Geography

Location: Southern Asia, North West of Pakistan, east of Iran
Coordinates: 33 00 N, 65 00 E
Area: 647, 500 sq km (country is landlocked)
Land boundaries: 5,529 km (total)
Border countries: China 76 km, Iran 936 km, Pakistan 2,430 km, Tajikistan 1,206 km,

1 'Afghanistan', CIA World Factbook, 30 November 2009.
2 Ibid.
Turkmenistan 744 km, Uzbekistan 137 km

**Climate:** Semi arid, cold winters, hot summers

**Terrain:** Mostly rugged mountains, plains in the south and North West

**Natural Resources:** Natural gas, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulphur, lead, zinc, iron ore, precious and semi precious stones

**Land use:** arable land (12.13%), permanent crops (0.21%), other (87.66%)

**Irrigated land:** 27,200 sq km (2003)

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**Demographics**

**Population:** 33,609,937 (July 2009 est.)

**Age Structure:**
- 0-14 years: 44.5% (male 7,664,670/female 7,300,446)
- 15-64 years: 53% (male 9,147,846/female 8,679,800)
- 65 years and over: 2.4% (male 394,572/female 422,603) (2009 est.)

**Population Growth Rate:** 2.629% (2009 est)

**Birth Rate:** 45.82 Births/1000 population (2008 est)

**Death Rate:** 19.56 Deaths/1000 population (2008 est)

**Net Migration Rate:** 21 Migrants/1000 population

**Urban Population:** 24% of total population (2008 est)

**Rate of Urbanization:** 5.4% Annual Rate of Change (2005 – 2010)

**Life Expectancy at Birth:** 44.64 years (total population), 44.47 years (male), 44.81 years (female)

**Ethnic Groups:** Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkman 3%, Baloch 2%, other 4%

**Religions:** Sunni Muslim 80%, Shia Muslim 19%, other 1%

**Languages:** Afghan Persian or Dari (official) 50%, Pashto 35% (official), Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek and Turkman) 11%, 30 minor languages (primarily Balochi and Pashai) 4%, much bilingualism

**Literacy:** total population (28.1%), male (43.1%), female (12.6%) definition: age 15 who can read and write

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**Ethnic Map of Afghanistan**

3 Ibid.
**Government**

*Conventional long form:* Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
*Conventional short form:* Afghanistan  
*Local long form:* Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Afghanestan  
*Local short form:* Afghanestan  
*Former:* Republic of Afghanistan  
*Government Type:* Islamic Republic  
*Capital name:* Kabul (34 31 N, 69 11E)  
*Independence:* 19 August 1919 (from UK control over Afghan foreign affairs)  
*National holiday:* Independence Day, 19 August (1919)  
*Legal system:* based on mixed civil and Sharia law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ

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5 ‘Afghanistan’, CIA World Factbook.
jurisdiction

**Suffrage:** 18 years of age; universal

**Current Provincial Governors:**

- Badakhshan - Monshi Abdul Majid
- Badghis - Mohammad Ashraf Nasseri
- Baghlan - Said Azizullah Hashimi (Acting)
- Balkh - Atta Mohammad Noor
- Bamiyan - Habiba Sorabi
- Daikondi - Sultan Ali Rozgani
- Farah - Rohul Amin
- Faryab - Abdul Haq Shafiq
- Ghazni - Dr. Muhammad Osman Osmani
- Ghor - Baz Mohammad Ahmad
- Helmand - Mohammad Gulab Mangal
- Herat - Ahmad Yusef Nuristani
- Jowzjan - not available
- Kabul - Haji Din Mohammad
- Kandahar - Tooryalai Wesa
- Kapisa - Khoja Ghulam Ghaus Abubaker
- Kunduz - Mohammad Omar Sulaimoni
- Laghman - Lutfallah Mashal
- Logar - General Abdulrahman
- Nangarhar - Gul Agha Sherzai
- Nimroz - Ghulam Dastageer Azad
- Nuristan - Jamaluddin Badre
- Paktia - Juma Khan Hamdard
- Paktika - Mohammad Akram Khapalwak
- Panjshir - Bahlul Bahij
- Parwan - Abdul Jabar Taqwa
- Samangan - Qazi Enayat Enayatullah
- Sar-i Pol - Sayed Iqbal Munib
- Takhar - Abdul Latif Ibrahim
- Urozgan - Asadullah Hamdam
- Wardak - Mohammad Halim Fidai
- Zabul - Del Bar Jan Arman
- Khost - Hamidullah Qalandarzoy
- Kunar - Syed Fazal Ullah Wahedi

**Executive Branch:**

<!-[if !supportLists]--> <![endif]--> Chief of State and head of government: President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai (Since December 7th 2004)

<!-[if !supportLists]--> <![endif]--> First Vice President: Ahmad Zia Massood (since December 7th 2004)

<!-[if !supportLists]--> <![endif]--> Second Vice President: Abdul Karim Khalili (since December 7th 2004)

**Cabinet:** 25 ministers – according to the new constitution the ministers are appointed by the president and approved by the National Assembly

Elections: the president and two vice presidents are elected by direct vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); if no candidate receives 50% or more of the vote in the first round of voting, the two candidates with the most votes will participate in a second round; a president can only be elected for two terms; election last held 9 October 2004 (next to be held in August 2009)
The Current Ministries and Ministers\textsuperscript{6}

Senior Minister - Hedayat Amin Arsala
Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Dr. Rangeen Dadfar Spanta
Ministry of National Defense - General Abdul Rahim Wardak

National Security Advisor - Dr. Zalmai Rassoul
Ministry of Interior - Dr. Mohamad Hanif Atmar
Ministry of Finance - Dr. Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi
Ministry of Justice - Sarwar Danish
Ministry of Education - Ghulam Farooq Wardak
Ministry of Higher Education - Dr. Ahzam Dadfar
Ministry of Water & Energy - Mohammad Ismael Khan
Ministry of Haj and Islamic Affairs - Nematulla Shahrani
Ministry of Public Welfare - Sohrab Ali Saffary
Ministry of Public Health - Dr. Mohammad Amin Fatemi
Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock - Muhammad Asif Rahimi
Ministry of Mines - Ibrahim Adel
Ministry of Communication and Information Technology - Eng. Amirzai Sangin
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development - Ehsan Zia
Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled - Noor Mohammad Qarqeen
Ministry of Borders & Tribal Affairs - Abdul Karim Barahowie
Ministry of Urban Development - Eng. Yousef Pashtun
Ministry of Counter Narcotics - General Khodaidad Khodaidad
Ministry of Economy and Manpower - Mohammad Jalil Shams
Ministry of Commerce and Industry - not available
Ministry of Women’s Affairs - Mrs. Hassan Bano Ghazanfar
Ministry for Information, Culture and Tourism - Abdul Karim Khuram
Ministry for Transport and Civil Aviation (Acting) - Omar Zakhilwal

Political Parties in Afghanistan and their Leaders\textsuperscript{7}

Afghan Nation [also known as the Afghan Social Democratic Party] (Afghan Mellat)
Leader: Anwar al-Haq Ahadi
Note: Ahadi is currently the Minister of Finance in President Karzai's administration. The party officially registered themselves in Afghanistan on May 16, 2004. Afghan Mellat is a powerful Pashtun nationalist party.

Afghan Nation [also known as the Afghan Social Democratic Party] (Afghan Mellat - Shams faction)
Leader: Shams Ul Huda Shams
Note: This party was previously based in Pakistan. However, it recently opened an office in Jalalalbad, and plans on actively participating in the upcoming parliamentary elections to be held in September, 2005. Unlike Ahadi’s faction which supported Hamid Karzai in the October 2004 elections, Sham’s faction supported Humayoon Shah Asei. Asei, a well known royalist, is a cousin of former king Mohammad Zaher’s late wife, Homaira.

\textsuperscript{7} Afghanistan Online, ‘Political Parties/Groups and Leaders in Afghanistan’, Afghanistan Online, 2005.
Afghan Society for the Call to the Koran and Sunna (Jama’at al-Da’wat il’l Qur’an wa Sunnat al-Afghanistan)
Leader: Mawlawi Sami’ullah Najibi

Afghanistan Independence Party (Hizb-e Istiqlal-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Dr. Faruq Nejrabi

**Afghanistan's Islamic Mission Organization (Tanzim-e Dahwat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)**
Leader: Abdul Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf
Note: Sayyaf's party used be known as Ittihad-i-Islami Barai Azadi Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan). The party registered the new name with the Ministry of Justice on April 25, 2005.

Afghanistan's Welfare Party (Hizb-e Refah-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mir Mohammad Asef Za’ifi

Freedom and Democracy Movement of Afghanistan (Nahzat-e Azadi wa Demokrasi-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Raqib Jawed Kuhestani

**Freedom Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Azadi-ye Afghanistan)**
Leader: Abdul Malik
Note: In the mid 1990s, Abdul Malik, was a confidant and senior foreign adviser to Abdul Rashid Dostum. However, he made a secret deal with the Taliban, turned against Dostum and invited the Taliban into northern Afghanistan. The deal did not last long and a major battle occurred between Malik's forces and the Taliban; thousands of Taliban soldiers were killed.

Freedom Party National Faction (Hizb-e Azadi-ye Bakhsh-e Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Shams al-Haq Naibkhail

Homeland Party (Hizb-e Maihan)
Leader: Mohammad Rahim

Human Rights Protection and Development Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Ifazat az Hoquq-e Bashar wa Inkefah-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Baryalai Nasrati

Islamic & National Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Harkat-e Inqilabi-ye Islami wa Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Ahmad Nabi

Islamic Civilization Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Islami-ye Tamadun-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Nabi Nafeh

Islamic Justice Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Adalat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Kabir Marzban

**Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (Harakat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)**
Leader: Sayyed Mohammad Ali Jawed
Note: For a long time, the party was led by Ayatollah Mohammad Asef Mohseni until he announced that he would step down in early February 2005. The Islamic Movement of
Afghanistan was one of the resistance groups opposing the Soviets and their client regimes in Afghanistan from 1978 to 1992.

Islamic People's Movement of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Harak-e Islami-ye Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Hosayn Anwari

Islamic Rights Advocates Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Itifaq-e Hoquq Khwahan-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Abdul Qahar

Islamic Society of Afghanistan (Jami'at-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Burhanuddin Rabbani
Note: Other prominent members- Mohammad Ismael Khan, and Atta Mohammad (Governor of Balkh Province).

Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Karim Khalili

Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq
Note: Mohaqiq is very popular among the Hazaras; he ran as an independent candidate for the presidency in October 2004, and received the vast majority of the Hazara votes. He served as Planning Minister in the transitional government until he was allegedly fired in March 2004. Mohaqiq claims he was fired after announcing that he would be running in the 2004 presidential elections against Hamid Karzai, however, Karzai's spokesman denied he was fired and claimed Mohaqiq quit after a dispute with then Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani. Mohaqiq stated that Karzai's administration was ethnically biased, and that there are attempts to sideline former Mujahideen members from the government.

Justice Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Adalat-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Hasan Fayrozkhail

Labor and Progress of Afghanistan Party (Hizb-e Kar wa Tawse'a-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Zulfiqar Omid

Moderate Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e E'tidal-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Unknown

National Congress Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Kongra-ye Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Latif Pedram
Note: Party leader Pedram ran as the party's official candidate for the presidency against Hamid Karzai in October 2004.

National Islamic Fighters Party of Afghanistan (Da Afghanistan Da Melli Mubarizinu Islami Gond)
Leader: Amanat Ningarhari

National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (Mahaz-e Melli-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Ahmad Gailani
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Junbsh-e-Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayed Noorullah
Note: This party was formerly led by Abdul Rashid Dostum. Dostum officially stepped down on April 18, 2005 to take up a post (Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Armed Forces) in President Hamid Karzai's government. Dostum was appointed by Karzai on March 1, 2005. The party was officially registered with the Ministry of Justice on April 18, 2005. Abdul Rashid Dostum ran as an independent candidate for the presidency in October 2004, and received the vast majority of the Uzbek votes. Dostum was a former Communist General who switched sides to help the Mujahideen bring down Dr. Najibullah’s Russian supported government.

National Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Wahdat-e Melli-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Akbari

National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (Jabha-e Melli-ye Nijat-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Sebghatullah Mojadeddi

National Movement of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Nahzat-e Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Ahmad Wali Masood (brother of slain Mujahideen commander, Ahmad Shah Masood). Note: Zia Masood, another brother of Ahmad Shah Masood, and party member is currently serving as Afghanistan's first Vice President. Mohammed Yunis Qanuni was also a member of this party, until Zia Masood agreed to sign on as Hamid Karzai’s Vice President in the October 2004 presidential elections. Qanuni ran against Karzai.

National Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Rashid Aryan

National Peace & Islamic Party of the Tribes of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Sulh-e Melli-ye Islami-ye Aqwam-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Qaher Shari'ati

National Peace & Unity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Sulh wa Wahdat-e Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Qader Imami

National Peace Islamic Party of Afghanistan (Da Afghanistan Da Solay Melli Islami Gond)
Leader: Shah Mahmud Popalzai

National Peace Movement of Afghanistan (Nahzat-e Melli Sulh-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Sami'ullah Sadat

National Prosperity and Islamic Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Sahadat-e Melli wa Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Osman Saligzada

National Prosperity Party (Hizb-e Refah-e Melli)
Leader: Mohammad Hasan Jahfari

National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan (Nahzat-e Hambastagi-ye Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Ishaq Gailani
Note: Gailani was his party’s official candidate for president until withdrawing from the race on 6 October. Gailani urged National Solidarity Movement supporters to back Karzai in the presidential vote.
National Solidarity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Paiwand-e Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Mansur Nadiri

National Stability Party (Hizb-e Subat-e Melli)
Leader: Abdul Ra'uf

National Tribal Unity Islamic Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Melli-ye Wahdat-e Aqwam-e Islami-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Shah Khogyani

National Unity Movement (Tahrik-e Wahdat-e Melli)
Leader: Sultan Mahmud Ghazi

National Unity Movement of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Harakat-e Melli-ye Wahdat-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Nader Atash

National Unity Party (Hizb-e Mutahid-e Melli)
Leader: Nur al-Haq 'Ulumi

National Unity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Wahdat-e Melli-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Rashid Jalili

New Afghanistan Party (Hezb-e-Afghanistan Naween)
Leader: Mohammad Yunis Qanuni

Party of Islam (Hizb-e Islami)
Leader: Arghandiwal
Note: The party was founded in the 1970s and for many years led by former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar is currently believed to be in alliance with the Taliban and waging a guerilla war against US forces in Afghanistan.

Party of Islam (Hizb-e Islami - Khalis faction)
Leader: Mohammad Yunos Khalis
Note: Khalis is believed to be in hiding and involved in fighting against the US troops present in Afghanistan. His base of support is in the eastern Nangarhar Province.

Peace and National Welfare Activists Society (Majmah-e Melli-ye Fahalin-e Sulh-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Shams al-Haq Nur Shams

Peace Movement (Da Afghanistan Da Solay Ghorzang Gond)
Leader: Shahnavaz Tanai
Note: Tanai, served as former minister of defense under the Soviet-backed communist regime of Dr. Najibullah.
People's Aspirations Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Arman-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Sarajuddin

People's Liberal Freedom Seekers Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Libral-e Azadi-ye Khwa-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Ajmal Sohail

People's Message Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Risalat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Nur Aqa

People's Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Ahmad Shah Asar

People's Prosperity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Falah-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Zarif

People's Sovereignty Movement of Afghanistan (Nahzat-e Hakimyat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Hayatullah Subhani

People's Uprising Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Rastakhaiz-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Sayyed Zaher

People's Welfare Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Sahadat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Zubair Payroz

People's Welfare Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Refah-e Mardum-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Miagul Waseq

Public Opinion Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Afkar-e Ama-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Unknown

Republican Party (Hizb-e Jamhuri Khwahan)
Leader: Sebghatullah Sanjar

Solidarity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Hambastagi Afghanistan)
Leader: Abdul Khaleq Ne'mat

**Taliban**
Leader: Mullah Mohammad Omar (Other prominent members: Jalaluddin Haqqani, Saifullah Mansoor)
Note: The Taliban are waging a war against the US backed Afghan government headed by Hamid Karzai.

United Afghanistan Party (Hizb-e Afghanistan-e Wahid)
Leader: Mohammad Wasel Rahimi

Understanding and Democracy Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Tafahum-e wa Demokrasi-ye Afghanistan)
Leader: Ahmad Shahin
Young Afghanistan’s Islamic Organization (Sazman-e Islami-ye Afghanistan-e Jawan)
Leader: Sayyed Jawad Hosayni

Youth Solidarity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Hambastagi-ye Melli-ye Jawanan-e Afghanistan)
Leader: Mohammad Jamil Karzai

Judicial Branch

The constitution establishes a nine-member Stera Mahkama or Supreme Court (its nine justices are appointed for 10-year terms by the president with approval of the Wolesi Jirga) and subordinate High Courts and Appeals Courts; there is also a minister of justice; a separate Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission established by the Bonn Agreement is charged with investigating human rights abuses and war crimes.

Economy

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): $26.29 billion (2008 est.)
GDP (Official Exchange Rate): $12.85 billion (2008 est.)
GDP (Real Growth Rate): 7.5% (2008 est.)
GDP - per capita (PPP): $800 (2008 est)
GDP - composition by sector: 31% Agricultural, 26% Industry, 43% Services
Labour Force: 15 million (2004 est)
Unemployment Rate: 40% (2008 est)
Labour Force – by Occupation: 80% Agricultural, 10% Industry, 10% Service (2008 est)

Budget: revenues $890 million, expenditures $2.7 billion (Afghanistan has also received $2.6 billion from the Reconstruction Fun and $63 million from the Law and Order Trust Fund)

Agricultural products: opium, wheat, fruits, nuts; wool, mutton, sheepskins, lambskins

Industries: small-scale production of textiles, soap, furniture, shoes, fertilizer, cement; hand-woven carpets; natural gas, coal, copper

Exports - commodities: opium, fruits and nuts, hand-woven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, precious and semi-precious gems

Export Partners: India 22.8%, Pakistan 21.8%, US 20.5%, Tajikistan 7.2% (2007)
Import Partners: Pakistan 36.8%, US 11%, India 5%, Germany 4.2%
Import – Commodities: capital goods, food, textiles, petroleum products

8 ‘Afghanistan’, CIA World Factbook.
Afghanistan National Development Strategy

Approved by President Hamid Karzai in April 21, 2008, this document outlines the Afghan government’s strategies for security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction. The blueprint lays out the plans for the period of 2008 to 2013:

Security: Achieve nationwide stabilization, strengthen law enforcement, and improve personal security for every Afghan.

Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights: Strengthen democratic practice and institutions, human rights, the rule of law, delivery of public services and government accountability.

Economic and Social Development: Reduce poverty, ensure sustainable development through a private sector-led market economy, improve human development indicators, and make significant progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

International organization participation: ADB, CP, ECO, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCt, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OPCW, OSCE (partner), SAARC, SACEP, SCO (guest), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO (observer)

Military


Military service age and obligation: 22 years of age; inductees are contracted into service for a 4-year term (2005)


Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually: male: 382,720, female: 361,733 (2009 est.)

Military expenditures: 1.9% of GDP (2006 est.)

History of Afghanistan


Afghanistan’s history spans five thousand years and the Afghan people have contributed to the emergence of many Central Asian empires. The ancient centers of culture and civilization were influenced by diverse outsiders such as Rome, Greece, Arabia, Iran, Central Asia, India, and China. Great conquerors such as Jenghiz Khan and Timurlane swept through Afghanistan during the 13th and 14th century. These rulers brought with them the desire to establish kingdoms, and founded cultural and scholarly communities in Afghanistan. In particular, during the Timurid dynasty, poetry, architecture and miniature painting reached their zenith.

The rise of the great Mughal Empire again lifted Afghanistan to heights of power. The ruler, Babur, had his capital in Kabul in 1512, but as the Mughals extended their power into India, Afghanistan went from being the center of the empire to merely a peripheral part of it. In the 18th and 19th century with European forces eroding the influence of the Mughals on the Indian subcontinent, the kingdom of Afghanistan began to emerge. Ahmad Shah ruled from 1747 and successfully established the concept of a united Afghanistan.

Throughout the 19th century Afghans fought against British forces. In the 1830s, Dost Muhammad skillfully balanced the influence of the Russians, British, Iranians, and Sikhs. However, rising tensions resulted in several wars from 1839 and 1842 and from 1878 to 1880. The twenty-one year reign of Abdur Rahman Khan was an important period for the consolidation of a modern state marked by efforts to modernize and establish control of the kingdom. The borders of Afghanistan were established in 1893 through negotiations with the British and provincial governments emerged, taking the place of clan rule.

**Modern History**

In 1919, Afghanistan gained independence from British occupying forces. From 1919-1973 Afghanistan modernized and built extensive infrastructure with the assistance of the international community. This period of relative stability ended in 1973 when King Zahir Shah was overthrown while away in Europe.

In 1978 and 1979, a number of coups brought to power a communist government that drifted increasingly toward the USSR, ending with a Soviet puppet government in Kabul led by Babrak Kamal and an invasion of Soviet forces. Throughout the eighties, an indigenous Afghan resistance movement fought against the invading Soviet forces. With the help of the United States, Afghans successfully resisted the occupation. On February 15, 1989 the last Soviet soldier retreated across Afghanistan’s northern border. As hostilities ceased, more than a million Afghans lay dead and 6.2 million people, over half the world’s refugee population, had fled the country.

The Soviet withdrawal in 1989 weakened the communist government of President Najibullah, leading to his ousting in April 1992. An interim president was installed and replaced two months later by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a founder of the country's Islamic political movement, backed by the popular commander Ahmad Shah Massoud.

**Current History**

The government remained unstable and unable to form a national consensus amongst its various factions. This instability was exploited by a group of Islamic fighters called the Taliban (‘talib’ means ‘religious student’ or ‘seeker of knowledge’). With the assistance of foreign

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governments, organizations, and resources, the Taliban seized Kandahar and in September 1998 entered Kabul.

Taliban rule became infamous for their repression of women and dissidents as well as their destruction of the country’s cultural heritage. Showing little interest in trying to govern and rebuild Afghanistan, they instead played host to the radical Al-Qaeda terrorist network. Following Al-Qaeda’s 2001 attacks, the United States and its allies began military operations and quickly overthrew the Taliban. An interim government was installed.

In December of 2001, Afghan and world leaders met in Bonn, Germany under United Nations auspices to design an ambitious agenda that would guide Afghanistan towards “national reconciliation, a lasting peace, stability, and respect for human rights,” culminating in the establishment of a fully representative government. Many political and civil institutions were established with the Bonn Agreement such as the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, the Judicial Commission, Counter- Narcotics Directorate, and the Constitutional commission.

Progress on the political front has been rapid, with elections leading to an elected parliament and president as well as a national constitution. With international assistance, the new government of Afghanistan is developing a stable, political infrastructure and security apparatus.

The security situation in Afghanistan necessitates the continued presence of international forces. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created in accordance with the Bonn Conference, in December 2001, after the ousting of the Taliban regime. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) took over command and coordination of ISAF in August 2003. This is the first mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area in NATO’s history. Initially restricted to providing security in and around Kabul, NATO’s mission now covers about 50% of the country’s territory. ISAF currently numbers about 9,700 troops from 37 NATO and non-NATO troop contributing countries. The Alliance is expanding its presence in Southern Afghanistan.

The London Conference on Afghanistan in January 2006 aimed to launch the Afghanistan Compact, the successor to the Bonn Agreement, to present the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy, and to ensure the Government of Afghanistan has adequate resources to meet its domestic ambitions. The Afghanistan Compact marks the formal end of the Bonn Process, with completion of the Parliamentary and Provincial elections, and represents a framework for co-operation for five years.

The Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) is the product of twelve-months of intensive consultations within the Afghan government and with a wide array of stakeholders including community representatives, the ulama, the private sector, NGOs, and the international community. The document outlines the government’s policy objectives and analyzes the obstacles to their achievement.

Armed Violence

The insurgency and related violence remain the primary obstacle to development and stability in Afghanistan. Especially in the south and east of the country violent clashes between insurgents and NATO or OEF occur on a regular basis. A report released by UNAMA in September 2007 found that the number of suicide bombings in Afghanistan had increased by more than 700 percent between 2005 (17 incidents) and 2006 (123 incidents). Numbers are
expected to rise further in 2007, with 103 incidents in the first eight months alone. In the first quarter of 2008, NGOs have been directly targeted for attack on 29 occasions. Although comparable to last year's figures in volume (30), the attacks of this year have resulted in many more fatalities.

Both the insurgents and the international coalition have launched their respective military campaigns after the end of the 2007/2008 winter. Media reports indicate a steady level of violence in the south and east, and an increase in violence in the north and west of the country. Insurgents have shifted away from a conventional strategy to using more suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) - even in areas where they have little support base. Afghan outrage at civilian casualties caused by NATO forces continues to create difficulties for the ISAF mission and bolster support for the insurgents. In an effort to protect himself from the political fallout of this popular discontent, President Karzai publicly blamed international forces for rising violence in June 2008, saying they have mismanaged the fight against the Taliban.

Insurgents benefited from this public debate and a number of other factors: continued access to safe havens across the border in Pakistan, rampant corruption of Afghan police and government representatives, the return of warlords to power, poverty and unemployment, a lack of benefits to some populations from foreign aid, opium cultivation, poorly applied opium eradication schemes, and tribal disputes.

As mentioned in one of the UN Secretary-General's latest reports to the Security Council, "a key to sustaining security gains in the long term is increasing the capability, autonomy and integrity of the Afghan National Security Forces." In view of this long-term perspective, efforts to train and equip Afghan forces are being increased and discussions are ongoing on how to address serious challenges with the reform of the Afghan National Police. There are signs that the US is refocusing on Afghanistan, dedicating more resources to the Afghan mission and pushing other NATO countries to increase their own contributions to the mission in Afghanistan.

