatorial appointments is the March 2008 replacement of the ineffective Helmand governor Asadullah Wafa with Gulab Mangal. Mangal is considered a competent administrator, but he is from Laghman province, not Helmand, somewhat to the consternation of Helmand residents. U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other officials say Mangal is taking effective action against poppy cultivation in the province. Some observers speculate, however, that Karzai still wants to replace Mangal with a close Karzai ally, the former governor, Sher Muhammad Akunzadeh (governor until 2005, now a Karzai appointee in the upper house of parliament), who purportedly committed numerous human rights abuses in the course of fighting the Taliban in the province and apparently remains powerful informally there. Karzai maintains Akunzadeh, when he was governor, was highly effective in keeping the Taliban at bay in the province by fielding local tribal forces against the insurgents.

The UNODC report on narcotics in August 2008 credits the strong leadership of Ghul Agha Shirzai, Nangarhar’s governor, for moving that province into the “poppy free” column in 2008. Atta Mohammad Noor of Balkh province receives similar credit, and Monshi Abdul Majid, governor of Badakhshan, is cited for achieving significant reduction in cultivation over the past few years. The governor of Qandahar was changed (to former General Rahmatullah Raufi, replacing Asadullah Khalid) after the August 7, 2008, Taliban assault on the Qandahar prison (Sarposa) that led to the freeing of several hundred Taliban fighters incarcerated there. However, reflecting continued political infighting over how best to stabilize Qandahar, Raufi was replaced in December 2008 by Afghan-Canadian academic Tooryalai Wesa. Other governors said to be

successful in helping stabilize and develop their provinces include former Khost governor Arsala Jamal, and Kabul province governor Hajji Din Mohammad, son of the slain “Jalalabad Shura” leader Hajji Abd al-Qadir.

U.S. Embassy/Budgetary Support to Afghan Government

A component of U.S. efforts to strengthen governance has been maintaining a large and active diplomatic presence. Zalmay Khalilzad, an American of Afghan origin discussed above, was ambassador during December 2003-August 2005; he reportedly had significant influence on Afghan government decisions.¹⁶ Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, who served as commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan during 2004-2005, is now Ambassador. Eikenberry and the rest of the U.S. team will be working closely with new special representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who made his second official visit to the region in April 2009.

The U.S. embassy, now in newly constructed buildings, has progressively expanded its personnel and facilities to several hundred. The Embassy will need to accommodate additional civilian hires and Foreign Service officers who will be posted to Afghanistan as mentors and advisers to the Afghan government under the Obama Administration strategy. About \$87 million was requested for new construction in a FY2009 supplemental appropriations request, and \$1.15 billion in State Department operations and Embassy construction funds are requested for FY2010. Of that latter amount, \$60 million is to enhance the air service that takes State Department and USAID people around the country (“PRT Air”). The tables at the end of this paper include U.S. funding for State Department and USAID operations.

Although the Afghan government has increased its revenue and is covering a growing proportion of its budget, USAID provides funding to help the Afghan government meet gaps in its budget—both directly and through a U.N.-run multi-donor Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) account. Those figures are provided in the U.S. aid tables at the end of the paper.

As part of an earlier, 2003 U.S. push on reconstruction, the Bush Administration formed a 15-person Afghan Reconstruction Group (ARG), placed within the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, which now focuses on helping Afghanistan attract private investment and develop private industries.

Human Rights and Democracy

The Administration and Afghan government claim progress in building a democratic Afghanistan that adheres to international standards of human rights practices and presumably is able to earn the support of the Afghan people. However, the State Department report on human rights practices for 2008 (released February 25, 2009)¹⁷ said that Afghanistan’s human rights record remained “poor,” noting in particular that the government or its agents commit arbitrary or unlawful killings. Still, virtually all observers agree that Afghans are freer than they were under the Taliban. Some press and other restrictions appear to reflect the government’s sensitivity to Afghanistan’s conservative nature rather than politically motivated action. For example, alcohol

¹⁶ Waldman, Amy. “In Afghanistan, U.S. Envoy Sits in Seat of Power.” *New York Times*, April 17, 2004. Afghanistan’s ambassador in Washington is Seyed Jalal Tawwab, formerly a Karzai aide.

¹⁷ For text, see <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/sca/119131.htm>

is increasingly difficult to obtain in restaurants and stores, although the government has not banned alcohol consumption or sales.

Afghan political groupings and parties are able to meet and organize freely, but there are also abuses based on ethnicity or political factionalism and arbitrary implementation of justice by local leaders. Since the Taliban era, more than 40 private radio stations, seven television networks, and 350 independent newspapers have opened, but the State Department says that there are growing numbers of arrests or intimidation of journalists who criticize the central government or local leaders. A press law was adopted in September 2008, requiring media organs to be licensed by the government, and press policy remains highly conservative; in April 2008 the Ministry of Information and Culture banned five Indian-produced soap operas on the grounds that they are too risqué. The ban was later overturned when the broadcasters agreed to also run Islamist-oriented programming from Turkey. That came amid a move by conservative parliamentarians to pass legislation to ban loud music, men and women mingling in public, video games, and other behavior common in the West.

Religious Freedom

On religious freedom, some note that the government has reimposed some Islamic restrictions that characterized Taliban rule, including the code of criminal punishments stipulated in Islamic law. The death penalty has been re-instituted, reversing a 2004 moratorium declared by Karzai. Fifteen convicts were executed at once on October 7, 2007. In January 2008, Afghanistan's "Islamic council," composed of senior clerics, backed public executions for convicted murderers and urged Karzai to end the activities of organizations that promote Christianity to Afghans.

The State Department International Religious Freedom report for 2008 (released September 19, 2008) reported continued discrimination against the Shiite (Hazara) minority and some other minorities such as Sikhs and Hindus, but that "Government and political leaders aspire to a national environment that respects the right to religious freedom." A *Washington Post* report of January 4, 2009, highlighted the freedom Afghan Shiites now have to celebrate their holy days openly. The Minister of Justice is a Shiite, a development many observers did not expect at any time in Afghanistan. However, in May 2007, a directorate under the Supreme Court declared the Baha'i faith to be a form of blasphemy.

In March 2009, the parliament and executive branch attempted to accommodate Shiite demands by passing and signing a new personal status law for members of the sect. However, in April 2009, following an international condemnation of provisions that human rights groups say would legalize the rape of a wife by her husband and restrict the ability of women to go outside the home, Karzai placed the law under review by the Justice Ministry, which drafts government bills. Karzai said during his May visit to the United States that it would be amended and resubmitted to the parliament. H.Con.Res. 108 and S.Con.Res. 19, expresses the sense of Congress that the law should be repealed; President Obama has called the provisions of the law "abhorrent."

On January 25, 2008, in a case that has implications for both religious and journalistic freedom, a young reporter, Sayed Pervez Kambaksh, was sentenced in a quick trial to death for distributing a website report to student peers questioning some precepts of Islam. On October 21, 2008, a Kabul appeals court reduced his sentence to 20 years, a sentence reaffirmed by the Afghanistan Supreme Court in March 2009, but he still could obtain a Karzai pardon.

A previous religious freedom case earned congressional attention in March 2006. An Afghan man, Abd al-Rahman, who had converted to Christianity 16 years ago while working for a Christian aid group in Pakistan, was imprisoned and faced a potential death penalty trial for apostasy—his refusal to convert back to Islam. Facing international pressure, Karzai prevailed on Kabul court authorities to release him (March 29, 2006). His release came the same day the House passed H.Res. 736 calling on protections for Afghan converts.

Human Trafficking

Afghanistan was again placed in Tier 2 in the State Department report on human trafficking issued in June 2008 (Trafficking in Persons Report for 2008). The government is assessed as not complying with minimum standards for eliminating trafficking, but making significant efforts to do so. The report says that women (reportedly from China and Central Asia) are being trafficked into Afghanistan for sexual exploitation. Other reports say some are brought to work in night clubs purportedly frequented by members of many international NGOs. In an effort to also increase protections for Afghan women, in August 2008 the Interior Ministry announced a crackdown on sexual assault—an effort to publicly air a taboo subject. The United States has spent \$500,000 to eliminate human trafficking in Afghanistan since FY2001.

An Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) was formed in 2002 to monitor government performance and has been credited in State Department reports with successful interventions to curb abuses. Headed by former Women's Affairs minister Sima Samar, it also conducts surveys of how Afghans view governance and reconstruction efforts. The House-passed Afghan Freedom Support Act (AFSA) re-authorization bill (H.R. 2446) would authorize \$10 million per year for this Commission until FY2010.

Advancement of Women

According to the State Department human rights report for 2008, the Afghan government is promoting the advancement of women, but numerous abuses, such as denial of educational and employment opportunities, continue primarily because of Afghanistan's conservative traditions. A major development in post-Taliban Afghanistan was the formation of a Ministry of Women's Affairs dedicated to improving women's rights, although numerous accounts say the ministry's influence is limited and it is now headed by a male, (the deputy minister is female). It promotes the involvement of women in business ventures, and it plays a key role in referring women victims of domestic abuse to a growing number of women's shelters across Afghanistan. Many women continue to wear the head-to-toe *burqa* covering, even though wearing it has not been required since the Taliban government was ousted.

Three female ministers were in the 2004-2006 cabinet: former presidential candidate Masooda Jalal (Ministry of Women's Affairs), Sediqa Balkhi (Minister for Martyrs and the Disabled), and Amina Afzali (Minister of Youth). However, Karzai nominated only one (Minister of Women's Affairs Soraya Sobhrang) in the 2006 cabinet, and she was voted down by Islamist conservatives in parliament, leaving no women in the cabinet. In March 2005, Karzai appointed a former Minister of Women's Affairs, Habiba Sohrabi, as governor of Bamiyan province, inhabited mostly by Hazaras. (She hosted then First Lady Laura Bush in Bamiyan in June 2008.)

The constitution reserves for women at least 17 of the 102 seats in the upper house and 62 of the 249 seats in the lower house of parliament. There are 68 women in the lower house, meaning six

were elected without the quota. There are 23 serving in the upper house, six more than Karzai's mandated bloc of 17 female appointees. There are also 121 women holding seats in the 420 provincial council seats nationwide. However, some NGOs and other groups believe that the women elected by the quota system are not viewed as equally legitimate parliamentarians.

More generally, women are performing jobs that were rarely held by women even before the Taliban came to power in 1996, including in the new police force. There are 67 female judges and 447 female journalists working nationwide. The most senior Afghan woman in the police force was assassinated in Qandahar in September 2008. Press reports say Afghan women are increasingly learning how to drive. Under the new government, the wearing of the full body covering called the *burqa* is no longer obligatory, and fewer women are wearing it than was the case a few years ago. On the other hand, women's advancement has made women a target of attacks by Taliban supporters or highly conservative Afghans. Attacks on girls' schools and athletic facilities have increased in the most restive areas. On November 12, 2008, suspected Taliban sprayed acid on the faces of several schoolgirls in Qandahar.

U.S. officials have had some influence in persuading the government to codify women's rights. After the Karzai government took office, the United States and the new Afghan government set up a U.S.-Afghan Women's Council to coordinate the allocation of resources to Afghan women. According to the State Department, the United States has implemented several hundred projects directly in support of Afghan women, including women's empowerment, maternal and child health and nutrition, funding the Ministry of Women's Affairs, micro-finance projects, and like programs.

The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (AFSA, P.L. 107-327) authorized \$15 million per year (FY2003-FY2006) for the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Those monies are donated to the Ministry from Economic Support Funds (ESF) accounts controlled by USAID. S. 229, "Afghan Women Empowerment Act of 2009," introduced in the 111th Congress, would authorize \$45 million per year in FY2010-FY2012 for grants to Afghan women; for the ministry of Women's Affairs (\$5 million), and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (\$10 million).

Overall Democracy and Governance Funding Issues

During FY2002 - 2009, USAID has spent \$1.9 billion on governance, democracy, and rule of law programs, including: support for elections, civil society programs, political party strengthening, media freedom, and local governance. Funding earmarks for programs benefitting women and girls is contained in the tables at the end of the paper.

Combating Narcotics Trafficking¹⁸

Narcotics trafficking is regarded by some as one of the most significant problems facing Afghanistan, generating what U.S. commanders estimate to be about \$100 million per year for the Taliban. Afghanistan is the source of about 93% of the world's illicit opium supply, and according to UNODC, "... leaving aside 19th Century China, no country in the world has ever produced

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion and U.S. funding on the issue, see CRS Report RL32686, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy*, by Christopher M. Blanchard.

narcotics on such a deadly scale.” However, this is one area where there are widespread accounts of progress, although it is not certain whether the progress will be sustained.

Ambassador Holbrooke disparaged signs of progress at a meeting in Brussels on March 21, 2009, saying the United States had received “nothing” for its counter-narcotics funding. The Obama Administration’s strategic review focused some additional attention on promoting alternative livelihoods to poppy growing. Some international officials are reporting good results by encouraging the growing of pomegranates and of saffron rice as alternative crops that draw buyers outside Afghanistan. Encouraging alternative livelihoods is the preferred emphasis of the Afghan government, and the Afghan side maintains that narcotics flourish in areas where there is no security, and not the other way around. In FY 2008, the United States provided \$38 million in “Good Performers” funds to provinces that have eliminated poppy cultivation, such as Balkh province. According to Afghan cabinet members, the government also is spending funds on a “social safety net” to help wean landless farmers away from poppy cultivation work.

The UNODC report of November 2008 was the most positive such report since at least 2005, saying: “The opium flood waters in Afghanistan have started to recede.” The estimate was based on a drop in area under opium cultivation of 19%, an overall opium production drop of 6%, and a large increase in the number of “poppy free provinces” from 13 in the 2007 report to 18 (out of 34 total provinces) now. A January 2009 UNODC “Afghanistan: Opium Winter Assessment” said the trend in reduction in poppy cultivation is likely to continue in 2009. The report added that all 18 provinces now considered “poppy free” are likely to remain so, and four provinces (Badakhshan, Herat, Baghlan, and Faryab) have the potential to join that category. The report adds that cultivation in Helmand, which produces more than half the poppy crop of all Afghanistan, is likely to fall in 2009. These reports attribute the progress to strong leadership by some governors, such as those mentioned above in the section on governance.

On the other hand, some poppy growers are turning to marijuana cultivation and trafficking, perhaps sensing less pressure on that activity. On June 11, 2008, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1817, called for greater international cooperation to stop the movement of chemical precursors used to process opium into Afghanistan.

In concert with interdiction and building up alternative livelihoods, U.S.-trained Afghanistan counter-narcotics police eradicate poppy fields by cutting down the crop manually on the ground. During 2007, there was debate between some in the U.S. government, including Ambassador Wood, and Karzai over whether to conduct spraying of fields, particularly by air. President Karzai strongly opposed aerial spraying, arguing that doing so would cause a backlash among Afghan farmers; he appears to have won this argument. Congress has to date sided with Karzai’s view; the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 110-161) prohibited U.S. counter-narcotics funding from being used for aerial spraying on Afghanistan poppy fields without Afghan concurrence.

Using U.S. and NATO forces to combat narcotics is another facet under debate. Some NATO contributors, such as Britain, have focused on interdicting traffickers and raiding drug labs. At a NATO meeting on October 10, 2008, NATO accepted a policy of using force against narcotics traffickers. Under the agreement, each country can choose to keep their forces out of such missions, and press reports say that several NATO nations have done just that, hampering implementation of the October 2008 agreement and causing continued U.S.-NATO frictions over the policy on this tactic. U.S. troops deployed in Helmand have not specifically acted against poppy fields, deliberately to avoid angering the local population on which the success of U.S. counter-insurgency operations depend. In February 2009, NATO modified its posture somewhat

toward viewing some drug traffickers as active participants in the insurgency, and therefore subject to military operations, rather than as a purely criminal/legal issue.

The U.S. military, in support of the effort after initial reluctance, is flying Afghan and U.S. counter-narcotics agents (Drug Enforcement Agency, DEA) on missions and identifying targets; it also evacuates casualties from counter-drug operations. The Department of Defense is also playing the major role in training and equipping specialized Afghan counter-narcotics police, in developing an Afghan intelligence fusion cell, and training Afghan border police, as well as assisting an Afghan helicopter squadron to move Afghan counter-narcotics forces around the country. The Bush Administration took some legal steps against suspected Afghan drug traffickers; in April 2005, a DEA operation successfully caught the alleged leading Afghan narcotics trafficker, Haji Bashir Noorzai, arresting him after a flight to New York. The United States funded a Counternarcotics Justice Center (\$8 million) in Kabul to prosecute and incarcerate suspected traffickers.

The Bush Administration repeatedly named Afghanistan as a major illicit drug producer and drug transit country, but did not include Afghanistan on a smaller list of countries that have “failed demonstrably to make substantial efforts” to adhere to international counter-narcotics agreements and take certain counter-narcotics measures set forth in U.S. law.¹⁹ The Bush Administration exercised waiver provisions to a required certification of full Afghan cooperation that was needed to provide more than congressionally stipulated amounts of U.S. economic assistance to Afghanistan. A similar certification requirement (to provide amounts over \$300 million) is contained in the House version of the FY2008 appropriation (P.L. 110-161), and in the FY2009 appropriation, P.L. 111-8 (\$200 million ceiling). The latest waiver was issued in May 2008 and another is expected soon. Other provisions, such as cutting U.S. aid to any Afghan province whose officials are determined complicit in drug trafficking, were contained in H.R. 2446 (AFSA reauthorization, 110th Congress), which passed only the House. Narcotics trafficking control was perhaps the one issue on which the Taliban regime satisfied much of the international community; the Taliban enforced a July 2000 ban on poppy cultivation.²⁰

Post-War Security Operations and Force Capacity Building

One major question among experts is what is the U.S. definition of “winning” the “war” in Afghanistan. While that might be debated, the top security priority of the United States articulated since 2001 has been to prevent the Taliban and its allies from challenging the Afghan government as that government builds capacity to defend itself. The security efforts were part of the “nation-building” priorities discussed in previous sections, intended to weaken popular support for the Taliban by promoting economic and political development, eliminating the sources of funding for the insurgency, and building democracy. The Obama Administration review, the results of which were announced March 27, 2009, narrowed the official U.S. mission goals to something less ambitious—preventing Al Qaeda from re-establishing a base in Afghanistan—although the policy tools announced appear to continue – and in some ways expand - nation-building.

¹⁹ Afghanistan had been so designated every year during 1987-2002.

²⁰ Crossette, Barbara. “Taliban Seem to Be Making Good on Opium Ban, U.N. Says.” *New York Times*, February 7, 2001.

