



United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: Background and Policy Issues

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Summary

One of the most serious challenges facing Afghans and Afghanistan today remains the lack of security. Recent moves by the Taliban and other insurgents to reestablish control of some areas of the country have slowed the pace and extent of economic development and the expansion of the Afghan government, an essential part of the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan.

The United Nations has had an active presence in Afghanistan since 1988. Since the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, international donor activity and assistance has been coordinated primarily through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), though there are other coordinating institutions tied to the Afghan government. Most observers agree that continued, substantial, long-term development is key, as is the need for international support, but questions have been raised about aid effectiveness (funds required, priorities established, impact received) and the coordination necessary to achieve sufficient improvement throughout the country. In March 2009, the Obama Administration unveiled its overall strategy for Afghanistan as a top national security priority and highlighted the unsatisfactory status of progress to date and need to find a way forward. Congress has focused on Afghanistan as a critical concern during the first six months of the 111th Congress.

The international recovery and reconstruction effort in Afghanistan is immense and complicated and, in coordination with the Afghan government, involves U.N. agencies, bilateral donors, international organizations, and local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The international community and the Afghan government have sought to establish coordinating institutions and a common set of goals in order to use donor funds effectively.

The international donor community has put great emphasis on Afghan “ownership”—meaning leadership and control—of reconstruction and development efforts by the country itself. Although the Afghan government is taking on an increasingly central role in development planning and the management of aid funds, the international community remains extensively involved in Afghan stabilization, not only in diplomacy and development assistance, but also in combating insurgents and addressing broader security issues. The coordinated aid programs of the United States and its European allies focus on a wide range of activities from strengthening the central and local governments of Afghanistan and its security forces, to promoting civilian reconstruction, reducing corruption, and preparing for elections.

This report examines the central role of UNAMA in Afghanistan. It discusses the obstacles the organization faces in coordinating international efforts and explores related policy issues and considerations for the 111th Congress. This report will be updated as events warrant.

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Introduction

Recently, the United States and the international community have turned greater attention to the central role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as coordinator of international donor activity and assistance. This shift was brought about by a broader, ongoing debate focused on U.S. and other assessments of efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. UNAMA's role has been emphasized in different contexts. For example, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1806 (2008) significantly expanded UNAMA's authority. The Declaration of the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan, which took place in Paris in June 2008, also underlined UNAMA's role in leading all aspects of civilian coordination. In unveiling a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan in March 2009, the Obama Administration highlighted the need for coordination and burdensharing among donors in building Afghan capacity and providing the necessary civilian expertise. It also emphasized the importance of a leadership role for UNAMA on these issues and as part of its coordination role. The Chairman's statement of the International Conference on Afghanistan (The Hague, March 31, 2009) also emphasized UNAMA's coordination role and urged its expansion into as many provinces as possible.

Some observers contend that some significant progress has been achieved so far in Afghanistan. U.S. embassy officials in Kabul have noted progress on reconstruction, governance, and security in many areas of Afghanistan and report that violence, although higher than previous levels and accelerating in certain areas, such as the east, is mostly limited to a few provinces. Experts argue that recent progress on civilian reconstruction and development in Afghanistan needs to be understood in the context out of which Afghanistan has emerged since 2001 following more than two decades of conflict that resulted in significant political, economic, and social decline. Reconstruction efforts must cope with the destructive impact of war and with the distortions in the Afghan economy, in which the war and drugs compete with agriculture and other economic activities. Despite the deteriorating security situation, some progress in Afghanistan's reconstruction continues to be made, and when considered over time, is not insignificant.

Other assessments are more pessimistic. Critics say that slow reconstruction, corruption, and the failure to extend Afghan government authority into rural areas and provinces, particularly in the south and east, have contributed to continuing instability and a Taliban resurgence. Afghan officials in the more stable northern part of the country have expressed concerns about the distribution of reconstruction funding. Narcotics trafficking persists, despite counter-measures, and independent militias remain a problem throughout the country, although many have been disarmed. Some experts raise concerns about increased insecurity in previously stable areas and the challenges this creates in providing humanitarian and development assistance.¹

UNAMA has been given a lead role in the civilian reconstruction effort. Many experts believe that the international effort in Afghanistan is at a critical period. The international community's expectations of UNAMA in part reflect the impact UNAMA may have on the success or failure of international efforts in Afghanistan. This report provides an analysis of UNAMA's role in Afghanistan and the key policy issues it faces on civilian reconstruction.

¹ For background information, see CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman. For a map of Afghanistan, see **Appendix A**.

Setting the Context

The United States, other countries, and international relief organizations have long been active in providing assistance to the Afghan people. Afghanistan was admitted as a member of the United Nations on November 19, 1946, and has had a relationship with the United Nations that goes back more than 60 years. During the 1980s, the United States, along with other countries, funded the mujahedin forces fighting against the Soviet Union, as well as provided humanitarian aid to Afghans who fled to refugee camps in Pakistan. In 1988, the Geneva Peace Accords were signed, which led to the Soviet withdrawal nearly a decade after its invasion.²

With the peace accord in place, the United Nations established an active presence in Afghanistan. It generally maintains separate offices for (1) political and peace processes (Pillar I) and (2) humanitarian and reconstruction operations (Pillar II).³ During the violent civil war that lasted through the 1990s, the United Nations continued to seek a peace agreement that would allow for sustained reconstruction. However, with the failure of several peace agreements, the international donor community focused primarily on humanitarian aid because the conditions were not stable for long-term development.⁴ Donors also did not want to provide assistance to the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist movement that ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, when it was ousted by U.S.-backed Afghan factions.⁵

Afghanistan was one of the least developed countries in the world even prior to the outbreak of war in 1978.⁶ The assistance situation changed dramatically once the Taliban was removed from power following the U.S.-led military intervention in 2001. The implementation of humanitarian assistance and the development of reconstruction plans quickly took shape when Afghans met under U.N. auspices to decide on a governance plan, which resulted in the Bonn Agreement, signed on December 5, 2001. On December 22, 2001, an interim government was formed with Hamid Karzai as its leader. This paved the way for a constitution, considered the most progressive in Afghan history, which was approved at a “constitutional *loya jirga*” (traditional Afghan assembly) in January 2004. Hamid Karzai was elected president in October 2004, and parliamentary and provincial elections were subsequently held in September 2005. The next presidential and provincial elections are to be held on August 20, 2009, with parliamentary elections likely to follow about one year later in 2010. The Afghan government has been working with the international donor community on reconstruction programs and plans since a major donor conference in January 2002 in Tokyo.

The Afghan government and the international community face a daunting task. Many problems remain in every reconstruction sector. Strategic challenges are numerous and continue to put the

² After the Soviet Union left Afghanistan, the United States sharply reduced its aid programs to Afghanistan.

³ Since 1988, these offices received a series of different names, but most recently until 2002, the political office was run by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSM) and the humanitarian and reconstruction office was run by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

⁴ Usually, the international donor community is considered to be made up of international organizations and individual donor countries.