Reconciliation and Power Sharing

Many critics of the mission in Afghanistan, but also NATO leaders themselves, have been explicit in stating that a military strategy will not solve Afghanistan's problems and call for a political solution. While President Karzai has apparently made some contact with the Taliban and there is some effort towards reconciliation through the Strengthening Peace Program, no wide-ranging, track one peace process is underway. The willingness of some opposition forces to share power with Karzai's government remains in question. A new political opposition, the United National Front, has emerged to oppose president Karzai. This group is a mix of former Northern Alliance members, mujahideen, and even former members of the communist government. Former Indian diplomat M K Bhadrakumar has interpreted this as a show of independence by Afghans who believe the US will not be able to stabilize the situation.

Regional Environment

Pakistan's role continues to be controversial, as many Afghans and international observers allege Pakistani support for the insurgency. A new series of peace deals between Pakistan's government and local Taliban groups has granted insurgents wide latitude in areas along the border with Pakistan. According to NATO commanders, Pakistan's failure to act against militants in its tribal areas has led to an increase in attacks against US and NATO forces in eastern Afghanistan.
**Allegations** that Iran is supplying weapons to the Taliban have also become more common, though the Iranian government denies its involvement with the insurgency in Afghanistan. Some analysts argue that Iran may be pursuing a two-pronged approach, with overt support for the Karzai government and economic investment in Afghanistan on the one hand and covert assistance to insurgents on the other hand, thus hedging its bets and securing influence (esp. in western Afghanistan) no matter who will control the country in the long run.

**Reconstruction**

The international community in Afghanistan is working to improve its coordination and increase aid effectiveness, while some NGOs call for the military to stop doing reconstruction work. The situation for women in Afghanistan continues to be grim, and some claim hard-won freedoms achieved since 9-11 are in danger of being stifled before a lasting impact on women's rights can be achieved. Recent murders of Afghan women journalists and continued forced marriages highlight the volatility of the situation for women in Afghanistan.

Opium cultivation continues to reach record levels, and debates about how to tackle this issue are heated. According to UNODC, Afghanistan produced an extraordinary 8,200 tons of opium in 2007 (34 percent more than in 2006), becoming practically the exclusive supplier (93 percent of the global opiates market). The United States continues to push for eradication, while many, including some other NATO nations, fear this only feeds insurgency and instability. Other alternatives are licensing opium cultivation and providing alternative livelihoods. The first option has not been pursued, and the latter has not been sufficiently funded nor has it had time to achieve any significant results.

Despite the insurgency, development and reform efforts continue. Initiatives like the National Solidarity Programme, in which local councils are consulted to determine their own development needs, are expanding. While media reports from Afghanistan tend to focus on the violence and instability, some parts of the country are relatively stable and are benefitting from development efforts.
Conflicts


Latest trends

President Obama’s Afghanistan/Pakistan Strategy

On March 27th, 2009 US President Barack Obama outlined his new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. This strategy was formulated after a comprehensive consultation process with the US’s military and civilian personnel involved in the region, the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the US’s allies and other major donors and international organizations. As outlined on the White House website, the key points of this new strategy are:

1. An obtainable objective

   The new strategy aims to defeat Al Qaeda by disrupting and dismantling the organizations and its safe havens.

2. A regional approach

   It recognizes that context of this conflict and its solution has to be expanded to include Pakistan. President Obama ensures an increased amount of aid to Afghanistan especially civilian aid to help bolster the country’s infrastructure and democratic institutions. Diplomatic initiatives would be pursued with all players in South Asia. Finally, a strong trilateral framework would be set up to ensure cooperation among the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan on issues such as intelligence and military issues and also trade, economic and development concerns.

3. Building capacity and more training

   Additional US troops in Afghanistan would boost the capacity to train the Afghan military and police. Every US unit will be paired with an Afghan unit to facilitate training. NATO allies will also be encouraged to do likewise.

4. Using all element of National Power

   Additional resources will be given to develop the civilian capacities of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Obama lent his support to a bill co-sponsored by Senators Kerry and Lugar which would see $1.5 billion in aid given to Pakistan over the next five years. He would also be supporting a bipartisan bill to set up Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in the Afghanistan and in the border regions of Pakistan.

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12 Obama’s Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, March 2009 Council on Foreign Relations (March 2009)
13 What’s new in the strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan White House website (March 2009)
5. Bringing new international elements into the effort

This calls for a new Contact Group for Afghanistan and Pakistan to be created. This will bring together all the states that have a vested interest in the security i.e. NATO, the Central Asian states, the Gulf states, Iran, Russia, India and China.

The London Conference 2010

The London conference on Afghanistan, which is to be held on January 28th 2010, will bring together the international community with the aim of aligning their military and civilian strategies to aid Afghanistan’s reconstruction. The conference will be hosted by UK PM Gordon Brown, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. It will also be co-chaired by UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband, the outgoing Afghan foreign minister Rangin Spanta and the UN special representative to Afghanistan Kai Edie. Key issues on the agenda are:

1. Security:
   - Consider how the respective roles of international and Afghan forces should evolve over time
   - Address how to support Afghan led efforts to integrate former insurgents
   - Encourage allies to increase commitment in critical area such as army and police training

2. Governance and Development
   - Agree on concrete steps for the Afghan government to take to tackle corruption and improve financial management
   - Consider how development assistance can support the Afghan leadership

3. Regional support
   - Promote continuous and system cooperation by and between all regional stakeholders

The conference is indicative of the long term involvement of the international community in Afghanistan. This has been demonstrated by recent events in December 2009 and January 2010. On January 24th 2010 Afghanistan’s Independent election commission announced that it was postponing the parliamentary elections, scheduled for May 22nd 2010, by four months to September 2010. A statement released by the commission cited a “lack of a budget, security and uncertainty and logistical challenges” as reasons for the postponement. The commission needs $50 million from international donors to help with the $120 million budget needed to run the elections. Donor states were calling for a postponement of the elections to ensure that electoral reform can take place to ensure a fraud-free election. This is in light of the major irregularities that took place during the controversial August 2009 presidential elections.

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14 Afghanistan: The London Conference 2010 (January 2010)
15 Afghanistan Parliamentary election postponed BBC(January 24th 2010)
16 Mark Tran Afghanistan election postponed The Guardian (January 24th 2010)
Another indicator of Afghanistan’s dependence on the international community was revealed when on December 8th 2009 President Karzai stated that the Afghan military would require financial support from the international community until at least 2024. This comes in light of the announcement of the US’s desire to begin troop withdrawals by 2011. Together with the financial shortcoming of the election commission the spotlight has been put on the issue of Afghanistan’s donor dependency.

The London Conference, however, does have its critics as an article in the Spectator asserted that President Karzai will use the event to avoid having the international community set bench marks on his government. Since he does not have a complete cabinet he can use that as his excuse. However, the article goes on to say that Karzai has the major cabinet positions secured i.e. that of defense, finance, interior and agriculture, while there rest are minor positions. The article recommended that the conference be postponed to later in the year when Karzai has less of a reason to avoid such benchmarks.

**Outcomes of the London Conference on Afghanistan Jan 28th 2010**

The following steps were agreed to by the international community at the London Conference:

- To develop a plan for phased transition to Afghan security lead province by province to begin provided conditions are met, by late 2010/early 2011.
- Targets for significant increases in the Afghan Army and Police Force supported by the international community: 171,000 Afghan Army and 134,000 Afghan Police by the end of 2011, taking total security force numbers to over 300,000.
- Confirmation of a significant increase in international forces to support the training of Afghan forces. In total, the US have increased levels by 30,000 and the rest of the international community by 9,000, including the German contribution taking total force levels to around 135,000.
- Measures to tackle corruption, including the establishment of an independent Office of High Oversight and an independent Monitoring and Evaluation Mission.
- Better coordinated development assistance to be increasingly channelled through the GoA, supported by reforms to structures and budgets.
- A civilian surge to match the military surge, including new civilian leadership of the international community’s programmes, with the appointment of Mark Sedwill, previously British Ambassador to Afghanistan, as NATO’s Senior Civilian Representative, a new UN representative plus more civilians on the ground to support governance and economic development.
- Enhanced sub-national government to improve delivery of basic services to all Afghans.
- Support for the GoA’s national Peace and Reintegration Programme, including financial support for a Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund, to offer economic alternatives to those who renounce violence, cut links to terrorism and agree to work within the democratic process.
- Support for increased regional co-operation to combat terrorism, violent extremism and the drugs trade, to increase trade and cultural exchange and to create conducive conditions for the return of Afghan refugees.


It is hoped that the initial plan laid out at the London Conference will lead to the Afghan government taking over the responsibility for running the war and the country within the next five years. The conference also set in motion a parallel peace plan whereby the so called

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17 Daniel Korski Cancel the London Conference The Spectator (January 7th 2010)
"moderate" Taliban will be convinced to put down their weapons with the promises of jobs and rural development. While Taliban leaders will also be invited to discuss peace.

In response to the plan to lure militants away from the insurgency the Taliban released a statement which said that attempted to bribe the Mujahedeen away from Jihad was futile. But in what seemed like a conciliatory note the Taliban stated that they were simply trying to wage a campaign to liberate Afghanistan from outside forces and were of no threat to neighboring countries. However, this statement ignored the conflict taking place between the Taliban and Pakistan along the border tribal regions of Pakistan.

At the end of the conference it had also been learned that the UN had met regional commanders on the Taliban’s council, the Quetta Shurah, to discuss the possibility of peace talks. It has been confirmed that the UN special representative, Kai Eide, had met with these leaders in Dubai before the London Conference which was held on January 28th 2010. The meeting was about safety guarantees for the Taliban if they were to participate in peace talks.

The London Conference was just the beginning of a process of reaching a political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan. The next phase will begin in Kabul in the spring of 2010 when the Loya Jirga convenes. It will be the first time in eight years that such a meeting will take place. Karzai has also called on Saudi Arabia play a prominent role in mediating with the Taliban.

Pakistan is seeking for a much more prominent role in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan. Historically, Afghanistan and Pakistan have never been on favourable terms. Here is a chance for Pakistan to have more of an influence on Afghanistan if the Taliban are to play a part in government. There is a continuous debate as to how much control Pakistan, the ISI and the army in particular, have over the Taliban. Some say that is still a close relationship. While others have pointed out that Pakistan’s hold over them has slipped away. Pakistan will have to prove that it is not trying to manipulate the situation if they are to gain any trust from a traditionally hostile Karzai government. However some analyst say that this move could backfire on Islamabad due to this mistrust by Kabul, unpredictable Pakistani militants, Taliban pressure and unrealistic expectations of gratitude from the West.

The one notable absence from the London Conference was Iran. As a region power it would have been expected that Iran would have wanted to make its voice heard at the conference and stake a claim for a major role in peace process. Iran was invited to the conference and the UK government hoped that there would be at least a representation from the Iranian embassy. According to Iran, this conference was a step towards increase military action in Afghanistan. An Iranian foreign ministry spokesman explained that the West did not take into consideration that the region could solve its own problems.

Whether the, much hyped, London Conference was a success remains to be seen. In a article for Foreign Policy’s The AfPak Channel, Norine Macdonald writes that London, like previous conferences before it, seems to be detached from the facts on the ground. In many of the areas where the conference has pledged to reform there are serious deficiencies as to the viability of the actions taking place. The international community’s confidence in the peace and reconciliation plan was seriously dented with only $140 million pledged for the first year of operation. It is difficult to see how this could bribe Taliban into defecting and provide for them

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18 Julian Borger Afghanistan Conference sets out plan for two-tier peace process The Guardian (January 2010)
19 Julian Borger UN in secret peace talks with the Taliban The Guardian (January 2010)
20 Pamela Constable Pakistan seeks role as mediator in possible Taliban-Afghanistan peace talks The Washington Post (January 2010)
jobs in an economy which is incapable of finding jobs for regular Afghans. In a gap riddled vetting process this could provide an opportunity for infiltrating the army and police.

The Afghan government is also floundering in terms of security and good governance. An estimated 10,000 of the 94,000 Afghan National Army (ANA) troops trained are believed to have deserted and 15 percent of the army and 60 percent of the police in Helmand province are thought to be drug addicts. There are still large swaths of the country which have limited or non-existent government presence. Bribery continues to be used as a means of aligning tribes to the government’s side. An example of this is the paying of the Shinwari tribe in southern Nangahar province $1 million to fight the Taliban. The article raises questions as to the seriousness of the international community’s commitment to Afghanistan and asks if the conference targeted more towards western audiences than Afghanistan.

Seeking a Negotiated Settlement with the Taliban

Shortly after the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, President Karzai offered an amnesty to the Taliban, on the condition that they renounce support for terrorism and hand over foreign fighters in Afghanistan. This condition was not met. In the following six years, no progress was made with regard to a negotiated settlement between the Afghan government and the insurgents. Now the situation might be changing. In September 2007, President Hamid Karzai repeatedly invited the Taliban to begin peace talks. To the surprise of many analysts, the Taliban took the unusual step of answering the President, issuing a statement saying they were prepared to meet with him. However, their interest in talks was conditional, as they demanded an immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops and a rewrite of the Afghan constitution. So far, the Afghan government has shown no intention of meeting those demands. In 2007 Karzai offered a political olive branch to the Taliban when he offered them a position in the government. Karzai also offered to meet with Mullah Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a warlord and former prime minister. This gesture was received favorably by the Canadian minister for Defense Peter Mackay. Karzai has, however, refused to move on his support for foreign troops on Afghan soil and has called on NATO states to increase their presence in his country.

However, now in 2010 and with the insurgency continuing President Karazi has taken another step towards reaching out to many of the Taliban’s foot soldiers. In January 2010 President Karzai announced the launch of a new reconciliation plan to attract those Taliban who decide to defect.21 The reconciliation plan is to go beyond what the Afghan government has ever offered to the Taliban. In the past a relatively small number of Taliban have defected. The UN reported that an estimated 170 did so in 2009. The new plan is to offer defectors jobs, security, education and other social benefits. The most important of these seems to be that of security guarantees which would ensure that the defecting Taliban would not be arrested or the subject of retaliation. Past plans offered little protection or financial incentive. As the plan is still in the process of being formulated one of the rumoured points is that the Afghan government would ask for Mullah Omar’s name be taken off the terrorist watch list. However, this controversial move was ruled out by Richard Holbrooke, the US’s envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The costs of the plan are estimated to be around $1 billion which will be financed through pledges at the London Conference on Afghanistan scheduled for January 28th 2010. However, as with any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan a thought has to be given to the rest of the population who are suffering from unemployment and lack of opportunities.

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21 Rod Nordland Karzai Closing in on Taliban Reconciliation Plan The New York Times (January 17th 2010)
The details of the reconciliation plan were first announced at a one day summit in Abu Dhabi on January 12th, 2010. The day long summit was attended by Richard Holbrooke and the foreign ministers from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The summit brought together the foreign ministers of Jordan and the United Arab Emirates and other high level officials from several Arab states. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda receive most of the funding from donors in these Arab states and therefore it is hoped, by the international community, that these countries would be able to exert some influence over key Taliban leaders by using their religious affiliations.

Arab states have already shown that they are capable of playing a role in reaching out Taliban. There have been glimpses of progress in the state of negotiations between the Taliban and the Karzai government. Reports have surfaced in October of 2008 of contact between Taliban leaders and President Karzai's brother, Qayum Karzai. The venue for this meeting was in Saudi Arabia where King Abdullah hosted a religious meal in September of this year. Among the attendees were important regional figures including former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and a delegation of 15 Afghans who represented a broad spectrum of political interests, including the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef. Saudi Arabia has in the past acted as a go between for the Taliban and other parties and was one of only three states to formally recognize the Taliban government in the 1990s, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates being the other two. Former PM Nawaz Sharif has also been involved in Pakistan's dealings with Afghanistan as he had a major hand in brokering a deal between key Mujahedeen factions in Afghanistan during the 1990s. Though both parties, the Afghan government and the Taliban, have denied the occurrence of these talks, news of this meeting is significant in light of recent statements made by Britain's most senior military official in Afghanistan, Brigadier Mark Carleton-Smith, who stated that there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. His sentiments were echoed by US Defense Secretary Robert Gates and the UN special envoy Kai Eide. Kai Eide went further and said that "if [they] want to have relevant results, [they] must speak to those who are relevant."

Another key challenge concerning negotiations between the government and insurgents is that both sides cannot be considered as unified groups. There are elements in Hamid Karzai's government - and in parliament - who do not want to talk to the Taliban at all. Sharing power in any sense would mean they would lose ground. A good example of this was in the Spring of 2007 when a Taliban commander brought a small delegation of insurgents to Kabul for a secret meeting with Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, the former Afghan president who leads a reconciliation program for insurgents who want to stop fighting. The meeting did not go well and Mr. Mojaddedi gave the Taliban delegation $10 to cover their travel expenses and informed them to come back later. This was seen by the Taliban as gravely insulting. It is examples such as this that have failed to convince insurgents that the Karzai government is taking negotiations seriously.

Meanwhile, “Taliban” has become a convenient shorthand term used to describe quite diverse groups and tribes - from local Afghans to groups backed by Pakistan, to foreign radicals linked to al-Qaeda. Some analysts therefore argue that the Taliban remain too faction-ridden to be a reliable negotiating partner. Peeling off moderates may hold out some hope for serious negotiations, but the presence of so many factions means there are also many potential spoilers who could easily wreck a nascent peace process.

22 Abubakar Siddique Kabul’s Taliban reconciliation strategy gains momentum Radio Free Europe (January 13th, 2010)
23 Martin Petience Karzai’s brother met “ex-Taliban” BBC (October 8th, 2008)
There are divergent views among experts on whether insurgents currently see themselves in a position of strength or weakness and how this would affect their interest in peace talks. Hampson argues that there is precious little evidence the war has reached a mutually painful stalemate, which would bring both sides to the negotiating table. He finds that the Taliban have been emboldened in recent months to increase the pace and frequency of their attacks. Others disagree and observe that the militants could be giving talks some thought because of a leadership crisis, with several commanders killed in military action this year. They could also be feeling the pressure of growing strength in the Afghan security forces and instability in Pakistan.

For peace talks to succeed, international actors will have to play a constructive role. The United Nations has formally designated the Taliban and other insurgent groups in Afghanistan as terrorists, making it politically and legally difficult for the Kabul government to reach a compromise. In recent weeks, however, the UN has endorsed efforts to begin talks and offered to mediate. NATO countries, including the US, also appear to view the idea of talks more favorably. This may have to do with the fact that there is a growing difference of opinion among coalition forces over tactics and deployment. There have even been reports of secret talks between the US and Taliban groups. According to these unconfirmed reports, the talks are aimed initially at resuscitating local truces in Afghanistan's hotly-contested southern provinces. Statements mentioned above from Brigadier Carleton-Smith and the UN special envoy Kai Eide might help put pressure on the need for an inclusive political solution that takes the Taliban into consideration.

It remains to be seen whether the Afghan government, insurgent groups and other actors involved will find ways to begin talks that can lead to a reduction of violence and promote reconciliation.

**History**

**Summary**

Afghans belong to diverse ethnic groups (42% Pashtun, 27% Tajik, 9% Hazara, and 9% Uzbek) and are divided between 80% Sunni Muslims and 19% Shi'ite Muslims. Despite these divisions, Afghans have historically rallied together to fend off foreign attacks.

Afghanistan is currently trying to rebuild after decades of internationalized civil strife that has left over 1.5 million people dead, 4.5 million refugees, half the population internally displaced, and a devastated economy, infrastructure and governance structure.

There have been 6 main phases of conflict in Afghanistan over this period

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24 The CIA World Factbook provides percentages of various Afghan ethnic groups, though Global Security explains that it is difficult to classify all the ethnic groups. The two major languages, Dari and Pashto, are spoken by members of various ethnic groups.


**The Saur Revolution:**
The 1978 communist party takeover spawned a resistance movement (Mujeheddin) and the involvement of the superpowers and neighbouring countries. Internal divisions within the Marxist government led ultimately to the Soviet invasion in 1979 to prop up a pro-Soviet faction.

**The Soviet Intervention:**
The Soviet invasion and occupation led to 10 years of pro-Soviet communist party rule. This was in the context of a guerilla war with diverse groups of Mujeheddin funded and supplied by outside powers, and it resulted in the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989.

**The Civil War:**
A vicious civil war raged from 1990-1996 between and among the Mujeheddin and factions of the former government, each with foreign backers, in the struggle to fill the power vacuum left by Soviet withdrawal. This period saw the rise of the Taliban movement, which promised stability and Islamic rule in this chaotic situation.

**The Taliban Regime:**
1996 saw the capture of Kabul by the Taliban, and further Taliban success in fighting other factions in the civil war. This led to 5 years of Taliban rule that was marked by internal repression and international pariah status. The Taliban victory prompted the creation of the United Front/Northern Alliance which united former Mujehheedin and pro-communist factions and their backers against the Taliban, and saw the Taliban provide sanctuary for the Al Qaeda terrorist group.

**U.S.-led Invasion:**
The U.S. led an invasion force in the fall of 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom, after holding Al Qaeda responsible for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York. The U.S., with varied assistance from 55 other countries, toppled the Taliban regime within two months of fighting and its leaders and Al Qaeda allies went into hiding.

**Detailed Timeline**

**The Saur Revolution: The People’s Democratic Party Takeover**

In 1978, the communist People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), under Noor Taraki, staged a successful coup against the regime of President Dauod - who himself had overthrown King Zahir in 1973. The coup, known as the Saur Revolution, occurred with the assistance of Soviet military advisors.26

With Soviet support, Taraki and the PDPA undertook a program of radical land and social reforms. To counter resistance, the PDPA formed the AGSA secret police (later called KAM and then KhAD) which repressed and killed religious leaders, teachers, students, former political leaders and members of the royal family, military officers, and others opposed to the new

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regime. An estimated 12,000 people were killed in Kabul’s Pul-i-Charkhi prison alone during this campaign, with up to 100,000 victims in the countryside.27

Afghanistan was 85% rural in 1979 and many of the PDPA’s reforms were unpopular among the religious, rural population. In March 1979, armed revolt broke out in the western city of Herat. The Afghan army’s 17th Division, sent to suppress the uprising, turned against the government, and from this time on resistance to the new regime grew.28 The anti-government fighters became known as Mujaheddin, an Arabic word which translates literally into ‘struggler’ and is often interpreted as meaning ‘holy warrior’29

The PDPA also suffered internal divisions and in 1979 Taraki’s rival Hafizullah Amin ousted Taraki and later had him killed. Amin was less tied to the Soviets and wanted closer relations with Pakistan and the West.

The Soviet Intervention

The USSR invaded Afghanistan on 24 December 1979 with a force of 40,000 soldiers and airmen, seeing a threat to its long-cultivated influence, and fearing both the spread of Iran’s Islamic revolution into its southern Soviet republics as well potential American ambitions in the country.30 Amin was killed by Soviet commandos, and Babrak Karmal was installed as the new leader of the PDPA.31 The Soviets proceeded to take control of the state, civil, and military organizations in the country. In a ruthless occupation strategy designed to drive people to more controllable urban areas, the Soviets destroyed rural infrastructure and livestock, used landmines widely, and wiped out entire villages. There were widespread arrests and disappearances of anyone suspected of opposing the regime.32

The Soviet invasion internationalized Afghanistan’s internal conflicts, fuelled the Mujaheddin resistance, and intensified U.S. involvement. The United States, seeing the Saur coup as a victory for communism, had already begun funding resistance fighters six months prior to the Soviet invasion. With military aid eventually totaling two billion dollars over the course of the Soviet intervention, the US used the invasion as, in the words of former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, an “opportunity to give the Soviet Union its Vietnam.”33

Resistance to the Soviet presence and the central government grew throughout the 1980s. With over 115,000 Red Army soldiers, 40,000 PDPA soldiers, and 70,000 paramilitary forces opposing approximately 70,000 Mujaheddin, the Soviets and their local allies had clear numerical superiority, but by 1985 the Soviet forces had become embroiled in a conflict with

31 Tanner, 234.
32 Nojumi, 58; Tanner, 255.
no foreseeable end. Some analysts see the US decision in 1986 to supply the Mujaheddin with Stinger anti-aircraft missiles as a turning-point, as this limited the Soviets’ airpower advantage. The USSR was soon faced with the choice of committing a much greater number of troops or withdrawing. UN political efforts resulted in the Geneva accords, signed on 14 April 1988, which led to Soviet withdrawal. The human costs of the conflict were immense. During the course of the Soviet occupation, an estimated 4.5 million Afghans became refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and half of the population was displaced by the fighting. The Soviets claimed losses of 13,883 dead and up to 37,000 wounded during the war, though this figure is often regarded as an understatement. Estimates of Afghans killed range from 600,000 to 1.2 million. These figures are for both civilians and combatants.

In 1989, the withdrawal of Soviet troops was completed, though the USSR continued to provide military and financial aid to the Afghan government under Mohammed Najibullah

### The Civil War

After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan experienced an intense internal power struggle. In the first six months after the Red Army withdrew, over four thousand planeloads of Soviet weapons flew into Afghanistan, and Soviet aid continued to reach levels of US$300 million per month. This enabled the PDPA, since 1986 under Mohammed Najibullah, to continue fighting the Mujahedin, and the fighting grew more savage. Kabul, which had largely escaped violence during the Soviet occupation, became a battleground of terrible ferocity.