The pillars of U.S. security strategy have been, and largely remain after the Obama Administration review, although with more emphasis on promoting Afghan governance and economic development than previously: (1) continuing combat operations by U.S. forces and a NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); (2) U.S. and NATO operation of “provincial reconstruction teams” (PRTs) that promote economic development; (3) the equipping, training, and expansion of an Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) force; (4) establishing local security organs; and (5) backing Afghan efforts to engage Taliban leaders who might want to end their armed struggle.

Taliban, Al Qaeda, and Related Insurgent Groups

Security is being challenged by a confluence of related armed groups—not only the ousted Taliban still centered around Mullah Umar. Mullah Umar and many of his top advisers from their time in power remain at large, believed in Pakistan in and around the city of Quetta, according to Afghan officials (“Quetta Shura”). One of Umar’s top deputies still at large is Mullah Bradar, but others, including Mullah Dadullah, his son Mansoor, and Mullah Usmani, have been killed or captured. Umar reportedly continues to run a so-called “shadow government” from his safehaven, and the Taliban has several official spokespersons, including Qari Yusuf Ahmadi and Zabiullah Mujahid, and it operates a clandestine radio station, “Voice of Shariat,” and publishes videos.

The Taliban of Afghanistan are increasingly linked politically to Pakistani Taliban militants such as Beitullah Mehsud and others. The Pakistan Taliban are primarily seeking to challenge the government of Pakistan, but they facilitate the transiting into Afghanistan of Afghan Taliban and support the Afghan Taliban goals of recapturing Afghanistan. Some Pakistani militants are increasingly focused on interrupting U.S. supply lines into Afghanistan that run through Pakistan.

Al Qaeda/Bin Laden Whereabouts

U.S. commanders say that, with increased freedom of action in Pakistan, Al Qaeda militants are increasingly facilitating, through financing and recruiting, militant incursions in Afghanistan. However, only very small numbers of Al Qaeda members—including Arabs, Uzbeks, and Chechens—are being captured or killed in battles in Afghanistan itself, according to U.S. commanders.

The two most notable Al Qaeda leaders at large, and believed in Pakistan, are Osama bin Laden himself and his close ally, Ayman al-Zawahiri. A purported U.S.-led strike reportedly missed Zawahiri by a few hours in the village of Damadola, Pakistan, in January 2006, suggesting that the United States and Pakistan have some intelligence on his movements.²¹ A strike in late January 2008, in an area near Damadola, killed Abu Laith al-Libi, a reported senior Al Qaeda figure who purportedly masterminded, among other operations, the bombing at Bagram Air Base in February 2007 when Vice President Cheney was visiting. In August 2008, an airstrike was confirmed to have killed Al Qaeda chemical weapons expert Abu Khabab al-Masri, and two senior operatives allegedly involved in the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa reportedly were killed by a Predator strike in January 2009. These strikes have continued under President Obama, indicating the new Administration continues to see the tactic as effective in preventing attacks.

²¹ Gall, Carlotta and Ismail Khan. “U.S. Drone Attack Missed Zawahiri by Hours.” *New York Times*, November 10, 2006.

There have been no recent public indications that U.S. or allied forces have learned or are close to learning bin Laden's location. In February 2009, some independent U.S. scientists, using geographic mapping and other methodology based on bin Laden's likely needs and lifestyle, speculated that he might be in or near the Pakistani border city of Parachinar—which is across the border from bin Laden's former Afghan stronghold at Tora Bora. Some press reports in April 2009 suggested that Pakistani intelligence believes Zawahiri might be in Quetta, Pakistan, although CRS has no way to corroborate or refute such information.

Hikmatyar Faction

Another "high value target" identified by U.S. commanders is the faction of former *mujahedin* party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, HIG) allied with Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents. Hikmatyar's fighters – once instrumental in the U.S.-supported war against the Soviet Union, are operating in Kunar, Nuristan, and Nangarhar provinces, east of Kabul. On February 19, 2003, the U.S. government formally designated Hikmatyar as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist," under the authority of Executive Order 13224, subjecting it to financial and other U.S. sanctions. (It is not formally designated as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization.")

While U.S. commanders continue to battle Hikmatyar's militia, the Afghan government reportedly is negotiating with his representatives. Hikmatyar has expressed a willingness to discuss a cease-fire with the Karzai government since 2007, but such talks appear to be gaining seriousness and specificity as of May 2009.

Haqqani Faction

Yet another militant faction is led by Jalaludin Haqqani and his eldest son, Siraj (or Sirajjudin). Jalaludin Haqqani, who served as Minister of Tribal Affairs in the Taliban regime of 1996-2001, is believed closer to Al Qaeda than to the ousted Taliban leadership in part because one of his wives is purportedly Arab. The group is active around Khost Province. Haqqani property inside Pakistan has been repeatedly targeted since September 2008 by U.S. aerial drone strikes. Some reports in May 2009 suggest this faction might also be in talks with the Afghan government.

The War to Date: Post-2006 Taliban "Resurgence" and Causes

In the four years after the fall of the Taliban, U.S. forces and Afghan troops fought relatively low levels of insurgent violence by the Taliban and other groups discussed above. The United States and Afghanistan conducted "Operation Mountain Viper" (August 2003); "Operation Avalanche" (December 2003); "Operation Mountain Storm" (March-July 2004) against Taliban remnants in and around Uruzgan province, home province of Mullah Umar; "Operation Lightning Freedom" (December 2004-February 2005); and "Operation Pil (Elephant)" in Kunar Province in the east (October 2005). By late 2005, U.S. and partner commanders appeared to believe that the combat, coupled with overall political and economic reconstruction, had virtually ended any insurgency.

An increase in violence beginning in mid-2006 took some U.S. commanders by surprise, by many accounts. Since then, Taliban insurgents have increasingly adapted suicide and roadside bombing characteristic of the Iraq insurgency – such bombings were not characteristic of Afghanistan's past wars. There is no agreement on the causes of the deterioration, but reasons often advanced include some of those discussed above in the sections on governance—Afghan government

corruption and the absence of governance or security forces in many rural areas—as well as the safehaven enjoyed by militants in Pakistan; the reticence of some NATO contributors to actively combat insurgents; civilian casualties caused by NATO and U.S. military operations; and the slow pace of economic development that caused Afghans to criticize the international commitment.

The main theater of combat—where many of these factors converge—is southern Afghanistan: particularly, Uruzgan, Helmand, and Qandahar provinces—areas that NATO/ISAF assumed primary responsibility for on July 31, 2006. Along with Zabol and Nimruz provinces, these provinces constitute “Regional Command South (RC-S).” Suggesting that U.S. and NATO strategy requires more than just military force, NATO counter-offensives in 2006 were only temporary successes, including such operations as Operation Mountain Lion, Operation Mountain Thrust, and Operation Medusa (August–September 2006). The latter, at the time, was considered a success in ousting Taliban fighters from the Panjwai district near Qandahar, but it proved short lived. In the aftermath of Medusa, British forces—who believe in working more with tribal leaders as part of negotiated local solutions—entered into an agreement with tribal elders in the Musa Qala district of Helmand Province, under which they would secure the main town of the district without an active NATO presence. That strategy failed when the Taliban took over Musa Qala town in February 2007. A NATO offensive in December 2007 retook it, although there continue to be recriminations between the Britain, on the one side, and the United States and Karzai, on the other, over the wisdom of the original British deal. Taliban fighters reportedly continue to influence or control outskirts of the district.

Coalition Responses to the Resurgence in 2007 and 2008

To address the “resurgence,” NATO tried to apply a more integrated strategy involving pre-emptive combat, increased development work, and a more streamlined command structure, in addition to a slow and steady troop buildup. U.S. and partner country troop levels have been increasing significantly since 2006, when NATO/ISAF took over peacekeeping operations nationwide (after October 5, 2006). Well more than half of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan (numbers are in the security indicators table below) are under NATO command. The remainder are part of the original post-September 11 anti-terrorism mission Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). There are also Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan under a separate command.²²

U.S. Command and May 2009 Changes

The NATO/ISAF force has been headed by U.S. Gen. David McKiernan since June 3, 2008. As of September 2008, he also led U.S. troops in OEF and in the training mission for the Afghan security forces as commander of “U.S. Forces Afghanistan”—an attempt to give U.S. commanders greater ability to deploy U.S. forces throughout the war zone. Gen. McKiernan and his successors also report to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM, headed as of October 31, 2008,

²² Incremental costs of U.S. operations in Afghanistan appear to be running about \$2.5 to 3 billion per month. The FY2008 Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 110-181, Section 1229) requires a quarterly DOD report on the security situation in Afghanistan; the first was submitted in June 2008. For further information, see CRS Report RL33110, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, by Amy Belasco.

by General David Petraeus, formerly top U.S. commander in Iraq) not only to NATO headquarters. U.S. officials say that the OEF and NATO/ISAF missions will not formally merge. Whether under NATO or OEF, most U.S. forces in Afghanistan are in eastern Afghanistan and are under the operational command of Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser as head of Combined Joint Task Force 101 (CJTF-101, named for the 101st Airborne Division, headquartered at Bagram Air Base north of Kabul).

On May 11, 2009, Secretary of Defense Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Michael Mullen announced that, in concert with the new U.S. strategy announced in March 2009 (discussed below), Gen. McKiernan had been asked to resign and Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, considered an innovative commander as head of U.S. special operations (2003-2008), was named his successor. He is to be assisted by Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez as day-to-day commander of the effort, a move reportedly intended to permit McChrystal (if confirmed) to focus on the combat component of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

Operation Enduring Freedom Partner Forces

The overwhelming majority of non-U.S. forces are now under the NATO/ISAF mission. Prior to NATO assumption of command in October 2006, 19 coalition countries—primarily Britain, France, Canada, and Italy—were contributing approximately 4,000 combat troops to OEF. Now, only a few foreign contingents, composed mainly of special operations forces, including a 200 person unit from the UAE, are still part of the U.S.-led OEF mission in Afghanistan. Until December 2007, 200 South Korean forces at Bagram Air Base (mainly combat engineers) were part of OEF; they left in December 2007 in fulfillment of a decision by the South Korean government the previous year. However, many observers believe South Korea did not further extend its mission beyond that as part of an implicit August 2007 deal under which Taliban militants released 21 kidnapped South Korean church group visitors.²³

Under OEF, Japan provided naval refueling capabilities in the Arabian sea, but the mission was suspended in October 2007 following a parliamentary change of majority there in July 2007. The mission was revived in January 2008 when the new government forced through parliament a bill to allow the mission to resume. It was renewed again, over substantial parliamentary opposition, in December 2008. In July 2008, Japan decided against expanding the mission of its Self Defense Forces to include some reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Japan is already the third largest individual country donor to Afghanistan, providing about \$1.9 billion in civilian reconstruction aid since the fall of the Taliban. It has been requested to be a major financial donor of an Afghan army expansion, and, in March 2009, it pledged to pay the costs of the Afghan National Police for six months.

As part of OEF outside Afghanistan, the United States leads a multi-national naval anti-terrorist, anti-smuggling, anti-proliferation interdiction mission in the Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea, headquartered in Bahrain. That mission was expanded after the fall of Saddam Hussein to include protecting Iraqi oil platforms in the Gulf.

2008 Deterioration

Continuing to rely heavily on combat operations, in 2007, U.S. and NATO forces, bolstered by the infusion of 3,200 U.S. troops and 3,800 partner forces, pre-empted an anticipated Taliban “spring offensive” with “Operation Achilles” (March 2007) in the Sangin district of northern Helmand Province, around the Kajaki dam. Other operations, including Operation Silicon (May 2007) were conducted in other parts of Helmand. During 2007, the United States also began to experience at least one use (unsuccessful) by the Taliban of surface-to-air missiles (SAM-7, shoulder held) against U.S. C-130 transport aircraft.

²³ Two were killed during their captivity. The Taliban kidnappers did not get the demanded release of 23 Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government.

The Bush Administration also decided in early 2008 to focus attention and provide additional resources than it had previously. Joint Chiefs Chairman Mullen largely confirmed the perception that the Afghan battlefield was “under-resourced” in December 11, 2007, congressional testimony. Similar findings were emphasized in outside assessments of Afghanistan policy, including a report in November 2007 by the Senlis Council;²⁴ a January 2008 study by the Atlantic Council (“Saving Afghanistan: An Appeal and Plan for Urgent Action”) and a January 30, 2008, study by the Center for the Study of the Presidency (“Afghanistan Study Group Report”). These assessments contributed to a decision by Secretary of Defense Gates, in January 2008, to deploy an additional 3,200 Marines to Helmand Province.

Despite the stepped-up coalition military activity, throughout 2008 growing concern took hold within the Bush Administration. This was reflected in such statements as one in September 2008 by Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen that “I’m not sure we’re winning” in Afghanistan, as well as one by him on October 10, 2008, that “I anticipate next year [2009] would be a tougher year.” Similar comments were made in early 2009 by President Obama and top U.S. military officials. These assessments comport with a reported U.S. intelligence estimate on Afghanistan, according to the *New York Times* (October 9, 2008), that described Afghanistan as in a “downward spiral”—language used also by Commander of U.S. Central Command General David Petraeus (in that position since October 31, 2008).

However, there have been some differences of opinion within the command structure on the extent of the security deterioration. Gen. McKiernan acknowledged setbacks but says there are also positive indicators in many parts of Afghanistan and that the conflict is “winnable.” He and others asserted that 70% of the violence in Afghanistan occurs in 10% of Afghanistan’s 364 districts, an area including about 6% of the Afghan population, and that militants crossing the border account for about 30% of all attacks in Afghanistan. Some add that the perception of Taliban control over territory is exaggerated. At the same time, Gen. McKiernan said that there was “stalemate” in the south, and that this assessment represented the basis of his request, made during the last year of the Bush Administration, for a total of 30,000 more soldiers in Afghanistan (see below).

The indicators that fed pessimistic assessments include: (1) 2008 recording the most U.S. combat casualties, of the war so far (about 150); (2) numbers of suicide bombings at a post-Taliban high; (3) number of roadside bombings (2,000 in 2008) at a post-Taliban high; (4) expanding Taliban operations in provinces where it had not previously been active, including Lowgar, Wardak, and Kapisa, close to Kabul; (5) high profile attacks in Kabul against well defended targets, such as the January 14, 2008, attack on the Serena Hotel in Kabul and the July 7, 2008, suicide bombing at the gates of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, killing more than 50; (6) the April 27, 2008, assassination attempt on Karzai during a military parade celebrating the ouster of the Soviet Union; (7) a June 12, 2008, Sarposa prison break in Qandahar (several hundred Taliban captives were freed, as part of an emptying of the 1,200 inmates there); (8) a reported 40% rise in attacks (over 2007 figures) in the U.S.-led eastern sector; (9) the July 13, 2008, on a U.S. outpost in Nuristan Province that killed nine U.S. soldiers; (10) a August 18, 2008, attack that killed ten French soldiers near Sarobi, 30 miles northeast of Kabul; (11) an attack by militants who broke into the Justice Ministry and other buildings in Kabul on February 11, 2009, killing twenty but being put down by Afghan commandos within four hours; and (12) figures compiled by

²⁴ Text of the report is at http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/Afghanistan_on_the_brink/documents/Afghanistan_on_the_brink.

NATO/ISAF in April 2009 show continued increases in various categories of insurgent violence, such as a 74% overall increase in insurgent-initiated attacks in early 2009 as compared to that period in 2008.

Contributing to the sense of deterioration have been reports that the Taliban, in some areas under their control, are setting up courts and other “shadow government” structures. Afghan officials say that over half of Helmand Province is under Taliban control, and parts of Qandahar Province is controlled by insurgents as well, although government forces control major population centers.

Bush and Obama Administration Strategy Reviews

As the perception of deterioration continued, it was reported in September 2008 that both the U.S. military and NATO were conducting a number of different strategy reviews. The reviews were, in part, intended to prevent an unraveling of the effort from the time of the U.S. election until President-elect Obama takes over. One review was headed by Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute, the Bush Administration’s senior adviser on Iraq and Afghanistan (who has been kept on under the Obama Administration); others were conducted by the Department of Defense, by CENTCOM, by NATO, and by the State Department. Almost all of the reviews were completed and briefed to Secretary of Defense Gates prior to the start of the Obama Administration.

Obama Administration “Strategic Review”

The Obama Administration—which has stated that Afghanistan needs to be given a higher priority than it was during the Bush Administration—integrated the Bush Administration reviews into an overarching 60-day inter-agency “strategic review.” It was chaired by South Asia expert Bruce Riedel, on temporary assignment, and co-chaired by Ambassador Holbrooke and by Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy. Ambassador Holbrooke invited both Afghanistan and Pakistan to participate in the review. Several ministers from each country visited Washington, D.C. during February 23-27, 2009, as part of the process, and reached agreement to hold regular trilateral meetings (U.S., Afghanistan, Pakistan). The latest, which included the Presidents of both Afghanistan and Pakistan, took place during May 4-7, 2009.

President Obama announced the new “comprehensive” strategy on March 27, 2009, addressing all interlocking factors that have caused security in Afghanistan to deteriorate since 2006. According to the President’s statement, and an associated “White Paper” of the inter-agency group that performed the review:

- *Key Goals:* (1) disrupt terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan to degrade their ability to launch international terrorist attacks; (2) promote a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan; (3) develop self-reliant Afghan security forces that can lead the counter-insurgency with reduced U.S. assistance; and (4) involve the international community to actively assist in addressing these objectives. These relatively targeted goals are in line with comments by President Obama in an interview with “60 Minutes,” broadcast March 22, 2009, saying that there needs to be an “exit strategy” for Afghanistan so that U.S. policy does not appear to be “perpetual drift.”
- *Resources and Troops.* The strategy will provide the resources to the stabilization effort in Afghanistan that U.S. officials say were lacking during the Bush Administration. However, the strategy emphasizes promoting Afghan governance

and the growth of its own forces, rather than U.S.-led combat. 17,000 additional combat troops are to be deployed to help secure the restive south and east of Afghanistan—in line with a February 17, 2009 authorization of those deployments by President Obama—and a long standing requirement for 4,000 U.S. military personnel to train the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) would deploy as well.