⁵ From FY1994 through FY2001, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) did not have a mission in Afghanistan, but continued to provide aid mainly through U.N. agencies and NGOs.

⁶ In 2007, Afghanistan placed 174th out of 178 countries on global rankings of the Human Development Index (HDI), which fell slightly under that of 2004 and well behind its regional neighbors. See *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*, U.N. Development Programme and the Center for Policy and Development, Kabul University, 2007.

state-building effort in Afghanistan at risk. Reconstruction is seen by many as the single most important factor for sustaining peace. According to many observers, successful development will stem public disillusionment with the new system in Afghanistan and will help keep Afghanistan from again becoming a permanent haven for terrorists.

Mandate, Structure, and Funding

The role of UNAMA is to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and to lead the international community in this effort. In support of the Government of Afghanistan, UNAMA coordinates efforts to rebuild the country and strengthen governance, development, and stability.

Mandate

On March 28, 2002, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1401 (2002) established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as a political and “integrated” mission, directed and supported by the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to help implement the Bonn Agreement. UNAMA aims to bring together two key elements—one with a political focus and the other dealing with humanitarian and development efforts. Lakhdar Brahimi, then Special Representative for the U.N. Secretary-General to Afghanistan, organized the Bonn Agreement and directed UNAMA until December 2004. UNAMA’s mandate is renewed annually in March. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1868 (2009) extends UNAMA’s mandate for another year until March 23, 2010.⁷

Significantly, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1806 (2008) expanded the mandate to include a “super envoy” concept that would represent the United Nations, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1868 (2009) incorporates UNAMA’s increased scope, which includes leading international civilian efforts to support the Afghan government, increasing cooperation with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and developing greater political outreach with Afghan leaders.⁸

Organization

Beginning in March 2008, the head of UNAMA, and Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General (SRSG) for Afghanistan, with expanded powers over his predecessors, is Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide.⁹ Two new Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-

⁷ The priorities of the Mission are outlined in detail in **Appendix D**, and some are discussed in the policy section of this report.

⁸ ISAF is a NATO-led operation in Afghanistan authorized by the U.N. Security Council under a peace enforcement mandate (Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter) and established to assist the Government of Afghanistan in maintaining security. See U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1386 (2001), 1413 (2002), 1444 (2002), 1510 (2003), 1563 (2004), 1623 (2005), 1707 (2006), 1776 (2007) and 1833 (2008). Its current mandate extends the authorization for a period of 12 months beyond October 13, 2008. ISAF has been deployed in Afghanistan since the end of 2001. In 2003, NATO took over leadership of ISAF.

⁹ In January 2008, with U.S. support, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon tentatively appointed British diplomat Paddy Ashdown to this “super envoy” position, but President Karzai rejected the appointment reportedly over concerns about the scope of authority of such an envoy, in particular its potential to dilute the U.S. role in Afghanistan. Some contend that for political purposes, Karzai might have also sought to show independence from the international (continued...)

General (DSRSG) for Afghanistan have recently been appointed: Peter W. Galbraith (of the United States) covers Political Affairs, and Robert Watkins (of Canada) covers Relief, Recovery, and Reconstruction (RRR). Mr. Watkins also serves as the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) Resident Representative, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan.

UNAMA has approximately 1,500 staff, of which about 80% are Afghan nationals (see organizational chart in **Appendix B**.) It coordinates all activities of the U.N. system in Afghanistan, which includes the participation of 18 U.N. agencies and several other organizations considered to be part of the U.N. country team (see **Appendix C**).¹⁰ UNAMA has eight regional offices and 12 provincial offices. The participants at the International Conference on Afghanistan in March 2009 emphasized that UNAMA should expand its presence into as many provinces as possible.¹¹

Budget

The total Calendar Year (CY) 2008 expenditures for UNAMA were \$86.34 million, which was \$10.2 million above the approved budget amount. With an expanded mandate, the U.N. General Assembly agreed to an increase of 91.5% in the Mission's CY2009 budget to \$168 million. This number reflects an increase in staff, the opening of four additional provincial offices, and the strengthening of regional offices in Tehran and Islamabad. UNAMA is funded through assessed contributions to the U.N. regular budget. The U.S. assessment is 22% (the same level as for the U.N. regular budget) or approximately \$36.96 million for CY2009.

Framework for Afghanistan's Reconstruction Strategy

UNAMA was established in part to facilitate the implementation of the 2001 Bonn Agreement. In addition to this landmark document, two subsequent agreements between the Afghan government and the international community outline the overall Afghanistan reconstruction strategy: The 2006 Afghanistan Compact and the 2008 Afghanistan National Development Strategy. The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, of which UNAMA is co-chair, serves as a coordinating and monitoring mechanism for the implementation of these agreements. In addition, several international conferences, such as the Paris Conference in 2008, have provided guidance and built international support for the way forward in Afghanistan.

Bonn Agreement—Bonn 2001

The Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, or Bonn Agreement, was signed in Bonn, Germany, on

(...continued)

community. Ashdown withdrew his name on January 28, 2008.

¹⁰ For a map of the U.N. presence across Afghanistan, see **Appendix D**.

¹¹ Chairman's Statement of the International Conference on Afghanistan, The Hague, March 31, 2009. For a map of UNAMA offices, see **Appendix E**.

December 5, 2001. It was endorsed by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1385 (2001). Under U.N. auspices, Afghan participants met to outline a process for the political transition in Afghanistan. The Bonn Agreement established an Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) on December 22, 2001, which was made up of 30 members and headed by Chairman Hamid Karzai. An Emergency “*loya jirga*” (traditional Afghan assembly) held in June 2002 replaced the AIA with a Transitional Authority (TA). The TA brought together a broad transitional administration to lead the country until a full government could be elected. A constitution, considered the most progressive in Afghan history, was approved at a “constitutional *loya jirga*” in January 2004. Hamid Karzai was elected president in October 2004, and parliamentary and provincial elections were subsequently held in September 2005. The Bonn Agreement also called for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Afghanistan and a Judicial Commission. It requested the U.N. Security Council to consider authorizing the deployment of a U.N.-mandated security force, outlined the role of the United Nations during the interim period, and referred to the need for cooperation with the international community on a number of issues, including reconstruction, elections, counternarcotics, crime, and terrorism. The Bonn Agreement was fully implemented in 2005.