Events elsewhere soon helped to turn the tide in the civil war. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, the money and weapons shipments to Najibullah’s government stopped coming. Seeing the end in sight, Najibullah resigned on 18 March, 1992. The UN attempted and failed to get a negotiated agreement amongst the various warring factions. Loosely allied in the face of a common enemy, the fall of the Najibullah government in 1992 marked the emergence of power struggles amongst former Mujahedin and PDPA commanders such as Rashid Dostum, Ismail Khan, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Atta Mohammed, Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Ahmed Shad Massoud. Alliances and defections amongst former Mujahedin were frequent, loyalties were fleeting, and foreign involvement only further complicated matters. As time passed, credible

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38 Tanner, 268; Chin, 62.
39 Mathew White, Death Tolls for Major Wars and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century, Tanner, 272-273.
40 Tanner, 278, Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Crisis of Impunity, 14.
allegations of massacres of civilians and prisoners, rape, looting, and other war crimes by all sides began to surface.\textsuperscript{42}

As Najibullah’s government fled, in April, Mujeheddin commanders Massoud, Dostum, and Hekmatyar converged on Kabul. Massoud’s well-trained and organized force soon pushed Hekmatyar from the city. A new government, termed the Islamic Jihad Council, also called the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) was formed, with the Tajik Rabbani as president and Massoud as Defence Minister. Some analysts attribute the ensuing civil war to ethnic differences, as Kabul had come to be controlled largely by ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks from the north, rather than the Pashtuns who had traditionally controlled the capital. As opium cultivation boomed, Rashid Dostum, a former PDPA commander, and Massoud soon began fighting for control of Kunduz in the north. In 1994, Dostum allied with Hekmatyar along with the Shi’ite Hazaras in an attempt to take Kabul. Rabbani and Massoud clung to power in Kabul, where in 1994 alone, 25,000 people were killed and a third of the city was reduced to rubble.\textsuperscript{43}

\textbf{The Taliban Regime}

The chaos spawned during the civil war led to the emergence of a new political power in Afghanistan, the Taliban. The Taliban movement traces its origins to wahhabite madrasah religious schools in Pakistan, which had a great influence on the children and orphans of refugees from the Afghan fighting. The word ‘Talib’ is an Arabic word meaning ‘student’ or ‘seeker of knowledge.’ These schools received funding from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and were responsible for educating large numbers of Pashtun Afghans, who formed the bulk of the refugees in the border region in Pakistan. Blaming the various Mujaheddin factions for the corruption of Afghanistan, the Taliban began its campaign to gain control of Afghanistan in the south of the country. Under the charismatic leadership of Mullah Mohammed Omar and with substantial Pakistani support, in 1994, the southern province of Kandahar was taken and became the central base for the growing movement.

With material backing from the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) and Saudi Arabia, on 27 September 1996, the Taliban took control of Kabul after bombarding the city and continued to push the AIG forces further north.\textsuperscript{44} Many Afghans welcomed the stability brought by Taliban control, but their hard-line interpretations of Islamic law and social restrictions were not unanimously accepted.

In 1996, a number of groups opposed to the Taliban formed the United National Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, also known as the United Front or the Northern Alliance. Its membership included Rabbani, the former president of the AIG, Ahmed Massoud, the minister of defence, a Hazara party under Muhammad Karim Khalili, a mostly Uzbek faction known as Jundish under Rashid Dostum, and a faction supported largely by Saudi Arabia and led by Abdul Sayyaf. The United Front was less united than the name would suggest, as each faction had its own foreign supporters and command structures were not merged.\textsuperscript{45} It is rumoured,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} UNAMA website, William Maley, Afghanistan Wars, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, 205-206.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Crisis of Impunity, 15-16. Rubin, 82.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan Crisis of Impunity, 15, 16; Rubin, 79, 85.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan Crisis of Impunity, 15, 16; Rubin, 12, 13.
\end{itemize}
but not proven, that Russian Special Forces provided advice and assistance to the United Front.  

**Al Qaeda and the Taliban**

Towards the end of the 1990s US interest returned sharply to Afghanistan. In 1998, the American embassies in Dar-Es-Salaam and Nairobi were bombed, resulting in 257 deaths and over 5000 wounded civilians. The Clinton administration placed the blame for these events on a little known terrorist group, Al Qaeda, headed by a wealthy Saudi businessman, Osama Bin Laden.

Bin Laden was one of the first Arabs to arrive in Afghanistan to fight as a Mujaheddin. Using his large fortune, Bin Laden supported the involvement of many foreign fighters in the conflict through his Maktab al-Khidamar organization. There are diverging reports about links between the CIA and Bin Laden at this point. The Gulf War of 1990-1991 was a radical turning point for Bin Laden, as he objected to the presence of American soldiers on Saudi soil. Upon losing his Saudi citizenship in 1995 and later being expelled from Sudan, his first refuge, Bin Laden found a safe port in Afghanistan in 1996, where he cultivated a close relationship with the rising Taliban and further developed his Al Qaeda organization.

In August 1998, the Americans retaliated for the embassy bombings with cruise missile strikes against purported Al Qaeda terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, driving a wedge between the Taliban and the US and ending any possibility of American recognition of the Taliban. From this time, as scholar Barnett R. Rubin wrote, the attack on Al Qaeda camps made Afghanistan a "one-issue" country for the US. That issue was terrorism.

The threat posed by Al Qaeda had in fact received significant attention from the Security Council over the previous five years. Security Council Resolution 1076 (1996) said "...the continuation of conflict in Afghanistan provides a fertile ground for terrorism and drug trafficking which destabilizes the region and beyond, and calls upon the leaders of the Afghan parties to halt such activities." This concern was repeated in Resolution 1193 on 28 August 1998. In December 1988, Resolution 1214 called on the Taliban to stop providing sanctuary for terrorists. And on October 15 1999, citing the failure to respond to this demand, Resolution 1267 demanded that the Taliban hand over Bin Laden, who had been indicted by the United States for the 1998 bombings in Nairobi and Dar-Es-Salaam. These demands were repeated in Resolution 1333 in December 2000 and even in Resolution 1363 in July 2001. However, strong words did not equate to action, and the world remained largely aloof from Afghanistan’s problems except for coverage of the oppression of Afghan women and the well-publicized destruction of the giant Buddhist statues in Bamian in March 2001.

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47 US Department of State, ‘US Embassy Bombings’.
49 Rubin, ‘Afghanistan Under the Taliban’, 86.
50 Ibid, 80.
U.S.-led Invasion

Al Qaeda was blamed almost immediately for the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, and the U.S. responded with the military invasion of Afghanistan, the precursor to the massive multifaceted peace operation in the country today.

Though preparations for military action commenced on 12 September 2001, the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, called "Operation Enduring Freedom" (OEF), began on 7 October 2001 with air strikes and missile attacks. The objectives of this campaign were outlined in a speech by US President George W. Bush on October 7, and included overthrowing the Taliban government and disrupting communications and networks between terrorist groups deemed responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Military action was preceded by an ultimatum delivered by President Bush on 20 September 2001. The President called on the Taliban to turn all Al-Qaeda leaders over to the US, release all unjustly imprisoned foreign nationals, close all terrorist training camps within Afghanistan and give the US full access to them. President Bush concluded his remarks by implying that the Taliban would be attacked if they did not comply.

When military action began, the U.S. President, in an address to the nation, stated that attacks were launched on his orders, and "supported by the collective will of the world." While the true accuracy of this claim is difficult to measure, UN actions and statements from the time did give some support to the President's words. Indeed, Security Council Resolution 1333 of December 2000 had earlier placed an arms embargo on the Taliban, banned the travel of Taliban ministers, and ordered the closure of all its diplomatic offices abroad.

The U.S.A. did not act alone when military operations against the Taliban began, as OEF was undertaken by a coalition of nations. The list of nations providing support to the coalition is extensive, with contributions coming from 55 nations and varying from indirect support such as permitting use of airspace and use of facilities for logistics, to the contribution of naval, air, and ground forces. Some of the major contributions to the initial campaign were made by the UK, Canada, France, Australia, and Germany. By January 2002, Special Forces from the United States Mission to NATO, ‘Allied Contributions to the War on Terrorism’ US Military CENTCOM website, and US Department of State, ‘Coalition Contributions to the War on Terrorism’. President George W. Bush, Speech to the Joint Session of Congress, 20 September 2001. President George W. Bush, Statement by the President, 7 October 2001. Human Rights Watch, World Report 2001: Afghanistan, 2001. Global Security, ‘Operation Enduring Freedom -- Afghanistan’, France sent its liaison team to United States Central Command (CENTCOM-Department of Defence branch responsible for 25 countries in Northeast Africa, Southwest and Central Asia, and Seychelles) on 10 October 2001. French planes conducted reconnaissance, refueling, and bombing missions after 18 October. A French infantry company was on the ground by 2 December and secured Mazar-i-Sharif. See: US Central Command website, "Coalition.", The French aircraft carrier task group based around the "Charles de Gaulle" deployed to the Indian Ocean in December 2001 to support operations. During operations, French fighter planes staged more than ten percent of sorties over Afghanistan. See: Global Security website, "Operation Enduring Freedom- Deployments," UK representatives arrived at CENTCOM on 18 September 2001. Support included launching Tomahawk cruise missiles during the initial invasion in October, and conducting reconnaissance flights. SAS commandos also participated in ground actions. See: Sean Maloney, "The International Security
Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Germany, and Turkey were operating in Afghanistan. Exact numbers of Special Forces soldiers or details of their actions are not readily available. Support did not come only from traditional western allies. Egypt, Malaysia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ethiopia are examples of non-traditional allies that offered support to US operations.

A critical partner in the coalition was Pakistan. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf joined the American coalition in October 2001. The United States reportedly had given Musharraf an ultimatum, telling him to declare Pakistan either friend or foe. He immediately reshuffled army corps command, marginalizing some officers that sympathized with the Taliban. Ending Pakistan's support to the Taliban was an important step in facilitating the upcoming military campaign. After a string of United Front/Northern Alliance victories which culminated in the taking of Kabul on 13 November 2001, Pakistan bowed to pressure and closed the Taliban’s embassy in Islamabad. The US, in exchange for Pakistan’s support, dropped economic sanctions imposed because of Pakistan’s nuclear program, and restructured loan repayments. Pakistani support continues in the shape of fly-over permission, emergency landing rights, docking permission for coalition ships, and military and police operations within Pakistan to combat suspected Taliban and Al Qaeda members. Recently news reports that the US is conducting military operations on Pakistani territory have begun to surface. However, the degree of central control exercised over Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency is uncertain, and support for the Taliban from Pakistani sources has continued despite Pakistan’s official denials of support.

Although allied contributions have been significant, the largest contingent of foreign soldiers in OEF came from the United States. The US had 20,000 to 25,000 troops in the region before 11 September 2001. By 8 November there were more than 50,000 American troops in the region, most aboard ships in the Arabian Sea with Special Forces and 10th Mountain Division soldiers based in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. By January 2002 the reported number of US troops inside Afghanistan was over 4,000, a number which increased to 8,000 by August of that year. The US deployed 500 aircraft and 14,000 Air Force personnel by November 2001.

The initial battle against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan was highly successful from the American perspective. Air strikes and Special Forces worked in tandem with the Northern Assistance Force: The Origins of a Stabilization Force." Canadian Military Journal, Summer 2003, Volume 4, Issue 3. 15 November, British Special Forces landed at Bagram Air Base North of Kabul and moved into Kabul to secure the UK embassy there. See: Global Security website, "Operation Enduring Freedom- Deployments."; Japan deployed three ships in November 2001 to support the operation, the first combat support mission for Japanese forces since World War Two. Their primary role was in supply and information gathering. See: Global Security website, "Operation Enduring Freedom- Deployments."

59 Maley, 265.
Alliance and other militia groups to rapidly push the Taliban forces south from northern Afghanistan. The use of air power during Operation Enduring Freedom was seen as highly efficient and negated the need for a large ground invasion force, with only 4,000 Special Forces troops being landed on the ground during the struggle against the Taliban. Larger numbers of ground troops arrived later to begin hunting Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. In December 2001, approximately 1,300 marines and an unknown number of Special Forces secured the Kandahar airfield.

The vast majority of ground fighting, however, was done by the Northern Alliance with US air and Special Forces support. Support to the Northern Alliance, now under Massoud’s successors Muhammed Qassem Fahim, Younos Qanuni, and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, began covertly in late September 2001. Large amounts of cash were used to persuade warlords to support an attack on the Taliban. A ground assault coincided with the start of coalition bombing. By 12 November, Mazar-e-Sharif, Meymaneh, and Herat had fallen. On 9 December, Hamid Karzai entered Kandahar, the last Taliban stronghold to fall to coalition and Northern Alliance forces. On 16 December 2001, with all the major cities in the control of forces allied with the coalition, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that “We’ve destroyed Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, and we have ended the role of Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorist activity.” On 22 December 2001 US General Tommy Franks traveled to Kabul to mark the inauguration of an interim Afghan Government.

The number of civilians killed as a result of the air campaign waged by the US is controversial. US government estimates are around 400, while other figures range as high as 3,767. The lack of an efficient mechanism of keeping track of civilian deaths during the fighting made determining the exact number killed nearly impossible. US government sources rely on military reports, while others use media reports, neither of which can be assumed to give an unbiased tally of casualties.

After the quick collapse of the Taliban, OEF shifted to more of what the military calls a “hunter-killer” mission, as US and coalition forces continued to search for and combat Taliban leaders and Al Qaeda members.

President Bush’s address of 7 October also referred to winning the favour of the Afghan people, and demonstrating the “generosity of America.” Subsequently, humanitarian aid was used controversially by the US military in the campaign against the Taliban. 37,000 food packets were dropped by air in rural areas by US forces, and 1700 tons of wheat and 328,000 blankets were delivered by US forces through October, November, and December 2001. This

For example, whereas 3,000 sorties were flown per day in 1991, only 200 were flown in 2001. Ten aircraft were used per target in 1991, and in 2001 one aircraft was used for two targets. The percentage of precision guided munitions used was much higher in Afghanistan (60-70%) than in the first Gulf War (less than 10%). Warren Chin, 62.


Maley, 263

Ibid, 266.


President George W. Bush, Statement by the President, 7 October 2001.
assistance continued after the fall of the Taliban.\textsuperscript{73} Reconstruction assistance is a central part of the US military strategy in stabilizing Afghanistan.

The major military and political involvement of outside powers in Afghanistan since the U.S. invasion can be called a ‘peace operation’ only in the broadest terms. It is not a unified mission under a single command, but rather a collection of outside actors pursuing different, though often related goals with different mandates and, sometimes, different motivations. However these actors do have common goals in creating a stable, democratic government in Afghanistan that does not pose a threat to its own citizens or those of other states.

\textbf{The Continuing Insurgency}

The reconstruction of Afghanistan is being undertaken in a challenging environment. This is because while peacebuilding and reconstruction ideally take place in a post-conflict setting, Afghanistan is very much a country in conflict. The Afghan government and its US and NATO allies are attempting to assert the government’s control outside Kabul. Illegal armed groups, the Taliban, and opium production are the key security challenges facing the Afghanistan government and the international community.\textsuperscript{74} There are currently 3 principle armed groups opposing the central government: 1) Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hizb-i-Islami (HIG), which operates to the east of Kabul, 2) the Taliban, which operates mainly in the south and parts of the east, and 3) Al Qaeda, which supports both HIG and the Taliban and also conducts its own attacks, from its base in the south-eastern border region with Pakistan.\textsuperscript{75}

Afghanistan is seen as more dangerous than Iraq as the Taliban have become more sophisticated in their ambushes and bombings. They are also using terror tactics in the main battle grounds of the southern and eastern provinces to assert their control over the population. Much of their efforts are being fuelled by the poppy trade. Many of the main poppy growing areas of the south and west overlap with the key insurgency battle grounds. A recent UN survey found that 100% of the southern poppy farmers and 72% western poppy farmers are forced to pay taxes to the Taliban, mullahs and local commanders. About 90% of the world’s heroin comes from Afghanistan, two-thirds of which is from Helmand province.

Though Afghanistan continues to remain the world’s leading producer of opium, the 2009 UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report revealed that opium production in the country had decreased by 19% in 2008. 18 provinces are reported to be poppy free which is up from the 13 poppy free provinces in 2007.\textsuperscript{76} Currently 98% of the opium growing is confined to the five southern provinces and two western provinces, Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Daykundi, Zabul, Farah and Nimroz. These are the areas where twin problems of the insurgency and lack of security are most prominent. Therefore it demonstrates a clear link between the conflict and the drug trade.

It is believed that the conflict is creating ideal conditions to encourage the growth of poppies. Poppy crops are widespread in areas where the insurgency is at its strongest. The Taliban

\textsuperscript{76} World Drug Report 2009 UNODC (2009) p33
have formed a symbiotic relationship with the narco-traffickers and have been able to add millions of dollars to their war chest through the drug trade. Of Afghanistan's 34 provinces 18 can be considered as poppy free. However, there is some confusion with how the problem should be dealt with by NATO. Is NATO (ISAF) meant to focus primarily on counter-insurgency or counter-narcotics? While the US forces see the narcotics trade as a primary threat, ISAF and the British in particular see counter narcotics as taking resources away from the war effort. However, as more US troops enter into Helmand province, where the main British presence lies, they might just win the argument. There has been some talk of legalizing the poppy production in relation to the production of pain killing drugs but this might not be feasible as the black market price of illegal poppy would be significantly higher than the any price offered on the legal market. Only a political solution and long term development is seen as the cure for Afghanistan’s poppy affliction.

Though the toppling of the Taliban from power in 2001 proved to be a straight forward task, suppressing the Taliban threat has become a prolonged battle. This assertion is backed by the comments made by Brigadier General Mark Carleton-Smith, who concluded that the war with the Taliban cannot be won and that there would be no decisive victory. He stated to the British public, and the rest of the world, that the Afghan government and its foreign allies should be prepared to make a deal with the Taliban. These sentiments were also echoed by others such as Ron Hoffman, the Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan, who also stated that there was no military solution to the growing insurgency.

In his testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and Asia on April 2nd 2008, Mark L. Schneider, the Senior Vice President of the International Crisis Group (ICG) painted a grim picture. In his testimony he stated that within the last three years, since 2005, the situation has deteriorated considerably. Suicide bombings have increased by 600% from 2005 and insurgent attacks have also risen by 400%. 40 World Food Program (WFP) convoys were looted in 2007. There were also 130 attacks against humanitarian programs, 40 relief workers were killed and 89 abducted. Also in 2007, of the 8,000 conflict related deaths that occurred, 1500 of them were civilian.

With a serious escalation in violence in the past three years it seems that despite the presence of 64,000 troops on the ground the US and its NATO allies seems to be losing ground against the insurgency. In fact, in a recent Reuters article it was stated that new American president would face a situation more dangerous and challenging than that which led to September 11th attacks. J Alexander Thier of the U.S. Peace Institute stated that there needs to be a new strategy from the new U.S. president and the new administration cannot afford to waste any time.

Already there seems to be cracks forming in the NATO ranks. A top alliance commander described the campaign against the Taliban as disjointed. Individual veto power that countries can wield over certain operations and the lack of commitment to fulfilling troop pledges has hampered the NATO efforts against the insurgency. Initially NATO was only sanctioned to operate within Kabul but in 2003 its mandate was extended throughout the country. However many of the nations are not willing to commit troops to those areas where NATO is engaging in heavy fighting with the Taliban. In late October 2008 General Sir Michael Rose, former commander of the UN forces in Bosnia, added to the growing list of concerned voices when he stated that coalition forces are reaching their limit. While writing for the military think tank Royal United Services Institute he called for the formation of local tribal militias. According to General Rose, “by winning the support of the Pashtun tribes who live on both sides of the border and by developing a sympathetic understanding to their complex tribal systems, it should be possible to achieve security in key eastern and southern areas of Afghanistan.”
However, this is easier said than done as the Pakistani government has found it difficult to deal with the tribes in Waziristan. At the same time the Afghan army is expected to double its size to 134,000 in four year’s time. However, it is difficult to predict at what point the NATO forces would be able to reduce in size. The need for additional troops is also a major concern as states are not willing to risk their troops in hostile situations. NATO commanders say that at least **12,000 more troops are need to bolster the NATO contingent**. The British government, for example, has stated that it will not be sending reinforcements to Helmand province where it is currently operating. It is expected that troops will be available once the force in Iraq is cut down in size. Currently most of the burden of combat lies on the shoulders of the US, UK, Canadian and Dutch troops including a few other nations who allow their forces to engage in combat operations. In January 2009 UK Defense Secretary John Hutton lashed out at fellow European NATO partners of freeloaders. He admonished those nations who were not pulling their weight and for expecting the US to do the heavy lifting in this conflict on the political, military and financial levels. However, with the swearing in of President Obama three brigades have been promised to Afghanistan which will raise the US’s presence from 36,000 troops to 60,000. Thus adding much needed military muscle to the war effort.

The ICG has criticized the international community’s efforts in Afghanistan due to its “lack of strategic coherence”. There is a lack of any form of structure on both the civilian and the military side. The civilian representatives of the UN, NATO, and the European Union have no clear line of authority and at the same time the US and other major contributing nations are not willing to be subjected to outside authorities. On the military side Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is undertaking multiple missions (local training and its own operations) and reporting to EUCOM, NATO, CENTCOM and the special operations command in Tampa. This lack of coherence is also reflected in recent exchanges between the US and the UK. Recent reports suggest that the US has been unimpressed with the UK effort in Afghanistan, especially their counter insurgency effort. The UK Defence Secretary, John Hutton, has however dismissed these claims saying that there is a high regard for the UK’s contribution in Afghanistan. He said that the UK welcomes any constructive criticism of their effort but will not be drawn into this discussion based on unsubstantiated gossip. At present the UK troop commitments represents 12% of the total troop presence in Afghanistan. UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband has said that his government will continue to review their troop commitments but there are no guarantees of an increase in troop level in the near future. Troop numbers are a continuous bone of contention among the US and their allies but Defense Secretary Hutton stressed that the UK continues to punch above their weight. He also indicated that there are other factors that are contributing to the lack progress in fighting the insurgency, pointing to the need for the Karzai government to do more.

While efforts are being focused on the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan there is the fear that Al Qaeda has regained its strength in the tribal areas of Pakistan. An unstable nuclear state like Pakistan would prove to be advantageous for Al Qaeda. This is according to Anthony Cordesman from the Centre for Strategic studies. However there are other voices who say that Al Qaeda is on the run as they cannot operate as freely as they could before the invasion of Afghanistan and who even say that the Afghan insurgency is less sophisticated than that in Iraq. Al Qaeda continues to have plans to further destabilize the region. US Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said that he believes that Al Qaeda is attempting to spark a war between India and Pakistan. Evidence of this can be seen in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Secretary Gates also mentioned the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Pakistan based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba as being involved in this plan. As the US tries to stand firm on its commitment to its policy with Afghanistan and Pakistan, a war between India and Pakistan could damage its efforts in the region.
With 2009 being the most deadliest year for Afghan civilians as fatalities rose by 14%, the Wall Street Journal reported on the new generation of Taliban commanders who were more determined to drive foreign troops out of Afghanistan rather than reach a negotiated settlement. The article explains that while the Taliban were a broken force after the US and NATO invasion of the country it is the younger generation of commanders who have transformed the Taliban into an effective guerrilla fighting force.

Most of the new generation of Taliban commanders have grown up knowing nothing else besides 30 years of continuous warfare. While the older generation were seen as more pragmatic the younger generation seem less inclined to negotiate. Though Mullah Omar and his inner circle and Osama Bin Laden continue to lead their movements it is Sirajuddin Haqqani who has emerged as an influential figure in the Afghanistan insurgency and the conflict along Pakistan’s border tribal region. He has ties to every major group in the confederation of factions under the Taliban umbrella as well as with Al Qaeda. His base in Pakistan’s Northern Waziristan attracts militants from all over the world. US and Afghanistan officials believe that he was probably responsible for the major attack on the Afghan capital, Kabul, just 50 yards away from the presidential palace. The assault in Kabul was a response to the Afghan government’s reconciliation plan. Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban’s spokesman emphasised that the Taliban were prepared to fight and not make any deals to lay down their arms. Attacking a major city centre has sent shockwaves throughout the country as the, primarily rural, insurgency has demonstrated that nowhere in the country is safe.

NATO continues to stress that failure is not an option for the US and its coalition partners. In a statement made at the February 2009 meeting of NATO and partner defence ministers in Krakow, Poland, Mr Jaap de Hoop Schefer reiterated the now common mantra that “we should not be under any illusion that there is a military solution” and that greater cooperation is need among NATO allies and their partners. Also, as the Taliban and Afghan insurgency takes its toll on coalition supply routes through Pakistan, the US has been able to secure alternative routes through Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. However these routes will be used only for non-military supplies. About 50 to 200 containers will be sent via the two countries every week. The Tajikistan government has given permission to the US to use its railways and roads to transport non-military supplies into Afghanistan. The US has also invested millions in the construction of a bridge that connects Tajikistan to Afghanistan which will almost certainly be used. The US has also reached agreements with Russia and Kazakhstan to transport non-military supplies through their territory. This comes in the wake of the loss of the US’s only military base in the Central Asia region, Kyrgyzstan. The decision of the parliament Kyrgyzstan to close the base is due to the Kyrgyzstan government claiming that the US has not been paying enough rent for their base in Manas, whilst the US has said it would be willing to pay more but within reason.

The 'Taliban' Today

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77 Matthew Rosenberg New wave of warlords bedevils US Wall Street Journal (January 20th 2010)
78 Dexter Filkins Kabul attack shows resilience of Afghan Militants The New York Times (January 18th 2010)
Currently applying the term Taliban to all insurgents in Afghanistan is an inaccurate way of portraying several diverse groups. According to Paul Rogers of Bradford University, elements of the former Taliban leadership are still in charge of that movement, though its rank and file is somewhat more complex. Taliban fighters can range from those dedicated to the movement to local villagers and youth lured by high rates of pay.

Kofi Annan claims that currently the insurgency is being conducted mostly within Afghanistan's borders, by Afghans. However, the leadership relies on support from outside the country. Annan identifies the centre of gravity of the insurgency as being in the south around Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and increasingly Farah, though insurgent activity occurs throughout the country.

Annan identifies five distinct leadership centres of the insurgency:

- The wing of Hizb-e-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Kunar
- The Taliban northern command in Nangahar and Laghman
- Networks led by Jalaluddin Haqqani, operating mostly in Paktya and Khost
- The Wana Shura, for Paktika
- The Taliban Southern command, for Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand, and Uruzgan.