- *Afghan Forces.* The additional trainers are expected to enable the Afghan National Army to reach its planned goal of 134,000 (from the existing 86,000) by 2011. The strategy left open a future expansion to 250,000 or more ANA and 140,000 ANP, as has been discussed by Afghan officials.
- *Civilian “Surge.”* To develop Afghan institutions not only in the central government but at the provincial and local levels, there is to be a significant increase (about 430, including 51 direct hires) in U.S. civilian advisors in Afghanistan, both new hires and assignment of existing State Department and other agency personnel. This would more than double the number of civilian experts now in country, of which only 13 serve in the southern sector. Substantial new contributions of personnel from U.S. allies and partners in Afghanistan are expected as well (see below). The FY2009 supplemental request includes \$600 million to fund the “civilian surge,” including new Embassy construction costs to handle more personnel. According to subsequent testimony and announcements, USAID is to provide 150 of the civilians (45 of which would be in Kabul); U.S. Department of Agriculture is to provide 50 experts; and the remainder would be furnished by the Department of State (foreign service officers and civilian hires, of which 50 have been hired). There are reportedly inter-agency discussions about potentially filling some posts temporarily with military reservists.
- *Reconciliation.* The strategy expresses clear support for longstanding Afghan efforts to persuade insurgent commanders and their foot soldiers to lay down their arms and accept the Afghan constitution. However, Mullah Umar and his aides are aligned with the Al Qaeda organization and should not be included in any reconciliation deal (see further below).
- *Pakistan.* According to Administration officials in briefings for Congressional staff (March 27, 2009),²⁵ the new Administration strategy treats Afghanistan and Pakistan as organically linked. Specific points include: (1) institutionalizing stronger mechanisms for bilateral and trilateral cooperation among the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; (2) providing U.S. military assistance to help Pakistani forces conduct counter-insurgency against militants in Pakistan; (3) increasing economic assistance to Pakistan (\$1.5 billion per year for the next five years); (4) fostering reform of local governance in areas of Pakistan where militants are operating; and (5) encouraging foreign investment in key sectors of the Pakistani economy, and supporting legislation to create “Reconstruction Opportunity Zones” – areas of Afghan-Pakistan economic cooperation the products of which would enjoy preferential duties for import to the United States. (see below).

²⁵ Unclassified briefing by Administration officials. March 27, 2009

- *International Dimension.* The Administration will explore new diplomatic mechanisms, including establishing an “Contact Group” consisting of all nations that have a stake in the security of the region—NATO allies and other U.S. partners, as well as the Central Asian states, the Gulf nations and Iran, Russia, India, and China. As explained by Administration officials in briefings to congressional staff on the new strategy (March 27, 2009), NATO and other partners will be asked to contribute whatever they are comfortable contributing—whether that be troops, economic aid, civilian mentors, ANSF trainers—as long as the contribution fills an identified requirement. Some pledges—mostly aid and trainers, rather than combat troops—were made at the NATO summit in France April 3-4, 2009, as discussed further below.
- *Review Process.* The strategy is intended to be reviewed regularly to assess its results. Joint Chiefs Chairman Mullen said on May 18 that the new strategy might reverse the negative security trends within 12-24 months. Secretary Gates said on May 20 that he wants an initial assessment of the strategy’s effectiveness by March-April 2010.

U.S. Troop Buildup in 2009

Even before the new strategy was announced, there was a consensus that U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan needed to increase. In keeping with an announcement in September 2008 by President Bush, about 5,000 more U.S. forces deployed to Afghanistan in January 2009. They deployed to Lowgar and Wardak provinces, south of Kabul, where there has been significant Taliban infiltration since 2008. The additional deployments (17,000 combat troops and 4,000 trainers), which are now starting to flow to Afghanistan, will bring U.S. force levels to about 70,000 by the end of 2009.

The Obama Administration strategy’s emphasis on civilian mentorship and development reflected the views of European partners, President Karzai, Defense Secretary Gates, and others who believe that Afghanistan’s difficulties are complex and required more innovations than adding forces. The strategy announcement put off a decisions on whether to send the remaining 10,000 forces of those requested by Gen. McKiernan in 2008. Secretary of Defense Gates, who has expressed the view that adding too many troops could create among the Afghan people a sense of “occupation” that could prove counter-productive, said in May 2009 that it would be a “hard sell” and it would “take some convincing” for him to agree that additional forces would materially improve security if the current build-up does not. Those who advocate more troops beyond those approved say that such forces are needed to create permissive security conditions to enable the building of Afghan governance capabilities.

Beyond the addition of troops, there is a growing question of equipment. Some experts say that the United States is too reliant on armor in Afghanistan which is not suited for Afghanistan’s poor roads and steep mountain passes. Others say there should be more emphasis on mobility provided by more helicopters and on greater availability of aerial surveillance assets.

Initiatives Under Way Before the Strategy Announcement

The Obama Administration review supports some of the strategy innovations begun in 2008. One such initiative is a major expansion of the Afghan National Army, which was planned before the strategy announcement and endorsed by it. Others are discussed below.

Negotiations With the Taliban

During 2008, there was growing U.S. support for new Afghan efforts to bring Taliban fighters off the battlefield and into the political process. President Karzai has consistently advocated talks with Taliban militants who want to consider ending their fight. Noted above is the “Program for Strengthening Peace and Reconciliation” (referred to in Afghanistan by its Pashto acronym “PTS”) headed by *Meshrano Jirga* speaker Sibghatullah Mojadeddi and overseen by Karzai’s National Security Council. The program is credited with persuading 5,000 Taliban figures and commanders to renounce violence and join the political process. Several Taliban figures, including its foreign minister Wakil Mutawwakil, ran in the parliamentary elections. “Mullah Rocket” a former Taliban commander, is running for president in the August 2009 elections. The Taliban official who was governor of Bamiyan Province when the Buddha statues there were blown up, Mohammad Islam Mohammadi—and who was later elected to the post-Taliban parliament from Samangan Province—was assassinated in Kabul in January 2007.

The issue has gained momentum in recent months. In October 2008, press reports said that Afghan officials (led by Karzai’s brother Qayyum) and Taliban members had met each other in Ramadan-related gatherings in Saudi Arabia in September 2008. Another round of talks was held in late January 2009 in Saudi Arabia, and there are reports of ongoing contact in Dubai, UAE.

Since the new strategy was announced, the talks have broadened, according to press reports.²⁶ According to these stories, one track involves negotiations with the Hikmatyar faction. Other talks reportedly include Afghans close to Mullah Umar. The talks apparently involve Arsala Rahmani, a former Taliban official now in parliament, and the former Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, who purportedly is in touch with Umar’s inner circle. The Taliban and other militants are still demanding that (1) all foreign troops leave Afghanistan; (2) a new “Islamic” constitution be adopted; and (3) Islamic law is imposed. However, recent press reports say that talks center on lower level confidence building measures, such as removal of the names of Taliban figures from U.N. lists of terrorists, lists established pursuant to Resolution 1390 (January 2002). Other reports say that the Haqqani faction, reportedly politically close to Al Qaeda, may also be in negotiations with the Karzai government.²⁷

The Obama Administration strategy has backed negotiations to bring mid and lower level Taliban leaders and their foot soldiers off the battlefield. Even though the recent negotiations involve harder core Taliban figures, U.S. officials have not sought to obstruct these talks, even though President Obama ruled out compromise with Umar in the strategy announcement.

Training Tribal Militias/Afghan Public Protection Force

Since June 2006, Karzai and international force donors have been considering arming some local tribal militias in eastern Afghanistan, building on established tribal structures, to help in local policing. Until mid-2008, U.S. military commanders opposed assisting local militias anywhere in Afghanistan for fear of creating new rivals to the central government, but the urgent security needs in Afghanistan caused re-consideration.

²⁶ Filkins, Dexter. Push For Talks in Afghan Fight. New York Times, May 21, 2009.

²⁷ Gopal, Anand. “Key Afghan Insurgents Open Door to Talks.” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 19, 2009.

In late 2008, the Bush Administration and Karzai government reached tentative agreement to try the concept. The militia formation is being conducted as part of the IDLG's Social Outreach Program, which was discussed above, and is intended to strengthen the ability of local communities to keep Taliban infiltrators out. It is being termed the "Afghan Public Protection Force" (APPF) and is funded with DoD (CERP) funds. The program began in Wardak Province in early 2009 and might be expanded to Ghazni, Lowgar, and Kapisa provinces. Participants in the program are given a reported \$200 per month. U.S. commanders say that no U.S. weapons are supplied to the militias, but this is an Afghan-led program and some reports say the Afghan government might provide weapons (reportedly Kalashnikov rifles) to the local groups, possibly using U.S. funds.

The Obama Administration review did not repudiate the approach or discontinue it, but did not emphasize or praise it, either. Some elders in Wardak oppose the program, partly due to Taliban intimidation, and have been slow to recommend recruits for it. Ambassador Holbrooke has indicated that the results of the pilot program in Wardak are not yet clear. Karzai has expressed opposition to relying on "tribal militias," although he appears to have acquiesced to the program. U.S. commanders and Afghan officials say they will be able to keep the militias "under control," because they are under the control of the Interior Ministry. As such, they are not *arbokai*, which are private tribal militias. Some Afghan and U.S. officials fear that the militias could become an additional source of arbitrary administration of justice and of corruption against local populations, and question the apparent deviation from the post-September 11 commitment to building the central government as the only legitimate source of Afghan armed force. As an indication of divisions among Afghan leaders about the concept, the upper house of the Afghan parliament (Meshrano Jirga) passed a resolution in November 2008 opposing the concept.

Adopting the Dutch Approach in Uruzgan

The Obama Administration strategy appears to, in many ways adopt techniques and policies such as those used in Uruzgan Province, where the Netherlands is the lead force. The January 2009 DoD report on Afghanistan stability (mandated by P.L. 110-181) notes the substantial success of the Dutch approach in Uruzgan, discussed below.

Dutch troops and officials have used an approach that focuses not on combat but on development work and engagement with local leaders to understand their development needs.²⁸ In this approach, decisions are made jointly—or at least with extensive consultations—by the commander of the military contingent and the Dutch civilian leader for the province, usually a relatively senior Foreign Ministry diplomat. On March 29, 2009, the Netherlands converted its Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT, see below) in Tarin Kowt to civilian leadership rather than military leadership. Dutch officials say their projects in Uruzgan encourage the follow-on expansion of governance, and clearly place Afghans in the lead in implementing projects, rather than on delivering projects implemented by foreign donors. The Netherlands has not added troops to the 1,700+ contingent that took over the peacekeeping in the province in mid-2006.

Others say the approach is not unique because the Netherlands relies on an Australian contingent to conduct protective combat. Some say the approach cannot be widely applied because Uruzgan geography is not as hostile as in other provinces, and because the Taliban insurgency is not as strong there. The province does not border Pakistan, an entry point for insurgents.

²⁸ Chivers, C.J. "Dutch Soldiers Stress Restraint in Afghanistan." *New York Times*, April 6, 2007.

Limiting Civilian Casualties/U.S. Military Presence/SOFA

U.S. officials are also attempting to adjust military operations in order to limit civilian casualties. This issue has gained urgency since 2008 as the Taliban have benefitted politically from the backlash caused by Afghan civilian casualties inflicted by U.S. or NATO airstrikes. One such disputed incident occurred near Herat on August 22, 2008, that UNAMA said killed 90 civilians but U.S. investigators say killed only 30 non-combatants. Another incident occurred in early November 2008 in which an alleged 37 Afghan civilians at a wedding party were killed. The latest incident, on May 4, 2009, occurred in a battle in Farah province. Afghan officials say 140 civilians were killed but the U.S. says far fewer were killed by U.S. strikes and combat. In public statements, Karzai has been increasingly critical of these casualties, and the new Ambassador, Karl Eikenberry, went with Karzai to Farah to apologize and pledge compensation.

After the Herat incident, the Afghan cabinet demanded negotiation of a formal “Status of Forces Agreement” (SOFA) that would spell out the combat authorities of non-Afghan forces, and would limit the U.S. of airstrikes, detentions, and house raids.²⁹ In late November 2008, at a multi-lateral conference, Karzai called for a timetable for a withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan, perhaps borrowing from similar nationalistic calls by the government of Iraq in its negotiations with the United States. He has since demanded a larger Afghan role in U.S. operations, and particularly whether or not to use air strikes in selected cases. A purported draft “SOFA”—or “technical agreement” clarifying U.S./coalition authorities in Afghanistan—is reportedly under discussion between the United States and Afghanistan.

U.S. forces currently operate in Afghanistan under a “diplomatic note” between the United States and the interim government of Afghanistan in November 2002; the agreement gives the United States legal jurisdiction over U.S. personnel serving in Afghanistan and stated the Afghan government’s acknowledgment that U.S.-led military operations were “ongoing.”

Even if the Taliban insurgency ends, Afghan leaders say they want the United States to maintain a long-term presence in Afghanistan. On May 8, 2005, Karzai summoned about 1,000 delegates to a consultative *jirga* in Kabul on whether to host permanent U.S. bases. They supported an indefinite presence of international forces to maintain security but urged Karzai to delay a decision. On May 23, 2005, Karzai and President Bush issued a “joint declaration”³⁰ providing for U.S. forces to have access to Afghan military facilities, in order to prosecute “the war against international terror and the struggle against violent extremism.” The joint statement did not give Karzai enhanced control over facilities used by U.S. forces, over U.S. operations, or over prisoners taken during operations. Some of the bases, both in and near Afghanistan, that support combat in Afghanistan, include those in

Table 2.

²⁹ Gall, Carlotta. Two Afghans Lose Posts Over Attack. *New York Times*, August 25, 2008.

³⁰ See <http://www.mfa.gov.af/Documents/ImportantDoc/US-Afghanistan%20Strategic%20Partnership%20Declaration.pdf>.

Table 2. Afghan and Regional Facilities Used for Operations in and Supply Lines to Afghanistan

Facility	Use
Bagram Air Base	50 miles north of Kabul, the operational hub of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and base for CJTF-101 and Gen. Schloesser. At least 500 U.S. military personnel are based there. Handles many of the 150 U.S. aircraft (including helicopters) in country. Hospital constructed, one of the first permanent structures there. FY2005 supplemental (P.L. 109-13) provided about \$52 million for various projects to upgrade facilities at Bagram, including a control tower and an operations center, and the FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provided \$20 million for military construction there. NATO also using the base and sharing operational costs.
Qandahar Air Field	Just outside Qandahar, the hub of military operations in the south. Turned over from U.S. to NATO/ISAF control in late 2006 in conjunction with NATO assumption of peacekeeping responsibilities. Being enhanced (along with other facilities in the south) at cost of \$1.3 billion in expectation of influx of U.S. combat forces in the south.
Shindand Air Base	In Farah province, about 20 miles from Iran border. Used by U.S. forces and combat aircraft since October 2004, after the dismissal of Herat governor Ismail Khan, whose militia forces controlled the facility.
Peter Ganci Base: Manas, Kyrgyzstan	Used by 1,200 U.S. military personnel as well as refueling and cargo aircraft for shipments into Afghanistan. Leadership of Kyrgyzstan changed in April 2005 in an uprising against President Askar Akayev, but senior U.S. officials reportedly received assurances about continued U.S. use of the base from his successor, Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Bakiyev demanded a large increase in the \$2 million per year U.S. contribution for use of the base; dispute eased in July 2006 with U.S. agreement to give Kyrgyzstan \$150 million in assistance and base use payments. Dispute flared again in February 2009 with Kyrgyz order that the base close. Kyrgyz parliament backed the expulsion in late February, giving U.S. six months to vacate. U.S. officials say the issue remains under active negotiation, suggesting increased aid payments to Kyrgyzstan might reverse the decision.
Incirlik Air Base, Turkey	About 2,100 U.S. military personnel there; U.S. aircraft supply U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. use repeatedly extended for one year intervals by Turkey.
Al Dhafra, UAE	Air base used by about 1,800 U.S. military personnel, to supply U.S. forces and related transport into Iraq and Afghanistan. Could see increasing use if Manas closes.
Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar	Largest air facility used by U.S. in region. About 5,000 U.S. personnel in Qatar. Houses central air operations coordination center for U.S. missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; also houses CENTCOM forward headquarters. Could see increased use if Manas closes.
Naval Support Facility, Bahrain	U.S. naval command headquarters for OEF anti-smuggling, anti-terrorism, and anti-proliferation naval search missions, and Iraq-related naval operations (oil platform protection) in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. About 5,100 U.S. military personnel there.
Karsi-Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan	Not used by U.S. since September 2005 following U.S.-Uzbek dispute over May 2005 Uzbek crackdown on unrest in Andijon. Once housed about 1,750 U.S. military personnel (900 Air Force, 400 Army, and 450 civilian) in supply missions to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan allowed German use of the base temporarily in March 2008, indicating possible healing of the rift. Could also represent Uzbek counter to Russian offer to U.S. coalition to allow use of its territory to transport equipment into Afghanistan. U.S. purportedly exploring new overtures to Uzbekistan that could lead to re-opening to U.S. use of the base. Some shipments beginning in February 2009 through Navoi airfield in central Uzbekistan, and U.S. signed agreement with Uzbekistan on April 4, 2009 allowing nonlethal supplies for the Afghanistan war. Goods are shipped to Latvia and Georgia, some transits Russia by rail, then to Uzbekistan.
Tajikistan Air Bases, other facilities	Some use by coalition partners, including France, and emergency use by U.S. India also using bases in Tajikistan. New supply lines to Afghanistan established in February 2009 might use Tajikistan.

The NATO-Led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)³¹

The strategy announced in March 2009 envisions continued cooperation with partner forces and countries and notes that future contributions might take the form of finances and civilian mentors and advisers, rather than only troops. U.S. cooperation with other donor countries is a major issue, in part because the effectiveness of the NATO alliance in general has come under question as the Afghanistan stabilization effort has not produced quick results. Most U.S. troops in Afghanistan remain under the umbrella of the NATO-led “International Security Assistance Force” (ISAF)—consisting of all 26 NATO members states plus partner countries.

Background of ISAF

ISAF was created by the Bonn Agreement and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001, a Chapter 7 resolution),³² initially limited to Kabul. In October 2003, after Germany agreed to contribute 450 military personnel to expand ISAF into the city of Konduz, ISAF contributors endorsed expanding its presence to several other cities, contingent on formal U.N. approval—which came on October 14, 2003 in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1510. In August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF—previously the ISAF command rotated among donor forces including Turkey and Britain.

NATO/ISAF’s responsibilities broadened significantly in 2004 with NATO/ISAF’s assumption of security responsibility for northern and western Afghanistan (Stage 1, Regional Command North, in 2004 and Stage 2, Regional Command West, in 2005, respectively). The transition process continued on July 31, 2006, with the formal handover of the security mission in southern Afghanistan to NATO/ISAF control. As part of this “Stage 3,” a British/Canadian/Dutch-led “Regional Command South” (RC-S) was formed. Britain is the lead force in Helmand; Canada is lead in Qandahar, and the Netherlands is lead in Uruzgan; the three now rotate the command of RC-S. “Stage 4,” the assumption of NATO/ISAF command of peacekeeping in fourteen provinces of eastern Afghanistan (and thus all of Afghanistan), was completed on October 5, 2006. As part of the completion of the NATO/ISAF takeover, the United States put about half the U.S. troops operating in Afghanistan under NATO/ISAF in “Regional Command East” (RC-E).