Afghanistan Compact—London 2006

Donor countries and the Afghan government met at the London Conference in February 2006 to adopt the Afghanistan Compact (Compact), which provided a five-year time line (2006-2011) for addressing three main areas of activity, each with identified goals and outcomes: Security, Governance (Rule of Law and Human Rights), and Economic and Social Development. It also highlighted the cross-cutting issue of narcotics. The Compact acknowledged the need for Afghanistan to become more self-reliant while affirming the responsibilities required to achieve that goal. The international community agreed to monitor implementation of the Compact and the outlined benchmarks, and to improve aid effectiveness and accountability.¹²

Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)—Paris 2008

The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which was signed by President Karzai in April 2008 and later presented as the “blueprint for the development of Afghanistan” at the donors conference in Paris, France, on June 12, 2008, is a policy paper created by the Afghan government. It builds on the Compact and follows a plan for establishing goals and measurable targets that is similar to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals.¹³ Focusing on the three issue areas identified in the Compact (security, governance, economic growth/poverty reduction), it looks ahead to a vision for Afghanistan in the year 2020 while identifying specific goals to be achieved over five years between 2008 and 2013.¹⁴ The ANDS envisions that most of the funding

¹² The Afghanistan Compact, London 31 January-1 February 2006.

¹³ Examples of MDGs include cutting the number of people living on less than a dollar a day by half; ensuring that all children receive primary schooling; reducing the number of people who do not have access to safe drinking water by half; and reversing the spread of diseases such as malaria and HIV, among other things. More information on MDGs is available at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

¹⁴ See Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Executive Summary, 1387 – 1391 (2008 – 2013), A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. ANDS also serves as Afghanistan’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

required would be provided by donors and that these funds would be distributed through the central government.

Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB)

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) was established in 2008 and is the coordination body between the Afghan government and the international community. UNAMA is co-chair of the JCMB and has a central role in helping implement the development strategies outlined in the Compact and the monitoring activities put forward in ANDS. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1806 (2008) and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1868 (2009) direct UNAMA, in that capacity, to coordinate the work of international donors and organizations with an emphasis on aid effectiveness. The JCMB co-chairs reviewed the Compact and presented their findings at the June 2008 conference in Paris, stating that significant progress had been made in health and education, infrastructure and economic growth, and strengthening of Afghan national security forces.

International Donor Conferences and Trust Funds

The international donor community has established a series of institutional mechanisms for developing and coordinating reconstruction for countries emerging from conflict. Though adapted to specific situations, these mechanisms are generally similar. In November 2001, with the possibility of the fall of the Taliban and a potential opening for sustainable reconstruction work, the international donor community quickly established and implemented new initiatives. In addition to providing their own assistance to Afghanistan, international organizations and international financial institutions administered donor conferences, trust funds, and humanitarian and reconstruction programs. A brief summary of the main international donor conferences demonstrates the ongoing challenges that remain in Afghanistan and the repeated articulation of some of the issues. At the same time, it also shows increased participation by international stakeholders, perhaps, many contend, as a barometer of the importance that has now been ascribed to Afghanistan's future.¹⁵

¹⁵ Pledges represent amounts that countries have been willing to earmark for Afghanistan. See the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, October 2008. For a list of donor country pledges 2002-2008, see **Appendix F**. Many inside and outside the Afghan government have criticized donors for not following through on their pledges. However, donor conferences in general exhibit problems, such as slow disbursement of funds, weak mechanisms for pledging and mobilizing assistance, inadequate devices for tracking aid flows, inappropriate forms of aid conditionality, poor articulation between relief and development efforts, and weak coordination within the donor community. Donors over-pledge, pledge already allocated funds, and slowly or never fulfill their pledges. In the case of Afghanistan, the international community has sought to avoid some of these problems through the creation of an aid database, which has made pledging, tracking, and monitoring more transparent. Whether donor conferences and trust funds are the best way to fund reconstruction has been questioned by some observers.

International Donor Conferences¹⁶

- **Bonn Conference** (December 22, 2001)—With the Bonn Agreement and interim government in place, UNDP organized a donor conference in which the interim government presented its reconstruction plans and country representatives and international NGOs made pledges in order to show international support for those plans.
- **Tokyo Conference** (January 21-22, 2002)—A ministerial conference, co-hosted by Japan, the United States, the European Union, and Saudi Arabia, was convened in Tokyo to discuss aid to Afghanistan. Donors pledged \$4.5 billion.
- **Berlin Conference** (April 1, 2004)—The conference brought together 65 representatives from countries and international organizations to focus on reconstruction in Afghanistan. Pledges exceeded \$8.2 billion.
- **London Conference** (February 1, 2006)—At the conference in London, the government of Afghanistan and the international community signed the Compact that outlined the principles of their cooperation over the next five years. Donors pledged \$10.5 billion.
- **Paris Conference** (June 12, 2008)—The Afghan government and international community met in Paris in June of the same year to reiterate their partnership, with guidance from the Compact and the Afghan government’s assigned leadership role in the implementation plan outlined in ANDS. The conferees affirmed the expanded role of UNAMA in all aspects of coordination. Key priorities identified at the conference included a wide range of activities: strengthening democracy and governance; investing in infrastructure and the private sector; improving aid effectiveness and reducing corruption; improving counter-narcotics measures; and ensuring the needs of all Afghans would be addressed through government services, greater civil society participation, and respect for human rights.
- **The Hague Conference** (March 31, 2009)—More than 80 countries met in The Hague for the “International Conference on Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Strategy in a Regional Context,” which was hosted by the government of the Netherlands and UNAMA. The conference reinforced the central role outlined for UNAMA as coordinator of international action and assistance.¹⁷ It also generated consensus on several points, including the need for a more directed agenda for Afghanistan, emphasizing the civilian capacity and institution-building, with sustained priority areas: security, governance, economic growth, and regional cooperation.

¹⁶ Several other meetings and conferences with an Afghanistan focus have taken place, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation March 27, 2009, in Moscow, Russia; the third Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, May 13-14 in Islamabad, Pakistan; a summit with the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan on May 19, 2009; and a meeting between NATO heads of state and government in Strasbourg on April 3-4, 2009.

¹⁷ Chairman’s Statement of the International Conference on Afghanistan, The Hague, March 31, 2009. See also U.N. document, Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and Security Council, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, A/63/892, S/2009/323, June 23, 2009.

Trust Funds

At the start of the civilian reconstruction effort in Afghanistan in 2002, the international community placed great emphasis on paying the Afghan government's current expenditures, most importantly the salaries of government employees to enhance government capacity. Toward this end, several trust funds were established. Trust funds allow for rapid distribution of monies because they centralize funding and remove the administrative requirements of drawing from multiple funds. Donor countries decide to contribute to these trust funds and urge others to make contributions. The Afghan Interim Authority Fund (AIAF), for example, was created for donor contributions to the first six months during governmental operations and other related activities. On July 22, 2002, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) succeeded the AIAF. In addition, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) was established to cover the rehabilitation of police facilities, salaries, training and capacity-building, and the procurement of non-lethal equipment. Following on these trust funds, the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund was also established.

Administered by the World Bank, the ARTF continues to provide funds for the government's budget, investment activities and programs including quick-impact recovery projects, government training programs for Afghans, and support for the National Solidarity Program. ARTF has also expanded into other sectors such as education, agriculture, justice, and urban infrastructure. ARTF currently provides approximately half of the government's non-security operating costs and over a quarter of its development expenditures.¹⁸ Recently, donors agreed to extend the ARTF until 2020. In part this reflects an ongoing commitment by donors to utilize the ARTF mechanism, and in part it is an acknowledgement of the development challenges that remain in Afghanistan.