According to Annan, the leadership forms the hard core of the insurgency and is widely considered not open to reconciliation. They operate from cross-border sanctuaries, which provide fertile recruiting grounds from the Afghan refugee camps. Unemployed, indoctrinated young men from these camps generally form the mid-level leadership of the Taliban. Afghans recruited within Afghanistan are most often the foot soldiers of the insurgency, though their motivations are often economic. This group is considered more open to reconciliation, especially if economic incentives are offered. Corruption amongst police, judiciary, and government officials, disappointment with the pace of development, uneven power distribution among some Pashtun tribes, and social policies that are perceived to threaten traditional tribal, religious, and ethnic practices have all been cited as sources of discontent.

Brigadier Jerry Thomas, commander of the 4,200 British Soldiers in Helmand in November 2006, echoed Annan's iteration that there is a hard-core of ideologically driven Taliban that are not open to reconciliation. Thomas said separating those that are open to reconciliation from those that are not is a central component of ISAF strategy. Thomas estimated the number of truly irreconcilable Taliban to be in the 'tens.'

The situation is also confused by shifting alliances amongst local landowners and former warlords who have stakes in opium cultivation, tribal allegiances, and local feuds. The presence of foreign Jihadi fighters and Al Qaida operatives further demonstrates the diversity of the 'anti-government' forces.

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79 Pam O'Toole, ‘Who are the Militants in Afghanistan?’ BBC World Service, 18 August 2006.
81 Sean Rayment, ‘Die-Hard Taliban will have to be eliminated’, Telegraph, 11 November 2006.
The Centre for Contemporary Conflict’s Thomas Johnson and M. Chris Mason claim the Taliban is a tribal, more than an Islamic, movement. Most of the movement’s leadership is from the Ghilzai Pashtuns, and its principle areas of operation coincide with the Ghilzai’s largest population centres (Uruzgan, Zab ul, Ghazni, Dai Kundi, and Paktika). Johnson and Mason also claim that Mullah Omar’s leadership is a centre of gravity of the Taliban movement, as opposed to the nearly infinite number of foot soldiers the Taliban can produce.  

The degree of popular support for the Taliban and other insurgent forces is difficult to measure. Anthony Cordesman of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies has published a slide-show format report that indicates levels of support for the Taliban of approximately 31% in Helmand/Kandahar and 71% in between Paktika and Wardak. The report, *Iraq, the Gulf, Afghanistan: The Way Ahead* includes maps portraying the area of operations of the key insurgency groups in Afghanistan, in addition to various statistics on attacks and Afghan perceptions of the security threat.

The maps below represent ‘high-risk’ (gray) areas, and ‘extreme risk’ (black) security areas in Afghanistan.

For a larger version [click here](#).  

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In October 2008 it was made known that Canada was to step up its efforts to reach out to those Taliban fighters who could be negotiated with. It was announced that the Canadian government will be funding an Afghan-supervised reintegration program. This program would give these militants job training and also relocate them to other parts of the country. $14 million has been set aside to fund this demobilization project. In addition to this initiative, Louise Delvoie, a senior fellow at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario and Canada’s High Commissioner to Pakistan, said that Canada should be encouraging Afghanistan to negotiate some form of power sharing with the moderate elements of the Taliban. There have been some signs of success in efforts to reach out to these elements of the Taliban. The Peace and Reconciliation Office in Kandahar has reached out to 512 former Taliban. However, care has to also be taken in assessing the impact of such programs in an ongoing conflict. Relocating Taliban to other parts of the country might stir other conflicts in the areas of their relocation.

International Community  Updated February 3rd 2010

Regional Involvement

Sitting at the crossroads of cultures and major trade routes, Afghanistan has known foreign invasion since the time of Alexander the Great. Particular interests in the country may have changed, but foreign intervention and meddling in the country have remained a constant factor in Afghan history. Understanding the involvement of outside states in the Afghanistan conflict is critical to assessing the successes and challenges of the current international effort. Too often, Afghanistan is portrayed as a purely internal conflict, a case of state implosion or failure, and external factors behind the conflicts are ignored.

Pakistan

Pakistan’s principle interest is seen as securing its northern and western border to be able to focus its attention on its disputes with India. However, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to be affected by a number of contentious issues such as the border between the two countries (Durand line) and a perception that Taliban militants are using Pakistan’s tribal areas as safe havens. Pakistan has denied such charges, but its security officials have acknowledged that local tribal fighters and militants of Arab, Afghan and Central Asian origin operate in its tribal regions. The presidents of Pakistan and Afghanistan pledged in December 2007 to increase the co-operation of their intelligence agencies and tighten border controls in an effort to crack down on Taliban and Al Qaeda-linked militants. The cordial tone of this latest bilateral meeting contrasted with past exchanges.
In spring 2007, American intelligence officials said the Al Qaeda leaders hiding in Pakistan’s tribal areas had become increasingly active. Backed by Al Qaeda, pro-Taliban militants have expanded their influence from the remote border regions into the more populated parts of Pakistan this year and mounted a record number of suicide bombings in Pakistan and Afghanistan. While mainstream media tend to depict bombings as an act of terrorism aimed against individuals, they should rather be considered as part of a political and military strategy by a coherent political group. It should be noted that in December 2007, Baitullah Mahsud, the commander of South Waziristan, reported that the Pakistani Taliban had agreed to a single chain of command under him.

Pakistan appears to be unable to stem the wave of extremist violence. This is surprising, since the United States has spent more than $5 billion (between 2001 and 2007) in a largely failed effort to bolster the Pakistani military effort against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. US officials said they believed that much of the American money was not making its way to frontline Pakistani units. Possibly as a result of the very limited success of its indirect support program in the past, the US has now decided to send trainers from the US Joint Special Operations Command Forces to Pakistan's tribal areas. Encouraged by its success in turning Sunni tribes in Iraq against Al Qaeda, the US now wants to win over the tribals who have been cooperating with militants.

Some argue that President Musharraf’s struggle to stay in power inspite of growing pressure from the political opposition, the judiciary and civil society distracted his attention from the threat of militants. Some analysts argue that Mr. Musharraf’s authoritarian maneuvers weakened the country’s already feeble political institutions and fueled more political turmoil. Mr. Musharraf's decision to end six weeks of martial law (imposed in early November 2007) was long overdue, as was his decision to finally resign his army post and take the presidential oath of office as a civilian. The latest major shift in the dynamics of Pakistani domestic politics occurred when opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2007. Elections were scheduled for January 8th 2008 but were not held until February 18 2008. Opposition parties PPP and PML-N won a majority of seats and agreed to govern in coalition, committing themselves to restoring democratic rule in the country. Mr. Musharraf’s political survival depended in part on his successor as army chief, Ashfaq Parvez Kayani.

However, the curtain was drawn on Mr. Musharraf’s presidency on August 18th 2008 when he decided to step down from power in order to save himself from being impeached by his own government. He was replaced as president by Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of Benazir Bhutto. President Zardari’s government was greeted by a major terrorist attack on the Marriot hotel in Islamabad on September 20th 2008. A large truck bomb exploded in front of the hotel, completely destroying the façade and killing 53 people and wounding 266 others. Security sources believe Pakistan’s national parliament and the residence of the prime minister were the preferred targets, but the bomber (or bombers) was deterred by a high security presence around those buildings. This was a significant attack on the government and the western presence in Pakistan. The hotel is a major symbol in Islamabad, which was frequented by diplomats, dignitaries, the city’s elite and well-off foreign visitors. A little known Pakistani militant group, Fidayeen-e-Islam, has said it carried out the attack. The group, based in Pakistan’s tribal areas and connected to leading militant Baitullah Mehsud, said that the aim of the attack was to stop US interference in Pakistan.

Following the bombing, President Zardari addressed the nation saying: "[W]e are determined to clear this cancer [of militancy] from Pakistan." He called upon "all democratic powers" to help save Pakistan against this threat. Many believe the security situation has worsened since the defeat of the allies of Pervez Musharraf in February’s general elections.
However, despite the political and economic trouble that the country is facing there has been progress in the fight against the Taliban militants in Pakistan’s tribal areas. Taliban militants fighting the Pakistan army have said that they are willing to lay down their arms and hold unconditional talks with the government. The government has said that it is willing to meet and talk to these local Taliban. The Taliban spokesman, Maulvi Omar also said that the local Taliban did not want foreign fighters in the country and would work with the government to remove them. His next statement reinforced the primacy that needs to be placed on finding a political solution to the Taliban issue as he emphasized that it would be useless to talk about security without involving the Taliban.

At present the Pakistan Army is looking to reassert the government’s control over its frontier provinces bordering Afghanistan. Two areas of concern are the Swat region and the Khyber region. Currently, the Pakistan military is engaged in operations to tackle the Taliban presence in the Swat Valley which, until recently, used to be a popular tourist destination. Though this area does not border Afghanistan it demonstrates the reach of the Taliban who have links with the radical cleric in the area, Maulana Fuzullah. There is a growing concern of the Taliban setting up their own courts in the area and preventing girls from receiving an education. Civilian casualties have been mounting as dozens of state employees and government supporters have been killed and about 200 schools have been destroyed.

Moving further west and into the Khyber region which borders Afghanistan, the Pakistan military has begun an offensive to root out militants who have been attacking supply convoys destined for coalition and ISAF troops. 75 percent of all supplies for the nearly 65,000 foreign troops pass through the Khyber Pass. This is a vulnerable route that the militants have taken advantage of to inflict as much damage as possible to the war effort in Afghanistan. This route has been a source of concern for a while, as supplies have to travel by land to reach the troops in landlocked Afghanistan. This has prompted NATO to look for alternatives and at present the likely option is through Central Asia and into northern Afghanistan.

Though Operation Khyber Agency has received a positive response from the United States, tensions are already mounting between the Pakistan government and the new American administration. The new American president looks to be keeping his promise on taking a tough stance against al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in Pakistan’s border region. During the election campaign, President Obama emphasised that he felt that the Bush administration’s major mistake was in switching the focus of the ‘war on terror’ to Iraq instead of focusing on Afghanistan and its border region with Pakistan. Obama has repeatedly stated that if he does receive credible intelligence of Taliban and al-Qaeda activity in border tribal regions of Pakistan he would authorize air strikes. Only four days into his presidency, Obama authorized what could be the first of many strikes into the Pakistan. The two strikes claimed about 18 lives. The US strongly believes that a major thorn in their plans is the presence of Taliban and al-Qaeda bases in Pakistan. In fact, in the last year in 2008, the US military has launched 30 strikes inside Pakistan territory which have claimed 200 lives.

Looking at current events it is difficult to predict how this new relationship will evolve. Both countries have new regimes, Obama in the US and Pakistan’s Zardari, who have to prove a point to their respective peoples regarding their leadership. President Zardari has already warned the US administration that air strikes are counterproductive to cooperation in the war on terror. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mohammad Sadiq said that the Pakistan government hopes that the US would adopt a more integrated and holistic approach towards terrorism and extremism. While Pakistan is willing to aid the US in its war on terror it is not willing to allow continuous US incursions into its territory. Therefore, only time will tell how both governments will be able to resolve this conflicting relationship.
In recent developments Pakistan’s relationship with the US and its participation in the War on Terror have taken another twist. In order to bring peace to the Swat region the Pakistani government has begun negotiations in what could be a permanent settlement with the Taliban. The Government of Pakistan announced a “permanent” truce in February 2009. A week before, a ten day ceasefire was announced. Included in this deal was an agreement for the imposition of Sharia Law in this region. This is primarily what the Taliban in the region have been waging their violence campaign for. Mr Javed, the commissioner of Malakand, has elaborated that the agreement would mean that the army would scale back operations in the area and residents who fled will be encouraged to return. Also, schools for boys would be reopened while those for girls would remain closed. Thousands of people have been displaced and over a thousand have been killed in the Swat area since the Taliban began its insurgency in 2007. The agreement is hardly the best possible outcome, but the end of hostilities will at least being a temporary peace for the residents of the Swat area.

The deal which has been struck between the Taliban and the Pakistan government has increased the concerns of the international community regarding the situation in Pakistan. BBC’s Pakistan analyst Owen Bennett-Jones has commented that this amounts to nothing short of capitulation by the Pakistan government. His sentiments were echoed by Richard Holbrook, the US’s newly appointed envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Voicing his concerns, Holbrook said that this might lead to surrender. He elaborated saying that it was hard to understand the nature of this deal. He also said that President Zardari has given assurances that this deal is only temporary. However, this contradicted earlier reports about the permanency of the Pakistan government’s arrangement with the Taliban in the Swat Valley especially since they have allowed the Taliban to impose their interpretation of Sharia Law on the people in the region, giving them another foothold in the fragile frontier regions of Pakistan. The international community is still coming to terms with the implications of this agreement and it will certainly be the main topic of discussion when an Afghan and a Pakistan delegation arrive at the White House. However despite the international implications of these developments, the deal is good news to the residents of Swat. Many of them welcome the new peace agreement after living with violence and seem be happy to live under any system that would guarantee them peace.

The Taliban’s encroachment into the Swat region is indicative of its growing control along Pakistan’s frontier regions. The presence continues to grow in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and seven administrative districts bordering Afghanistan. There they have taken advantage of the fragile tribal structures and assumed control of the areas. A report by International Crisis Group in October 2008 explains that this take over by the insurgents are not a result of tribal traditions or resistance but that of “short sighted military policies and a colonial-era body of law that isolates the region from the rest of the country.” By isolating the region the Pakistan government was denying the population their political freedoms and economic opportunities. These faults were easily taken advantage of by the insurgents to create a strong foothold in the area. Poorly run military operations and appeasement deals have helped the Taliban’s position. ICG recommended that Pakistan need to conduct broader institutional, political and economic reforms in the area and called on the international community and the US in particular to direct aid towards that region through accountable channels.

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84 Pakistan: Countering the militancy in FATA International Crisis Group (October 2009)
The Taliban’s strong presence in the area has led to growing fears of a further influx of fighters once the 30,000 strong US troop surge begins in the area. The rise in militants would therefore increase the level of violence on Pakistan’s side of the border. US officials deny this possibility. One can point to a recent offensive in the Helmand province in summer of 2009 which did not see a major influx of militant as was feared. On the other hand going further back to the initial invasion of 2001, Pakistan’s tribal region did see a massive influx of Talibran and Al Qaeda fighters. As Pakistan continues to focus the bulk of its forces along the border with India, its forces in the east are stretched due to ongoing operations in South Waziristan and other tribal areas. US officials could request that Pakistan pull some of its troops from its Indian border to bolster its forces in the west.

The success of the US’s troop surge was dealt another blow on January 21st 2010 when the Pakistan Army announced that it would not launch any new operations along its Afghan border for the next six months to a year. This halt in new operations is to allow for the Pakistan military to consolidate gains it has made in recent campaigns in the Swat and South Waziristan areas. The military cited a lack of resources and the risk of public disapproval of the killing fellow Muslims. For now, the US government has accepted Pakistan’s decision. However, consideration has to also be given to the wave of retaliatory strikes the Pakistan people have had to suffer as well. Terror attacks in response to an October 2009 military offensive claimed the lives of 600 people. These attacks are not just limited to the tribal areas but are in major cities such as Lahore, Peshawar and Rawalpindi. This adds to the fear and uncertainty spreading throughout the country.

India

India began cultivating its presence in Afghanistan through funding Northern Alliance forces fighting against the Taliban. After the Taliban's fall, India opened consulates in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif. India has offered $1.2 billion in assistance to Afghanistan, and Indian firms have been heavily involved in road construction and other projects. In Jan 2009 the Zaranj-Delaram highway was completed in south west Afghanistan near the Iranian border. Also under construction is Afghanistan's new parliament building set for completion in 2011. Indian is also constructing the Salma Dam in Herat province. India's Border Roads Organization has played a major role in construction projects, and some have alleged the BRO is effectively a branch of the Indian army.

In addition to funding and construction projects, India is also playing a role in the training of police, diplomats and civil servants. It is also lending its expertise in the areas of health, education, transportation, telecommunications and power. Shashi Tharoor, former under-secretary general at the United Nations pointed at India’s greatest asset is the soft power it wields in Afghanistan. Tharoor explains that Indian television and films are very popular in

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85 Karin Brulliard Pakistan worried US build up in Afghanistan will send militant across the border The Washington Post (January 5th 2010)
86 Anne Gearan Pakistani army: No new offensive for 6-12 months Associated Press (January 21st 2010)
87 Jayshree Bajoria India-Afghanistan Relations Council on Foreign Relations (July 22nd 2009)
Afghanistan and much of it is due to the fact it is not propagandist in nature and engages the needs of the population directly.

India has an interest in the construction of two gas pipelines running from Central Asia to India and From Iran to India. It sees Afghanistan as a potential gateway to trade with energy rich Central Asia. Afghanistan sees its relationship with India as a counterweight to Pakistan. India defends its interests in Afghanistan along economic lines, playing down regional power struggles. However, some commentators have referred to Indian-Pakistani rivalry as a new version of the ‘Great Game.’

The London Conference on January 10th 2010 provides an opportunity for India and Pakistan to make enough progress on their differences so as to allow for a regional solution to be realized. Mark Sedwill, the British ambassador to Afghanistan has already said that the Great Game was over and that it was time for Afghanistan to be a point of stability in the region. Steve Coll of the New American Foundation commented that the US will have to achieve results in Afghanistan by 2011 but this does not take into account the longer timeline followed by the India/Pakistan rivalry. He also added that India’s aversion towards outside help in its relationship with Pakistan will also make it difficult for the US to quicken the pace of any negotiations between the two states. Without the presence of some form of compromise there is always the risk of each party backing opposite sides in a possible renewed civil war following the withdrawal of US troops in 2011.

Iran

Iran’s overarching foreign policy objective with regard to Afghanistan is to consolidate its influence in order to gain enough leverage that, once NATO forces leave Afghanistan, it can affect political outcomes there. Even though Iran is an important ally of President Karzai, if he loses power and authority, Tehran will support other actors in order to maintain its leverage in Afghanistan. Iran hopes to position itself most advantageously to protect its national interests, regardless of how Afghanistan eventually evolves. This seems to have lead to a contradictory strategic outlook, due to the necessity of having a stable Afghanistan for its internal security, social and economic concerns and, in the meantime, trying to weaken the U.S. position in the area. As a consequence, Iran’s policy toward Afghanistan is multi-faceted, including elements of cooperation and subversion. Early in 2008 at a meeting with government analysts, academics and journalists the Afghan ambassador to the US, Said Tayeb Jawad openly stated that “Iran has become more and more a hostile power.”

The constructive face of Iranian policy favours a stable Afghanistan, for instance through infrastructure projects, promotion of trade and investment, labor migration, cooperation of law enforcement agencies and support to certain ethnic or religious groups. Iran has been a supporter of the Northern Alliance and played a role in the bringing about the fall of the Taliban. The Iranian government has also contributed millions of dollars to the reconstruction of Afghanistan’s western provinces. These funds have helped in the building of road, electrical grids, schools and health centres. The subversive side of this complex bilateral relationship is currently focused on measures to deter American goals in the region. There is growing evidence that Tehran has recalculated its strategic interests in Afghanistan as tension rises

89 Afghan regional solution maybe too little too late Reuters (January 2010)
with the United States over its nuclear ambitions. Iran is prepared to undermine US interests in the country should relations between Washington and Tehran deteriorate substantially.

Apparently Tehran has been increasing its operations in Afghanistan over the last few years, e.g. by financing and providing weaponry to various militant groups. Since May 2007, Coalition officials have repeatedly reported they had intercepted Iranian-made AK-47s, plastic explosives, mortar grenades and explosively formed projectiles (EFP). The EFP is similar to the weaponry the US says Iran has provided to militants in Iraq. However, there remains uncertainty over whether recent seizures of weapons along the Iranian border represent the work of the Iranian state, dissident elements within it, or a failure to control the movement of black market weapons.

Another point of contention in Iran over the Afghanistan conflict is the high number of Afghan refugees that have crossed over into Iran to escape the conflict. There are about 1 million UN-registered Afghan refugees in Iran and an additional million unregistered. Since the start of the war in Afghanistan in 2001 Iran has experienced a massive influx of refugees and believes that it should not be baring the burden of a conflict caused by a third power. Observers say that Iran continues to violate its promise not to forcibly remove refugees. Afghan Refugee Affairs ministry spokesman Shams-u-din Hamid said that Iran had already deported 9000 refugees at the start of 2010.

Iran continues to maintain that a stable Afghanistan is in its and the region’s best interest. Iran’s first vice president Mohammad Reza Rahimi emphasised that there is no military solution to Afghanistan’s conflict before he left for Istanbul to attend a conference on Afghanistan on January 26th 2010. Iran has also agreed to attend the London Conference on Afghanistan on January 28th 2010 provided that attention was given to its concerns. Iran continues to call for the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and for the countries own security forces to take control of the situation.

**Russia and the Central Asian Republics**

While Iran and Pakistan’s rivalry were the principle external factors fueling the war, Russia and the Central Asian former Soviet republics also supported the United Front, based on Russia’s policy of keeping radical Islam away from its southern borders. While levels of military assistance reminiscent of Russia’s aid prior to the fall of the PDPA were not nearly reached, the ISA and later the Northern Alliance were able to use Tajikistan as a shipping route for arms and other supplies. The collusion of the Russian border guards stationed in Tajikistan was necessary for this activity. The fact that Kuliob, a major Russian base in Tajikistan, was used as a shipping hub indicates the involvement of the Russian government in re-supplying the Northern Alliance prior to the American intervention in 2001. Uzbekistan, until the defeat of Junbish in 1998 at Mazar-i-Sharif, provided military aid to Dostum's forces. Afterwards, Uzbekistan reduced its support for any party in the country, though it turned a blind eye to the continued shipment of Iranian arms to the Northern Alliance through its territory.

In an extraordinary turn of events Russia is looking to step up its engagement in Afghanistan. In June 2008 at the 16th United States-Russia Working Group on Counterterrorism (CTWG) an agreement, in principle, was reached that Russia would supply arms to the Afghan National Army (ANA). However, the possibility of Russia sending troops seems highly unlikely given...

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90 [Iran said to resume deportation of Afghan refugees](http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/02/02/us-afghanistan-refugee-idUSTRE61156220100202) Reuters (February 2nd 2010)
91 [Iran says Afghan situation has no military solution](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2010-01/13/c_13049236.htm) Xinhau (January 2010)
92 Rubin, 85.
Moscow’s history with Afghanistan. In March, rumours of Russia contributing troops sparked public demonstrations in the Afghanistan. All this comes at a time when there is a growing sense of frustration among the NATO members who feel that more troops are needed and that many nations are involved simply to keep up appearances. A German NATO general stated that 6000 additional troops are needed in the war effort. Currently, the US wants to limit Russia’s contribution to the Afghanistan operation to intelligence sharing.

In January 2009 the Russia-NATO Council met to discuss the war in Afghanistan. One of the major issues is the securing of alternate supply routes into Afghanistan. Currently American and coalition forces rely on routes through Pakistan. These routes, like the Khyber Pass, are vulnerable to insurgents who have used the opportunities offered to ambush supply convoys and hamper the coalition efforts. Thus the US is looking to Central Asia, Russia’s backyard, for alternative routes. However, negotiations with Russia have not been very straightforward. Recently Russia has announced a number of defense agreements with countries that are unfriendly towards America, especially Iran. Once the US began talking to Central Asian countries without consulting the Russians, Russia countered this by having its own meetings with the Central Asian countries. This seems to be another area where the US and Russia are engaged in a power struggle as Russia looks to assert itself in its own backyard. It is thought that the meeting of the Russia-NATO council might not bring about a resolution to this issue as Russia is expected to demand a high level meeting i.e. with President Obama or Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. At the moment Russia would feel that they have the upper hand as it is the Americans who are in urgent need of finding alternate supply routes.

Russia could yet have a further role to play in Afghanistan. With February 15th 2009 marking the 20th anniversary of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the country continues to be a concern for Russia with the ever growing drug trade and spreading insurgency. The international presence is unable to control either. The US government is seeking Russia’s help in supplying equipment to the extra troops it plans on sending to Afghanistan. While Russia is also concerned with the instability in Afghanistan it is also in a tug of war with the US concerning influence in Europe, specifically concerning the missile defense shield. Therefore the US’s need gives the Russians a bargaining chip. In the years after the 2001 attacks Russian hope for a relationship of equals with the US never materialized as the US unilaterally engaged in Central Asia, which Russia sees as its sphere of influence. Russia hopes for a change in the nature of their relationship with the new Obama administration. Last month the US announced the closure of an airbase in Kyrgyzstan. Russia denies any role in this decision. However, the government of Kyrgyzstan was recently able to secure a two billion dollar loan to help its economy.

Russia’s actions concerning the war in Afghanistan and relations with the West are based on its desire to be the major power in Central Asia. Professor Stephen Blank, from the Strategic Studies institute, said that it is beyond Russia’s ability to sustain hegemony in Central Asia. Russia continues to make financial promises to Central Asian states it cannot keep and its military is not capable of winning in Afghanistan. However, it is this desire for empire that Prof. Blank says is blocking any serious reform of cooperation with the West. Further evidence of Russia’s lack of interest in cooperating with the west was on display in December 2009 when NATO Secretary General Andres Fogh Rasmussen failed to gain a commitment from Russia to send helicopters to Afghanistan and help train the Afghanistan air force. Analysts say that the three-day visit by Mr. Rasmussen did indicate a thawing in relations between NATO and Russia since the Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008. Also, in December 2009 the NATO-Russia council met for the first time since that conflict.