Some accounts say the United States might assume overall command of RC-S in November 2010, after rotations by the Netherlands (2008-2009) and Britain (2009-2010). As of the fall of 2008, a one-star U.S. general, John Nicholson, is deputy commander of RC-S, giving the United States added weight at that headquarters, to which most of the new U.S. forces are flowing.

The ISAF mission was most recently renewed (until October 13, 2009) by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1833 (September 22, 2008). It reiterated the previous year’s renewal resolution (1776) support for the Operation Enduring Freedom mission. Tables at the end of this report list contributing forces, areas of operations, and their Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

³¹ Twelve other countries provide forces to both OEF and ISAF.

³² Its mandate was extended until October 13, 2006, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1623 (September 13, 2005); and until October 13, 2007, by Resolution 1707 (September 12, 2006).

NATO Force Pledges in 2008 and 2009

There have been additional non-U.S. NATO and other troops sent to Afghanistan in 2008 and 2009, although most donor nations are suffering from waning public support for the Afghanistan mission. NATO and other partner forces that are bearing the brunt of combat in southern Afghanistan are Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Romania, and Australia. The need to line up new pledges became acute in February 2008, when Canada said it would extend its 2,500 troop deployment until 2009, but not beyond that, unless other partners contribute 1,000 forces to assist with combat in the Canadian sector (Qandahar province). Canada says its mission in Afghanistan will end in 2011, as does the Netherlands.

At and in conjunction with the NATO summit in Bucharest in early April 2008, twelve countries pledged additional forces. Among the major new contributions in 2008 was the French deployment of about 1,000 additional forces to Kapisa province to block Taliban movements toward northern Kabul. President Sarkozy won a parliamentary vote of support for the mission, in late September 2008, following the killing of ten French soldiers in August 2008. Britain increased its troop commitment in Afghanistan—mainly in high combat Helmand Province—to about 8,700 in early 2009. Germany repeatedly turned U.S. requests to send forces to the combat-heavy south, but in 2008 it increased its authorized troop ceiling for Afghanistan to 4,500, from 3,500, still in the northern sector. Despite opposition in Germany to the entire Afghanistan mission, Germany's parliament voted by a 453-79 vote margin on October 12, 2007, to maintain German troop levels in Afghanistan.

2009 Contributions

The Obama Administration strategy review was intended to help build support for new pledges of combat forces, Afghan force trainers, trainers and mentors for Afghan government bureaucrats, and other financial assistance to Afghanistan. Some of those pledges came through at the April 3 - 4, 2009, NATO summit, and since, although some say new troop pledges are less than expected:

- deployment of 3,000 non-U.S. troops to secure the Afghan elections and 2,000 trainers for the Afghan security forces. Contributing forces for the election period include: Spain (400), Germany (600), Poland (600), and Britain (about 900). For the training missions, a new NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan (NTM-A) is to be set up. France has offered to lead a 300 person European Gendarmerie Force that will help train Afghan forces out in the provinces rather than rely on bringing them to Kabul. Other military trainers—to fill out 70 Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs)—will come from Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy (200), Greece, Portugal, Turkey, and Slovakia, with Belgium to also send two more F-16 fighters. Italy will also send 100 paramilitary trainers for the NTM-A mission, medical helicopters, and military transport planes.
- \$100 million in contributions to an Afghan National Security Forces trust fund were pledged, to help finance expansion of the ANSF. Of this, \$57 million was pledged by Germany. Japan, as noted, separately pledged to pay the expenses of the Afghan police for six months.
- \$500 million in additional civilian assistance to Afghanistan was pledged at the meeting.

- In subsequent meetings, South Korea announced it would increase its aid contribution to Afghanistan by about \$20 million, in part to expand the hospital capabilities at Bagram Air Base. It reportedly is also discussing with the United States returning some combat engineers to Afghanistan for development missions.

Some of the pledges address NATO's chronic equipment shortages—particularly helicopters, both for transport and attack—for the Afghanistan mission. In 2007, to try to compensate for the shortage, NATO chartered about 20 commercial helicopters for extra routine supply flights to the south, freeing up Chinooks and Black Hawks for other missions. Some of the Polish troops deployed in 2008 are operating and maintain eight helicopters. The shortages persist even though several partner nations brought in additional equipment in 2006 in conjunction with the NATO assumption of peacekeeping command. Germany notes that it provides six Tornado combat aircraft to assist with strikes in combat situations in the south. NATO/ISAF also assists the Afghan Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism in the operation of Kabul International Airport (where Dutch combat aircraft also are located). In October 2008, Hungary added 60 troops to take over security at the airport.

National "Caveats" on Combat Operations

In an effort to repair divisions within the Afghanistan coalition over each country's respective domestic considerations, Secretary Gates presented, at a NATO meeting in Scotland on December 13, 2007, a "strategic concept paper" that would help coordinate and guide NATO and other partner contributions and missions over the coming three to five years. This was an effort to structure each country's contribution as appropriate to the politics and resources of that contributor. The concept paper, now titled the "Strategic Vision," was endorsed by the NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania in April 2008.

One of the most thorny issues has been the U.S. effort to persuade other NATO countries to adopt flexible rules of engagement that allow all contributing forces to perform combat missions, although perhaps not as aggressively as do U.S. forces. All have agreed that their forces would come to each others' defense in times of emergency anywhere in Afghanistan. At the NATO summit in April 2008, NATO countries pledged to continue to work remove the other so-called "national caveats" on their troops' operations that U.S. commanders say limit operational flexibility. For example, some nations refuse to conduct night-time combat. Others have refused to carry Afghan personnel on their helicopters. Others do not fight after snowfall. These caveats were troubling to those NATO countries with forces in heavy combat zones, such as Canada, which feel they are bearing the brunt of the fighting. (See CRS Report RL33627, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, by Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin.)

Provincial Reconstruction Teams

U.S. and partner officials have generally praised the effectiveness of "provincial reconstruction teams" (PRTs) — enclaves of U.S. or partner forces and civilian officials that provide safe havens for international aid workers to help with reconstruction and to extend the writ of the Kabul government—in accelerating reconstruction and assisting stabilization efforts. The PRTs, announced in December 2002, perform activities ranging from resolving local disputes to coordinating local reconstruction projects, although most U.S.-run PRTs and most PRTs in combat-heavy areas focus mostly on counter-insurgency. (U.S. PRTs in restive regions are "co-

located” with “forward operating bases” of 300-400 U.S. combat troops.) Some aid agencies say they have felt more secure since the PRT program began, fostering reconstruction,³³ and many of the new civilian advisers to be sent to Afghanistan under the new Obama Administration strategy will work out of the PRTs.

On the other hand, some relief groups do not want to associate with military forces because doing so might taint their perceived neutrality. Others, such as Oxfam International, argue that the PRTs are delaying the time when the Afghan government has the skills and resources to secure and develop Afghanistan on its own.

There are 26 PRTs in operation. Virtually all the PRTs, including those run by the United States, are now under the ISAF mission, but with varying lead nations. The list of PRTs, including lead country, is shown in a table at the end of this paper. Each PRT operated by the United States is composed of U.S. forces (50-100 U.S. military personnel); Defense Department civil affairs officers; representatives of USAID, State Department, and other agencies; and Afghan government (Interior Ministry) personnel. Most PRTs, including those run by partner forces, have personnel to train Afghan security forces. USAID officers assigned to the PRTs administer PRT reconstruction projects. USAID spending on PRT projects is in the table on USAID spending in Afghanistan at the end of this paper, and there is a database on development projects completed by each PRT available to CRS.

In the south, most PRTs are heavily focused on security. In August 2005, in preparation for the establishment of RC-S, Canada took over the key U.S.-led PRT in Qandahar. In May 2006, Britain took over the PRT at Lashkar Gah, capital of Helmand Province. The Netherlands took over the PRT at Tarin Kowt, capital of Uruzgan Province. Poland reportedly is considering taking over the U.S. PRT in Ghazni.

Representing evolution of the PRT concept, Turkey opened a PRT, in Wardak Province, on November 25, 2006, to focus on providing health care, education, police training, and agricultural alternatives in that region. There also has been consideration to turn over the lead in the U.S.-run PRTs to civilians rather than military personnel, presumably State Department or USAID officials. That was first attempted in 2006 with the establishment of a civilian-led U.S.-run PRT in the Panjshir Valley. As noted, in March 2009, the Netherlands converted its PRT to civilian lead.

Afghan National Security Forces

Capable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP)—are the means by which the United States and NATO might wind eventually down their involvement in Afghanistan. The Obama Administration strategy review emphasizes expanding the ANSF and helping it “take the lead” in securing Afghanistan, rather than placing it in a “back seat” to U.S.-led combat—a clear contrast with the 2007 “troop surge” in Iraq. U.S. forces (“Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan,” CSTC-A), headed as of November 2008 by Maj. Gen. Richard Formica, along with partner countries and contractors, are training the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). CSTC-A is under the authority of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

³³ Kraul, Chris. “U.S. Aid Effort Wins Over Skeptics in Afghanistan.” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2003.

The Administration strategy plans to expand the ANA to 134,000 by 2011—essentially a continuation of the Bush Administration expansion plan outlined in September 2008. However, reaching that goal has depended on the availability of additional trainers, and this requirement was met by the Obama Administration strategy announcement of the 4,000 additional U.S. trainers. The funds for the expansion—about \$12 billion in that time frame—are expected to come mainly from the United States, possibly defrayed by partner contributions by Japan, Germany (see above), South Korea, or other donors.

The Obama Administration strategy review on Afghanistan did not specifically propose expanding the ANA to about 250,000, which is what Afghan officials and some U.S. military leaders believe will be ultimately needed. However, the expansion to 134,000 is stated to be an interim step, thereby permitting a later decision for further expansion. The Obama Administration review proposed an initial expansion of the ANP to about 82,000, not much above its current level. A decision to expand the ANP to about 150,000 is put off until later.

Afghan National Army

The Afghan National Army has been built “from scratch” since 2002—it is not a direct continuation of the national army that existed from the 1880s until the Taliban era. That national army all but disintegrated during the 1992-1996 *mujahedin* civil war and the 1996-2001 Taliban period. However, some Afghan military officers who served prior to the Taliban did re-join the new military after the fall of the Taliban.

U.S. and allied officers say that the ANA, now about 86,000 trained and assigned (with the total to exceed 90,000 by June 2009) is becoming a major force in stabilizing the country and a national symbol. It now has at least some presence in most of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, working with the PRTs, and it deployed outside Afghanistan to assist relief efforts for victims of the October 2005 Pakistan earthquake. According to the Department of Defense, the ANA has taken the lead in 30 significant combat and clearing operations to date, and has demonstrated “increasing competence, effectiveness, and professionalism.”

Then NATO/ISAF commander General McNeill said in April 2008 that it would not be until 2011 that ANA (and ANP) forces would be capable enough to allow for a drawdown of coalition forces. This assessment was corroborated by a June 2008 DoD report on the ANSF.³⁴ However, recent DoD reports (January 2009) say that 52,000 ANA soldiers are engaged in or leading operations alongside ISAF. The ANA is now leading 75% of the combat operations in the eastern sector, and about 51% of operations overall; it participates in about 90% of all combat operations. The Obama Administration strategy review says that ANA units will be partnered with foreign donor units to enhance effectiveness.

Among specific examples of the ANA taking leadership, in August 2008, the ANA took over security of Kabul city from Italy, and it took formal control of Kabul Province in early 2009. The commando forces of the ANA, trained by U.S. Special Operations Forces, are considered well-trained and are taking the lead in some operations against high value targets, particularly against HIG elements in Nuristan province. The United States has built five ANA bases: Herat (Corps 207); Gardez (Corps 203); Qandahar (Corps 205); Mazar-e-Sharif (Corps 209); and Kabul (Division HQ, Corps 201, Air Corps).

³⁴ Required by FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 1231. (P.L. 110-181).

Other reports cite U.S. officers as observing continuing personnel problems (desertion, absentee), including ill discipline, although some concerns are being addressed. Some accounts say that a typical ANA unit is only at about 50% of its authorized strength at any given time. The GAO study said that there are significant shortages in about 40% of equipment items, although CSTC-A envisions that all ANA brigades are equipped to 85% of requirements as of the end of 2008.

ANA battalions, or “Kandaks,” are the main unit of the Afghan force. There are 106 Kandaks at this time. The Kandaks are stiffened by the presence of U.S. and partner embeds, called “Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams” (OMLTs). Each OMLT has about 12-19 personnel, and U.S. commanders say that the ANA will continue to need embeds for the short term, because embeds give the units confidence they will be resupplied, reinforced, and evacuated in the event of wounding. Coalition officers also are conducting heavy weapons training for a heavy brigade as part of the “Kabul Corps,” based in Pol-e-Charki, east of Kabul. Among the partner countries contributing OMLTs (all or in part) are Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Britain, and the United States, and additional OMLT contributions were discussed above.

Ethnic and Factional Considerations

At the time the United States first began establishing the ANA, Northern Alliance figures reportedly weighted recruitment for the national army toward its Tajik ethnic base. Many Pashtuns, in reaction, refused recruitment or left the ANA program. U.S. officials in Afghanistan say this problem has been at least partly alleviated with better pay and more close involvement by U.S. forces, and that the force is ethnically integrated in each unit. The naming of a Pashtun, Abdul Rahim Wardak, as Defense Minister in December 2004 also reduced desertions among Pashtuns (he remains in that position). The chief of staff is Gen. Bismillah Khan, a Tajik who was a Northern Alliance commander. U.S. officers in Afghanistan add that some recruits take long trips to their home towns to remit funds to their families, and often then return to the ANA after a long absence. Others, according to U.S. observers, often refuse to serve far from their home towns. The FY2005 foreign aid appropriation (P.L. 108-447) required that ANA recruits be vetted for terrorism, human rights violations, and drug trafficking.

Afghan Air Force

Equipment, maintenance, and logistical difficulties continue to plague the Afghan Air Force, now called the ANA Air Corps. The force is a carryover from the Afghan Air Force that existed prior to the Soviet invasion, and is expanding gradually after its equipment was virtually eliminated in the 2001-2002 U.S. combat against the Taliban regime. It now has about 400 pilots, as well as 22 helicopters and cargo aircraft. Its goal is to have 61 aircraft by 2011, but Defense Minister Wardak said in September 2008 that it will remain mostly a support force for ground operations rather than a combat-oriented Air Force. Gen. McKiernan, in statements in November 2008, credited the Afghan Air Force with an ability to make ANA units nearly self-sufficient in airlift.

In May 2008, the Afghan Air Force received an additional 25 surplus helicopters from the Czech Republic and the UAE, bought and refurbished with the help of U.S. funds. Afghan pilots are based at Bagram air base. Afghanistan is seeking the return of 26 aircraft, including some MiG-2s that were flown to safety in Pakistan and Uzbekistan during the past conflicts in Afghanistan. U.S. plans do not include supply of fixed-wing combat aircraft such as F-16s, which Afghanistan wants, according to U.S. military officials.

Afghan National Police (ANP)

U.S. and Afghan officials believe that building up a credible and capable national police force is at least as important to combating the Taliban insurgency as building the ANA. There is a widespread consensus that the ANP lags the ANA in its development by about 18 months, although U.S. commanders say that it is increasingly successful in repelling Taliban assaults on villages and that it is experiencing fewer casualties from attacks.

The major criticism of the ANP is widespread corruption, to the point where many Afghans are more afraid of the police than they are of the Taliban. To try to advance reform, the U.S. military is conducting reforms to take ANP out of the bureaucracy and onto the streets and it is trying to bring ANP pay on par with the ANA. It has been conducting a re-training program called “*focused district development*” to concentrate resources on developing individual police forces in districts, which is the basic geographic area of ANP activity. (There are about ten “districts” in each of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces.) In this program, a district force is taken out and retrained, its duties temporarily performed by more highly trained police, and then reinserted after the training is complete. As of April 2009, more than 3,000 ANP officers have undergone this process, which is expected to take five years to complete for the remainder of the country. A similar process is being applied to Afghanistan’s border forces.

There have been few quick fixes for the chronic shortage of equipment in the ANP. Most police are under-equipped, lacking ammunition and vehicles. In some cases, equipment requisitioned by their commanders is being sold and the funds pocketed. These activities, as well as absenteeism, led to the failure of a 2006 “auxiliary police” effort that attempted to rapidly field large numbers of new ANP officers.

The U.S. police training effort was first led by State Department/INL, but the Defense Department took over the lead in police training in April 2005. Much of the training is still conducted through contracts with DynCorp. In addition to the U.S. effort, which includes 600 civilian U.S. police trainers (mostly still Dyncorp contractors) in addition to the U.S. military personnel (see table on security indicators), Germany (originally the lead government in Afghan police training) is providing 41 trainers. The European Union has taken over from Germany as lead and is providing a 190-member “EUPOL” training effort, and 60 other experts to help train the ANP. New training institutions, such as NTM-A and the European Gendarmerie, were discussed above.

Criminal Justice Sector

Many experts believe that comprehensive justice sector reform is vital to Afghan governance. Some of the criticisms and allegations of corruption at all levels of the Afghan bureaucracy have been discussed throughout this paper. Police training now includes instruction in human rights principles and democratic policing concepts, and the State Department human rights report on Afghanistan, referenced above, says the government and outside observers are increasingly monitoring the police force to prevent abuses. However, some governments criticized Karzai for setting back police reform in June 2006 when he approved a new list of senior police commanders that included 11 (out of 86 total) who had failed merit exams. His approval of the 11 were reportedly to satisfy faction leaders and went against the recommendations of a police reform committee. The ANP work in the communities they come from, often embroiling them in local factional or ethnic disputes.

The State Department (INL) has placed 30 U.S. advisors in the Interior Ministry to help it develop the national police force and counter-narcotics capabilities. U.S. trainers are also building Border Police and Highway Patrol forces.

U.S. justice sector programs generally focus on building capacity of the judicial system, including police training and court construction; many of these programs are conducted in partnership with Italy, which is technically the “lead” coalition country on judicial reform. The United States has trained over 750 judges, lawyers, and prosecutors and built at least 40 judicial facilities. USAID also trains court administrators for the Ministry of Justice, the office of the Attorney General, and the Supreme Court.