U.S. Assistance

Before 2001, U.S. aid to Afghanistan flowed mainly through U.N. agencies and NGOs, but the U.S. role increased dramatically after the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). U.S. government funding for assistance has come from three main agencies—the Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the State Department.¹⁹ Military and security assistance since 2001 represents more than half of U.S. funding for Afghanistan and has been provided through DOD, mainly through the Afghan Security Forces Fund, the Commander's Emergency Response Program, and other funds appropriated for counternarcotics and other programs. Funds provided for development and humanitarian-related activities and implemented mainly through USAID and the State Department are distributed to international organizations and non-governmental organizations, which provide services in Afghanistan, or directly to the Afghan government. Afghanistan also receives U.S. aid through multilateral institutions. The most important avenue is through the United Nations and its affiliated agencies and through international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Some U.S. funding for Afghanistan

¹⁸ Along with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and United Nations Development Program make up the ARTF Management Committee. The latest report on the ARTF is at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFGHANISTAN/Resources/Afghanistan-Reconstructional-Trust-Fund/ARTF_Annual_ReportSY1387.pdf

¹⁹ Other funds are distributed through U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

comes from U.S. dues and additional voluntary donations to the United Nations through the State Department's International Organizations account or through the State Department's Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account.²⁰

UNAMA's 2009 Mandate for the International Civilian Effort in Afghanistan

In deciding to extend the mandate of UNAMA until March 23, 2010, the U.N. Security Council emphasized specific priorities for UNAMA.²¹ It also asked the U.N. Secretary-General to report to the Security Council every three months on developments in Afghanistan. In addition, it requested the U.N. Secretary-General to establish benchmarks (drawing on the mandate and identified priorities) to determine progress in their implementation. The Secretary-General's June 2009 report was supposed to provide an update on the status of the benchmarks; instead, the U.N. Secretary-General requested a delay in finalizing the benchmarks until his September 2009 report.²²

The priorities below are outlined in U.N. Security Council resolution 1868 (2009) as key areas of UNAMA's work in Afghanistan:²³

- promote more coherent support by the international community to the Afghan government;
- strengthen cooperation with ISAF;
- provide political outreach through a strengthened and expanded presence throughout the country;
- provide good offices in support of Afghan-led reconciliation programs;
- support efforts to improve governance and the rule of law and to combat corruption;
- play a central coordinating role to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- monitor the human rights situation of civilians and coordinate human rights protection;
- support the electoral process through the Afghan Independent Electoral Commission;
- support regional cooperation in working for a more stable and prosperous Afghanistan.²⁴

²⁰ For more information on these efforts, see CRS Report R40699, *Afghanistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff.

²¹ These priorities were initially set out in paragraph 4 of resolution 1806 (2008) and then restated in paragraph 4 of resolution 1868 (2009).

²² Future updates of this report will address the status of progress in each of the nine areas once UNAMA sets out its benchmark strategy.

²³ See **Appendix G** for more information on these priorities.

²⁴ Bullet points from UNAMA Fact Sheet, March 28, 2008.

Policy Issues

Afghanistan is of significant interest to the 111th Congress and at the top of the Obama Administration's national security agenda. As congressional concerns regarding Afghanistan continue to grow, UNAMA's role as a key player in coordinating international donor activity and assistance may be of particular interest, in part because the extent to which UNAMA is successful may reduce the need for relief and reconstruction activities currently conducted by the United States. Congress may also raise questions related to the budget, oversight of benchmarks and activities, and its role in overseeing aid effectiveness.

Recent Developments and Possible Roles for UNAMA

The following sections address areas where UNAMA is playing a significant role.

Deteriorating Security Situation and Limited Progress on Development

There are several issues of concern for the international community, the Afghan government, and observers. First, the increasing lack of security has threatened the progress of development. According to the U.N. Secretary-General, violence has increased in parts of the country to levels not seen since 2001.²⁵ In 2009, the monthly average of security incidents increased by 43%. Targeted attacks on unarmed civil servants and the aid community, including the United Nations, have also risen. Second, although progress has been made on development (see **Appendix H** for a list of key achievements since 2002), some observers argue that Afghans have become frustrated with what they perceive as little evidence of development. There are many possible explanations for the perceived lack of progress, including lack of security, lack of human and physical capacity to implement substantial development, inadequate funding levels, and a focus on other funding priorities.

It is well understood that both security and progress on development are necessary in order to maintain international donor interest in Afghan development, encourage private investment in Afghanistan, and maintain Afghans' hope in improvement in their country and their own lives. The deteriorating security situation continues to take center stage as the key issue in Afghanistan while international stakeholders try to find ways to enable civilian efforts to take hold and be sustained. As part of this effort, for example, UNAMA is coordinating with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance and ISAF on a pilot project to fashion local approaches to securing communities.

August 2009 Elections

Many experts have placed significant emphasis on the need for credible, free, and fair presidential and provincial elections on August 20, 2009. The elections are seen as a potential benchmark in the promotion of good governance, and as an indicator of the confidence of the Afghan people in and consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan. The elections are front and center in Afghan politics and in international community circles. Of particular concern to the United Nations are

²⁵ Report of the U.N. Secretary General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, A/63/892, S/2009/323, June 23, 2009.

questions about corruption (with some evidence that there have already been some problem in the registration of candidates), finding ways to handle electoral irregularities, and ensuring the safety and security of civilians prior to and during the elections. Approximately 15.6 million voters (38% of whom are women) updated their registrations. The final list of candidates includes 44 presidential candidates and 3,178 provincial council candidates, 328 of whom are women. UNAMA has assisted with the registration and candidate nomination process and worked to resolve controversies such as the date of the elections and questions about the powers of the President when the Presidential term expired. UNAMA has also contributed technical support for the election process and provided guidance to a range of actors, including the Independent Election Commission, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and members of civil society.