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93 Stephen Blank Beyond Manas: Russia’s Game in Afghanistan Central Asia Caucasus Institute (November 2009)
Post 2001 Relations with Neighbours

On 22 December 2002, the six nations neighboring Afghanistan signed the Kabul Declaration. In this document, China, Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan claimed to “solemnly reaffirm their commitment to constructive and supportive bilateral relationships based on the principles of territorial integrity, mutual respect, friendly relations, cooperation and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs.”\(^9\) This agreement was endorsed in Security Council Resolution 1453 of 2002.\(^5\)

Despite Pakistan’s official support for OEF and the international effort in Afghanistan, President Karzai continues to accuse Pakistan of supporting the Taliban and trying to assert its influence in Afghanistan. The lawless border region of North Waziristan in Pakistan has been a haven for Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters fleeing coalition and ISAF forces in Afghanistan. The Pakistani army has in recent years deployed “tens of thousands” of soldiers there to conduct combat missions against militants, though often their efforts are criticized as being insufficient.\(^6\) Reports suggest that the Taliban and Al Qaeda presence there is larger than the Pakistani government is willing to concede. Some observers assert that US pressure is needed to help improve Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, and that limiting the control of the military in Pakistan’s internal affairs is also essential. Development in the border areas is also a crucial element in reducing support for the insurgency in these regions.\(^7\)

Pakistan continues to remain deeply intertwined with events in Afghanistan. Forces hostile to the Afghan government use Pakistani territory as a supply base and refuge, and also as a recruiting ground. Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Agency has in the past worked closely with the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and some assert that there is a continuing relationship between the ISI and the Taliban. However, the government denies any links to militants, while critics accuse the government of not doing enough to confront militants in Pakistani territory. Afghan president Hamid Karzai has been one of the most vocal voices calling for increased Pakistani action, while President Musharraf steadfastly denies accusations that Pakistan is not doing all it can. Former ISAF Commander General David Richards gave some public support to Musharraf, claiming that Pakistan’s army has done “great work” in the border region. Richards did not deny that the Taliban uses Pakistan as a base, but claimed the 1,800 kilometer border is very difficult to control.\(^8\) On 5 September 2006 President Musharraf signed an agreement with tribal representatives in North Waziristan ending conflict between tribes and the Pakistani government. Some criticize this measure as allowing a total safe haven to Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists, while others claim that this is a step towards achieving stability. Part of the deal was for militants to end attacks within Pakistan, and to stop crossing the border into Afghanistan. Musharraf threatened a renewal of the use of force if the militants broke the truce.\(^9\) However, since this deal cross-border attacks have

\(^{94}\) K\textit{abul Declaration}, 22 December 2002.
\(^{96}\) ‘\textit{Dozens Killed in Pakistan Clashes}’, B\textit{BC News, 4 March 2006.}
\(^{97}\) B\textit{arnett R. Rubin, Afghanistan’s Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy, March 2006, p.12-13.}
\(^{98}\) P\textit{BS Frontline, ‘The Return of the Taliban’, Originally Aired 3 October 2006.}
The United Nations Report of the Security Council Mission to Afghanistan (December 2006) quoted ISAF statistics that show a 70% and 50% increase in insurgent attacks in the two provinces that border on North Waziristan, Khost and Paktika. This report restated the need to address the safe haven the Taliban finds in Pakistan in order to improve Afghanistan's security situation, though not necessarily through military means. Cross-border jirgas have been encouraged by President Karzai and Pakistani Foreign Secretary Khan, though as of January 2006 they have not occurred.

Sources in Pakistan continue to provide funding to the Taliban, whether they are businesses run in the frontier province of Baluchistan or individual contributors. According to reporter Syed Saleem Shahzad, money also continues to be laundered through the United Arab Emirates. Tribal allegiances also play a significant role in financial support for the Taliban.

Accusations of Iranian involvement in stirring insurgency in Afghanistan are surfacing. Though Iran has a history of being against the Talibanization of Afghanistan, some analysts suggest that the shared goal of reducing American influence is leading Tehran to partner with more diverse groups. Increasing incidents of violence in the provinces bordering Iran have been attributed to Iranian support for insurgents there. US General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chief's of Staff, has accused Iran of supplying Afghans with weapons, a charge which Iranian officials have denied. Identifying an Iranian government role in supporting insurgency in Afghanistan is made more difficult by Iran's clear record of support for President Karzai. Iran is caught between its strategic interests of maintaining a stable eastern border, combatting drug trafficking, and trying to reduce US influence in the region. See "Afghanistan's Role in Iranian Foreign Policy," "Amid tensions, US, Iran both give life to Afghanistan city" and "Arrested in Afghanistan" for more information on Iran's interests in Afghanistan.

Regional integration is beneficial for Afghanistan. Given its geographical location, it can serve as a vital trade hub for transporting resources from Central Asia to ports on the Arabian Sea in Iran and Pakistan. Economic integration with neighbors is essential to creating regional stability. A beneficial trade agreement has been signed with Iran. Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan have signed protocols agreeing to the construction of a trans-Afghanistan pipeline, but poor infrastructure and a slow pace of construction have hindered progress on this project.

THE UNITED NATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

UNAMA

Introduction

Lakdar Brahimi, the Secretary General's Special Envoy to Afghanistan from 1997 to 1999, arrived in Kabul on 21 December 2001. He and his staff absorbed and replaced the former UN mission in the country, the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, and established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA has overall responsibility for all UN activities in the country.

Its mandate, which had to be re-examined after the completion of the Bonn Process, was defined in Security Council resolutions 1662 (2006) and 1747 (2007) and elaborated on in resolution 1806 (2008). On March 23 2009, the Security Council extended the UNAMA's mandate in resolution 1868. UNAMA is tasked to lead the international civilian efforts to:

- promote more coherent support by the international community to the Afghan government;
- strengthen the cooperation with ISAF in order to improve civil-military coordination;
- provide political outreach, promote at the local level the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, the ANDS and other strategies;
- provide good offices to support the implementation 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 assistance;
- continue to assist in the full implementation of fundamental freedoms and human rights;
- support the electoral process;
- support regional cooperation to work towards a stable and prosperous Afghanistan;

UNAMA’s current mandate will end in March 2010.

UNAMA is headed by Mr. Kai Eide, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan (SRSG). He succeeded Lakdar Brahimi (2002-2004), Jean Arnault (2004-2006) and Tom Koenigs (2006-2007).

The Mission consists of two main pillars, headed by the SRSG’s two deputies. The first is a political pillar, monitoring the political and human rights situation in the country. It also maintains contact with Afghan leaders and the international community. The second pillar is focusing on relief, recovery, and reconstruction. There are currently more than 1,200 staff, most of them Afghan (209 international civilians, 959 local civilians, 16 military observers, 3 civilian police, 30 UN volunteers). The headquarters is in Kabul, with 9 provincial and 8 regional offices throughout Afghanistan.

**Review of UNAMA’s role**

Initially, UNAMA endeavored to adopt a 'light footprint' approach, as suggested by its first SRSG Brahimi in 2002. The UN’s role was supposed to be to provide the government with support and assistance – not to seek to govern in its place. However, in the absence of leadership from the Afghan government and in view of ineffective international development efforts, an increasing number of countries decided that a high-profile representative was required to take a more prominent role in coordinating donor activities and guide reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Various countries expressed their desire for a stronger UN role, possibly by appointing a high-level UN envoy who would will play such a coordinating role.
On 10 March 2008, Kai Eide was appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA. During his first few months in office, he focused on reaching out to all key players and engaging them in discussions on a more coherent approach, notably through a number of visits to countries such as the US, Canada, Iran and Pakistan as well as his participation in the NATO summit in April 2008 and the international donor conference in June 2008. Having received strong verbal support from all sides, he believes that he possesses the tools needed for a successful UN role in Afghanistan. While pushing donors to accept being coordinated and move from process-oriented to delivery-oriented consultation mechanisms, he also recognizes the urgent need for the Afghan government to combat corruption and improve governance.

One of the biggest scandals that Kai Eide had to deal with in his term as head of UNAMA was the presidential election fraud of 2009. UNAMA did not monitor the elections but supported the work of the Independent Election Commission (IEC). Though it did play a major role in planning, preparations and logistics through the UNDP’s Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT). The election was rife reports of intimidation, ballot stuffing, ghost polling stations and interference of IEC employees. Once evidence of fraud emerged it cost UNAMA, the US and EU credibility with the Afghan people for declaring the elections a success. With nearly a quarter of all votes being disqualified the election was set for a runoff between President Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah. However, Abdullah Abdullah withdrew from the contest and Karzai was declared the winner.

The election affected Kai Eide personally as he was accused by a former colleague Deputy Special Representative Peter Galbraith of supporting President Karzai and allowing fraud to take place unchallenged. This was an accusation he strongly denied. As his term ends in March 2010, in his final formal address to the UN, Kai Eide warned of the negative trends that could undo the reconstruction work being done Afghanistan. He was concerned about the growing strength of the insurgency and the frustration of the Afghan people that their expectations had not been met.

UNAMA’s role has been harshly criticised in a January 2009 report by the Afghanistan Rights Monitor (ARM), a newly established Kabul-based rights watch dog. According to the report, entitled "The Plight of the Afghan People in 2008", the UN and other aid agencies have failed in reaching and delivering aid to the neediest of communities. The report went further in accusing the UN and other aid organizations of retreating to the security zones in Kabul and other major cities. It urged the UN to maintain its neutrality and venture into the more volatile areas of the country in order to assist those affected by the ongoing conflict. ARM also states that civilian casualties are underreported and that the problem is worse than it has been made out to be. The report estimates that about 3,917 civilians were killed, over 6,800 were wounded and about 120,000 were forced out of their homes. These figures are said to be higher than those reported by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and UNAMA. All sides in the conflict were charged with “repeated and systematic” violations of international human rights law, the Geneva Conventions and Afghanistan’s laws regarding conflict. However, the UN has strenuously refuted these allegations. Dan McNorton, a UNAMA spokesman responded to the reports by saying that the report overlooked UNAMA’s regional and provincial presence. He cited the thousands of road missions, immunization programs, returnee assistance projects, food assistance and disaster relief efforts that the UN has

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103 Afghanistan: Elections and Crisis of Governance International Crisis Group (November 2009)
104 UN envoy admits Afghan elections marred by fraud but denies cover up UN News Centre (October 12th 2009)
105 UN Afghan envoy Kai Eide warns of “negative trends” BBC (January 6th 2010)
undertaken. The report was labelled as "superficial and deeply uninformed." Despite this dismissive response from the UN spokesman greater analysis is needed to ensure that aid is reaching the neediest of Afghans and that the UN and other organizations are having the greatest possible impact on the majority of Afghans.

Discussions about a separate OCHA office

In recent months aid agencies providing assistance in Afghanistan have been advocating for the re-establishment of an independent UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) outside the UNAMA mission structure. They believe that the neutrality and independence of humanitarian assistance is at risk as long as its coordination is part of the mandate of an integrated UN mission with a clear political mandate to support the Afghan government. UNAMA, however, is concerned that establishing a separate OCHA office could be counter-productive because it would fragment the coordination effort at a time when donors are trying to improve coherence.

Other UN Agencies

In addition to UNAMA, there are nearly twenty other UN agencies and programs operating in Afghanistan. In 2006, all UN agency program plans were harmonized to operate on a three year cycle, from January 2006 to January 2008.106

**UNDP - United Nations Development Program**
**UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**
**UNICEF - United Nations Children's Emergency Fund**
**WFP - World Food Program**
**FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization**
**WHO - World Health Organization**
**UNHABITAT/UNHCS - The United Nations Human Settlements Program**
**UNIFEM - United Nations Women's Fund**
**UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization**
**UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**
**UNEP - United Nations Environment Program**
**UNHCHR - United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**
**UNMACA - United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan**
**UNOPS - United Nations Office for Project Services**
**UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund for Afghanistan**
**UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization**
**UNCCD - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**
**UNJLC - United Nations Joint Logistics Centre**

Related Non-UN Agencies: IOM

**International Organization of Migration**

**UNDP - United Nations Development Program**

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106 UNFPA, ‘Afghanistan Country Programme’. UNFPA.
**UNDP** is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. In Afghanistan, the Program operates within the framework of the integrated UNAMA mission and within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Together with the Government of Afghanistan, it is focusing on three development areas:

**State-building**

Faced with a long reconstruction process, national government services lack sufficient resources to meet all priorities. UNDP focuses on strengthening institutional capacity to enforce the rule of law and provide public administration services to Afghans. In its support to public administration, UNDP provides public sector management, information management, aid coordination and tracking of resources.

**Democracy and civil society empowerment**

Good governance is one of the most important factors in eradicating poverty and promoting development. In line with the Bonn Agreement and the Millennium Development Declaration, UNDP is supporting the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to consolidate its institutions, to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, and to promote human rights and gender equality.

**Sustainable livelihoods**

UNDP is providing training, employment and investment opportunities that assist Afghan communities to continue the physical reconstruction of their country, to remove the remnants of war and reintegrate former combatants, and to face future human development challenges.

**UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Since major repatriation operations to Afghanistan resumed in 2002, more than 5 million Afghans have returned to their country, mostly from Pakistan and Iran. Another half million internally displaced people have gone back home. However, approximately 3 million Afghans still remain in the two neighboring countries alone. Localized conflict continues to displace some communities within Afghanistan, while poverty and lack of job opportunities oblige many Afghans to seek employment abroad.

After the huge return movements of 2002-2004, the pace of repatriation has dropped in the last three years. Nevertheless, Afghanistan has been **UNHCR's largest repatriation** operation worldwide for six consecutive years. Voluntary repatriation will continue to be the preferred durable solution. In 2007, **UNHCR** has adjusted its support for initial travel and reintegration assistance to bring it more into line with recent cost increases. It will continue to support a shelter program – with an additional 10,000 units in 2007 – that has built new homes for more than a million returnees since 2002. Cooperation with the Afghan authorities to allocate land for poor and homeless returnees and local people will be intensified. Moreover, UNHCR will continue to work closely with the Afghan government and its international partners to identify new opportunities to address employment, livelihood, and social sector requirements.
**UNICEF - United Nations Children's Emergency Fund**

UNICEF's priorities in Afghanistan are education, child health, and the demobilization of child soldiers. In 2006, UNICEF will provide $61 million to various ministries for health, education, and protection of women's and children's rights. This is part of a new three year deal signed in February 2006 with the respective ministries. Specifically, UNICEF will focus on community-based education, curriculum development and teacher training, women's literacy, hygiene courses, immunization, training of maternal health workers, and policy-level support for child labour and trafficking initiatives. UNICEF has shifted from implementing projects to supporting government agencies in implementing projects. UNICEF has also been heavily involved in disaster relief.


**WFP - World Food Programme**

Since the establishment of a transitional government in June 2002, WFP's operations have shifted from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and recovery. The current program aims to provide 520,000 metric tonnes of food aid to 6.6 million Afghans between January 2006 and December 2008 – at a cost of US$ 372 million. On average, WFP will distribute food to 3.5 million people each year, primarily in remote, food-insecure rural areas. In 2007 alone, the UN expects to deliver about 225,000 tonnes of food.

WFP will target chronically poor and food-insecure families, schoolchildren, teachers, illiterate people, tuberculosis patients and their families, internally displaced persons and ex-combatants – with a particular emphasis on vulnerable women and girls. WFP will provide assistance to its beneficiaries through a range of relief and recovery activities, including food for work, food for training and food for education. These projects will be implemented in partnership with the Afghan government, other UN agencies (notably UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, FAO and UNHCR), Community Development Councils and non-governmental organisations.

In the recent past, WFP has increasingly been affected by insecurity in its areas of operation. Especially in southern Afghanistan, its convoys carrying food donations have repeatedly coming under attack. The Program has lost more food between October 2006 and October 2007 through those attacks than in the previous three years. About 1,000 tonnes of wheat, beans, cooking oil and fortified biscuits have been waylaid or vanished since January. About 30 attacks on local Afghan trucks moving the food between volatile southern districts are blamed on insurgents who resent foreign intervention, or sometimes on bandits who later sell donations meant to sustain the poorest families.

**FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization**

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"The mandate of FAO in Afghanistan is to support agricultural and environmental rehabilitation and assist the country to become a food secure and self-reliant nation in accordance with the principles of the National Development Framework of the Afghan Government."\textsuperscript{109} FAO works in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and the Environment and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. The main office of FAO Afghanistan is in Kabul. As agriculture and animal husbandry support an estimated 85\% of Afghanistan's population, the FAO established a Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Information Management and Policy unit (FAAHM) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in July 2003, with US and German funding. The FAO runs several programs concerning food security, livestock, crops and seeds, forestry, and institution building, all in cooperation with ministries and local communities.\textsuperscript{110} The FAO is also involved in veterinary services and the fight against avian flu in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{111} Information on FAO budgets in Afghanistan is not available on any FAO websites.

(The information on this website is only updated through 2004.)

FAO provides a good satellite map of Afghanistan at:

**WHO - World Health Organization**

The WHO is involved in vaccinations and reporting diseases and other health problems in Afghanistan. WHO provides health information on Afghanistan at:
http://www.who.int/countries/afg/en/

**UNHABITAT/UNHCS - The United Nations Human Settlements Program**

UNHABITAT was formed in 1978 with a vision to alleviate the problems associated with mass urbanization. It is a development agency, focused on poverty reduction and sustainability.\textsuperscript{112} UNHABITAT has been in Afghanistan since 1991.\textsuperscript{113} It worked with communities during the Taliban years to foster democratic methods of governance. This was called the Community Forums Programme. UNHABITAT works with the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing. UNHABITAT drew on its lessons from the Community Forums programs to draft the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), the Afghan government's principle community development/project implementation program. The NSP will be coordinated with the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development. UNHABITAT works with municipal governments as well to conduct projects to improve urban infrastructure. This is done in partnership with various NGOs and civil organizations. In 2003, US$15 million was spent on infrastructure

\textsuperscript{109} Food and Agricultural Organization, ‘FAO in Afghanistan’, Food and Agricultural Organization.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} UN Habitat, ‘History’.
\textsuperscript{113} UN Habitat, ‘a New Era of Opportunity’, UN Habitat.
projects. One key project was a Municipal Solid Waste Management Programme. This involved waste collection, education and awareness, and disposal.\textsuperscript{114}

UNHABITAT Afghanistan website: http://www.unhabitat.org/Afghanistan/default.asp
(This website has not been updated since 2003.)

**UNIFEM - United Nations Women's Fund**

UNIFEM began operations in Afghanistan in early 2002, consulting with Afghan women to formulate its strategy. Its goal is to increase options and opportunities for women through making overall development more equitable. The two principle aims are to strengthen capacity and leadership of women's networks and gather political and financial support for women. This is done by supporting capacity-building in the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and supporting other women's groups. Protocols have been arranged with the ministries of education, health, commerce, planning, and justice to ensure mainstreaming of gender into their areas of operations. Women's Development Centres have been established at the provincial and community levels. Working with NGOs, they provide literacy and health education, computer skills and English training, and income generation workshops. Seven of these centres have been opened as of March 2006.\textsuperscript{115} UNIFEM also works to promote women in the Afghan media, and to raise awareness of women's rights and violence against women. To this end, UNIFEM works with UNESCO, MOWA, and the Ministry of Information and Culture. Principle donors include Italy, Japan, Denmark, Finland, the USA, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Belgium. UNIFEM efforts have resulted in President Karzai announcing an inter-ministerial Task Force to Eliminate Violence Against Women (VAW) on 6 June 2005. Support for this initiative came from the government of Italy. There are currently about 30 UNIFEM staff members in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{116} In March 2005 UNIFEM began publishing the newsletter "Gender Advocacy in Afghanistan."

The newsletter is available at: http://afghanistan.unifem.org/publication.htm
UNIFEM Afghanistan website: http://afghanistan.unifem.org/

**UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization**

UNESCO formed the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage in 2002. It works to protect sites like the Minaret of Jam and the Bamian statues, and also supports the restoration of the Kabul museum. UNESCO provides literacy training and scientific training, and also supports NGOs involved in recovering cultural artifacts removed from the country.\textsuperscript{117}

UNESCO Afghanistan website:

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} UNIFEM Afghanistan.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} UNESCO, 'Afghanistan', UNESCO.
UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The UNODC cooperates with the Afghan government’s Ministry of Counter Narcotics to maintain an opium monitoring system and to conduct annual opium surveys. It conducts the annual surveys using satellite imagery and ground surveys. UNODC runs several other projects besides monitoring, including a drug demand reduction training program for women in refugee camps in Pakistan, training and capacity-building with the Counter Narcotics Directorate, infrastructure activities as an alternative to opium cultivation, and training a drug law enforcement unit. A list of projects and updated publications by UNODC are available on the UNODC website.


UNEP - United Nations Environment Program

UNEP aided the passing of crucial legislation designed to protect the environment in January 2006. As 80% of Afghans rely on natural resources for their livelihoods, this was an important contribution. Called the Environment Act, it provides for sustainability and laws that allow the government to enforce the Act. UNEP also conducted the Post-Conflict Environment Assessment and Capacity Building Programme, and published the "Afghanistan Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment" in 2003. Canada provided nearly a third of the funding required for the Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment with a contribution of €248,020. UNEP worked with the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment's (MIWRE) National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) on that project. The project was started in 2002, after the Emergency Loya Jirga. Since the report, at the request of the MIWRE UNEP has been working on increasing the capacity of the Department of Environment. UNEP provides training to NEPA personnel, gives technical assistance and advice on an as-needed basis, and supplies office and field equipment, while NEPA is the final decision-making body. UNEP works to improve assessment and enforcement, and is working to develop educational programs at Kabul University and Kabul Polytechnicum to train environmental experts. The UNEP Capacity Building and Institutional Development Programme for Environmental Management was launched on 28 October 2003. The purpose of the program is to develop a stand-alone NEPA. The program is now expected to continue until 2008. Funding was received from the

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119 UNODC, ‘UNODC Afghanistan Projects’, UNODC.
120 UN Environmental Programme, ‘Environmental Legislation Comes of Age in Afghanistan’, UN Environmental Programme, 3 January 2006.
European Commission, the Government of Finland, and the Global Environment Facility. UNEP does not, as of April 2006, have an updated website on its Afghanistan activities.


**UNHCHR - United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Rather than a separate unit dedicated to human rights, UNHCHR is manifested through a senior human rights advisor posted to the office of the SRSG. Human rights principles are integrated in all of the operations of UNAMA. There are two pillars of human rights activities. The first is monitoring investigation, and community liaison. The second pillar is human rights education, institution building, and humanitarian protection.

UNHCHR Afghanistan website: http://afghanistan.ohchr.org/ (Only limited information is available.)

**UNMACA - United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan**

This organization is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing mine action on behalf of the government of Afghanistan. The organization works in cooperation with NGOs, government ministries, and donor agencies.

UNMACA does not maintain a website. Some information is available on the Landmine Monitor website at: http://www.icbl.org/lm/2004/appendices/unmas#Heading24602

**UNOPS - United Nations Office for Project Services**

UNOPS operates as a contract organization within the UN system. While functioning similar to a private contractor, UNOPS does not earn a profit for its services. In Afghanistan, UNOPS implements and manages development projects in cooperation with other UN agencies, the Afghan government, and international donors. UNOPS currently has 300 international and 200,000 national staff in Afghanistan. Since 2002, it has been redirected as a service provider for the Afghan government and UN agencies. UNOPS manages development projects from start to finish or as needed. It hires personnel, procures goods, organizes training, manages financial resources, administers loans, and more. Funding for UNOPS activities comes from fees charged for its services. On average, UNOPS manages 25 major projects and over 1,000

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125 UNHCHR, ‘Background’, UNHCHR Afghanistan, UNHCHR.
126 UNOPS, ‘Our Mission’, UNOPS Afghanistan, UNOPS.
sub-projects. The estimated value of these projects and associated labour is US$600 million. UNOPS also implements quick-impact projects for PRTs, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, the US military, and with funding from USAID. Thirty-five projects have been completed so far, with another 39 underway.

(No date is provided for the information on this website.)

**UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund for Afghanistan**

"UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect." UNFPA has been active in Afghanistan since the late 1970s in the areas of population and reproductive health/family planning. Since September 2001 UNFPA activities have focused on three core areas: reproductive health, women's issues/gender, and population census. In 2003, UNFPA shifted its focus from humanitarian assistance to a developmental approach. Examples of UNFPA activities include the rehabilitation of three hospitals in Kabul, supporting reproductive health services in under-served areas, using the media to promote change, rehabilitation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs Vocational Training Centre and offices, and income generation projects for women. UNFPA also places technical experts in related ministries. Detailed information of its project activities, under the title of "Country Program Action Plan," can be found online at [http://afghanistan.unfpa.org/program.html](http://afghanistan.unfpa.org/program.html). This plan is for the period 2006-2008. UNFPA proposes a budget of US$52 million for this period, with $15.4 million going to reproductive health projects, $4.5 to gender-related projects, $31.5 million going to population and development projects, and $0.6 million going to programme coordination.

UNFPA Afghanistan website: [http://afghanistan.unfpa.org/about.html](http://afghanistan.unfpa.org/about.html)
(This website is current as of March 2006.)

**UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization**

The mission of UNIDO is to provide "tailor-made solutions for the sustainable industrial development of developing countries and countries with economies in Transition." UNIDO has developed a Country Service Framework plan for 2005-2008. This plan will assist the Afghan government to develop the Ministry of Mines and Industry (MMI), provide technical assistance for the rehabilitation of factories, encourage private enterprise, and help poor rural communities to engage in viable farming to reduce their dependence on relief aid.