The United States and its partners have, to date, generally refrained from interfering in traditional mechanisms such as village *jirgas* or *shuras* convened to dispense justice. Doing so would likely raise questions among Afghans that the United States is trying to influence traditional Afghan culture and impose Western values on Afghanistan. The traditional mechanisms are still more widely used in Afghan villages, particularly in Pashtun areas, than are the secular judicial mechanisms, in part because of the ease of access of these mechanisms.

U.S. Security Forces Funding/“CERP”

About half of all U.S. assistance to Afghanistan since 2002 has gone toward building the ANSF. U.S. funds are used to cover ANA salaries as well as to equip and train them. Recent appropriations for the ANA and ANP are contained in the tables at the end of this paper. In addition to the train and equip funds provided by DOD, the U.S. military in Afghanistan has additional funds to spend on reconstruction projects that build goodwill and presumably reduce the threat to use forces. These are Commanders Emergency Response Program funds, or CERP. Figures for CERP funds are in the aid tables at the end of this paper. U.S. funds are supplemented by funds from U.S. partners, although exact numbers are not available. As noted in the table, as of FY2005, the security forces funding has been DOD funds, not State Department funds.

Table 3. Major Security-Related Indicators

Force	Current Level
Total Foreign Forces in Afghanistan	About 70,000, of which: 58,4000 are NATO/ISAF. (12,000 ISAF in 2005; and 6,000 in 2003.) U.S. forces: 40,000 total, of which 26,000 in NATO/ISAF and 13,000 U.S. (plus 2,000 partner forces) in OEF (DoD figures) . (U.S. total was: 25,000 in 2005; 16,000 in 2003; 5,000 in 2002). U.S. expected to rise to about 65,000 by August 2009. U.S. forces deployed at 88 bases in Afghanistan, and include 1 air wing (40 aircraft) and 1 combat aviation brigade (100 aircraft).
U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan	614 killed, of which 453 by hostile action. Additional 67 U.S. deaths in other OEF theaters, including the Philippines and parts of Africa (OEF-Trans Sahara). About 500 partner forces killed. 155 U.S. killed in 2008-highest yet. 30 killed Jan and Feb. 2009. 150 U.S. killed from October 2001-January 2003. About 20/month killed since July 2008.
NATO Sectors (Regional Commands-South, east, north, west, and central/Kabul)	RC-S- 22,800 (Canada, UK, Netherlands rotate lead; 9,000 in Helmand); RC-E-22,600 (U.S. lead); RC-N-4,740; RC-W-2,940 (Italy lead) RC-Kabul-5,740 (France, Afghan lead).
Afghan National Army (ANA)	86,000 assigned, including civilian support. There are 106 battalions. 90,000+ is expected by June 2009. Goal is 134,000 by as early as 2011 and may be raised to over 260,000. About 2,000 trained per month. 4,000 are commando forces, trained by U.S. Special Forces. ANA private paid about \$150 per month; generals receive about \$750 per month. ANA being outfitted with U.S. M16 rifles and 4,000 up-armored Humvees.
Afghan National Police (ANP)	80,000 assigned, close to authorized strength: 82,000. May be raised to 150,000 eventually, but strategy review did not outline specific expansion figure. 11,000 are border police/18,000 authorized; 3,800+ counter-narcotics police; 5,300 civil order police. 700 are female. Salaries raised to \$150 per month in 2008 from \$70 to counter corruption.
U.S. and Partner Trainers	About 7,000 total: 2,200 U.S. military trainers as Embedded Training Troops and Police Mentoring Teams, but 4,000 being added. 3,000 civilian trainers. 800 coalition trainers, including EUPOL for ANP (European Union contingent of 190 trainers, organized as OMLTs), and 41 German trainers of senior ANP. U.S. sending 4,000 more U.S. trainers, and partners sending several hundred more, including establishing NATO Training Mission- Afghanistan.
Legally Armed Fighters disarmed by DDR	63,380; all of the pool identified for the program
Number of Taliban fighters	10,000-15,000 (U.S. military and Afghan estimates). Plus about 1,000 Haqqani faction and 1,000 HIG. 7,000 killed 2007-8.
Armed Groups disbanded by DIAG	161 illegal groups (five or more fighters) disbanded. Goal is to disband 1,800 groups, of which several hundred groups are "significant." 5,700 weapons confiscated, 1,050 arrested. About 5,000 Taliban reconciled since May 2005.
Weapons Collected by DDR	57,630 medium and light; 12,250 heavy.
Attacks per day (average)	1,100 per month in 2009; 1,000 per month in 2008; 800 per month in 2007 and 2006; 400 in 2005. 2,000 roadside bombs in 2008, highest yet.
Number of Suicide Bombings	21 in 2005; 123 in 2006; 160 in 2007; 200+ in 2008; 35 to date in 2009.
Afghan Casualties	2,100 Afghan civilians killed in 2008; 1,523 killed in 2007. 6,340 Afghans killed in 2008 incl. Taliban; 6,500 killed in 2007.

Source: CRS.

Regional Context

Most of Afghanistan's neighbors believed that the fall of the Taliban would stabilize the region, but the region remains unstable as like-minded militants now threaten the government of Pakistan. Six of Afghanistan's neighbors signed a non-interference pledge (Kabul Declaration) on December 23, 2002. In November 2005, Afghanistan joined the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and Afghanistan has observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which is discussed below. (Karzai attended the SCO summit in Tajikistan on August 30, 2008.)

Pakistan/Pakistan-Afghanistan Border³⁵

The Obama Administration strategy review emphasized the linkage between militants present in Pakistan and the difficulty stabilizing Afghanistan, and the review outlined several new initiatives to strengthen and enhance Pakistan's ability to defeat militants on its territory. The review indicates that new U.S. aid will be provided to Pakistan, but that this aid will be contingent on Pakistan's performance on "benchmarks" to be developed to measure its cooperation. However, Ambassador Holbrooke and others have said that the security deterioration in western Pakistan in April 2009 has, to some extent, overtaken the Obama Administration Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy and that Pakistan's stability is now a major issue in and of itself.

The current U.S. view contrasts with that during 2001-2006, when the Bush Administration praised then President Pervez Musharraf for Pakistani accomplishments against Al Qaeda, including the arrest of over 700 Al Qaeda figures since the September 11 attacks.³⁶ After the attacks, Pakistan provided the United States with access to Pakistani airspace, some ports, and some airfields for OEF. Others say Musharraf acted against Al Qaeda only when it threatened him directly; for example, after the December 2003 assassination attempts against him. Musharraf resigned in August 2008, and the civilian government is led by the party of the late Pakistani secular leader Benazir Bhutto. The President is her widower, Asif Ali Zardari.

Pakistan's policy in Afghanistan is heavily colored by fears of historic rival, India. Pakistan viewed the Taliban regime as providing Pakistan strategic depth against rival India, and Pakistan apparently remains wary that the current Afghan government may come under the sway of India. Numerous militant groups, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyba (Army of the Righteous) were formed in Pakistan to challenge India's control of part of the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir. Some observers believe Pakistan wants to retain the ability to stoke these militants against India, even though some of these militants are connected to and maybe assisting Islamist groups that are now challenging the stability of Pakistan.

Pakistan says India is using its Embassy and four consulates in Afghanistan to train and recruit anti-Pakistan insurgents, and is using its reconstruction funds to build influence there. Afghan officials have said they have evidence that, to counter that influence, ISI agents were involved in

³⁵ For extensive analysis of U.S. policy toward Pakistan, and U.S. assistance to Pakistan in conjunction with its activities against Al Qaeda and the Taliban, see CRS Report RL33498, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*, by K. Alan Kronstadt.

³⁶ Among those captured by Pakistan are top bin Laden aide Abu Zubaydah (captured April 2002); alleged September 11 plotter Ramzi bin Al Shibh (September 11, 2002); top Al Qaeda planner Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (March 2003); and a top planner, Abu Faraj al-Libbi (May 2005).

the July 7, 2008, suicide bombing of India's embassy in Kabul. In connection with that act, U.S. officials, in July 2008, confronted Pakistani officials with evidence that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) is actively helping Afghanistan militants, particularly the Haqqani faction.³⁷

Some Afghan leaders still resent Pakistan as the most public defender of the Taliban movement when it was in power and they suspect it wants to have the option to restore a Taliban-like regime. (Pakistan was one of only three countries to formally recognize it as the legitimate government: Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the others.) Pakistan ended its public support for the Taliban after the September 11, 2001, attacks, but Pakistan-Afghanistan relations began deteriorating after the March 2006 Afghan accusation that Pakistan was allowing Taliban remnants, including Mullah Umar, to operate there.

Pakistan's unwillingness to confront militants on its soil led the Bush Administration, in 2007, to criticize Pakistan even during Musharraf's rule. That shift accelerated following a *New York Times* report (February 19, 2007) that Al Qaeda had re-established some small Al Qaeda terrorist training camps in Pakistan, near the Afghan border. This possibly was an outgrowth of a September 5, 2006, compromise between Pakistan and tribal elders in this region. In April 2008, the new government dominated by Bhutto's party, which prevailed in February 2008 parliamentary elections, negotiated a similar "understanding" with members of the Mehsud tribe, among which is Tehrik-e-Taliban (Pakistan Taliban) leader Baitullah Mehsud. U.S. commanders in Afghanistan blamed the Pakistani compromises for an increase in militant infiltration across the border. A February 2009 Pakistani truce with militants in Swat Valley, and militant advances to areas as close as 60 miles from Islamabad, stimulated renewed U.S. concerns, even though Swat is not near the Afghanistan border, particularly about the willingness of the Pakistani government to confront militants threatening its own survival.

The deterioration in Pakistan is a setback from late 2008, when U.S. officials said they saw improved Pakistani cooperation with U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. In June 2008, Pakistan ended a six month suspension in attendance at meetings of the Tripartite Commission" under which NATO, Afghan, and Pakistani military leaders meet regularly on both sides of the border. In April 2008, in an extension of the Tripartite Commission's work, the three agreed to set up five "border coordination centers"—which will include networks of radar nodes to give liaison officers a common view of the border area. These centers build on an agreement in May 2007 to share intelligence on extremists' movements. Only one has been established to date—near the Torkham Gate at the Khyber Pass.

Even though Pakistan's internal security has deteriorated, there has been a dramatic improvement in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations since the Musharraf era ended. Karzai attended the September 9, 2008, inauguration of President Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of Benazir Bhutto. The "peace jirga" process—a series of meetings of notables on each side of the border, which was agreed at a September 28, 2006, dinner hosted by President Bush for Karzai and Musharraf, has resumed. The first *jirga*, in which 700 Pakistani and Afghan tribal elders participated, was held in Kabul August 9-10, 2007.³⁸ Another was held in the improving climate of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations during October 27-28, 2008; the Afghan side was headed by former Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah. It resulted in a declaration to endorse efforts to try to engage militants in both

³⁷ Mazzetti, Mark and Eric Schmitt. "CIA Outlines Pakistan Links With Militants." *New York Times*, July 30, 2008.

³⁸ Straziuso, Jason. Musharraf Pulls Out of Peace Council. Associated Press, August 8, 2007.

Afghanistan and Pakistan to bring them into the political process and abandon violence. Zardari and Karzai held bilateral meetings in Turkey on December 6, 2008, and, in the clearest sign of closer ties, Zardari visited Kabul and met with Karzai on January 9, 2009, where the two signed a joint declaration against terrorism that affects both countries. Additional progress was made during the visit of Afghan and Pakistani ministers to Washington, D.C. during February 23- 27, 2009, to participate in the Obama Administration strategic review. As noted above, Karzai and Zardari visit Washington, D.C. in May 2009 to continue the strategic dialogue.

Increased Direct U.S. Action³⁹

The Obama Administration has continued to combat militants in Pakistan without directly violating Pakistan's restrictions on the U.S. ability to operate "on the ground" in Pakistan. Pakistani political leaders across the spectrum publicly oppose any presence of U.S. combat forces in Pakistan, although the *New York Times* reported on February 23, 2009, that there are about 70 U.S. military advisers in Pakistan to help train Pakistani forces to battle Al Qaeda and Taliban militants. U.S. cross-border raids still appear to be "off limits"—on September 3, 2008, a U.S. helicopter borne force reportedly crossed the border to raid a suspected militant encampment, drawing criticism and possibly some weapons fire from Pakistani forces. U.S. forces in Afghanistan acknowledge that they shell purported Taliban positions on the Pakistani side of the border, and do some "hot pursuit" a few kilometers over the border into Pakistan.

The Obama Administration has continued to use Predator and Reaper unmanned aircraft to strike militant targets in Pakistan, often incurring Pakistani official protestations. Press reports say there is increasing focus on striking the Haqqani network and on Pakistani militant Beitullah Mehsud. A major issue for the Obama Administration is whether Pakistan will tacitly permit such UAV attacks on the core of the Afghan Taliban leadership that is believed based in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province of Pakistan. To date, Pakistan has not cooperated with the United States to pressure Taliban leaders in this area.⁴⁰

Regarding the long-term relationship, Pakistan wants the government of Afghanistan to pledge to abide by the "Durand Line," a border agreement reached between Britain (signed by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand) and then Afghan leader Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in 1893, separating Afghanistan from what was then British-controlled India (later Pakistan after the 1947 partition). It is recognized by the United Nations, but Afghanistan continues to indicate that the border was drawn unfairly to separate Pashtun tribes and should be re-negotiated. As of October 2002, about 1.75 million Afghan refugees have returned from Pakistan since the Taliban fell, but as many as 3 million might still remain in Pakistan, and Pakistan says it plans to expel them back into Afghanistan in the near future.

Iran

As it attempts to stabilize Afghanistan, nearly eight years after the United States helped Afghan militias overthrow the Taliban, the Obama Administration sees Iran as potentially helpful to its new strategy for Afghanistan, announced March 27, 2009. The U.S. special representative for

³⁹ CRS Report RL34763, *Islamist Militancy in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Region and U.S. Policy*, by K. Alan Kronstadt and Kenneth Katzman

⁴⁰ Sanger, David and Eric Schmitt. "U.S. Weighs Taliban Strike into Pakistan." *New York Times*, March 18, 2009.

Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, has advocated a “regional” component of the strategy, which focuses primarily on Pakistan but also envisions cooperation with Iran to help keep Afghanistan calm.

Still, Iran and U.S. interests in Afghanistan, while in many ways coincident, are not identical. Iran perceives its key national interests in Afghanistan as exerting its traditional influence over western Afghanistan, which Iran borders and was once part of the Persian empire, and to protect Afghanistan’s Shiite minority. Iran’s assistance to Afghanistan has totaled about \$1.164 billion since the fall of the Taliban, mainly to build roads and schools and provide electricity and shops to Afghan cities and villages near the Iranian border. This makes Iran among the top financial donors to Afghanistan and is in many ways supportive of the U.S. policy of attempting to pacify Afghanistan in part through economic development.

In public statements, in part because of the economic development work done by Iranian firms, President Hamid Karzai has, at times, called Iran a “friend” of Afghanistan. Karzai received Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Kabul in August 2007, and he is expected to visit Tehran at the end of May 2009 as part of a new tripartite diplomatic process between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. During his visit to the United States in May 2009, Karzai said he had told both the United States and Iran that Afghanistan must not become an arena for the broader competition and disputes between the United States and Iran.⁴¹

In discussing conflict between Iran and the United States in Afghanistan, Karzai was referring to the reports that Iran has sporadically offered support for Taliban and other militants in Afghanistan. The State Department report on international terrorism for 2008, released April 30, 2009, said Iran continues to provide some training to and ships arms to “selected Taliban members” in Afghanistan. Weapons provided, according to the State Department report, include mortars, 107mm rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, and plastic explosives. Several shipments of such weapons were captured by the U.S. military in Afghanistan in 2007. Secretary of Defense Gates testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee in late January 2009 that the Defense Department had seen a slight increase in Iranian shipments of arms into Afghanistan in the few preceding months. Iran has opposed the U.S. use of the Shindand air base,⁴² which Iran fears the United States might use to attack or conduct surveillance against Iran.

Iranian aid to Taliban fighters puzzle some experts since these shipments would appear to conflict with Iran’s support for the government of Karzai—which Iran actively helped put together, in cooperation with the United States—at the December 2001 “Bonn Conference.” In addition, Iran has traditionally supported Persian-speaking non-Pashtun factions in Afghanistan, who would presumably be suppressed and marginalized by any new Taliban-led regime in Afghanistan. Iran saw the Taliban regime, which ruled during 1996-2001, as a threat to its interests in Afghanistan, especially after Taliban forces captured Herat (the western province that borders Iran) in September 1995. Iran subsequently drew even closer to the ethnic minority-dominated Northern Alliance than previously, providing its groups with fuel, funds, and ammunition.⁴³ In September 1998, Iranian and Taliban forces nearly came into direct conflict when Iran discovered that nine

⁴¹ Comments by President Karzai at the Brookings Institution. May 5, 2009.

⁴² Rashid, Ahmed. “Afghan Neighbors Show Signs of Aiding in Nation’s Stability.” *Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2004.

⁴³ Steele, Jonathon, “America Includes Iran in Talks on Ending War in Afghanistan.” *Washington Times*, December 15, 1997.

of its diplomats were killed in the course of the Taliban's offensive in northern Afghanistan. Iran massed forces at the border and threatened military action, but the crisis cooled without a major clash, possibly out of fear that Pakistan would intervene on behalf of the Taliban. Iran offered search and rescue assistance in Afghanistan during the U.S.-led war to topple the Taliban, and it also allowed U.S. humanitarian aid to the Afghan people to transit Iran. In attempting to explain the continuing shipments, some experts believe Iran's policy might be shifting somewhat to gain leverage against the United States by causing U.S. combat deaths, or by demonstrating that Iran is in position to cause U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan.

Others see Iran as a marginal player in Afghanistan, because it is identified primarily with non-Pashtuns and its links to Taliban fighters are tenuous and sporadic. Those who take this view question whether U.S. engagement with Iran would contribute much to solving the core problems plaguing the U.S. mission there. Still others believe that talks with Iran on Afghanistan could lead to broader U.S.-Iran talks, or potentially even open up the possibility of using Iran as a supply line for non-U.S. NATO forces in Afghanistan. Secretary of State Clinton made a point of announcing that Iran would be invited to the U.N.-led meeting on Afghanistan at the Hague on March 31, 2009. At the meeting, Special Representative Holbrooke briefly met the Iranian leader of his delegation to the meeting, and handing him a letter on several outstanding human rights cases involving Iranian-Americans. At the meeting, Iran pledged cooperation on combating Afghan narcotics and in helping economic development in Afghanistan—both policies Iran is already pursuing to a large degree.