Civilian Casualties from Air Strikes

UNAMA reported that 1,013 civilian casualties occurred between January and June 2009, mostly in the south and eastern parts of the country, an increase of 24% over the same time last year.²⁶ Of these casualties, 59% were caused by anti-government elements and 30.5% were attributed to international and Afghan forces (12% could not be attributed). Most civilian casualties result from targeted attacks by the Taliban and terrorist groups. At the same time, extensive press coverage from bombing campaigns in Afghanistan reveals that there have been a number of innocent victims of erroneous U.S. bombings. While the hunt for the Taliban and Al Qaeda continues, the potential for mistaken targets remains a risk. In recent months, claims of erroneous bombing targets have highlighted the difficulty of intelligence gathering and security problems on the ground. The issue is blurred by the recognition that the end result may not be a matter of simple human error, but rather a complex combination of factors for which it is more difficult to determine responsibility. Collateral damage includes civilian losses, considered to be a by-product of war, despite efforts to minimize innocent loss of life. Concerns about civilian casualties from air strikes, particularly in populated areas, have also focused on the degree to which this affects the Afghan population's perception of the ISAF and U.S.-led forces, and whether the international forces are doing enough to protect civilians. Some experts are concerned that this could become an issue in the elections. UNAMA has been outspoken over its concerns regarding civilian casualties.²⁷

Benchmarks and Organizational Issues

Benchmarks to Measure Progress on UNAMA's Priorities

In his June 2009 report, the U.N. Secretary-General clarified that the benchmarks to measure progress on UNAMA's priorities (and yet to be developed) would focus on broad areas in UNAMA's mandate and incorporate goals outlined in the agreed national strategies. The benchmarks would be results-based rather than tied to specific target dates. While UNAMA has

²⁶ Report of the U.N. Secretary General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, A/63/892, S/2009/323, June 23, 2009; UNAMA, Human Rights Unit, *Afghanistan: Mid Year Bulletin on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2009, July 2009.

²⁷ U.N. Security Council, *Extending Mandate of U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan*, Security Council Condemns All Attacks on Civilians, Recruitment of Child Soldiers, SC/9624, March 23, 2009; Highlights of the Noon Briefing, U.N. Headquarters, New York, June 30, 2009.

the capacity to monitor progress in some areas, the Secretary-General noted that this responsibility would also need to be shared with the Afghan government and other members of the international community. Furthermore, developing benchmarks in a comprehensive way would depend on creating an appropriate consultation process with the Afghan government and other international stakeholders.

Some experts believe that on the one hand, regular reports on benchmarks could help UNAMA execute its mandate in a more effective manner and would provide an opportunity to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of its strategy on a regular basis. On the other hand, others have questioned whether this is the most efficient way of measuring and tracking implementation of the mandate, whether it is possible to see progress in three-month intervals, and whether this may narrow the scope of how UNAMA's success or failure may be judged. How the benchmarks are set out, with what criteria, and how the message of progress towards these benchmarks is conveyed, could have a significant impact on the perception of UNAMA's performance during a critical year.

Resources and Expansion of UNAMA

The U.N. Security Council, and most recently the participants at the March 2009 conference in The Hague, have called for the expansion of UNAMA's presence to each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. UNAMA's regional and provincial offices are viewed by many as a means to help support the civilian surge, to further the work of national programs (such as ANDS), and to foster participation at the subnational level by the local government and civil society. In order to expand into each province, UNAMA would need additional resources and funding to open another 11 offices. The U.N. Secretary-General has stated that to meet the expectations outlined in its mandate and to sustain its progress so far, the mission will need to be strengthened in 2010.²⁸

Afghan Participation

Experts emphasize the need to create Afghan jobs and to build Afghan capacity. Nevertheless, very little has been said about the mechanics of doing so or discerning the differing views that exist within the Afghan community. The international donor community has put great emphasis on "ownership"—meaning leadership and control—of reconstruction efforts by the country itself. The degree to which Afghans feel a part of what is at stake in their country and to what has been achieved so far is unclear. Some argue that the people and government of Afghanistan are increasingly taking the lead and that the international community is moving toward a supporting role, while others argue just the opposite is taking place. Some are concerned that not enough aid gets directly to the people and that Afghans see little improvement in their lives. It is recognized by many that Afghans are a critical piece of the puzzle in their country's success. The outcome of the August elections may provide an indicator of the views from within the country, but no matter the final result, finding ways to empower Afghans in Afghanistan emphasizes the importance of an integrated approach and one that builds needed capacity on multiple levels.

²⁸ Report of the U.N. Secretary General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, A/63/892, S/2009/323, June 23, 2009.

Donor Aid Effectiveness

In his June 2009 report, the U.N. Secretary-General commented on three “interlinked strategic shifts” in Afghanistan that point to the emergence of an “aid effectiveness framework.” With UNAMA as the coordinator, these included (1) an emphasis on civilian efforts, (2) a focus on subnational governance and service delivery, and (3) signs that the international efforts are beginning to line up behind comprehensive government programs that, by agreement, serve as the basis for moving forward.²⁹

International Donors

President Hamid Karzai and his ministers have complained that virtually all international aid is decided and provided directly by international donors. Karzai has called the international development efforts a “parallel government” that is not serving the needs of Afghans. He publicly called for a higher percentage of international aid to be channeled through the Afghan government, or at least for development priorities to be determined in partnership with the Afghan government. This Afghan sentiment was supported in the Compact and the strategy outlined in ANDS. To some extent, the Afghan government remains in a weak position to insist on greater input in setting development priorities because it is so dependent on the international community for security and development funds. In addition, the international donor community provides direct budgetary support to the Afghan government through the ARTF.

International donors, for their part, have complained about widely reported corruption, waste and abuse within the Afghan bureaucracy that have hampered implementation of projects. On the one hand, UNAMA is expected to take the lead on ensuring that donors honor their commitments and align their efforts in a transparent manner behind the financing and implementation of ANDS. To sustain international support, it needs to explain both the achievements and challenges. Nevertheless, on the other hand, UNAMA is also keen to see the capacity of government institutions strengthened with accountability measures in place to provide donors with the confidence to commit funds to Afghanistan’s central budget, and to ensure the Afghan government is able to tackle the problem of corruption. Aid effectiveness is a central part of UNAMA’s mandate and an area where it places great emphasis in its work with the Afghan government and international donors.

Aid Coordination

The international community continues to struggle with establishing effective coordinating mechanisms and institutions to help move the development process forward. The institutional networks have altered over time, with UNAMA taking on the main coordinating role in March 2002 and, under its recent mandates, a renewed emphasis on expanding that role. The international community and the Afghan government have sought to establish a common set of goals in order to coordinate activities and utilize donor funds most effectively.

Some observers argue that the Afghan government, international organizations, NGOs, donor countries, and others are following their own priorities and programs, and therefore do not

²⁹ Report of the U.N. Secretary General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, A/63/892, S/2009/323, June 23, 2009.

coordinate their efforts as effectively as possible. Some, however, have suggested that complete coordination may be both unnecessary and ineffective, especially when different organizations do not share common goals or strategies. For example, the United Nations, the United States, and others have in the past supported a specific strategy intended to bolster the Karzai government through development. For those in Afghanistan and the region who did not support this goal of Karzai empowerment or for those who were marginalized by regime change (such as former supporters of the Taliban regime), supposedly neutral, non-partisan humanitarian assistance could appear partisan. Coordination is a complicated matter, but some would argue that there should be coordination only among like-minded organizations, such as among humanitarian groups, separate from the coordination of political groups, and separate from the coordination of military oriented groups. In speeches in Washington, DC, in late April 2008, and since then, the SRSG for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, has said that additional capacity-building resources are needed, and that some efforts by international donors duplicate each other or are tied to purchasing decisions by Western countries.