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127 [UNOPS, ‘FAQ’, UNOPS Afghanistan, UNOPS.](#)
128 [International Organization for Migration, IOM in Afghanistan Brochure.](#)
129 [UNFPA, ‘Our Mission’, UNFPA.](#)
130 [UNFPA, UNFPA Afghanistan, UNFPA.](#)
132 [UN Industrial Development Organization, ‘About UNIDO’, UNIDO.](#)
Country Service Framework plan is divided into two components. The first is based on creating an environment favourable to industrial development through advising the MMI on industrial policy, addressing unfavourable investment climates caused by too heavy bureaucratic structures, and promoting domestic trade. The second component comprises, among other things, direct assistance to the poor to stimulate the economy and reconstruction, providing small-business assistance programs, and construction training and assistance for farmers.\(^{134}\)

Information on UNIDO projects and project budgets can be found at: [http://www.unido.org/data/country/project.cfm?c=AFG](http://www.unido.org/data/country/project.cfm?c=AFG)

**UNCCD - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

Afghanistan is a signatory to this convention, signed in 1995. The purpose of the Convention is to develop unified strategies to combat desertification with sustainable development. Desertification is a growing problem due to overgrazing and deforestation.\(^{135}\) Recently, UNCCD provided the Ministry of Agriculture US$49,000 to collect information and documents, organize a national conference, and hire a consultant for the creation of a medium-sized project in Afghanistan.\(^{136}\)

UNCCD website: [http://www.unccd.int/main.php](http://www.unccd.int/main.php) (Updated regularly, but contains little Afghanistan information. However it provides a point of contact with the Ministry of Agriculture Representative.)

**UNJLC - United Nations Joint Logistics Centre**

UNJLC provides support to cooperating agencies in the form of logistics planning and coordination. It primarily operates in crisis areas. It ceased operations in Afghanistan on 31 March 2003.


**Related Non-UN Agencies:**

**IOM - International Organization of Migration**

The IOM has been in Afghanistan for twelve years. Since 2001, IOM had helped 430,000 displaced persons return to their homes, as of March 2005. Working with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, IOM has programs to facilitate return. Examples of such programs are the IDP Return and Reintegration Assistance Program, The Return of Qualified Afghans Program (which seeks to draw Afghans living in the EU back to Afghanistan), and the

\(^{134}\) Ibid.

\(^{135}\) UN News Centre, ‘Press Briefing by Ariane Quentier, Senior Public Information Officer, and by UN Agencies in Afghanistan‘, UN News Centre, 16 June 2005.

\(^{136}\) Email communication with Mustafa Jawad, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, 29 March 2006.
reintegration component of DDR in northern Afghanistan. IOM implements quick-impact projects for PRTs, funded by USAID. The focus is on small infrastructure projects. IOM also works with USAID on a Schools and Clinics Construction and Refurbishment program. IOM works with the ministries of Women's Affairs, Justice, and Interior on counter-trafficking initiatives. IOM also has an Afghan Transition Initiative (ATI) to help increase the Afghan government's responsiveness to citizens' needs, increase citizen awareness and participation in the democratic process, and increase the capacity of the Afghan media. The ATI is funded by USAID. So far US$33,000,000 has been handed out in 558 grants for various projects. IOM relies on a fleet of 50 trucks and 25 light escort vehicles in its transportation activities. It works closely with UNHCR to accomplish this. To help make the journey easier and safer, IOM operates three transit centres where returnees can get a warm meal and spend a safe night. The IOM reintegration unit offers trade skills training, employment placement, grants for business start-ups, advice, and agricultural assistance.

**Peace Operation** Updated February 3rd 2010

**SECTION CONTENTS:** MISSION MANDATES | UN ASSISTANCE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN | OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) | THE BONN AGREEMENT | THE AFGHANISTAN COMPACT | COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS | SECURITY SECTOR REFORM | COMPOSITION OF THE PEACE OPERATION | INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF) | OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) | UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN (UNAMA) | AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY & AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (ANP)

**Mission Mandates**

**International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)**

**The Initial UN Mandate**

The ISAF mission was first established after the U.S.-led overthrow of the Taliban, in December 2001, as a result of the UN-facilitated talks in Bonn, Germany. The Bonn Agreement laid out a framework and timeline for political recovery and also set the basis for UNAMA and the ISAF mission. Its Annex 1 (International Security Force) states that 'the participants request the assistance of the international community in helping the new Afghan authorities in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces.' It also included a request for 'the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force.'

The Bonn Agreement was soon endorsed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1386 (2001), which authorized 'the establishment for 6 months of an International Security Assistance Force to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas, so that the Afghan Interim Authority as well as the personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment.' Furthermore, the Security Council called 'on Member States participating in ISAF to provide assistance to help the Afghan Interim

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137 IOM, *IOM in Afghanistan Brochure*.
138 IOM, 'Afghanistan Transition Initiative', Afghanistan.
139 IOM, 'IDO Return and Reintegration', Afghanistan.
140 IOM, 'Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration', Afghanistan.
Authority in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces.’ Resolution 1386 (2001) and shortly afterwards Resolution 1413 (2002) essentially authorized ISAF as a peace enforcement mission under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. ISAF was and is not a UN force but a coalition of states, with costs born by contributors. However, annual UN Security Council Resolutions have since renewed and endorsed the mission's mandate.

The Military Technical Agreement

The January 4, 2002 Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between ISAF and the Afghan government set the size of the mission at 5,000 to 6,000 troops and outlined such tasks as patrolling, assisting the interim administration in developing security structures, assisting reconstruction efforts, and arranging training for Afghan security forces. The MTA gave the commander of ISAF final decision in how to interpret the mandate, and also gave the ISAF commander complete freedom to do what is believed necessary to protect ISAF and its mission. This does not mention explicitly offensive operations, though the vague language of the MTA arguably allows ISAF to undertake offensive operations as it deems necessary.

Transition to NATO Command

After several rotations under different 'lead nations', in August 2003 the mission passed into NATO command, though it retained its UN mandate. This transition reduced the problem of finding lead nations, and by establishing a continuous NATO headquarters eliminated the problem of setting up new headquarters for each lead nation.

ISAF Expansion

Almost two years after the initial mandate, the Security Council expanded the ISAF mandate by adopting Resolution 1510 (2003), which allowed ISAF ‘to support the Afghan Transitional Authority and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul and its environs, so that the Afghan Authorities as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel engaged, in particular, in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, can operate in a secure environment, and to provide security assistance for the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement.’ NATO signed a new Military Technical Agreement with the Government of Afghanistan on December 9, 2003.

Despite this new legal basis for ISAF’s presence throughout the country, it took three years, until October 2006, to expand the mission to all parts of Afghanistan. The total number of ISAF troops passed the expected 15,000, as large numbers of American soldiers were reassigned as part of ISAF. The current size of the ISAF force as of January 25th 2010 is 84,150(For details on the size of national ISAF contingents, see Composition)

The Operational Plan

The December 2005 Operational Plan (Revised) stated NATO's end goal as being ‘a self-sustaining, moderate and democratic Afghan government able to exercise its sovereign authority, independently, throughout Afghanistan.’

ISAF defines its tasks as follows:

to support the Afghan government and nurture the people's consent to it,
to concentrate on activities that will assist the Afghan government to establish sustainable economic growth (such as securing mineral resources);

supporting the government in the development and implementation of its counter-narcotics campaign

work to resolve conflict and reduce tension within Afghanistan by focusing on the defeat of the insurgency threat to the country;

support the training of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

With regard to combat operations, the Operational Plan states: "Security operations will be required to allow PRTs to perform their tasks. Such security operations will range from local force protection in a permissive environment to decisive, pro-active military ground and air manoeuvre thereby creating the environment for PRTs to flourish."

UN endorsement under Chapter VII of the UN Charter implies UN consent to the use of force. However, certain nations have national caveats that prevent them from participating in such actions.

The Operational Plan states further: "Counter-terrorism operations will not be conducted by ISAF forces, or under ISAF command." However, NATO does engage insurgents offensively, and has encountered Al Qaeda operatives, which makes the distinction between OEF and ISAF mandates very nuanced.

Debate About Counter-Insurgency Approach

Greg Mills' article "10 counterinsurgency commandments from Afghanistan" provides insight into the strategic thinking of the ISAF forces. Mills emphasizes that efforts should be focused on the political and economic dimensions of the conflict, and that a military victory over the insurgency is highly unlikely. Especially between Britain and the US, disagreement has surfaced over tactics used in the counter-insurgency campaign, e.g. the use of air strikes, which Britain complains undermines its strategy of "winning hearts and minds." However, Britain is under pressure to justify its approach after the Taliban have seeped back into the north of Helmand province, the heart of the poppy-growing region.

An increasing number of experts within NATO and elsewhere are arguing that a more nuanced approach to the counter-insurgency campaign is needed – reflecting multiple layers within the insurgency. For instance, it is assumed that more than half of the fighters are locals who believe they are defending their livelihoods, or are following guidance they receive from their mullahs and elders, reacting against corruption among local officials, or seeking redress for other local or personal grievances. It is therefore being argued that ISAF should adopt a more discriminating approach to the security situation in the south of Afghanistan and switch its focus from military means to a more effective police presence that would be more closely integrated with local communities. Some analysts go even further and recommend a shift from direct engagement of the enemy to heavy reliance on local forces and partners. There are indications that ISAF strategy is indeed changing along these lines, with the build-up of Afghan security forces becoming the centre of gravity for the mission’s efforts. (For more information on security sector reform, see Security Sector Reform)

On August 25th the ISAF commander General Stanley McChrystal released his new guidelines for counter insurgency. The key focus for the McChrystal’s guidelines is that "protecting the
people is the mission.” He emphasized that it is the Afghan people who will decide who wins this conflict and that ISAF was in a struggle to win their support. If they are to succeed, ISAF forces must be able to see life through the eyes of the Afghan people and understand their frustrations. Victory will not be won through killing insurgents but by providing security and helping Afghans become active participants in the success of their own community. Troops must realize that they were the Afghan’s guests and should conduct themselves accordingly. By partnering with the Afghans they would be able to improve governance and accountability.

Though ISAFs new counterinsurgency guidelines seems to heed many of the calls for creating partnerships there are still others who do not see this hearts and mind approach as helpful to the state building process. Looking at the history of South Asia some say that a hearts and minds campaign will not work in Afghanistan. Paul Staniland outlines two possible avenues. The first is state coercion, where the force of the state is brought down on militants to make them submit. He uses the examples of Sri Lanka's bloody wars, Indian Punjab and Indian administered Kashmir. Mass military deployment is needed to imprint the state in the consciousness of the population. The second avenue is that is bargaining which is a mixture of accommodation and coercion. He sites Iraq as an example of this. He clearly goes against what he considers the popular counter insurgency discourse of mass legitimacy and providing governance.

**Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)**

PRTs are joint military-civilian entities whose role is to help the Government of Afghanistan extend its authority in the provinces and facilitate the development of a secure environment to allow reconstruction and development activities to move forward. An additional function of the PRTs is to provide a visible international presence that deters terrorist and criminal activities, especially in remote areas. PRTs also contain aid and diplomatic representatives from the governments of the nation supporting the PRT.

Various mechanisms exist to coordinate the work of the PRTs with the Afghan government, foreign military, UN, and NGO representatives. The Afghan Ministry of Interior chairs a PRT Executive Steering Committee, which oversees the activities of the PRTs and is the main coordination focus for groups concerned with PRT activities. A PRT working group, which involves military, government, and NGO representatives, convenes weekly. Afghan Interior Ministry officials are also being integrated into some PRTs in an effort to improve coordination with the Afghan government.

**Current UN Mandate for ISAF**

The UN Security Council mandate for ISAF has been renewed annually for several years. In September 2008, ISAF's mandate was extended for a period of 12 months beyond 13 October 2008 (Resolution 1833). Reflecting concern about the recent increase in the number of civilian deaths, the Resolution acknowledges "the efforts by ISAF and other international forces to minimize the risk of civilian casualties and (calls) on them to take additional robust efforts in this regard." In total there are nine UN Security Council resolutions relating to ISAF: 1386, 1413, 1444, 1450, 1510, 1563, 1623, 1707, 1776 and 1833.

**ISAF's Continuing Role**

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141 Paul Stailand Counter insurgency is a bloody and costly business Foreign Policy (November 24th 2009)
The Afghanistan Compact endorses a continuing role for ISAF and OEF through the end of 2010, in providing security support and assistance in security sector reform to the Afghan government, as well as strengthening and developing the national security forces. The agreement also specifies that such activities are to be undertaken in full respect of Afghan sovereignty and with the goal of strengthening dialogue and cooperation with its neighbours. On 6 September 2006 President Karzai and NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer signed the “Declaration by NATO and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.” This declaration confirms NATO’s ‘long-term’ role in defence sector reform, security sector training, and defence institution-building. This document was soon followed by the Riga Summit Declaration of November 2006, in which NATO declared "We are committed to an enduring role to support the Afghan authorities, in cooperation with other international actors. Contributing to peace and stability in Afghanistan is NATO’s key priority."

Despite such ambitious statements, it is becoming increasingly apparent that NATO is struggling to maintain the cohesion of the alliance and ensure that the burden of providing security assistance to Afghanistan is shared equally among its members. Some allies express frustration with the refusal of others to share the dangerous combat roles being assumed almost exclusively by the United States, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands. Some observers argue that the lack of political will among some members of the alliance to share a greater part of the burden reflects deeper divisions over anti-drug and reconstruction policies, rising civilian casualties and what some say is heavy-handed U.S. leadership. For details on this controversy, see Composition.

On January 16th 2009 UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband urged NATO states take on more of the burden in Afghanistan. US and UK forces have taken the brunt of the casualties in the escalating insurgency. 2009 saw the UK suffer 108 losses while the US saw 316 of its troops kills. Other NATO troops suffered a combined 95 fatalities. On December 1st US President Obama pledged to send 30,000 troops to Afghanistan to bolster the US and NATO efforts there. These troops will be deployed primarily in the Kandahar and Helmand provinces which are the most volatile. The European Union states have pledged 7000 troops in the wake of Obama’s pledge. However, despite the additional troops, Canada has begun plans to pull combat troops out of Afghanistan in 2011. A decision was reached by the country’s parliament in March 2008 to end the mission by July 2011. Despite the pull out Canada will continue to work in humanitarian, developmental and diplomatic projects in Afghanistan.

UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Annex II of the Bonn Agreement on "Role for the United Nations" specified that the Special Representative of the Secretary General has responsibility for all UN activities in Afghanistan as well as to "monitor and assist in the implementation" of all aspects of the Bonn agreement (Annex II). The UN was requested to 'advise" and "assist" the interim Afghan authorities and to attend meetings of the government bodies. The annex also specified that in the event of an impasse among members of the Interim government, the SRSG could "use his/her good offices with a view to facilitating a resolution to the impasse or a decision."

Subsequently, Security Council Resolution 1401 of 28 March 2002 established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA incorporated and replaced the UN

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142 Peter Graf UKs Miliband: Afghan’s combat burden must be shared The Star (January 16th 2009)
143 Full President Obama’s speech text on Afghanistan The LA Times (December 1st 2009)
Special Mission to Afghanistan which had been operating since December 1993 but had withdrawn from the country during the US-led invasion. Resolution 1401 gave the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), at the time Lakhdar Brahimi, “full authority...over the planning and conduct of all United Nations activities in Afghanistan.” Resolution 1401 also called for all reconstruction assistance to be provided through the Interim Government and its local agencies where possible, and for local authorities to contribute to the maintenance of security. This was consistent with Kofi Annan’s recommendation of giving Afghans as big a role as possible in managing the reconstruction of the country, leaving only a 'light footprint' by the international community.\footnote{\textit{United Nations, The Situation in Afghanistan, S/Res/1401, 28 March 2002, p.2}}

**Follow-through on the Bonn Agreement**

The political transition process outlined in the Bonn agreement was fully implemented by the end of 2005, only slightly behind schedule (see Follow-through on Bonn Agreement). By the end of 2005, Afghanistan had elected Hamid Karzai as President, and elected both upper and lower houses of an Afghanistan National Assembly. Extension of both ISAF’s and the UN's role in Afghanistan beyond the terms of the Bonn Agreement, is specified in the Afghanistan Compact, agreed in early February 2006 between Afghan government and political leaders and representatives of the UN and donor countries. It lays out clear targets to be reached by end 2010 in 3 key areas of 1) security, 2) governance and 3) social and economic development. The Afghanistan Compact was endorsed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1659, February 15, 2006.

**Progress on Political Stabilization in Afghanistan**

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<tr>
<td>Bonn Agreement reached, includes call for UN assistance in conflict recovery</td>
<td>UN Security Council Resolution 1154 endorses Bonn Agreement</td>
<td>Afghan Interim Administration established, Chairman Hamid Karzai + 29 members</td>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) established through UN Security Council Resolution 1401 following on Bonn Agreement</td>
<td>Emergency Loya Jirga to create a transitional government (1500 delegates from 400 jurisdictions). Created Transitional Administration to replaced Interim Government</td>
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\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

The UN’s Continuing Role

The Afghanistan Compact endorses a "central and impartial coordinating role" for the United Nations in the partnership between the Afghan government and the international community. It establishes a "Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board" for the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, co-chaired by the Afghanistan government and the United Nations, whose goal is to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness of aid and regular public reporting. For more details see United Nations in Afghanistan.

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

There is no direct UN mandate for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Nor has a "status of forces" bilateral agreement been reached with the new Afghan government since OEF military action overthrew the Taliban regime.\(^{147}\)

The US, which leads the operation, justified its initial military action in the fall of 2001 by referring to the right to self-defence as defined in Art. 51 of the UN Charter and as affirmed in various UN Security Council resolutions as well as declarations by the UN General Assembly and NATO after the attacks of September 11.

Though there has been no direct UN authorization of OEF, several relevant UN Security Council Resolutions on Afghanistan have explicitly acknowledged OEF, making it clear that the action is not ‘illegal. Security Council Resolution 1368 (12 September 2001) called on all states "to work together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the September 11 terrorist attacks and stresses that those responsible for aiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these acts will be held accountable."\(^{148}\) Security Council Resolution 1373 (28 September 2001) reaffirmed the right of collective security and the right to self-defence enshrined in the UN Charter. Security Council Resolution 1662 (March 2006) which extended the mandate of UNAMA, directly mentions both OEF and ISAF as providing assistance to the Afghan government to address threats to security and stability.

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\(^{147}\) Barnett R. Rubin, Afghanistan’s Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy, Council on Foreign Relations, CSR No.12, March 2006, 5.

\(^{148}\) Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VII Article 42.
The 2006 Afghanistan Compact, endorsed in Security Council Resolution 1659, acknowledges the role of OEF in providing strong support to the Afghan Government in establishing and sustaining security and stability in Afghanistan, subject to participating states' national approval procedures.

The US-led coalition defines its mission as follows:

"Combined Forces Command Afghanistan conducts full spectrum operations throughout the combined joint operations area to defeat Al Qaeda and associated movements, establish an enduring Afghan security structure and reshape its posture for the Long War in order to set the conditions for long-term stability in Afghanistan."

**US-Afghan Agreements**

Coalition forces operate with no bilateral agreement with the Afghan government. This provides them discretion to act according to US goals and interests. However the consent of the Karzai government to the continuation of the operation gives legal backing to the operation. President Karzai has called for coalition forces to focus more on the insurgents' supply lines and bases in Pakistan, indicating a difference in how the US and the Afghan government perceive the vital interests of Afghanistan. Karzai also demanded the US reduce unpopular actions, like house searches and bombings, within Afghanistan.

On 23 May 2005 the US and Afghanistan issued a joint declaration of strategic partnership, which endorsed the continued stationing of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. This agreement entails regular high-level exchanges in the political, economic, and security fields. The agreement also calls for helping to organize Afghan security forces, continued anti-terrorism activities, strengthening Afghanistan's ties with NATO, and possibly assisting Afghanistan in the case of an external threat. The agreement does not specifically address the issue of permanent US bases in Afghanistan.

According to analyst Barnett Rubin, this Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership, providing for "freedom of action" by U.S. forces must give way to a status of forces agreement between Afghanistan and the United States that affirms Afghan sovereignty, commits both sides to respect international humanitarian law, and limits threats to neighbouring states from U.S. bases.

There has been an aversion on behalf of the US government to sign a status of forces agreement (SOFA) with Afghanistan. An official from the Bush Administration was quoted as saying that the Afghan government was not the most streamlined or efficient system with too many players on that side. However, while the UN mandate serves as a SOFA for NATO, the Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership is seen by some as a mere diplomatic note signed by

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149 CFC-A Press Centre & Fact Sheet Regarding Coalition Forces, 9 March 2009.
153 The Afghanistan Compact, 1 February 2006, 3.
the Bush Administration and a non-elected government at the time. What adds to the confusion is that the US forces are not one homogenous force. Parts of the US forces operate under NATO's ISAF banner while the rest are part of OEF. While the multitude of command structures frustrate many, the Afghan government see it as a way of deflecting responsibility for actions leading to civilian casualties.

The Bonn Agreement

On 27 November 2001, Lakdar Brahimi convened the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan's political future. The composition of the groups attending reflected the military situation on the ground. Strong representation came from the Northern Alliance and other anti-Taliban forces like Rashid Dostum's Junbsh, while no Taliban representatives attended. Deputy Special Representative for the Secretary General Chris Alexander, in a 2006 interview with NATO, has stated two reasons for not including the Taliban in the Bonn process: the Taliban had fallen from power, and having been routed its leadership was largely inaccessible at the time. Critiques of the Bonn Process have called it a peace of the victors, and accused it of being a 'flawed' peace. The inclusiveness of the process was undermined by US financial support to warlords, whom they contracted to assist them in their hunt for Al Qaeda. Excluding the Taliban and supporting a role for many of the warlords responsible for the civil war in the 1990s is considered by some to be a principle cause of the ongoing insurgency.

Pressure from the Six plus Two Group was instrumental in getting Afghan groups to attend the conference, though according to Afghanistan specialist Barnett Rubin, the Bonn Conference was hastily organized, and the UN was pressured into accepting it by the US. Nonetheless, the "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions," commonly referred to as the Bonn Agreement, was reached on 5 December 2001. The Interim Administration was established on 22 December 2001, with Hamid Karzai being sworn in as Chairman. The conference also gave prominent positions to Northern Alliance leaders: Younis Qanooni became Minister of the Interior, Abdullah Abdullah became Foreign Minister, and Muhammed Qassem Fahim became the Vice-president in the new Afghan Interim Administration. There was a distinct effort during the Bonn Conference to make the proceedings as much of an Afghan effort as possible, and to give the Interim Administration and later the Transitional Government de jure decision-making power.

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157 Maloney, 'The International Security Assistance Force'.
158 Rubin, Hamidzada, Stoddard, 'Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond', p.54.
The Bonn Agreement was endorsed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1154. While the Bonn Agreement set the course for Afghanistan's post-war recovery, it was not a peace agreement. Rather, it was an agreement dependent on the Coalition victory, and the Taliban did not attend the conference. The Taliban at the time was factionalized, with moderate and extremist groupings. Abdur Rehman Zahid, the Taliban's former deputy Foreign Minister in 2001, said "The Taliban support the Bonn process and the Loya Jirga."\(^{159}\) However, the Taliban and its leader, Mullah Omar, have not been part of any substantial peace efforts.

The Bonn Agreement laid out a timetable for Afghanistan's political development. It called first for the creation of a transitional government, to be created through a loya jirga, a traditional Afghan meeting process, within six months. Following that, it called for a constitutional loya jirga to be held within 18 months of the Bonn Agreement. Kofi Annan envisioned the Transitional Authority leading Afghanistan until free elections were held to choose a President and a National Assembly. These were set to occur within two years of the Emergency Loya Jirga. The first step towards this was accomplished with the creation of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga.\(^{161}\) The Bonn Agreement also called for the creation of a civil service and an independent Human Rights Commission, the formation of an international security force, and it promised to ensure the participation of women in the government.\(^{162}\)

**Follow-through on the Bonn Agreement**

The emergency loya jirga was convened between June 12 and 19, 2002, with participation from 1,500 delegates from 400 jurisdictions. Hamid Karzai was elected by secret ballot to serve as president of the Transitional Administration, which replaced the Interim Government. During the Transitional Administration, the inexperienced Cabinet served as both the executive and legislative bodies of government.

Bonn also called for the assistance of the United Nations in several areas of the conflict recovery process. Subsequently, Security Council Resolution 1401 of 28 March 2002 established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA incorporated and replaced the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan which had been operating since December 1993 but had withdrawn from the country during the US-led invasion. Resolution 1401 gave the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), at the time Lakdar Brahimi, "full authority...over the planning and conduct of all United Nations activities in Afghanistan."\(^{163}\) Resolution 1401 also called for all reconstruction assistance to be provided through the Interim Government and its local agencies where possible, and for local authorities to contribute to the maintenance of security.\(^{164}\) This is consistent with Kofi Annan's

\(^{164}\) Ibid.
recommendation of giving Afghans as big a role as possible in managing the reconstruction of the country, leaving only a 'light footprint' by the international community.\footnote{United Nations, \textit{The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security}, 18 March 2002, p.15.} Progress on the Bonn Agreement proceeded. In January 2004 the Constitutional Loya Jirga was concluded, and a new constitution was signed. Although slightly behind schedule, Presidential elections were held in October 2004, with Hamid Karzai being announced the winner on 9 October. Seventeen other candidates had run against Karzai in the election.\footnote{CBC News Online, ‘Hamid Karzai: A Profile’, CBC News Online, 1 March 2005.} Voter turn-out was high in this election, with over 8 million Afghans voting, forty-one percent of whom were women. While not without minor problems, the election was regarded as legitimate by international observers.\footnote{US Department of State, ‘Background Note Afghanistan’, US Department of State, November 2008.} The bicameral National Assembly elections on 18 September 2005 and the selection of representatives for the Upper House (Meshrano Jirga) in December of that year completed the process laid out in the Bonn Agreement. Over six million voters, approximately 50\% of those registered, cast their votes in this election. While considered successful, ballots from 703 polling stations, or 2.5\% of the total, were discarded because of fraud. 27\% of all seats in the Lower House (Wolesi Jirga) went to women, and several of these women obtained their seat without use of quotas for women. Members for an Upper House were selected from representatives elected for provincial councils in the 18 September election. Secretary General Kofi Annan claimed that Afghanistan had gained a fully elected government which was representative of Afghanistan's ethnic and political diversity.\footnote{United Nation, \textit{The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security – Emergency International Assistance for Peace, Normalcy and Reconstruction of War-Stricken Afghanistan}, S/2006/145, 7 March 2006, 2-3.}

\textbf{The Afghanistan Compact}

From 31 January until 6 February 2006 representatives and leaders from Afghanistan and the international community met in London, England, to outline future goals and commitments for Afghanistan. Fifty-one countries attended the London conference. The result was the Afghanistan Compact.\footnote{The Afghanistan Compact, 6.}

With the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), formerly IANDS (see details here) providing the backdrop, the Afghanistan Compact addressed three focus areas: security, governance, and social and economic development. ISAF and OEF are expected to remain in Afghanistan and continue coordinated activities with the Afghan government and military through 2010. The Afghan National Army was expected to reach a total strength of 70,000 soldiers by 2010, but recent US announcements have called for increasing that number to 80,000 by 2008. Police and counter-narcotics operations are also expected to expand. Moreover, the disarmament of "illegal armed groups," or militias that are not registered with the government, is targeted to be achieved by the end of 2007.\footnote{The Afghanistan Compact, 6.}

The Afghanistan Compact encourages donors to channel aid through the Afghan government, and within the framework of the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy. The Afghan government is given responsibility for setting its own aid priorities and for establishing...
reliable methods of accountability. Increasingly, Afghan partner organizations and the Afghan private sector are to be used when channeling aid without going through the central government. The Afghanistan Compact was endorsed by the Security Council in Resolution 1659.