After the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, President Bush warned Iran against meddling in Afghanistan. Partly in response to the U.S. criticism, in February 2002 Iran expelled Karzai-opponent Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, but it did not arrest him. At other times, Afghanistan and Iran the two countries have had disputes over Iran's efforts to expel Afghan refugees. About 1.2 million remain, mostly integrated into Iranian society, and a crisis erupted in May 2007 when Iran expelled about 50,000 into Afghanistan. About 300,000 Afghan refugees have returned from Iran since the Taliban fell.

India

The interests and activities of India in Afghanistan are almost the exact reverse of those of Pakistan. India's goal is to deny Pakistan "strategic depth" in Afghanistan, and India supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in the mid-1990s. Tajikistan allows India to use one of its air bases; Tajikistan supports the mostly Tajik Northern Alliance. Many of the families of Afghan leaders have lived in India at one time or another and, as noted above, Karzai studied there. India saw the Taliban's hosting of Al Qaeda as a major threat to India itself because of Al Qaeda's association with radical Islamic organizations in Pakistan dedicated to ending Indian control of parts of Jammu and Kashmir. Some of these groups have committed major acts of terrorism in India, and there might be connections to the militants who carried out the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008.

Pakistan accuses India of using its four consulates in Afghanistan (Pakistan says there are nine such consulates) to spread Indian influence in Afghanistan. However, many U.S. observers believe India's role in Afghanistan is constructive, and some would support an Indian decision to deploy more security forces in Afghanistan to protect its construction workers, diplomats, and installations. India reportedly decided in August 2008 to improve security for its officials and workers in Afghanistan, but not to send actual troops there.

India is the fifth largest single country donor to Afghan reconstruction, funding projects worth about \$1.2 billion. India, along with the Asian Development Bank, financed a \$300 million project, mentioned above, to bring electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan. It has also renovated the well known Habibia High School in Kabul and committed to a \$25 million renovation of Darulaman Palace as the permanent house for Afghanistan's parliament. India financed the construction of a road to the Iranian border in remote Nimruz province. India is also helping the IDLG with its efforts to build local governance organizations, and it provides 1,000 scholarships per year for Afghans to undergo higher education in India.

Russia, Central Asian States, and China

Some neighboring and nearby states take an active interest not only in Afghan stability, but in the U.S. military posture that supports U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The region to the north of Afghanistan is a growing factor in U.S. efforts to secure new supply lines to Afghanistan. Some of these alternative lines have begun to open, at least to non-lethal supplies.

Russia

Russia wants to re-emerge as a great power and to contain U.S. power in Central Asia, including Afghanistan. However, it supports U.S. efforts to combat militants in the region who have sometimes posed a threat to Russia itself. In an effort to try to cooperate more with NATO at least in Afghanistan, in conjunction with the April 2008 NATO summit, Russia agreed to allow NATO to ship non-lethal supplies to coalition forces in Afghanistan by land over Russian territory. That pledge was put into doubt following the August 2008 crisis over Georgia, an outcome of which has been suspension of Russian military cooperation with NATO; Russia says this land route cooperation constitutes military coordination covered under that suspension announcement. However, in February 2009, Russia said it would again allow the United States to ship non-lethal equipment into Afghanistan through Russia, and, as noted, some of these shipments began in February 2009.

Russia provides some humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, although it keeps a low profile in Afghanistan because it still feels humiliated by its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and senses Afghan resentment of the Soviet occupation. During the 1990s, Russia supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban with some military equipment and technical assistance in order to blunt Islamic militancy emanating from Afghanistan.⁴⁴ Although Russia supported the U.S. effort against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan out of fear of Islamic (mainly Chechen) radicals, Russia continues to seek to reduce the U.S. military presence in Central Asia. Russian fears of Islamic activism emanating from Afghanistan may have ebbed since 2002 when Russia killed a Chechen of Arab origin known as "Hattab" (full name is Ibn al-Khattab), who led a militant pro-Al Qaeda Chechen faction. The Taliban government was the only one in the world to recognize Chechnya's independence, and some Chechen fighters fighting alongside Taliban/Al Qaeda forces have been captured or killed.

⁴⁴ Risen, James. "Russians Are Back in Afghanistan, Aiding Rebels." *New York Times*, July 27, 1998.

Central Asian States

These states are becoming increasingly crucial to U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan are pivotal actors in U.S. efforts to secure alternate supply routes into Afghanistan. These states are increasingly important in light of Kyrgyzstan's decision in February 2009 to end U.S. use of Manas airbase, although that decision might be reversed.

During Taliban rule, Russian and Central Asian leaders grew increasingly alarmed that radical Islamic movements were receiving safe haven in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan, in particular, has long asserted that the group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), allegedly responsible for four simultaneous February 1999 bombings in Tashkent that nearly killed President Islam Karimov, is linked to Al Qaeda.⁴⁵ One of its leaders, Juma Namangani, reportedly was killed while commanding Taliban/Al Qaeda forces in Konduz in November 2001. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not directly border Afghanistan, but IMU guerrillas transited Kyrgyzstan during incursions into Uzbekistan in the late 1990s.

During Taliban rule, Uzbekistan supported Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostam, who was part of that Alliance. It allowed use of Karshi-Khanabad air base by OEF forces from October 2001 until a rift emerged in May 2005 over Uzbekistan's crackdown against riots in Andijon, and U.S.-Uzbek relations remained largely frozen. Uzbekistan's March 2008 agreement with Germany for it to use Karshi-Khanabad air base temporarily, for the first time since the rift in U.S.-Uzbek relations developed in 2005, suggests that U.S.-Uzbek cooperation on Afghanistan and other issues might be rebuilt. Stepped up U.S. discussions with Uzbekistan, in light of Kyrgyzstan's denial of the U.S. use of Manas air base, have apparently borne some fruit with the Uzbek decision in February 2009 to allow the use of Navoi airfield for shipment of U.S./NATO goods into Afghanistan. At the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Uzbekistan proposed to revive the "6 + 2" process of neighbors of Afghanistan to help its stability, but Karzai reportedly opposes this idea as unwanted Central Asian interference in its affairs.

In 1996, several of the Central Asian states banded together with Russia and China into a regional grouping called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to discuss the Taliban threat. It includes China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Reflecting Russian and Chinese efforts to limit U.S. influence in the region, the group has issued statements, most recently in August 2007, that security should be handled by the countries in the Central Asia region. Despite the Shanghai Cooperation Organization statements, Tajikistan allows access primarily to French combat aircraft, and Kazakhstan allows use of facilities in case of emergency. A meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to discuss Afghanistan was held in Moscow on March 25, 2009, and was observed by a U.S. official, as well as by Iran.

Of the Central Asian states that border Afghanistan, only Turkmenistan chose to seek close relations with the Taliban leadership when it was in power, possibly viewing engagement as a more effective means of preventing spillover of radical Islamic activity from Afghanistan. It saw Taliban control as facilitating construction of a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan (see above). The September 11 events stoked Turkmenistan's fears of the Taliban and its Al Qaeda guests and the country publicly supported the U.S.-led war. No U.S. forces have been based in Turkmenistan.

⁴⁵ The IMU was named a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department in September 2000.

China⁴⁶

A major organizer of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China has a small border with a sliver of Afghanistan known as the “Wakhan corridor.” China had become increasingly concerned about the potential for Al Qaeda to promote Islamic fundamentalism among Muslims in China. In December 2000, sensing China’s increasing concern about Taliban policies, a Chinese official delegation met with Mullah Umar. China did not enthusiastically support U.S. military action against the Taliban, possibly because China was wary of a U.S. military buildup nearby. In addition, China has been allied to Pakistan in part to pressure India, a rival of China. Still, Chinese delegations continue to assess the potential for new investments in such sectors as mining and energy,⁴⁷ and a deal was signed in November 2007 for China Metallurgical Group to develop the Aynak copper mine south of Kabul, and build related infrastructure.

Persian Gulf States: Saudi Arabia and UAE

Saudi Arabia is playing a growing role in hosting negotiations between the Karzai government and “moderate” Taliban figures for a negotiated settlement. Saudi Arabia has leverage because, during the Soviet occupation, Saudi Arabia channeled hundreds of millions of dollars to the Afghan resistance, primarily Hikmatyar and Sayyaf. Saudi Arabia, a majority of whose citizens practice the strict Wahhabi brand of Islam similar to that of the Taliban, was one of three countries to formally recognize the Taliban government. The Taliban initially served Saudi Arabia as a potential counter to Iran, but Iranian-Saudi relations improved after 1997 and balancing Iranian power ebbed as a factor in Saudi policy toward Afghanistan. Drawing on its reputed intelligence ties to Afghanistan during that era, Saudi Arabia worked with Taliban leaders to persuade them to suppress anti-Saudi activities by Al Qaeda. Some press reports indicate that, in late 1998, Saudi and Taliban leaders discussed, but did not agree on, a plan for a panel of Saudi and Afghan Islamic scholars to decide bin Laden’s fate.

According to U.S. officials, Saudi Arabia cooperated extensively, if not publicly, with OEF. It broke diplomatic relations with the Taliban in late September 2001 and quietly permitted the United States to use a Saudi base for command of U.S. air operations over Afghanistan, but it did not permit U.S. airstrikes from it. As noted above, it has hosted talks between the Karzai government and moderate Taliban leaders to pursue potential reconciliation.

The United Arab Emirates, the third country that recognized the Taliban regime, is emerging as another major donor to Afghanistan. Its troop contribution was discussed under OEF, above. At a donors conference for Afghanistan in June 2008, UAE pledged an additional \$250 million for Afghan development, double the \$118 million pledged by Saudi Arabia. That brought the UAE contribution to Afghanistan to over \$400 million since the fall of the Taliban. Projects funded include housing in Qandahar, roads in Kabul, a hospital in Zabol province, and a university in Khost. There are several daily flights between Kabul and Dubai emirate.

⁴⁶ For more information, see CRS Report RL33001, *U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Shirley A. Kan.

⁴⁷ CRS Conversations with Chinese officials in Beijing. August 2007.

U.S. and International Aid to Afghanistan and Development Issues

Many experts have long believed that accelerating economic development would do more to improve the security situation—and to eliminate narcotics trafficking—than intensified anti-Taliban combat. This belief appears to underpin the Obama Administration strategy.

Afghanistan's economy and society are still fragile after decades of warfare that left about 2 million dead, 700,000 widows and orphans, and about 1 million Afghan children who were born and raised in refugee camps outside Afghanistan. More than 3.5 million Afghan refugees have since returned, although a comparable number remain outside Afghanistan. The U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) supervises Afghan repatriation and Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. The literacy rate is very low and Afghanistan lacks the skilled labor pool needed to build a large modern economy.

U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan

During the 1990s, the United States became the largest single provider of assistance to the Afghan people. During Taliban rule, no U.S. aid went directly to that government; monies were provided through relief organizations. Between 1985 and 1994, the United States had a cross-border aid program for Afghanistan, implemented by USAID personnel based in Pakistan. Citing the difficulty of administering this program, there was no USAID mission for Afghanistan from the end of FY1994 until the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan in late 2001.

Since FY2002 and including funds already appropriated for FY2009, the United States has provided over \$32 billion in reconstruction assistance, including military “train and equip” for the ANA and ANP and counter-narcotics-related assistance (which is about \$15 billion during that time period). This does not include funds requested in a FY2009 supplemental appropriation request. The Obama Administration budget for FY2010 says that reconstruction aid to Afghanistan would “increase” in FY2010, but figures are not available to date. The figures in the tables do not include costs for U.S. combat operations, which are discussed in CRS Report RL33110, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, by Amy Belasco. The tables below depict the aid.⁴⁸

Aid Oversight

Still heavily dependent on donors, Karzai has sought to reassure the international donor community by establishing a transparent budget and planning process. Some in Congress want to increase independent oversight of U.S. aid to Afghanistan; the conference report on the FY2008 defense authorization bill (P.L. 110-181) established a “special inspector general” for Afghanistan reconstruction, (SIGAR) modeled on a similar outside auditor for Iraq (“Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction,” SIGIR). Funds provided for the SIGAR are in the tables below. On May 30, 2008, Maj. Gen. Arnold Fields (Marine, ret.) was named to the position. He has filed

⁴⁸ In some cases, aid figures are subject to variation depending on how that aid is measured. The figures cited might not exactly match figures in appropriated legislation; in some, funds were added to specified accounts from monies in the September 11-related Emergency Response Fund.

three reports on Afghan reconstruction, most recently on April 30, 2009,⁴⁹ which include discussions of SIGAR staffing levels and activities, and lays out the auditing plan of specific projects.

Aid Authorization: Afghanistan Freedom Support Act

A key post-Taliban aid authorization bill, S. 2712, the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act (AFSA) of 2002 (P.L. 107-327, December 4, 2002), as amended, authorized about \$3.7 billion in U.S. civilian aid for FY2003-FY2006. For the most part, the humanitarian, counter-narcotics, and governance assistance targets authorized by the act were met or exceeded by appropriations. However, no Enterprise Funds have been appropriated, and ISAF expansion (\$1 billion in U.S. funds were authorized in the Act) was funded by the contributing partner forces. The act authorized the following:

- \$60 million in total counter-narcotics assistance (\$15 million per year for FY2003-FY2006);
- \$30 million in assistance for political development, including national, regional, and local elections (\$10 million per year for FY2003-FY2005);
- \$80 million total to benefit women and for Afghan human rights oversight (\$15 million per year for FY2003-FY2006 for the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs, and \$5 million per year for FY2003-FY2006 to the Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan);
- \$1.7 billion in humanitarian and development aid (\$425 million per year for FY2003-FY2006);
- \$300 million for an Enterprise Fund;
- \$550 million in draw-downs of defense articles and services for Afghanistan and regional militaries. (The original law provided for \$300 million in drawdowns. That was increased by subsequent appropriations laws.

A subsequent law (P.L. 108-458, December 17, 2004), implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, contained "The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act Amendments of 2004." The subtitle mandates the appointment of a U.S. coordinator of policy on Afghanistan and requires additional Administration reports to Congress, including (1) on long-term U.S. strategy and progress of reconstruction, an amendment to the report required in the original law; (2) on how U.S. assistance is being used; (3) on U.S. efforts to persuade other countries to participate in Afghan peacekeeping; and (4) a joint State and Defense Department report on U.S. counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan. An overarching annual report on U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is required until 2010, the other reporting requirements expired.

Afghan Freedom Support Act Re-Authorization

In the 110th Congress, H.R. 2446, passed by the House on June 6, 2007 (406-10), would reauthorize AFSA through FY2010. A version (S. 3531), with fewer provisions than the House bill, was not taken up by the full Senate. Some observers say that versions of AFSA re-

⁴⁹ For text of the reports, see <http://www.sigar.mil>.

authorization are expected to be reintroduced in the 111th Congress. The following are the major provisions of H.R. 2446:

- A total of about \$1.7 billion in U.S. economic aid and \$320 in military aid (including draw-downs of equipment) per fiscal year would be authorized.
- a pilot program of crop substitution to encourage legitimate alternatives to poppy cultivation is authorized. Afghan officials support this provision as furthering their goal of combating narcotics by promoting alternative livelihoods.
- enhanced anti-corruption and legal reform programs.
- U.S. aid would be cut off to any Afghan province in which the Administration reports that the leadership of the province is complicit in narcotics trafficking. This provision has drew criticism from observers who say that the most needy in Afghanistan might be deprived of aid based on allegations.
- \$45 million per year for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, and programs for women and girls.
- \$75 million per year for enhanced power generation, a key need in Afghanistan.
- a coordinator for U.S. assistance to Afghanistan.
- military drawdowns for the ANA and ANP valued at \$300 million per year (un-reimbursed) are authorized (versus the aggregate \$550 million allowed currently).
- appointment of a special envoy to promote greater Afghanistan-Pakistan cooperation.
- reauthorizes "Radio Free Afghanistan."
- establishes a U.S. policy to encourage Pakistan to permit shipments by India of equipment and material to Afghanistan.

International Reconstruction Pledges/National Development Strategy

International (non-U.S.) donors have provided over another \$25 billion since the fall of the Taliban, as of 2009. When combined with U.S. aid, this by far exceeds the \$27.5 billion for reconstruction identified as required for 2002-2010. The major donors, and their aggregate pledges to date, are listed below. These amounts were pledged, in part, at the following donor conferences: (Tokyo), Berlin (April 2004), Kabul (April 2005), the London conference (February 2006), and the June 12, 2008 conference in Paris, discussed below. The Afghanistan Compact leaned toward the view of Afghan leaders that a higher proportion of the aid be channeled through the Afghan government rather than directly by the donor community. Only about 20% of the funds disbursed are channeled through the Afghan government. In the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan government promised greater financial transparency and international (United Nations) oversight to ensure that international contributions are used wisely and effectively.

At the June 12, 2008, conference in Paris, Afghanistan formally presented its Afghan National Development Strategy, asking for \$50.1 billion during 2009-2014 from international donors. Of that, \$14 billion was requested to improve infrastructure, including airports and to construct a railway. Another \$14 billion would be to build the ANSF, and about \$4.5 billion would be for agriculture and rural development. However, citing in part a relative lack of transparency in

Afghan governance, donors pledged about \$21 billion, but that included \$10.2 billion already committed by the United States. Of the other major pledges, the Asian Development bank pledged \$1.3 billion, the World Bank pledged \$1.1 billion, Britain pledged \$1.2 billion; France pledged \$165 million over two years; Japan pledged \$550 million; Germany offered \$600 million over two years, and the European Union pledged \$770 million.

Among multilateral lending institutions, in May 2002, the World Bank reopened its office in Afghanistan after 20 years. Its projects have been concentrated in the telecommunications and road and sewage sectors. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also been playing a major role in Afghanistan. One of its projects in Afghanistan was funding the paving of a road from Qandahar to the border with Pakistan, and as noted above, it is contributing to a project to bring electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan.

Efforts to build the legitimate economy are showing some results, by accounts of senior U.S. officials, including expansion of roads and education and health facilities constructed. USAID spending to promote economic growth is shown in **Table 15**, and U.S. and international assistance to Afghanistan are discussed in the last sections of this paper.