Sustained Support from the United States

The Obama Administration has put forward a new strategy for Afghanistan. Other key international stakeholders have also refocused their efforts. Some experts argue there needs to be greater U.S., including congressional, attention to the United Nation's role in Afghanistan and the implementation of its expanded priorities. Other experts say that sustained (and increased) support from the United States in the form of public statements, reporting, transparency, and oversight is critical to UNAMA and to the importance attached to its mission. And yet some are concerned that UNAMA not become "Americanized" or controlled by the United States. The recent appointment of Peter Galbraith as DSRSG for Afghanistan was viewed as controversial because of fears of undue influence by the Americans.

Negative views about the United Nations itself could also undermine U.S. support for UNAMA. In general, Congress supports the United Nations, but it has also been critical of the organization, particularly with regard to perceived inefficiencies and insufficient accountability, duplication of efforts across agency mandates and missions, and allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse of U.N. resources. The 111th Congress is likely to continue to focus on broad U.N. reform efforts and priorities in general, and with increased attention toward Afghanistan, could decide to conduct greater oversight of UNAMA's activities and progress.

Other questions that have raised tensions in the past, such as how much of U.S. foreign assistance to Afghanistan should be provided bilaterally and how much through multilateral organizations like the United Nations, may also prove challenging as UNAMA manages the complexities of donor relations and policy objectives in Afghanistan.

Appendix A. Map of Afghanistan

Figure A-I. Map of Afghanistan



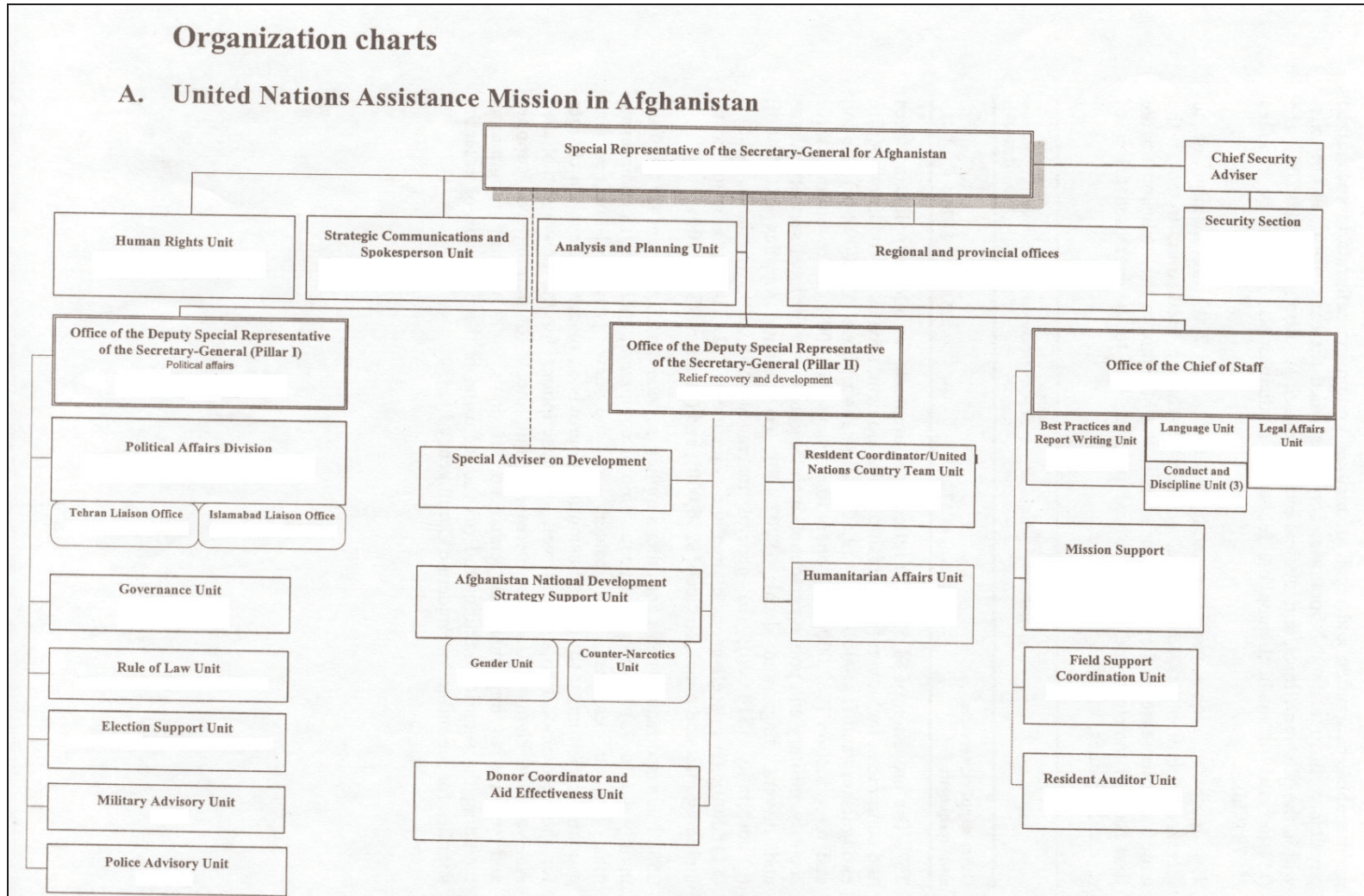
Map No. 3056 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS July 2009

Department of Field Support Cartographic Section

Source: UNAMA, 2009.

Appendix B. UNAMA Organizational Chart

Figure B-I. UNAMA Organization Chart



Source: UNAMA, 2008.

Appendix C. The U.N. Country Team

The following organizations and U.N. agencies make up the country team in Afghanistan.³⁰

Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

International Labor Organization (ILO)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA)

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)