**Coordination Arrangements**

This section tracks command structure, reporting structure and formal and informal coordination arrangements for military and civilian elements, lead nation if any and rationale for this, location of ultimate decision making authority - both bureaucratic and political.

**Chains of Command**

The peace operation in Afghanistan is not a unified operation with a clear chain of command, but rather three separate missions striving for the same goal of stabilization. Each of the three major international actors in Afghanistan has a separate mandate (See: Mandates). ISAF focuses on security, stabilization and extending the authority of the Afghan government, though in 2006 offensive operations against anti-government forces became more common in southern Afghanistan. OEF, the ongoing US-led military operation, focuses on counter-terrorism and training Afghan military forces, and the U.N. operates a political assistance mission, UNAMA. Each organization maintains liaisons with the others, but each has a separate chain of command and there is no unified command structure. OEF and ISAF have announced ‘clear command arrangements,’ but the details of these arrangements are not clear. Major General Benjamin Freakley, the US commander of OEF’s CJTF-82, also has a command role in ISAF, an arrangement aimed at improving coordination between the two missions.

At a meeting at NATO headquarters on 2 November 2006 the lead donors discussed unifying their strategy for the first time. NATO, the UN, the World Bank, and the European Union were all participants. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer restated NATO's position that there is no military solution to the conflict and that greater development needs to occur.

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170 Ibid. 13-14.
The command structures within the 3 separate missions are as follows:

ISAF in theory operates under a unified command within Afghanistan. However, individual nations often place certain caveats on their contingents, such as forbidding them to undertake offensive operations against insurgents.

NOTE: This chart reflects changes to the structure of OEF in January/February 2007. The Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan was removed and replaced with CJTF-76, which was subsequently renamed CJTF-82.

Prior to NATO’s takeover of eastern Afghanistan, there was a lot of overlap between ISAF’s and OEF’s responsibilities in some areas, especially with regard to the PRT structures that both missions operate with funding and personnel support from USAID. Transferring US soldiers to NATO command has led to increased integration, though the effect this will have on operations remains to be seen.
Stage III and Stage IV expansion of the ISAF mission to the south and east of the country, taking over much of Operation Enduring Freedom's roles in those regions, has been completed. In the transition period, these new international forces were under the command of Operation Enduring Freedom, but as NATO took over command of the south on 31 July 2006, these additional forces, approximately 9000 mostly Canadian, British, and Dutch troops deployed across Helmand, Kandahar, and Uruzgan, fell under the command of ISAF. As a result, ISAF troop numbers reached over 20,000 by the time Stage 3 expansion was completed. Stage 4 expansion, which saw ISAF assuming command of eastern Afghanistan, was completed on 5 October 2006. Approximately 11,300 US troops transferred to NATO command. PRTs will remain a focus of ISAF efforts, though larger troop formations are present and conducting stability operations, such as the over 6,700-strong British force deployed in Helmand.

According to ISAF and OEF commanders, these ISAF forces will have the same stabilization mission as ISAF troops in the rest of the country: "Our mandate will remain the same as it is in the north and the west ...It will not carry out counterterrorism operations. However it will have very robust rules of engagement and if people, insurgents, those who wish to prevent the security and the future of Afghanistan in any way prevent ISAF conducting its operation, we will, we can and we will take action if we have to. I would just finally like to stress once again the ISAF role in the south during Stage Three will not be to seek out those insurgents." Despite this claim, ISAF forces have engaged in offensive operations, such as Operation Medusa of August-September 2006 in the south, which was aimed at dislodging insurgents from strongholds and interrupting their operations. The distinction between what counts as a counter-terrorism mission is also somewhat blurred, as ISAF forces can encounter Al Qaeda operatives. According to a former US military spokesman, the difference is "really a nuance." The ISAF mandate is sufficiently vague to allow these types of operations to be conducted. See: Mandates.

### Security Sector Reform

In 2002 at the Tokyo donor conference, the US convened a side meeting of G8 countries which agreed on a "lead donor system" for key reforms in the security sector, as the U.S. did not want to lead non-military efforts in what it saw as "nation-building" activities. The resulting division of labour among G8 countries was as follows:  

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<th>Area of SSR Responsibility</th>
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<tr>
<td>Training the Afghan National Army</td>
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<td>Training Officer Corps of ANA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Afghan National Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judicial Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counternarcotics</td>
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173 European Defence, ‘British Forces Spearhead Afghanistan Expansion’,  
176 Rubin, Hamidzada and Stoddard, 58.
The EU assumed responsibility for the training of Afghan police, though Germany is in command of the mission. Prior to June 2007, Germany served as the sole lead nation for police reform.

The lead donor arrangement has not been without problems, as some areas of responsibility have not been coordinated with the Bonn process, and the relation between certain priority areas has been neglected (for example the link between DDR and recruitment to the Afghan National Army). There have been problems with this arrangement, such as: poor coordination between these areas and the Bonn political process, poor coordination between pillars (for example the link between DDR and recruitment to the Afghan National Army), the inadequate capacity of some donors to establish sufficient programs, disputes between donors on appropriate strategies, and importantly the lack of Afghan leadership in the process. Emma Sky presented a more comprehensive critique of SSR and the lead donor system: "Afghanistan Case Study: The Lead Nation Approach" in "Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform: A Guide for Donors" Chapter 9.

In the end, the US has been deeply drawn into involvement in each sector, providing both large amounts of funding and personnel. In February 2007 the US announced an additional $11.8 billion in funding for Afghanistan, with $9.3 billion of this slotted for Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police equipment, training, and funding over 2007-2008.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration was carried out primarily under the Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP). This UNDP and UNAMA-organized program completed the DDR process in June 2006, with over 63,000 former militia soldiers being disarmed. Since that time the ANBP has focused on the destruction of mine and ammunition stockpiles and the disbandment of illegal armed groups (DAIG). The ANBP has reported that since June 2006 only 25% of DDR participants have found long-term and sustainable employment, though a Reintegration Support Project is expected to run until December 2007. The ANBP does not cover the armed groups that were not party to the Bonn Agreement, such as the Taliban or Hekmatyar’s Hizb-i-Islami. The ANBP is set to run until 2011. For reports on the DAIG project and the completed DDR program refer to the ANBP section of the UN Development Programme website.

Coordination Mechanisms

There does not appear to be a hierarchical command structure that coordinates policy and operations amongst OEF, ISAF and UNAMA. Decisions are made through concrete liaison arrangements between all three missions as well as in consultation with the Afghan government. It can be assumed that discussions take place at the highest political levels within NATO and between the U.S., the UN, the Afghan government, and other ISAF troop contributing nations. ISAF has liaison missions in all departments of the Afghan government and UNAMA. There exists in Kabul an informal ‘tea club’ of billionaire donor countries, whose ambassadors meet regularly with the SRSG. According to an International Crisis Group policy brief, it is in these informal discussions that many policies are made. While the Afghan government is nominally in charge of the development process, decisions on Afghanistan are often made in foreign capitals as individual donor countries set their own priorities. This has led some to question who is really responsible for making decisions on Afghanistan. The critical perspective is that Karzai is an American puppet, though this is only alleged and by no means a formal arrangement. In any case, the poor coordination of the different missions and donor priorities can have a negative impact on development efforts and the adherence to the Afghanistan Compact framework.

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177 ISAF, ‘ISAF History’, ISAF.  
ISAF History, ISAF.  
In the event of a crisis, each mission would react on its own, but it can be assumed that efforts at coordination would be made. Currently it is not clear which international actors can ultimately be held accountable for the success or failure of efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Only the Afghan government is being held accountable for the success or failure of these efforts, though significant media and public attention is being given to the mission in western countries. See: Analysis and Opinions.

**PRTs**

Point 19 of the PRT terms of reference asserts that the PRTs follow their respective national chains of command. See: PRT Terms of Reference. Each NATO country that provides troops has its own mandates and terms of engagement with the ISAF force in Afghanistan. Within a PRT, each element (military, development, diplomacy, policing, etc) tends to be in charge of its area of expertise. For example, the development component of the PRT would be the authority in that field. However, as security is a factor affecting all actions of the PRT, and the military component is in charge of security, certain operational decisions are deferred to military judgment. Examples of such decisions would be where it is possible to operate safely, and when.

The Afghan Ministry of Interior and the ISAF commander co-chair a PRT Executive Steering Committee, which oversees the activities of the PRTs and meets every two to three months. Created in 2004, it includes the ambassadors from the countries contributing troops to the PRTs, the Afghan Ministers of Finance and Rural Reconstruction and Development, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative, and the EU Special Representative. US General David Barno, according to an officer who served under his command in 2004, was the 'catalyst' in establishing the PRT Executive Steering Committee. The aim of the PRT ESC is to provide 'high-level' guidance on what activities the PRTs can do to support the Afghan government, define measures of effectiveness for the PRTs, and determine conditions for the handover to full government authority.¹⁷⁹ A PRT working group, which involves military, government, and NGO representatives, convenes weekly.

**UNAMA's Coordination Role:**

UNAMA maintains liaisons with both foreign military missions in Afghanistan, as well as the Afghan government. However, it does not dictate security policy, and focuses instead on developing governing capacity, democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and sustainable development. It serves as a coordinating agency for development and humanitarian agencies within Afghanistan. See: UNAMA.

**NGO Civil-Military Working Group**

In 2004 a Civil-Military working group was established by UNAMA, with the purpose of resolving operational issues and to provide a channel for NGO concerns and perspectives to the military, the Afghan government, and foreign donors. The charter of the working group gives as its tasks developing effective methods of communication, identifying and prioritizing issues of concern and recommending solutions, developing systems for resolving conflicts, and

documenting lessons learned. However, this working group has been plagued by several problems: lack of participation by NGOs, indifference shown by the military, and non-existent Afghan government participation.\textsuperscript{180} UNAMA has been the main coordination point between the PRTs and NGOs, while other points of contact have been through the NGO networks ACBAR and Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO).\textsuperscript{181} In addition, some NGOs have contacts directly with PRTs in their areas. While some PRTs and NGOs at the local and national level feel they have good relations, among some NGOs there is a sense of unease about working with the PRTs, especially among Afghans who worry about being seen as cooperating with what some see as a foreign occupation force.\textsuperscript{182}

Coordination in the field differs from region to region and depends on the initiatives of the different actors operating in a given area. In the case of the military, this can shift from rotation to rotation. Using the Canadian military example, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) units from different troop rotations have shown various levels of enthusiasm for holding regular consultations with NGOs, and NGOs have shown various levels of enthusiasm for meeting regularly with military forces. Anecdotal evidence indicates that relations between NGOs and military actors are better at the field level than at the operational level, and that personalities are the determining factor in the quality of relations. Events and troop rotations, however, can lead to quick changes in relations.

**Additional Coordination Mechanisms:**

NATO maintains a Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) in Afghanistan, appointed by the NATO Secretary General on an ad hoc basis. The SCR is responsible for coordination between ISAF, the Afghan government, and civilian agencies, like UNAMA, operating in Afghanistan. The current SCR is Daan W. Everts of the Netherlands. He replaced Hikmet Cetin of Turkey, who served from 2003 until August 2006.\textsuperscript{183}

A Joint Coordination Body brings together UNAMA, ISAF, and the Afghan Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior (established in January 2002)

**Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board**

On 30 April 2006, the inaugural session of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board was held. This Board is intended to oversee, monitor, and assess progress on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, and improve coordination amongst donors and the Afghan government. It consists of 28 members, including seven Afghans, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, representatives from the six largest donors (USA, UK, Japan, Germany, European Union, India), three neighbouring countries (Iran, Pakistan, China), and Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the Russian Federation, Canada, NATO, Coalition forces, the Netherlands, Italy, and France. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank also sit on


\textsuperscript{181} Agency Coordinating Body For Afghanistan Relief; Afghanistan NGO Security Office.

\textsuperscript{182} Japan Network of NGOs, Civil-Military Relations, 4 December 2004, p.4.

\textsuperscript{183} NATO, ‘NATO’s Role in Afghanistan’, NATO.
the Board. The board is to meet quarterly, and publishes bi-annual reports on the progress of the Afghanistan Compact.\textsuperscript{184} As part of the coordination and awareness raising process, the Afghan government has been holding consultations with provincial groups on local needs and strategies for addressing poverty and other issues. The outcomes of consultations and reports are available on the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy website: http://www.ands.gov.af/

The International Crisis Group Policy Brief, "Afghanistan's Endangered Compact" criticizes the JCMB as being 'unwieldy' because of its large membership. This report also claims that the JCMB places all responsibility for monitoring progress on the Afghanistan Compact and reporting to the JCMB on the Afghan Government's Oversight Committee. The 'international community' is not held accountable for reporting or for progress on the Compact, nor for the numerous projects implemented not through the Afghan government. The JCMB also lacks a full-time, functioning secretariat, though as of January 2007 one was being staffed.

Policy Action Group

To address the threat of the insurgency in the southern provinces in a more coordinated manner, in June 2006 President Karzai with then COMISAF Gen. David Richards established a high-level task force known as the Policy Action Group. Through a process led by the Afghan President, the PAG comprises four groups that address intelligence, security, strategic communication, and reconstruction and development. The committee will provide advice on these issues, and oversee an implementation team. The PAG meets weekly and includes President Karzai as chair, the Afghan ministers of Defence, Internal Communications, and Education, top leaders of UNAMA, ISAF and OEF, and the ambassadors of the UK, Canada, and the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{185}

Links/Overlap Between OEF and ISAF

While on paper the operations are separate, in practice, there is a lot of overlap between OEF and ISAF's responsibilities in some areas, and the two missions operate in tandem with a large degree of synchronization of efforts. The U.S. sees both entities as linked tools in the larger 'war on terror'.\textsuperscript{186} Other governments draw very clear distinctions between the two missions. Ultimately, in practice the ISAF and OEF missions are intimately intertwined:

How OEF and ISAF Overlap

NATO countries contribute significant numbers of troops/equipment to OEF, though some of them with 'national caveats' specifying aspects of the mission that they cannot perform.\textsuperscript{187}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{185} Carlotta Gall, 'General Takes Long View in Afghanistan', International Herald Tribune, 16 October 2006.
\item \textsuperscript{186} See US Central Command (Centcom) website, Coalition Pages.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Excerpts from the "Fifth Report", March 28, 2006. U.K. Parliament. Points 3 and 4 regarding national caveats. This issue was highlighted in early 2006, with the extensive debate in the Netherlands regarding the role of Dutch forces in Afghanistan, and the strong opposition in the Dutch Parliament to have Dutch troops
The US already contributes significantly to the ISAF force. ISAF, in some cases, relies on US capabilities such as strategic airlift, unmanned aerial vehicles, and especially helicopters.\textsuperscript{188} The US has provided such assistance to ISAF through an OEF-ISAF memorandum of understanding for several years.\textsuperscript{189} With the handover of southern and eastern Afghanistan to ISAF command, approximately 17,000 U.S. troops currently operate under ISAF command.\textsuperscript{190}

OEF focuses on a counter-terrorism mission, but as Taliban and insurgent strength and aggressiveness has grown, ISAF forces have adopted more aggressive tactics that are, in practice, indistinguishable from OEF’s approach. Ultimately, the operational environment and requirements will likely continue to dictate the evolving missions of ISAF and OEF.

With the handover of OEF’s area of responsibility in southern and eastern Afghanistan to NATO/ISAF in mid-late 2006, there is more synergy between the two missions. The December 2005 Operational Plan reiterated the primacy of the Afghan government in decision making, and provided for enhanced coordination between OEF and ISAF forces. This will be obtained by establishing "clear command arrangements."\textsuperscript{191}

As the U.S. is an enormously influential NATO member and appoints the military commander of NATO (The Supreme Allied Commander Europe SACEUR is always an American general), coordination of strategies used for ISAF and OEF likely happens at the highest levels.

**Past Discussions over Unified Command for OEF and ISAF**

Despite opposing a large international force early on in the occupation of Afghanistan, by 2005 the U.S. made clear it wanted NATO to assume OEF operations as soon as possible. A White House Fact Sheet on Afghanistan read, "In close coordination with our NATO Allies, we hope to work gradually toward placing OEF and ISAF under a single NATO chain of command in order to maximize the efficiency of our overall stabilization efforts in the country."\textsuperscript{192} On March 14, 2006 US General John Abizaid stated to the Senate Armed Services Committee that NATO would assume overall command of the U.S.-led OEF: "As NATO eventually assumes control over all conventional U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan, the United States will remain the single largest contributor of forces to this NATO effort, while also retaining a very robust counterterrorism force throughout the entire country."\textsuperscript{193} When ISAF was originally set up, the US was concerned that OEF troops conducting counter-terrorism activities would encounter ISAF troops, and the US wanted a clear chain of command. Germany and other EU countries wanted ISAF to have independent command. The UK pulled together a compromise by which

participate in combat against the Taliban In effect, each troop contributing nation in NATO has its own mandates and terms of engagement, and national processes for determining these.


\textsuperscript{189} White House, NATO’s Role in Afghanistan, Embassy of the United States, Belgium.


\textsuperscript{192} White House, NATO’s Role in Afghanistan, Embassy of the United States, Belgium.

ISAF retained operational command while ultimate authority lay with the US. Afghan President Hamid Karzai clearly indicated his support for NATO taking over command of OEF since his election, as did the UK. The US, despite being very influential, does not retain complete control over ISAF planning, as France and Germany resisted and blocked American efforts to have NATO assume OEF's counter-terror and counter-insurgency duties. Continuing debates within NATO about force contributions and operational caveats indicate that a unified command is still not likely in the Afghanistan context.

Composition Of The Peace Operation

This section tracks, where possible, the size, composition, countries of origin of foreign military personnel, equipment and sources of financing, as well as police forces and civilian support personnel.

As Afghanistan is neither a UN mission nor an integrated mission, what constitutes the 'peace operation' in the country is open to debate. For the purposes of this website, we will track the contributions of the major international entities operating in Afghanistan in the security sphere, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) counterterrorism mission, and the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) involved in security sector reform projects. We will also track data on the Afghan National Army (ANA), as they provide a large part of the troops for security operations, working in cooperation with international forces, and a key part of the international strategy in Afghanistan is to create a strong ANA which would eventually assume all security duties from the OEF forces and ISAF. As data on these issues is often contested, we provide sources for all figures presented here.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

Overview

ISAF is a multinational mission composed of contingents from 40 different countries, including all 26 NATO member states. The commander of ISAF is US General Stanley A. McChrystal. He took over command from US General David D. McKiernan in June 2009. He in turn had assumed command from US General Dan McNeill on June 3, 2008.

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194 Center Humanitarian Cooperation website.
196 We welcome the creation of a single HQ to command ISAF and OEF as a logical consequence of the increased "synergy" of the missions. On paper the command, control and communication arrangements between ISAF and OEF seem clear, but the success of the arrangements will be tested when operational decisions have to be made. We will scrutinise closely the operational effectiveness of these arrangements particularly in regard to the allocation of air assets. (Paragraph 38)" House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, Fifth Report, United Kingdom Parliament, March 28, 2006.
The ISAF Headquarters is based in Kabul. It interacts with the Government of Afghanistan, the UN, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. The HQ serves as the operational command for the mission. Since NATO assumed command and control of the ISAF mission in August 2003, the ISAF Headquarters structure has evolved from one built around the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps headquarters model to a composite headquarters. The transition took place in February 2007.

Across Afghanistan, ISAF has five Regional Commands, with several Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in each one of them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Provincial Reconstruction Team</th>
<th>Lead Nation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RC N</td>
<td>Mazar-e Sharif</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC W</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>RC C</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>RC S</td>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>RC E</td>
<td>Bagram</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Regional Commands coordinate all regional civil-military activities conducted by the military elements of the PRTs in their area of responsibility, under operational control of ISAF. Each regional command is assumed by a lead nation and is composed of a Command and Control HQ and a Forward Support Base (FSB) that are essential logistic installations, created to provide a supply, medical and transport hub in each region to assist the PRTs. The FSBs are also used to host Quick Response Forces and tactical operations centers.

**Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)**

While ISAF’s primary mission consists in securing Afghanistan to permit speedy reconstruction and development, practical support for reconstruction and development efforts also stands as one ISAF’s key supporting military tasks. Related activities are mainly implemented through its PRTs - small multi-disciplinary teams composed of a range of military and civilian personnel. As of December 2008, ISAF operated a total of 26 PRTs.

As Olson and Gregorian explain, PRTs on average include up to 150 military personnel who provide force protection to a range of civilian representatives, most commonly diplomats, government development agency staff, and police advisors. Some PRTs house counternarcotics teams, judicial and criminal experts from donor governments, and liaison officers from the Afghan Ministry of the Interior. Within this basic common structure, the national policies of the PRT lead nation govern the specific operations of any given PRT. With their mixed military-civilian composition, many PRTs reflect the “whole of government approaches” of the major donor countries and represent increased internal coordination between the military, aid and diplomatic departments of their lead nation.

Critics argue that PRTs are only one step towards a more comprehensive strategy for reconstruction that still needs to be developed. PRTs were geared towards dampening the level of violence and managing short-term local reconstruction efforts, but they could not provide the core for a long-term effort. Moreover, there simply are not enough PRTs to reach out to all the regions of Afghanistan.

**Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs)**
Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams are small teams (12-19 individuals) of experienced officers and NCOs embedded with Afghan National Army units to provide training and mentoring. OMLTs also provide a liaison capability between ANA and ISAF forces, co-ordinating the planning of operations and ensuring that the ANA units receive enabling support. OMLT personnel deploy for periods of at least 6 months in order to build enduring relationships with the ANA and maximise the mentoring effect.

NATO has deployed 20 OMLTs as of October 2007, taking over from US Embedded Training Teams (ETTs). In October 2007, Major General Cone, the commanding general of Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A), announced plans to add another 80 training teams in the near future, although it was not clear from his statement how many of these additional teams would be set up by ISAF as opposed to CSTC-A itself. OMLTs composed of ISAF troops submit their progress reports to Task Force Phoenix, an element of CSTC-A, which is responsible for reform and development of the ANA.

Strength of National Contingents

As of December 22 2009 there are approximately 84,150 troops and there are 43 troop contributing nations.\(^{198}\) This figure includes national contingent commands. Equipment and direct costs of ISAF are paid for by troop contributing nations. Individual contributions by each country change frequently due to the rotation of troops and different commitments from different countries. However, some trends are clear. Long-time NATO members consistently provide the most troops, as the charts below show. The top troop contributors are the USA, the UK, Germany, France, Canada and Italy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Troops</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>545</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>495</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2,830</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
<td>295</td>
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<td>Cz. Rep.</td>
<td>370</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4280</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>1955</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>105</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>900</td>
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<td>Romania</td>
<td>900</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>Estonia</td>
<td>155</td>
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<td>Latvia</td>
<td>175</td>
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December 22d 2009. Source: ISAF website\(^{199}\) Debate About Caveats and Size of Contingents

\(^{198}\) ISAF and the Afghan National Army Strength and Laydown, NATO (December 22\(^{nd}\) 2009)

\(^{199}\) ISAF and the Afghan National Army Strength and Laydown, NATO: http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf
ISAF operates under a unified command within Afghanistan (see Coordination Arrangements). However, individual nations often place certain caveats on their contingents, such as forbidding them to undertake offensive operations against insurgents. General James Jones, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, called such national caveats an "operational cancer" and an "impediment to success." These caveats continue to cause operational difficulties for ISAF commanders and tended to overshadow recent Alliance meetings such as the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. Caveats can include limits on patrols, usage of airlift capabilities, and where certain countries can deploy their soldiers. Germany, Italy, Spain, and France often bear the brunt of such accusations, but defend their commitments. Caveats can be the result of political considerations, disagreements about certain aspects of the mission, or lack of proper training or equipment.

The ongoing controversy among troop-contributing countries about the unwillingness of certain member states to send its troops to the volatile south and east of Afghanistan as well as growing domestic opposition against the ISAF mission cast doubts on NATO’s enduring role. In recent months, key troop contributors faced crucial decisions on whether to renew their commitments to the mission. The Dutch government postponed a parliamentary debate last autumn on its contribution because the deployment had become so politically sensitive before extending the mandate of their troops for another three years up to December 2010. Canada’s government appointed an independent panel to review the country’s mission in Afghanistan. Following the Panel’s recommendations, the Canadian House of Commons decided to keep its troops in Afghanistan for at least another two years. The German parliament extended the mandate of its ISAF contingent for one year, but maintained its veto on the participation of German troops in combat operations outside its current area of operations in the relatively stable north of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the UK and the US are in the process of significantly increasing their forces in Afghanistan.