Key Sectors

The following are some key sectors and what has been accomplished with U.S. and international donor funds:

- **Roads.** Road building is considered a U.S. priority and has been USAID's largest project category there, taking up about 25% of USAID spending since the fall of the Taliban. Roads are considered key to enabling Afghan farmers to bring legitimate produce to market in a timely fashion and former commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan Gen. Eikenberry (now Ambassador) said "where the roads end, the Taliban begin." The major road, the Ring Road, is 73% re-paved, according to the Defense Department January 2009 report on Afghan stability. Among other major projects completed are: a road from Qandahar to Tarin Kowt, built by U.S. military personnel, inaugurated in 2005; and a road linking the Panjshir Valley to Kabul. In several provinces, U.S. funds (sometimes CERP funds) are being used to build roads connecting remote areas to regional district centers in several provinces in the eastern sector. A key priority is building a Khost-Gardez road, under way currently.
- **Education.** Despite the success in enrolling Afghan children in school since the Taliban era (see statistics above), setbacks have occurred because of Taliban attacks on schools, causing some to close.
- **Health.** The health care sector, as noted by Afghan observers, has made considerable gains in reducing infant mortality and improving Afghans' access to health professionals. In addition to U.S. assistance to develop the health sector's capacity, Egypt operates a 65-person field hospital at Bagram Air Base that instructs Afghan physicians. Jordan operates a similar facility in Mazar-e-Sharif.
- **Agriculture.** USAID has spent about 5% of its Afghanistan funds on agriculture, and this has helped Afghanistan double its agricultural output over the past five years. Afghan officials say agricultural assistance and development should be a top U.S. priority as part of a strategy of encouraging legitimate alternatives to

poppy cultivation. (Another 10% of USAID funds is spent on “alternative livelihoods” to poppy growing, mostly in aid to farmers.) One emerging “success story” is growing Afghan exports of high quality pomegranate juice called Anar. Other crops now substituting for poppy include wheat and saffron. To help Afghanistan develop this sector, the U.S. National Guard is deploying “Agribusiness Development Teams” in several provinces to help Afghan farmers with water management, soil enhancement, crop cultivation, and improving the development and marketing of their goods.

- **Electricity.** About 10% of USAID spending in Afghanistan is on power projects. The Afghanistan Compact states that the goal is for electricity to reach 65% of households in urban areas and 25% in rural areas by 2010. There have been severe power shortages in Kabul, partly because the city population has swelled to about 3 million, up from half a million when the Taliban was in power, but power to the capital is growing. The Afghan government, with help from international donors, has been importing electricity from Central Asian and other neighbors.
- A major power project is the Kajaki Dam, located in unstable Helmand Province. USAID has allocated about \$500 million to restore the three electricity-generating turbines (two are operating) of the dam which, when functional, will provide electricity for 1.7 million Afghans and about 4,000 jobs in the reconstruction. In an operation involving 4,000 NATO troops (Operation Ogap Tsuka), components of the third and final turbine was successfully delivered to the dam in September 2008 and it is expected to be operational in mid-late 2009.

National Solidarity Program

The United States and the Afghan government are also trying to promote local decision making on development. The “National Solidarity Program” (NSD) largely funded by U.S. and other international donors – but implemented by Afghanistan’s Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development—seeks to create and empower local governing councils to prioritize local reconstruction projects, and it is widely hailed as a success. The assistance, channeled through donors, provides block grants of about \$60,000 per project to the councils to implement agreed projects, most of which are water projects. Elections to the nearly 30,000 local councils—discussed above in the discussion on the IDLG—have been held in several provinces, and almost 40% of those elected have been women.⁵⁰ The U.S. aid to the program is part of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) account.

The FY2009 supplemental request asks about \$85 million for the ARTF account, of which much of those funds would be used to fill a \$140 million shortfall in the NSP program. H.R. 2346, the House version, earmarks \$70 million to defray the shortfall.

⁵⁰ Khalilzad, Zalmay (Then U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan). “Democracy Bubbles Up.” *Wall Street Journal*, March 25, 2004.

Trade Initiatives/Reconstruction Opportunity Zones

The United States is trying to build on Afghanistan's post-war economic rebound with trade initiatives. In September 2004, the United States and Afghanistan signed a bilateral trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA). These agreements are generally seen as a prelude to a broader and more complex bilateral free trade agreement, but negotiations on an FTA have not yet begun. On December 13, 2004, the 148 countries of the World Trade Organization voted to start membership talks with Afghanistan. Another initiative supported by the United States is the establishment of joint Afghan-Pakistani "Reconstruction Opportunity Zones" (ROZ's) which would be modeled after "Qualified Industrial Zones" run by Israel and Jordan in which goods produced in the zones receive duty free treatment for import into the United States. For FY2008, \$5 million in supplemental funding was requested to support the zones, but P.L. 110-252 did not specifically mention the zones.

Bills in the 110th Congress, S. 2776 and H.R. 6387, would authorize the President to proclaim duty-free treatment for imports from ROZ's to be designated by the President. In the 111th Congress, a version of these bills was introduced (S. 496 and H.R. 1318). President Obama specifically endorsed passage of these bills in his strategy review announcement.

Major Private Sector Initiatives

Some international investors are implementing projects, and there is substantial new construction, such as the Serena luxury hotel that opened in November 2005 (long considered a priority Taliban target, the hotel was attacked by militants on January 14, 2008, killing six) and a \$25 million new Coca Cola bottling factory that opened in Kabul on September 11, 2006. Several Afghan companies are growing as well, including Roshan and Afghan Wireless (cell phone service), and Tolo Television. A Gold's Gym has opened in Kabul as well. The 52-year-old national airline, Ariana, is said to be in significant financial trouble due to corruption that has affected its safety ratings and left it unable to service a heavy debt load, but there are new privately run airlines, such as Pamir Air, Safi Air, and Kam Air. Some Afghan leaders complain that not enough has been done to revive such potentially lucrative industries as minerals mining, such as of copper and lapis lazuli (a stone used in jewelry). In November 2007, the Afghan government signed a deal with China Metallurgical Group for the company to invest \$2.8 billion to develop Afghanistan's Aynak copper field in Lowgar Province; the agreement includes construction of a coal-fired electric power plant and a freight railway. Work has begun on the mine.

Afghanistan's prospects also appeared to brighten by the announcement in March 2006 of an estimated 3.6 billion barrels of oil and 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves. Experts believe these amounts, if proved, could make Afghanistan relatively self-sufficient in energy and able to export energy to its neighbors. USAID is funding a test project to develop gas resources in northern Afghanistan.

Afghan officials are said to be optimistic about increased trade with Central Asia now that a new bridge has opened (October 2007) over the Panj River, connecting Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The bridge was built with \$33 million in (FY2005) U.S. assistance. The bridge will further assist what press reports say is robust reconstruction and economic development in the relatively peaceful and ethnically homogenous province of Panjshir, the political base of the Northern Alliance.

Another major energy project remains under consideration. During 1996-1998, the Clinton Administration supported proposed natural gas and oil pipelines through western Afghanistan as an incentive for the warring factions to cooperate. A consortium led by Los Angeles-based Unocal Corporation proposed a \$2.5 billion Central Asia Gas Pipeline, estimated to cost \$3.7 billion to construct, that would originate in southern Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan to Pakistan, with possible extensions into India.⁵¹ The deterioration in U.S.-Taliban relations after 1998 largely ended hopes for the pipeline projects. Prospects for the project have improved in the post-Taliban period. In a summit meeting in late May 2002 between the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the three countries agreed to revive the project. Sponsors held an inaugural meeting on July 9, 2002 in Turkmenistan, signing a series of preliminary agreements. Turkmenistan's leadership (President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, succeeding the late Saparmurad Niyazov) favors the project as well. Some U.S. officials view this project as a superior alternative to a proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India, transiting Pakistan.

Some of the more stable provinces, such as Bamiyan, are complaining that international aid is flowing mostly to the restive provinces in an effort to quiet them, and ignoring the needs of poor Afghans in peaceful areas. Later in this paper are tables showing U.S. appropriations of assistance to Afghanistan, and **Table 15** lists USAID spending on all of these sectors for FY2002-FY2007.

Table 4. Major International (non-U.S.) Pledges to Afghanistan Since Jan. 2002
(\$ in millions)

Britain	2,897
World Bank	2,803
Asia Development Bank	2,200
Japan	1,900
European Commission (EC)	1,768
Netherlands	1,697
Canada	1,479
India	1,200
Iran	1,164
Germany	1,108
Norway	977
Denmark	683
Italy	637
Saudi Arabia	533
Total Non-U.S. Pledges (including donors not listed)	25,800 (includes pledges at April 2009 NATO summit)

Source: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. October 2008 report. p. 140. This table lists donors pledging over \$500 million total.

⁵¹ Other participants in the Unocal consortium include Delta of Saudi Arabia, Hyundai of South Korea, Crescent Steel of Pakistan, Itochu Corporation and INPEX of Japan, and the government of Turkmenistan. Some accounts say Russia's Gazprom would probably receive a stake in the project. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow), October 30, 1997, p. 3.

Table 5. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1978-FY1998

(\$ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Devel. Assist.	Econ. Supp. (ESF)	P.L. 480 (Title I and II)	Military	Other (Incl. Regional Refugee Aid)	Total
1978	4.989	—	5.742	0.269	0.789	11.789
1979	3.074	—	7.195	—	0.347	10.616
1980	—	(Soviet invasion-December 1979)			—	—
1981	—	—	—	—	—	—
1982	—	—	—	—	—	—
1983	—	—	—	—	—	—
1984	—	—	—	—	—	—
1985	3.369	—	—	—	—	3.369
1986	—	—	8.9	—	—	8.9
1987	17.8	12.1	2.6	—	—	32.5
1988	22.5	22.5	29.9	—	—	74.9
1989	22.5	22.5	32.6	—	—	77.6
1990	35.0	35.0	18.1	—	—	88.1
1991	30.0	30.0	20.1	—	—	80.1
1992	25.0	25.0	31.4	—	—	81.4
1993	10.0	10.0	18.0	—	30.2	68.2
1994	3.4	2.0	9.0	—	27.9	42.3
1995	1.8	—	12.4	—	31.6	45.8
1996	—	—	16.1	—	26.4	42.5
1997	—	—	18.0	—	31.9 ^a	49.9
1998	—	—	3.6	—	49.14 ^b	52.74

Source: Department of State.

- a. Includes \$3 million for demining and \$1.2 million for counternarcotics.
- b. Includes \$3.3 million in projects targeted for Afghan women and girls, \$7 million in earthquake relief aid, 100,000 tons of 416B wheat worth about \$15 million, \$2 million for demining, and \$1.54 for counternarcotics.

Table 6. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1999-FY2002

(\$ in millions)

	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002 (Final)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA) and USAID Food For Peace (FFP), via World Food Program(WFP)	42.0 worth of wheat (100,000 metric tons under "416(b)" program.)	68.875 for 165,000 metric tons. (60,000 tons for May 2000 drought relief)	131.1 (300,000 metric tons under P.L. 480, Title II, and 416(b))	198.12 (for food commodities)
State/Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) via UNHCR and ICRC	16.95 for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and to assist their repatriation	14.03 for the same purposes	22.03 for similar purposes	136.54 (to U.N. agencies)
State Department/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	7.0 to various NGOs to aid Afghans inside Afghanistan	6.68 for drought relief and health, water, and sanitation programs	18.934 for similar programs	113.36 (to various U.N. agencies and NGOs)
State Department/HDP (Humanitarian Demining Program)	2.615	3.0	2.8	7.0 to Halo Trust/other demining
Aid to Afghan Refugees in Pakistan (through various NGOs)	5.44 (2.789 for health, training— Afghan females in Pakistan)	6.169, of which \$3.82 went to similar purposes	5.31 for similar purposes	
Counter-Narcotics			1.50	63.0
USAID/Office of Transition Initiatives			0.45 (Afghan women in Pakistan)	24.35 for broadcasting/media
Dept. of Defense				50.9 (2.4 million rations)
Foreign Military Financing				57.0 (for Afghan national army)
Anti-Terrorism				36.4
Economic Support Funds (E.S.F)				105.2
Peacekeeping				24.0
Totals	76.6	113.2	182.6	815.9

Source: CRS.

Table 7. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2003

(\$ in millions, same acronyms as Table 6)

FY2003 Foreign Aid Appropriations (P.L. 108-7)	
Development/Health	90
P.L. 480 Title II (Food Aid)	47
Peacekeeping	10
Disaster Relief	94
ESF	50
Non-Proliferation, De-mining, Anti-Terrorism (NADR)	5
Refugee Relief	55
Afghan National Army (ANA) train and equip (FMF)	21
Total from this law:	372
FY2003 Supplemental (P.L. 108-11)	
Road Construction (ESF, Kabul-Qandahar road)	100
Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ESF)	10
Afghan government support (ESF)	57
ANA train and equip (FMF)	170
Anti-terrorism/de-mining (NADR, some for Karzai protection)	28
Total from this law:	365
Total for FY2003	737

Source: CRS. Earmarks for programs benefitting women and girls totaled: \$65 million. Of that amount, \$60 million was earmarked in the supplemental and \$5 million in the regular appropriation.

Table 8. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2004

(\$ in millions, same acronyms as previous tables)

Afghan National Police (FMF)	160
Counter-Narcotics	125.52
Afghan National Army (FMF)	719.38
Presidential Protection (NADR)	52.14
DDR Program (disarming militias)	15.42
MANPAD destruction	1.5
Terrorist Interdiction Program	0.41
Border Control (WMD)	0.23
Good Governance Program	113.57
Political Competition, Consensus Building (Elections)	24.41
Rule of Law and Human Rights	29.4
Roads	348.68
Education/Schools	104.11
Health/Clinics	76.85
Power	85.13
PRT's	57.4
CERP (DoD funds to build good will)	39.71
Private Sector Development/Economic Growth	63.46
Water Projects	28.9
Agriculture	50.5
Refugee/IDP's	82.6
Food Assistance	88.25
De-Mining	12.61
State/USAID Program Support	203.02
Total Aid for FY2004	2,483.2
Laws Derived: FY2004 supplemental (P.L. 108-106); FY2004 regular appropriation (P.L. 108-199). Regular appropriation earmarked \$5 million for programs benefitting women and girls.	

Table 9. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2005

(\$ in millions)

Afghan National Police (State Dept. funds, FMF, and DoD funds, transition to DoD funds to Afghan security forces)	624.46
Counter-Narcotics	775.31
Afghan National Army (State Dept. funds, FMF, and DoD funds)	1633.24
Presidential (Karzai) Protection (NADR funds)	23.10
DDR	5.0
Detainee Operations	16.9
MANPAD destruction	0.75
Small Arms Control	3.0
Terrorist Interdiction Program	0.1
Border Control (WMD)	0.85
Good Governance	137.49
Political Competition/Consensus-Building/Election Support	15.75
Rule of Law and Human Rights	20.98
Roads	334.1
Afghan-Tajik (Nizhny Panj) Bridge	33.1
Education/Schools	89.63
Health/Clinics	107.4
Power	222.5
PRTs	97.0
CERP	136.0
Civil Aviation (Kabul International Airport)	25.0
Private Sector Development/Economic Growth	77.43
Water Projects	43.2
Agriculture	74.49
Refugee/IDP Assistance	54.6
Food Assistance (P.L. 480, Title II)	108.6
Demining	23.7
State/USAID Program Support	142.84
Total Aid for FY2005	4,826.52
Laws Derived: FY2005 Regular Appropriations (P.L. 108-447); Second FY2005 Supplemental (P.L. 109-13). The regular appropriation earmarked \$50 million to be used for programs to benefit women and girls.	

Source: CRS. In FY2005, funds to equip and train the Afghan national security forces was altered from State Dept. funds (Foreign Military Financing, FMF) to DoD funds.

Table 10. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2006

(\$ in millions)

Afghan National Police (DoD funds)	1,217.5
Counter-narcotics	419.26
Afghan National Army (DoD funds)	735.98
Presidential (Karzai) protection (NADR funds)	18.17
Detainee Operations	14.13
Small Arms Control	2.84
Terrorist Interdiction	.10
Counter-terrorism Finance	.28
Border Control (WMD)	.40
Bilateral Debt Relief	11.0
Budgetary Support to the Government of Afghanistan	1.69
Good Governance	10.55
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund	47.5
Political Competition/Consensus Building/Elections	1.35
Civil Society	7.77
Rule of Law and Human Rights	29.95
Roads	235.95
Education/Schools	49.48
Health/Clinics	51.46
Power	61.14
PRT's	20.0
CERP Funds (DoD)	215.0
Private Sector Development/Economic Growth	45.51
Water Projects	.89
Agriculture	26.92
Food Assistance	109.6
De-mining	14.32
Refugee/IDP aid	36.0
State/USAID program support	142.42
Total	3,527.16
Laws Derived: FY2006 Regular Foreign Aid Appropriations (P.L. 109-102); FY06 supplemental (P.L. 109-234). The regular appropriation earmarked \$50 million for programs to benefit women and girls.	

Source: CRS.

Table 11. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2007

(\$ in millions)

Afghan National Police (DoD funds)	2,523.30
Afghan National Army (DoD funds)	4,871.59
Counter-Narcotics	737.15
Presidential (Karzai) Protection	19.9
Detainee Operations	12.7
Small Arms Control	1.75
Terrorist Interdiction Program	0.5
Counter-Terrorism Finance	0.4
Border Control (WMD)	0.5
Budget Support to Afghan Government	31.24
Good Governance	107.25
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (incl. National Solidarity Program)	63
Political Competition/Election support	29.9
Civil Society	8.1
Rule of Law/Human Rights	65.05
Roads	303.1
Education/Schools	62.75
Health/Clinics	112.77
Power	194.8
PRTs	126.1
CERP (DoD funds)	206
Private Sector Development/Economic Growth	70.56
Water Projects	2.3
Agriculture	67.03
Refugee/IDP Assistance	72.61
Food Assistance	150.9
Demining	27.82
State/USAID Program Support	88.7
Total	9984.98
Laws Derived: Regular Appropriation P.L. 110-5; DoD Appropriation P.L. 109-289; and FY2007 Supplemental Appropriation P.L. 110-28. The regular appropriation earmarked \$50 million for programs to benefit women/ girls.	

Source: CRS. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, October 2008 report.

**Table 12. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan,
FY2008**

(Appropriated, In millions)

Afghan National Army (DoD funds)	1,724.68
Afghan National Police (DoD funds)	1,017.38
Counter-Narcotics (INCLE and DoD funds)	619.47
NADR (Karzai protection)	6.29
Radio Free Afghanistan	3.98
Detainee operations	9.6
Small Arms Control	3.0
Terrorist Interdiction Program	.99
Counter-Terrorism Finance	.60
Border Control (WMD)	.75
Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP, DoD funds)	269.4
Direct Support to Afghan Government	49.61
Good Governance	245.08
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (incl. National Solidarity program)	45.0
Election Support	90.0
Civil Society Building	4.01
Rule of Law and Human Rights	125.28
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)	2.0
Roads	324.18
Education/Schools	99.09
Health/Clinics	114.04
Power (incl. Kajaki Dam rehabilitation work)	236.81
PRT programs	75.06
Economic Growth/Private Sector Development	63.06
Water Projects	16.4q
Agriculture	34.44
Refugee/IDP Assistance	42.1
Food Aid	101.83
De-Mining	15.0
State/USAID Program Support	317.4
Total	5,656.53
Appropriations Laws Derived: Regular FY2008 (P.L. 110-161); FY2008 Supplemental (P.L. 110-252). The regular appropriation earmarked \$75 million for programs to benefit woman and girls.	