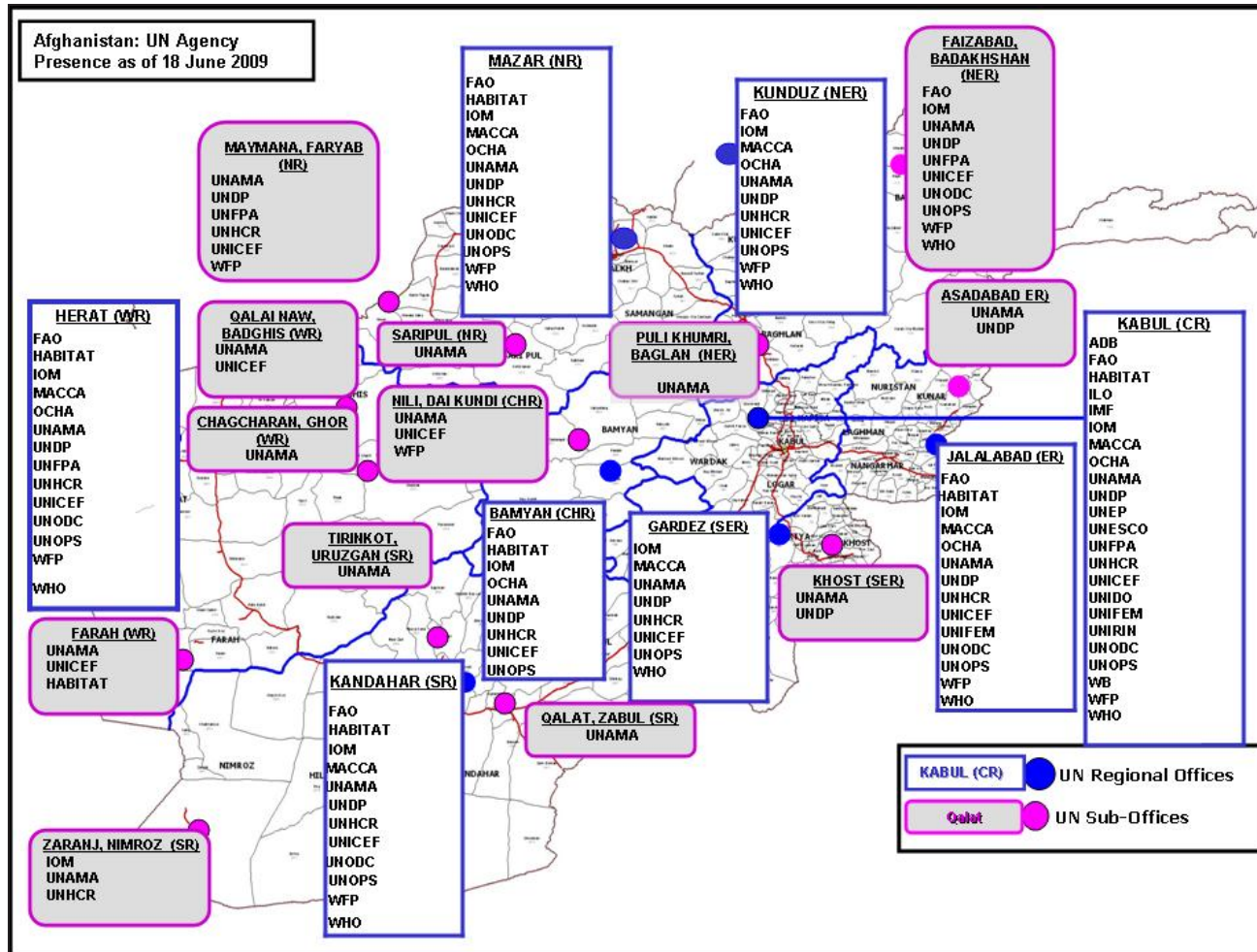
United Nations World Health Organization (WHO)

World Bank (WB)

³⁰ Source: UNAMA, June 2009.

Appendix D. Map of U.N. Presence in Afghanistan

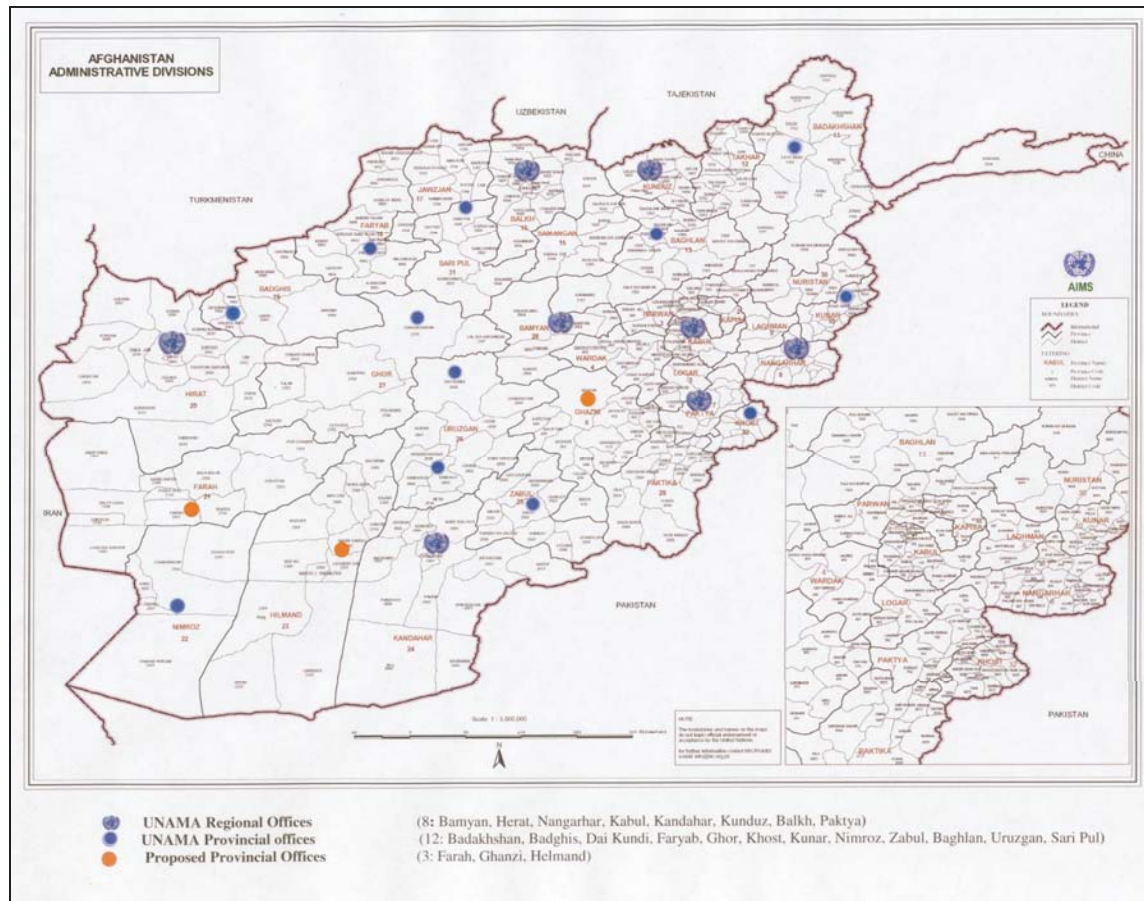
Figure D-I. Map of U.N. Presence in Afghanistan



Source: UNAMA, July 2009.