Source: Special Inspector General Afghanistan Reconstruction. October 2008 report.; CRS.

Table 13. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2009

(\$ in millions)

	Regular Appropriation (P.L. 111-8)	Bridge Supplemental (P.L. 110-252)	FY2009 Supp. Request	Total
Afghan Security Forces Funding		2,000	3,607	5,607
CERP (DoD funds)		683		683
Detainee operations (DoD)		4		4
Counternarcotics (DoD)	24	150	57	232
Counternarcotics (DEA)	19			19
Counternarcotics – Alternative Livelihoods (INCLE)	100	70	87	257
Counternarcotics – Eradication, interdiction (INCLE)	178	14	17	209
IMET	1.4			1.4
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (Incl. National Solidarity Program)	45	20	85	150
Governance building	100	68	115	283
Civil Society promotion	8	4		12
Election Support	93	56	25	174
Strategic Program Development			50	50
Rule of Law Programs (USAID)	8	15	20	43
Rule of Law (INCLE)	34	55	80	169
Roads (ESF)	74	65		139
Power (ESF)	73	61		134
Agriculture (ESF and DA)	25		85	110
PRTs/Local Governance (ESF)	74	55	159	288
Education	88	6		94
Health	61	27		88
Econ Growth/"Cash for Work"	49	37	220	306
Water, Environment, Victims Comp.	31	3		34
Karzai Protection (NADR)	32		12	44
Food Aid (P.L. 480, Food for Peace)	14	44		58

Migration, Refugee Aid		50	7	57
State Ops/Embassy Construction	308	131	450	889
USAID Programs and Ops	18	2	165	185
State/USAID IG/SIGAR	3	11	7	20
Cultural Exchanges, International Orgs	6	10		16
Totals:	1,463	3,640	5,248	10,352

Notes: H.R. 2346 provides all requested funds, earmarks \$70 million for National Solidarity Program

Table 14. FY2010 Request

(\$ in millions)

Afghan Security Forces Funding	7,463
CERP (DoD funds)	1,198
Counternarcotics (DoD)	361
Counternarcotics – Alternative Livelihoods (INCLE)	275
Counternarcotics – Eradication, interdiction (INCLE)	200
IMET	1.5
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (Incl. National Solidarity Program)	200
Governance building	191
Civil Society promotion	10
Election Support	90
Strategic Program Development	100
Rule of Law Programs (USAID)	50
Rule of Law (INCLE)	160
Roads (ESF)	230
Power	230
Agriculture	230
PRT programs/Local governance	251
Education	95
Health	102
Econ Growth/"Cash for Work"	274
Water, Environment, Victim Comp.	15
Karzai Protection (NADR)	58
Food Aid (P.L. 480, Food for Peace)	16
Refugees and Migration	11
State Ops/Embassy Construction	1,152
USAID Ops	130
Cultural Exchanges	6
State, USAID IG, SIGAR	27
Totals:	13,124

Source: CRS

Table 15. USAID Obligations FY2002-FY2008
(\$ millions)

Sector	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007 (reg. + supp)	FY2008 (reg + supp)	FY2002- FY2008
Agriculture	27	56	50	77	27	67	31	335
Alternative Livelihoods	3	1	5	185	121	229	121	665
Roads	51	142	354	276	250	365	398	1836
Power	3		77	286	66	195	203	830
Water	2	1	27	21	1	2	1	54
Econ. Growth	21	12	84	91	46	69	61	383
Education	19	21	104	86	51	63	53	397
Health	8	56	83	111	52	113	66	489
Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund	38	40	67	87	45	46	45	368
Support to Afghan Gov't	3		36	31	15	15	17	117
Democracy	22	34	132	88	17	134	17	444
Rule of Law	4	8	21	15	6	10	4	68
PRT Programs		11	56	85	20	126	30	328
Program Suppt	5	6	17	16	4	35	15	98
Internally Displaced Persons	108	23	10			-		141
Food Aid	159	51	49	57	60	-	10	386
Civilian Assistance						10		10
Totals	471	462	1171	1510	779	1478	1108	6979

Source: CRS.

Table 16. NATO/ISAF Contributing Nations(As of April 3, 2009, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf)

NATO Countries		Non-NATO Partner Nations	
Belgium	450	Albania	140
Bulgaria	820	Austria	2
Canada	2830	Australia	1090
Czech Republic	580	Azerbaijan	90
Denmark	700	Bosnia – Herzegovina	2
Estonia	140	Croatia	280
France	2780	Finland	110
Germany	3465	Georgia	1
Greece	140	Ireland	7
Hungary	370	Macedonia	170
Iceland	8	New Zealand	150
Italy	2350	Sweden	290
Latvia	160	Ukraine	10
Lithuania	200	Jordan	7
Luxemburg	9	Singapore	20
Netherlands	1770	United Arab Emirates	25
Norway	490		
Poland	1590	Total ISAF force (approx.):	58,390
Portugal	30		
Romania	860		
Slovakia	230		
Slovenia	70		
Spain	780		
Turkey	660		
United Kingdom	8300		
United States	26215		

Table 17. Provincial Reconstruction Teams
(RC=Regional Command)

Location (City)		Province/Command
U.S.-Lead (all under ISAF banner)		
Gardez		Paktia Province (RC-East, E)
Ghazni		Ghazni (RC-E). with Poland.
Bagram A.B.		Parwan (RC-C, Central)
Jalalabad		Nangarhar (RC-E)
Khost		Khost (RC-E)
Qalat		Zabol (RC-South, S). with Romania.
Asadabad		Kunar (RC-E)
Sharana		Paktika (RC-E). with Poland.
Mehtarlam		Laghman (RC-E)
Jabal o-Saraj		Panjshir Province (RC-E), State Department lead
Qala Gush		Nuristan (RC-E)
Farah		Farah (RC-W)
Partner Lead (all under ISAF banner)		
PRT Location	Province	Lead Force/Other forces
Qandahar	Qandahar (RC-S)	Canada
Lashkar Gah	Helmand (RC-S)	Britain. with Denmark and Estonia
Tarin Kowt	Uruzgan (RC-S)	Netherlands. With Australia and 40 Singaporean military medics and others
Herat	Herat (RC-W)	Italy
Qalah-ye Now	Badghis (RC-W)	Spain
Mazar-e-Sharif	Balkh (RC-N)	Sweden
Konduz	Konduz (RC-N)	Germany
Faizabad	Badakhshan (RC-N)	Germany. with Denmark, Czech Rep.
Meymaneh	Faryab (RC-N)	Norway. with Sweden.
Chaghcharan	Ghowr (RC-W)	Lithuania. with Denmark, U.S., Iceland
Pol-e-Khomri	Baghlan (RC-N)	Hungary
Bamiyan	Bamiyan (RC-E)	New Zealand (not NATO/ISAF). 10 Singaporean engineers
Maidan Shahr	Wardak (RC-C)	Turkey
Pul-i-Alam	Lowgar (RC-E)	Czech Republic

Table 18. Major Factions/Leaders in Afghanistan

Party/ Leader	Leader	Ideology/ Ethnicity	Regional Base
Taliban	Mullah (Islamic cleric) Muhammad Umar (still at large possibly in Afghanistan). Jalaludin and Siraj Haqqani allied with Taliban and Al Qaeda. Umar, born in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan province, is about 65 years old.	ultra-orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Insurgent groups, mostly in the south and east, and in Pakistan
Islamic Society (leader of "Northern Alliance")	Burhannudin Rabbani/ Yunus Qanooni (speaker of lower house)/Muhammad Fahim/Dr. Abdullah Abdullah (Foreign Minister 2001-2006). Ismail Khan, a so-called "warlord," heads faction of the grouping in Herat area. Khan, now Minister of Energy and Water, visited United States in March 2008 to sign USAID grant for energy projects.	moderate Islamic, mostly Tajik	Much of northern and western Afghanistan, including Kabul
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan	Abdul Rashid Dostam. During OEF, impressed U.S. commanders with horse-mounted assaults on Taliban positions at Shulgara Dam, south of Mazar-e-Sharif, leading to the fall of that city and the Taliban's subsequent collapse. About 2,000 Taliban prisoners taken by his forces were held in shipping containers, died of suffocation, and were buried in mass grave. Grave excavated in mid-2008, possibly an effort by Dostam to destroy evidence of the incident. Was Karzai rival in October 2004 presidential election, then his top "security adviser" but now in exile in Turkey.	secular, Uzbek	Mazar-e-Sharif, Sheberghan, and environs
Hizb-e-Wahdat	Composed of Shiite Hazara tribes from central Afghanistan. Karim Khalili is Vice President, but Mohammad Mohaqiq is Karzai rival in 2004 presidential election and parliament. Generally pro-Iranian. Was part of Rabbani 1992-1996 government, and fought unsuccessfully with Taliban over Bamiyan city. Still revered by Hazara Shiites is the former leader of the group, Abdul Ali Mazari, who was captured and killed by the Taliban in March 1995.	Shiite, Hazara tribes	Bamiyan province
Pashtun Leaders	Various regional governors and local leaders in the east and south; central government led by Hamid Karzai.	Moderate Islamic, Pashtun	Dominant in southern, eastern Afghanistan
Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin (HIG)	<i>Mujahedin</i> party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Was part of Soviet-era U.S.-backed "Afghan Interim Government" based in Peshawar, Pakistan. Was nominal "Prime Minister" in 1992-1996 mujahedin government but never actually took office. Lost power base around Jalalabad to the Taliban in 1994, and fled to Iran before being expelled in 2002. Still allied with Taliban and Al Qaeda in operations east of Kabul, but may be open to ending militant activity. Leader of a rival Hizb-e-Islam faction, Yunus Khalis, the mentor of Mullah Umar, died July 2006.	orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small groups around Jalalabad, Nuristan, and Kunar provinces
Islamic Union	Abd-I-Rab Rasul Sayyaf. Islamic conservative, leads a pro-Karzai faction in parliament. Lived many years in and politically close to Saudi Arabia, which shares his "Wahhabi" ideology. During anti-Soviet war, Sayyaf's faction, with Hikmatyar, was a principal recipient of U.S. weaponry. Criticized the U.S.-led war against Saddam Hussein after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.	orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Paghman (west of Kabul)

Source: CRS.

Residual Issues from Past Conflicts

A few issues remain unresolved from Afghanistan's many years of conflict, such as Stinger retrieval and mine eradication.

Stinger Retrieval

Beginning in late 1985 following internal debate, the Reagan Administration provided about 2,000 man-portable "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles to the *mujahedin* for use against Soviet aircraft. Prior to the U.S.-led ouster of the Taliban, common estimates suggested that 200-300 Stingers remained at large, although more recent estimates put the number below 100.⁵² The Stinger issue resurfaced in conjunction with 2001 U.S. war effort, when U.S. pilots reported that the Taliban fired some Stingers at U.S. aircraft during the war. No hits were reported. Any Stingers that survived the anti-Taliban war are likely controlled by Afghans now allied to the United States and presumably pose less of a threat, in part because of the deterioration of the weapons' batteries and other internal components.

In 1992, after the fall of the Russian-backed government of Najibullah, the United States reportedly spent about \$10 million to buy the Stingers back, at a premium, from individual *mujahedin* commanders. The *New York Times* reported on July 24, 1993, that the buy back effort failed because the United States was competing with other buyers, including Iran and North Korea, and that the CIA would spend about \$55 million in FY1994 in a renewed buy-back effort. On March 7, 1994, the *Washington Post* reported that the CIA had recovered only a fraction (maybe 50 or 100) of the at-large Stingers. In February 2002, the Afghan government found and returned to the United States "dozens" of Stingers.⁵³ In late January 2005, Afghan intelligence began a push to buy remaining Stingers back, at a reported cost of \$150,000 each.⁵⁴

The danger of these weapons has become apparent on several occasions, although U.S. commanders have not reported any recent active firings of these devices. Iran bought 16 of the missiles in 1987 and fired one against U.S. helicopters; some reportedly were transferred to Lebanese Hizballah. India claimed that it was a Stinger, supplied to Islamic rebels in Kashmir probably by sympathizers in Afghanistan, that shot down an Indian helicopter over Kashmir in May 1999.⁵⁵ It was a Soviet-made SA-7 "Strella" man-portable launchers that were fired, allegedly by Al Qaeda, against a U.S. military aircraft in Saudi Arabia in June 2002 and against an Israeli passenger aircraft in Kenya on November 30, 2002. Both missed their targets. SA-7s were discovered in Afghanistan by U.S. forces in December 2002.

Mine Eradication

Land mines laid during the Soviet occupation constitute one of the principal dangers to the Afghan people. The United Nations estimates that 5 -7 million mines remain scattered throughout the country, although some estimates are lower. U.N. teams have destroyed one million mines and

⁵² Saleem, Farrukh. "Where Are the Missing Stinger Missiles? Pakistan," *Friday Times*. August 17-23, 2001.

⁵³ Fullerton, John. "Afghan Authorities Hand in Stinger Missiles to U.S." Reuters, February 4, 2002.

⁵⁴ "Afghanistan Report," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. February 4, 2005.

⁵⁵ "U.S.-Made Stinger Missiles—Mobile and Lethal." Reuters, May 28, 1999.

are now focusing on de-mining priority-use, residential and commercial property, including lands around Kabul. As shown in the U.S. aid table for FY1999-FY2002 (**Table 6**), the U.S. de-mining program was providing about \$3 million per year for Afghanistan, and the amount increased to about \$7 million in the post-Taliban period. Most of the funds have gone to HALO Trust, a British organization, and the U.N. Mine Action Program for Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Compact adopted in London in February 2006 states that by 2010, the goal should be to reduce the land area of Afghanistan contaminated by mines by 70%.

Appendix. U.S. and International Sanctions Lifted

Virtually all U.S. and international sanctions on Afghanistan, some imposed during the Soviet occupation era and others on the Taliban regime, have now been lifted.

- P.L. 108-458 (December 17, 2004, referencing the 9/11 Commission recommendations) repealed bans on aid to Afghanistan outright. On October 7, 1992, President George H.W. Bush had issued Presidential Determination 93-3 that Afghanistan is no longer a Marxist-Leninist country, but the determination was not implemented before he left office. Had it been implemented, the prohibition on Afghanistan's receiving Export-Import Bank guarantees, insurance, or credits for purchases under Section 8 of the 1986 Export-Import Bank Act, would have been lifted. In addition, Afghanistan would have been able to receive U.S. assistance because the requirement would have been waived that Afghanistan apologize for the 1979 killing in Kabul of U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Adolph "Spike" Dubs. (Dubs was kidnapped in Kabul in 1979 and killed when Afghan police stormed the hideout where he was held.)
- U.N. sanctions on the Taliban imposed by Resolution 1267 (October 15, 1999), Resolution 1333 (December 19, 2000), and Resolution 1363 (July 30, 2001) have now been narrowed to penalize only Al Qaeda (by Resolution 1390, January 17, 2002). Resolution 1267 banned flights outside Afghanistan by Ariana, and directed U.N. member states to freeze Taliban assets. Resolution 1333 prohibited the provision of arms or military advice to the Taliban (directed against Pakistan); ordered a reduction of Taliban diplomatic representation abroad; and banned foreign travel by senior Taliban officials. Resolution 1363 provided for monitors in Pakistan to ensure that no weapons or military advice was provided to the Taliban.
- On January 10, 2003, President Bush signed a proclamation making Afghanistan a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), eliminating U.S. tariffs on 5,700 Afghan products. Afghanistan had been denied GSP on May 2, 1980, under Executive Order 12204 (45 F.R. 20740).
- On April 24, 1981, controls on U.S. exports to Afghanistan of agricultural products and phosphates were terminated. Such controls were imposed on June 3, 1980, as part of the sanctions against the Soviet Union for the invasion of Afghanistan, under the authority of Sections 5 and 6 of the Export Administration Act of 1979 [P.L. 96-72; 50 U.S.C. app. 2404, app. 2405].
- In mid-1992, the George H.W. Bush Administration determined that Afghanistan no longer had a "Soviet-controlled government." This opened Afghanistan to the use of U.S. funds made available for the U.S. share of U.N. organizations that provide assistance to Afghanistan.
- On March 31, 1993, after the fall of Najibullah in 1992, President Clinton, on national interest grounds, waived restrictions provided for in Section 481 (h) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 mandating sanctions on Afghanistan including: bilateral aid cuts and suspensions, including denial of Ex-Im Bank credits; the casting of negative U.S. votes for multilateral development bank loans; and a non-allocation of a U.S. sugar quota. Discretionary sanctions included denial of GSP; additional duties on exports to the United States; and

- curtailment of air transportation with the United States. Waivers were also granted in 1994 and, after the fall of the Taliban, by President Bush.
- On May 3, 2002, President Bush restored normal trade treatment to the products of Afghanistan, reversing the February 18, 1986 proclamation by President Reagan (Presidential Proclamation 5437) that suspended most-favored nation (MFN) tariff status for Afghanistan (51 F.R. 4287). The Foreign Assistance Appropriations for FY1986 [Section 552, P.L. 99-190] had authorized the denial of U.S. credits or most-favored-nation (MFN) status for Afghanistan.
 - On July 2, 2002, the State Department amended U.S. regulations (22 C.F.R. Part 126) to allow arms sales to the new Afghan government, reversing the June 14, 1996 addition of Afghanistan to the list of countries prohibited from importing U.S. defense articles and services. Arms sales to Afghanistan had also been prohibited during 1997-2002 because Afghanistan had been designated under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-132) as a state that is not cooperating with U.S. anti-terrorism efforts.
 - On July 2, 2002, President Bush formally revoked the July 4, 1999, declaration by President Clinton of a national emergency with respect to Taliban because of its hosting of bin Laden. The Clinton determination and related Executive Order 13129 had blocked Taliban assets and property in the United States, banned U.S. trade with Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan, and applied these sanctions to Ariana Afghan Airlines, triggering a blocking of Ariana assets (about \$500,000) in the United States and a ban on U.S. citizens' flying on the airline. (The ban on trade with Taliban-controlled territory had essentially ended on January 29, 2002 when the State Department determination that the Taliban controls no territory within Afghanistan.).

Figure A-1. Map of Afghanistan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

Author Contact Information

Kenneth Katzman
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs
kkatzman@crs.loc.gov, 7-7612