Appendix E. Map of UNAMA Offices

Figure E-I. Map of UNAMA Offices



Appendix F. Afghanistan International Community Donors List

(in \$ millions)

Donor	Pledges at the Paris Conference to support the Afghanistan National Development Strategy		Total Pledge	Total Pledges—4Q FY1380 to FY1389 (January 2002- March 2011)
	Fresh	Old		
ADB	500.00	800.00	1,300.00	2,200.00
Aga Khan	100.00		100.00	200.00
Australia	232.36		232.36	440.23
Austria				14.00
Belgium	46.80		46.80	86.80
Brazil	1.00		1.00	1.00
Canada	600.00		600.00	1,479.75
China	7.50		7.50	196.50
Croatia	28.10		28.10	28.10
Czech Republic	22.00		22.00	22.00
Denmark	430.00	0.00	430.00	683.04
EC		780.00	780.00	1,768.65
ECHO	0.00	0.00	0.00	268.20
Egypt	2.00		2.00	2.00
Estonia			0.00	.30
Finland	30.00	45.00	75.00	152.00
France	126.80	38.70	165.50	208.00
Germany	280.80	374.40	655.20	1,108.32
Global Fund				11.48
Greece	3.10		3.10	12.70
Hungary	3.00		3.00	3.00
India	450.00		450.00	1,200.00
Iran	350.00		350.00	1,164.00
Ireland	13.50		13.50	33.40
Islamic Dev Bank			0.00	70.00
Italy	234.00		234.00	637.36
Japan	550.00		550.00	1,900.00
Kazakhstan	0.00		0.00	4.00
Korea (Rep of)	30.00		30.00	86.20
Kuwait	30.00		30.00	75.00

Donor	Pledges at the Paris Conference to support the Afghanistan National Development Strategy			Total Pledges—4Q FY1380 to FY1389 (January 2002- March 2011)
	Fresh	Old	Total Pledge	
Luxembourg	0.00		0.00	7.20
Malta	0.30		0.30	0.30
Netherlands	1,209.00		1,209.00	1,697.00
New Zealand	15.00		15.00	30.85
Norway	669.00	6.00	675.00	977.00
Oman	3.00		3.00	9.00
Org Islamic Conf	0.00		0.00	15.00
Pakistan	20.00		20.00	305.00
Poland	1.30		1.30	6.33
Portugal	0.00		0.00	1.20
Qatar	4.00		4.00	24.00
Russian Federation	0.00	0.00	0.00	141.00
Saudi Arabia	0.00	0.00	0.00	533.00
Slovakia	1.00		1.00	1.00
Spain	234.00		234.00	486.47
Sweden	0.00		0.00	288.60
Switzerland			0.00	134.00
Taiwan	0.00		0.00	28.60
Turkey	100.00		100.00	190.00
UAE	250.00		250.00	323.70
UK	1,200.00		1,200.00	2,897.00
UN Agencies	0.00	0.00	0.00	252.40
USA	7,095.40	3,104.60	10,200.00	31,851.86
Vietnam	0.01		0.01	0.01
World Bank	433.00	667.00	1,100.00	2,803.00
Other Donors	0.00	0.00	0.00	92.77
Total	15,305.97	5,815.70	21,121.87	57,149.62

Source: Office of the SIGAR, October 30, 2008 Report to Congress.

Appendix G. Priorities in UNAMA's 2009 Mandate

The priorities below were identified by the U.N. Security Council in resolution 1868 (2009) as key areas of UNAMA's work in Afghanistan:³¹

- promote more coherent support by the international community to the Afghan Government;

Promote, as co-chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), more coherent support by the international community to the Afghan Government and the adherence to the principles of aid effectiveness enumerated in the Afghanistan Compact, including through mobilization of resources, coordination of the assistance provided by international donors and organizations, and direction of the contributions of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in particular for counter-narcotics, reconstruction, and development activities;

- strengthen cooperation with ISAF;

Strengthen the cooperation with ISAF at all levels and throughout the country, in accordance with their existing mandates, in order to improve civil-military coordination, to facilitate the timely exchange of information and to ensure coherence between the activities of national and international security forces and of civilian actors in support of an Afghan-led development and stabilization process, including through engagement with provincial reconstruction teams and engagement with non-governmental organizations;

- provide political outreach through a strengthened and expanded presence throughout the country;

Through a strengthened and expanded presence throughout the country, provide political outreach, promote at the local level the implementation of the Compact, of the ANDS and of the National Drugs Control Strategy, and facilitate inclusion in and understanding of the Government's policies;

- provide good offices in support of Afghan-led reconciliation programs;

Provide good offices to support, if requested by the Afghan Government, the implementation of Afghan-led reconciliation programmes, within the framework of the Afghan Constitution and with full respect for the implementation of measures introduced by the Security Council in its resolution 1267 (1999) and other relevant resolutions of the Council;

- support efforts to improve governance and the rule of law and to combat corruption;

Support and strengthen efforts to improve governance and the rule of law and to combat corruption at the local and national levels, and to promote development initiatives at the local level with a view to helping bring the benefits of peace and deliver services in a timely and sustainable manner;

- play a central coordinating role to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid;

³¹ Text in italics is taken directly from U.N. Security Council resolution 1868 (2009). Bullet points from UNAMA Fact Sheet, March 28, 2008.

Play a central coordinating to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles and with a view to building the capacity of the Afghan government, including by providing effective support to national and local authorities in assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and to creating conditions conducive to voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons;

- monitor the human right situation of civilians and coordinate human rights protection;

Continue, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to cooperate with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), to cooperate also with relevant international and local non-governmental organizations, to monitor the situation of civilians, to coordinate efforts to ensure their protection and to assist in the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party; in particular those regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights;

- support the electoral process through the Afghan Independent Electoral Commission;

Support, at the request of the Afghan authorities, preparations for the crucial upcoming presidential elections, in particular through the IEC, by providing technical assistance, coordinating other international donors, agencies and organizations providing assistance and channeling existing and additional funds earmarked to support the process;

- support regional cooperation in working for a more stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

To work towards a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Appendix H. Key Efforts in Afghanistan, 2002-2008

UNAMA has outlined the following key indicators of progress between 2002 and 2008:

- **Health:** 85% of the population has been given access to a basic package of health services.
- **Social Protection:** 2.5 million Afghans have received social support.
- **Education and Culture:** More than 6 million children are enrolled in school.
- **Agriculture and Rural Development:** 32,000 villages have benefitted from development projects.
- **Natural Resources Management:** More than 3 million have benefitted from rural water and sanitation projects.
- **Infrastructure:** 13,150 km of roads have been rehabilitated, improved, or built.
- **National Army and Police:** More than 140,000 policemen and soldiers have been recruited and trained since 2003.
- **Disarmament and Demining:** More than 7.7 million unexploded ordnances have been cleared since 2001.
- **Democracy and Governance:** 75% of voters participated in Afghanistan's first democratic elections in 2004.
- **Justice and Human Rights:** The Constitution adopted in 2004 calls for the protection of human rights.
- **Economy and Trade:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita has increased by over 70% since 2002.
- **Media and Telecoms:** 75% of Afghans have access to telecommunications, including over 5 million cell phones now in use.³²

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³² U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, International Conference in Support of Afghanistan, Set of Fact Sheets, Paris, 24 May, 4 June, 12 June 2008.