ISAF has been criticized as lacking a unity of purpose. They are required to go beyond the normal limits of counter-insurgency and military strategy. In fact, they are said to be doing nothing short of armed nation building and at the same time defeating the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Placing caveats on their troops limits their use and therefore they might not be able to capitalize on victories against the Taliban and hold territory. Taliban influence has gradually increased in Afghanistan’s 264 administrative districts. In 2003 they held 30 districts, in 2008 that grew to 160. Insurgent attacks have also increased by 60% from 2008 to 2009. All the while the Taliban have lost almost every battle against ISAF forces. 200

**Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)**

Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan (OEF-A) has two major commands: Combined Joint Task Force 101 (CJTF 101) and the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A). Since the Stage IV transition of authority to ISAF, the status of various troops previously assigned to OEF-A has been unclear, but the operation is still in charge of counter-terrorist operations, mainly in the south and east of the country. CSTC-A is responsible for training the ANA through Task Force Phoenix and also interacts with the EU-led project training the ANP.

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200 Anthony Cordesman, More Troops, Fewer Caveats, Lets Get Serious Times Online (August 10th 2009)
While the vast majority of troops under Operation Enduring Freedom are currently from the United States, many other coalition partners contribute special forces troops, training teams for the Afghan National Army, ships, helicopters, aircraft and other equipment. In a January 2007 CRS Report to Congress, Middle East expert Kenneth Katzman claimed there were around 1,000 non-US troops operating as part of the US-led coalition. Partners such as Pakistan and Djibouti provide air and logistics bases, landing rights, and other services. Many countries contribute forces to both ISAF and OEF in Afghanistan. Over the period 2004-2006, nations contributing significantly to OEF, besides the United States, according to the coalition's website are: Germany, France, Spain, U.K., Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, Australia, Italy, and New Zealand. Please note that the troop numbers provided on these links are not current, as troop numbers shift continuously.

Prior to the NATO takeover of command, there were conflicting numbers presented by the NGO Security Council Report and OEF indicating total troop numbers in Afghanistan under OEF, as the charts below, both dated March 2006, show.

**OEF's composition in March 2006**
- Troops: 22,100
- US Troops: 19,000
- Contributors of military personnel: 20 countries
[Source: UN Security Council Report, Afghanistan, March 2006]

**Coalition forces in Afghanistan**
More than 26,000:
- United States: more than 18,500
- Allies: nearly 7,500
- Allied nations: 25
[Source: CFC-A Press Centre & Fact Sheet: linked here (re coalition forces, March 9, 2006)]

With the transfer of command to ISAF by mid-late 2006, a gradual draw down of U.S. troops in the south was expected. However continuing security challenges have resulted in a troop increase, with now up to 27,000 US troops in Afghanistan.

OEF was responsible for establishing the first PRTs in Afghanistan in 2002. With the expansion of NATO forces in late 2003, command of PRTs began to shift over to NATO nations. By September 2005, the United States led thirteen PRTs under OEF, though now leads only twelve under NATO command.

Financial Costs of OEF

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201 US CENTCOM, ‘Coalition Countries’, CENTCOM.
Maintaining the military mission in and around Afghanistan cost the US an average of US$1.3 billion per month in 2005. In comparison, the US spent an average of US$6.4 billion per month on operations in Iraq.\textsuperscript{204}

### United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

UNAMA reports approximately 1500 staff (about 80\% of them are national staff). It has a budget of $168 million with 18 offices regional and provincial offices including liaison officers in Islamabad and Teheran.\textsuperscript{205}

(For more information, see [United Nations in Afghanistan](#)

### Afghan National Army (ANA) & Afghan National Police (ANP)

A central part of the international strategy in Afghanistan is to create a strong Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) which would eventually assume all security duties from OEF and ISAF. In December 2007, a spokesman of the Afghan defense ministry announced that the ANA currently stood at around 57,000 soldiers and that it would reach a targeted strength of 70,000 within four months, i.e. by the end of March 2008. Its final target size is 70,000, although some observers believe the goal might be scaled back to 50,000 because of the sustainment costs to the Afghan government. At the same time, however, there are reports that the United States recently agreed to support a request from Kabul for an army of 80,000. The Afghan defense ministry even thinks Afghanistan needs a 200,000 strong army. It is hard to say how many operational soldiers the ANA currently has because the figures given by official sources often do not take into account desertion, ghost names, and the incompetence of many.

Training of ANA units was initially conducted by ISAF. In 2003 this responsibility was transferred to OEF as ISAF did not have the resources necessary to implement sufficient training. The effort is being led by the United States through its Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which is part of Central Command (USCENTCOM). Recently the United States announced that it would spend $3.4 billion during the remainder of the current fiscal year (2007) on supporting the ANA and ANP, followed by $5.9 billion in 2008. The funds will be used for training as well as the purchase of small arms, tanks, and helicopters and other aircraft. ISAF’s involvement with the ANA focuses on its employment rather than its manning, initial training and sustainment. It assists the ANA to bring its units up to operating capability through the provision of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs). These teams support training and deploy on operations in an advisory role. In late 2007 and early 2008, the number and capabilities of those security forces continues to grow. Plans are to augment the training teams already operating across Afghanistan with another 80 teams. Training emphasis will now be shifted from individual instruction to the training of larger units like battalions and brigades.

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{205} UNAMA website FAQ (January 28\textsuperscript{th} 2010)
The ANA is earning mixed reviews. Some U.S. and allied officers say that the ANA is becoming a major force in stabilizing the country and a national symbol. Although forces sporadically disperse while on a mission, for the most part, they are operational and are undertaking critical security missions, counterterrorism operations, and drug interdictions. It is increasingly able to conduct its own battalion-strength operations, as demonstrated in early December 2007 when ANA forces retook and secured the center of Musa Qala (Helmand) after several months of Taliban control. The ANA now has at least some presence in most of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. The United States has built four regional bases for it (Herat, Gardez, Qandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif). Despite these positive developments, challenges remain. There are reports of continuing personnel (desertion, absentee) problems, ill discipline, and drug abuse. 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 refuse to serve far from their home towns. Equipment, maintenance, and logistical difficulties continue to plague the ANA. Few soldiers have helmets, many have no armored vehicles or armor. Despite reform processes to increase the pay, income for those in the lower ranks remains insufficient to meet more than the most basic needs. ANA soldiers now receive $100 per month as a new recruit. In some reported cases, the Taliban are paying up to $12 per day, three times as much as the ANA field soldiers receive, and there is evidence of defection from the national security forces to the Taliban ranks.

As of July 2009 the size of the Afghan National Army (ANA) states at 93,000 with an expected growth of 134,000 but December 2011.206 The current size of the army is a source of frustration for both Afghan and US officials. With the US expected to begin its withdrawal by 2011 it is hoped that security responsibilities will be transferred to Afghan security forces. Despite the expected increase in troops levels by 2011, questions continue to remain as to the desired size of the ANA. The authorized combined strength of the ANA (134,000) and ANP (82,000) would roughly be one third the size of the security forces in Iraq in a country that is larger.207 However, there are plans by the Obama administration to increase the authorized number of the Afghan Army to 260,000.208 This size is nearly three times the size estimated by the US officials in 2002 when it seemed as if the Taliban and Al Qaeda had been defeated. This is another indicator of how the insurgency has grown and created a much more volatile security situation.

Though the increased size of the ANA seems to be important to combat the spreading insurgency, there are some political concerns rising. There are some who fear that an enlarged Afghan army would be a destabilizing factor in the already weak and corrupt Afghan political system. Despite this, the risk of an overly powerful Afghan army is outweighed by the risk of a government collapsing at the hands of the insurgency.

Increasing the size of the ANA to 260,000 will come at a much greater financial cost which the international community will have to bare. The initial level of 134,000 would be priced at $12 billion while the higher projected figure would be at a price of about $20 billion over the next six or seven years. This far outstrips the $1.1 billion dollar budget for the Afghan government. Senator Levin (D) who chairs the Armed Services Committee commented that “the cost is relatively small compared to the cost of not doing it.” The cost of an Afghan Army does not

207 Lawrence Korb, Caroline Wadhams, Colin Cookman, and Sean Duggan Sustainable Security in Afghanistan: Crafting an Effective and Responsible Strategy for a Forgotten Front Centre for American Progress (March 2009)
simply stop at this point. US and international investment in the ANA might have to continue for a while as President Karzai said that the ANA would need external funding for the next 15 years.²⁰⁹

While it has been said that the ANA is becoming a major force in stabilizing the nation and becoming a national symbol, it is clear that leadership is a major problem in the ranks of the army. In a December 22nd 2010 article by Foreign Policy magazine, Lt. Gen. William Cladwell was quoted as saying that attention should be given to improving the leadership of the Afghan security forces rather than simply looking to increase troop numbers.²¹⁰ Lack of leadership and frequent abuses of power are what led Pashtun tribes to support the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

A major problems in the ANA is that of nepotism. In a government and a military that is starving for meritocracy there too many appointments made on familial relations or friendships. An example of this is of Brig. Gen. Shams former commander of the 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps. Brig. Gen Shams had too little experience for a brigade commander and was appointed due to his political connections. While he was socializing in Jalalabad he failed to organize any brigade level operations and corruption was rampant. There is urgent need to reconceptualise rebuilding Afghanistan’s security forces and that is to combine short-term fixes with long term involvement. This would take a much longer US involvement in the Afghan army but in the long run it would be a much better use of resources. Unfortunately, the performance of the Afghan National Police is not yet comparable to that of the ANA. In 2001, Germany accepted the role of lead nation for the build-up of the ANP but sent only 40 police advisers to Kabul. The international effort to train a new police force was beset by infighting, inconsistency and a slow pace. Until mid-2003, no systematic police-training program existed outside Kabul. Consequently, other countries like the US got more involved in the process. In 2004, the US State Department hired a private contractor to train the ANP. Afghan officials complained that the training program was only two weeks long. In April 2005, the responsibility for the US contribution to ANP support was transferred to the Department of Defense. At first, it dispatched 300 advisers. Even though increased US involvement was generally welcomed, international partners have had differing views on the appropriateness of international soldiers training a domestic police force. Furthermore, the US answer turned out to be a quick fix, failing to obtain a single vision with the Germans or the Europeans, failing to engage the UN so that perhaps it could have fostered the needed coordination. Now while the number of deployed police stands at some 70,000, many patrolmen have had only two weeks training, the most about eight weeks. In mid-2007, the EU assumed responsibility for training the ANP. However, its early efforts have faltered over funding and staffing issues. The EU trainer numbers fall far short of what is necessary. The EU has agreed to send 195 police trainers from 25 member states. By the beginning of November 2007, however, not even half of them had arrived in Kabul. At the moment, the US, EU and others are carrying out a sweeping $2.5 billion overhaul of Afghanistan's police force that will include retraining all 72,000 members and embedding 2,350 advisers in police stations across the country. The US contribution will be commanded by CSTC-A and consist of 500 trainers, mainly employees of private security firms such as DynCorp.

The creation of police forces is a more complex and decentralized function than creating an army, and one that has to overcome Afghanistan’s entrenched rivalries between center and periphery and among tribal leaders and warlords. The ANP has insufficient presence in rural districts, and those that are patrolling are perceived to be corrupt, abusive, and lacking

²⁰⁹ Afghanistan “unable to pay for troops for 15 years” BBC (December 8th 2009)
²¹⁰ Mark Moyar How to whip the Afghan army into shape Foreign Policy (December 22nd 2009)
discipline. The ANP work in the communities they come from, often embroiling them in local factional or ethnic disputes. Since pay is both abysmally low and highly irregular, the lure of corruption is overwhelming. Many officers are local commanders and militia members in different clothes. In many districts the police are the only representatives that Afghans come across from the Karzai government, and their bad behavior is undermining the legitimacy of the central government. Rebuilding a police force is not just a matter of putting people through basic training; it is actually a matter of establishing middle management structures, establishing credible fiscally sustainable funding mechanisms for such institutions, and most importantly, it is a matter of establishing an ethos of loyalty to the civil power, which historically has not been present in Afghanistan, and in the absence of which, one can only expect mayhem to result.

A joint report by the Royal United Services Institute and the Foreign Policy Research Institute concludes that ANP reform is finally getting the attention it needs. Far from being an important part of the stat building effort, the crime and insecurity brought about by the ANP has caused many to mistrust the government. Thus it undermines the Afghan government’s ability to project itself throughout the country. The conclusion of the report is that the obsession with numbers must stop and police-building must be replaced with police reform. These reforms need to look at measures to maintain internal disciple and ensure external oversight. At the same time they must also focus on the broader issue of the overall justice sector. There are lessons to draw from past missions in Timor-Leste, Kosovo and Sierra Leone to name a few. However, attention must be paid to the unique social, cultural, political and security factors that govern Afghan society. The report also looks at the problem of non-state security actors but at the same time recommends the use of non-state justice actors i.e. local dispute resolution mechanisms. The overall goal of providing policy reform is to conceptualize and implement a strategy that is pragmatic, affordable and achievable. However, despite this, the critical resources needed to reform the Afghan police is that of time. The British head of justice and security Dr. Ian Oliver commented that it could take up to 30 years of engagement to create and effective police force. Already there are faint signs of hope when in July 2009 the ANP and other Afghan security forces thwarted off attacked on government buildings in Gardez and Jalalabad.

Despite efforts to build and reform the ANP, another major stumbling block is the presence of private security companies. With higher pay and a relatively safer work environment the ANP is losing many of its recruits to these PMCs. With deserters and AWOL recruits joining these companies the Afghan government has tried to regulate the activities of PMCs in order to put them on an even playing field with the ANP. Interior minister Mohamad Hanif Atmar is the official responsible to drafting these rules. These rules ensure that PMCs are licensed, operate under set conditions and place caps on who can be hired. The rules will also make it more difficult for deserters and AWOLs to be hired as they would not have the proper leaving certificate showing that that they completed their term of service honourably. History of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

In the initial invasion of Afghanistan, OEF was undertaken by a coalition of nations, with contributions coming from 55 nations and varying from indirect support such as permitting use of airspace and use of facilities for logistics, to the contribution of naval, air, and ground forces. Some of the major contributors to the initial campaign were made by the UK, Canada,

\[211\] Reforming the Afghan Police RUSI and FPRI (2009)
\[212\] Steve Rennie Afghan Government to regulate private security firms: Canadian General The Canadian Press (January 25th 2009)
France, Australia, and Germany.\textsuperscript{213} By January 2002, Special Forces from Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Germany, and Turkey were operating in Afghanistan. Exact numbers of Special Forces soldiers or details of their actions are not readily available.\textsuperscript{214}

Support did not come only from traditional western allies. Egypt, Malaysia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ethiopia are examples of non-traditional allies that offered support to US operations. Pakistan was a very critical partner in the coalition.

However, the largest contingent of foreign soldiers came from the United States. The US had 20,000 to 25,000 troops in the region before 11 September 2001. By 8 November there were more than 50,000 American troops in the region, with Special Forces and 10th Mountain Division soldiers based in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.\textsuperscript{215} Most of these were based aboard ships. By January 2002 the reported number of US troops in Afghanistan was over 4,000, a number which increased to 8,000 by August of that year. The US deployed 500 aircraft and 14,000 Air Force personnel by November 2001.\textsuperscript{216}

OEF tactics against the insurgents initially involved using Special Forces to confront high-value insurgent targets directly, while air-mobile light infantry would confront large concentrations of anti-OEF forces. The support of local militias was used widely. Starting in late 2002 and maturing in 2003, the coalition implemented the PRT concept, and by late 2004 emphasis had shifted from 'sweep and raid' operations to supporting the PRTs.\textsuperscript{217}

Anti-terrorism activities led to the support to local militias by the United States, who saw it as a military necessity because of the local knowledge militia groups had, and the absence of a strong national army. However, supporting and strengthening militia groups also ran counter


\textsuperscript{214} Global Security website, ‘Operation Enduring Freedom- Order of Battle.’


\textsuperscript{216} Global Security, ‘Operation Enduring Freedom- Order of Battle’.

\textsuperscript{217} Sean M. Maloney, 'Afghanistan Four Years On: An Assessment' Parameters, Autumn 2005, 25.
to the goal of creating a strong central government with a strong national army. Since 2003, the US has increasingly tried to avoid this practice, thereby minimizing the contradiction between the anti-terror aims of OEF and the Afghan government's goal of bringing all armed groups within the country under its influence. OEF currently concentrates its efforts primarily in the eastern region of Afghanistan, though support to ISAF throughout the country is also provided.

**Relief Activities** Updated March 30, 2009

**Section Contents:**

**Development** Updated February 3rd 2010

**SECTION CONTENTS:** Assistance Needs | The Afghanistan Compact | Afghan-le Development Mechanisms | Views on Progress

**Assistance Needs**

Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Its human development index stands far behind those of its regional neighbors. In fact, the state of human development in Afghanistan in 2007 has worsened over the last three years. Over the past two decades, war and natural disasters have led to the death, injury and displacement of millions of people and left the country's infrastructure in ruins. A significant part of the Afghan population remains dependent on aid, and large areas of the country are inaccessible to aid workers because of lack of security.

**Some key 2007 statistics:**

- GDP per capita has risen from $683 in 2002 (in PPP terms) to $964 in 2005 (41 % increase). Disaggregating this figure reveals a significant gender imbalance: $478 for women and $1428 for men.

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221 Ibid.
• Afghanistan has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world. It fell from 44.5 in 2003 to 43.1 in 2005.

• 6.6 million Afghans (20 % of the population) do not meet their minimum food requirements. 50 % of Afghan children under five are underweight.

• The gross enrolment ratio (primary, secondary and tertiary education levels combined) has risen to 59.3 % in 2005, up from 45 % for 2002. Schools enrolment has grown from around 900,000 to nearly 5.4 million in the last five years. However, over half of school age children remain out of school. The national average for attendance of children six to thirteen years of age is estimated at 37 %. Enrollment in urban areas is considerably higher than that in rural areas, and there is almost a 1:1 ratio of girls and boys attending primary school in urban areas.

• Provinces in the South and South-east continue to exhibit particularly low levels of enrollment for girls and boys. Zabul (1 %), Uruzgan (1%), Helmand (6%) and Paktika (9 %), in the South and South-east have the lowest levels of enrollment. Insecurity has become an increasingly formidable challenge to accessing education.

• Adult literacy fell from 28.7 % in 2003 to 23.5 % in 2005 (32.4 % for men and 12.6 % for women.

• Violence against women in Afghanistan is widely believed to have reached epidemic proportions. Yet, because the majority of cases remain unreported due to the severe restrictions women face in seeking justice or redress, limited evidence exists to confirm this perception. Between 60 and 80 % of marriages in the country are forced. Child marriages constitute about 40 % of all marriages.

• The probability at birth of not surviving to age 40 is .419 in Afghanistan. The rate of Afghans dying before their first birthday has fallen from 165 to 135 per 1,000 live births. This results in 40,000 more successful births each year. Yet as available data indicates, the mortality rate for children under five (257 per 1,000 live births) remains the world's third highest. In other words, a quarter of all children die before they reach the age of five.

• Afghanistan's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is estimated at 1600 per 100,000 live births. Kabul had an MMR of 400 per 100,000, and a remote rural district of Badakhshan 6,500 per 100,000 live births. This particular local rate is the highest ever recorded, even in a country with one of the highest MMRs in the world. This highlights that women in rural areas do not have access to any form of reproductive health care, as well as the urgent need to continue to expand and improve the provision of health care services for women in remote rural areas. Many of the deaths of women and children are largely preventable. Such deaths are a direct result of the young age of marriage, overall poor health, frequency of child birth as well as virtually no access to gynecological and obstetrical surveys.

• The population of Afghanistan is extremely dependent on environmental resources, particularly natural resources, for their livelihoods. Environmental degradation directly threatens the livelihoods of Afghans. Forest cover has been reduced by almost half since 1978. Access to safe drinking water varies considerably throughout the country. Only 31 % of households nationwide have access to safe drinking water.
• 5-7 million landmines and large quantities of unexploded ordnance remain and kill or wound up to 100 people monthly. In 2006, 132 million square kilometres of land (approximately the size of Nicaragua) were cleared.\textsuperscript{222}

• Most of Afghanistan's roads have been destroyed, and many of the most vulnerable communities live in inaccessible mountain regions, which are often cut off by heavy snow during the winter.

• About two million Afghans are still living abroad as refugees, most of them in Iran and Pakistan. Another 3.5 million have moved back to Afghanistan since 2001. Some were able to return to their communities and rebuild their lives, but about 40 per cent ended up in Kabul where they have no roots or family.

Afghanistan's economy comprises a legal sphere (pertaining to formal economic activities within the letter of the law), a grey sphere (so-called informal activity, outside of taxation or legal permission but widely tolerated) and a criminal sphere (strictly against the law, with a damaging and corrosive effect on society). Even though analysts often try to look at these spheres from different perspectives, it is impossible to distinguish strictly between these various categories. \textit{Research has shown} that the networks which support war cannot easily be separated out and criminalized in relation to the networks that characterize peace. The intermingling and overlapping of various "legal", "grey" and "criminal" flows – of arms, drugs, smuggled luxury goods along with wheat, water melons and labor migrants – is most apparent, though not always visible.

A striking feature of Afghanistan’s economic structure is the dominance of the informal sector – not only in agriculture and in the drug industry, but also in most other sectors. It is inherently difficult to \textit{estimate} the size of the informal economy; nevertheless, it is clear that some 80-90 percent of economic activity in Afghanistan occurs in the informal sector. The booming non-formal economy is \textit{highly regulated} by informal institutions and is definitely not "free." The appearance of economic dynamism hides the fact that informal social regulation actively restricts competition and participation. This lack of competition means that the distribution of the benefits of markets (and therefore of economic growth) is skewed towards those who are already wealthy and powerful.

For a detailed economic overview read the \textit{Afghanistan chapter} of the Asian Development Bank's flagship publication "Asian Development Outlook 2008".

\textbf{The Afghanistan Compact}

With the completion of the parliamentary elections in September 2005, the Bonn process that had guided reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan since the end of 2001 came to an end. However, the immense scope of needs (see above) meant that continued international support was required to continue the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan. As a framework for such support, the Afghan government and its international partners adopted the five-year \textit{"Afghanistan Compact"} for the period of 2006-2010.

The Afghanistan Compact addressed three focus areas: 1) security; 2) governance, rule of law and human rights; and 3) economic and social development. Counter-narcotics efforts were

considered as a cross-cutting priority. In the Compact, ISAF and OEF are expected to remain in Afghanistan and continue coordinated activities with the Afghan government and military through 2010 and the Afghan National Army is expected to reach a total of 70,000 soldiers by 2010. Police and counter-narcotics operations are also expected to expand. Moreover, the disarmament of "illegal armed groups," or militias that are not registered with the government, was targeted to be achieved by the end of 2007.223

The Afghanistan Compact encourages donors to channel aid through the Afghan government, and within the framework of the (Interim) Afghanistan National Development Strategy. More implementation of development through the national government would in theory allow it to create much needed capacity, and also create an aid structure that the government can manage within its budgetary and human capacity limits, as well as having the effect of boosting the government's legitimacy. Independent action by donor agencies can create structures that, when turned over to the Afghan government, are beyond the Afghan government's ability to manage.224

Through the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan government is given responsibility for setting its own aid priorities and for establishing reliable methods of accountability. Increasingly, Afghan partner organizations and the Afghan private sector are to be used when channeling aid without going through the central government.225 The Afghanistan Compact was endorsed by the Security Council in Resolution 1659 (15 February 2006), though the Afghanistan Compact is not a legally binding document but rather a strategic framework for development.226

A Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board was established to monitor progress on the Afghanistan Compact. For a critical perspective of the Afghanistan Compact, see the International Crisis Group Policy Briefing Asia 59 "Afghanistan's Endangered Compact." 29 January 2007. This brief raised such issues as setting deadlines for achievements that are unrealistic, not making the international community accountable for reporting on projects, not giving the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board sufficient organizational strength, and insufficient involvement of the National Assembly of the government (Wolesi Jirga) in monitoring the Afghanistan Compact.

In 2008 a report on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) explained that the Afghan Compact was designed to be implemented with overly ambitious due to the changing circumstances.227 These include the worsening security situation, the prevalence of the opium economy, a fragile licit economy, corruption and inadequate effectiveness and management of aid. To meet these challenges will look to further strengthen their policy formulation, implementation and monitoring capabilities. By strengthening the JCMB the body will be able to better formulate policy, problem solves and strategically coordinate between the Afghan government and the international community. The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS)

223 The Afghanistan Compact, p.6
227 Report on the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) International Conference in Support of Afghanistan (June12th 2008)
To provide more detailed guidelines for the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks, the Afghan government has prepared a five-year Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The national strategy, which covers the five-year period from 2008 to 2013 and was approved by President Hamid Karzai and his Cabinet on April 21, 2008, envisages a large increase in resources for the next five years, the vast majority in the form of donor assistance. It serves as Afghanistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and uses the pillars, principles and benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact as a foundation.

The ANDS builds on a number of strategy documents that were used to guide development efforts in recent years, including the the National Development Framework of 2002, the Securing Afghanistan's Future report of 2004 and the Interim ANDS (IANDS) of 2005. The IANDS had been initiated because previous strategy documents had involved only limited consultation. With the introduction of the IANDS, UNAMA and other UN agencies committed to develop their plans relative to the government's framework.

Experts have argued that there is an urgent need for stronger prioritization of programs in the ANDS. The number of policy measures and other actions is overwhelming and needs to be streamlined, for decision-making, implementation, and monitoring purposes. An additional concern, particularly for NGOs, has been that identified priorities are not clearly linked to poverty reduction.

In its review of the final draft of the ANDS, called the Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN), the World Bank concluded in June 2008 that the Afghan government’s limited ability to effectively spend the aid it receives poses a major constraint to tackling its important development challenges. The JSAN says that increases in actual spending on large infrastructure projects will take time and require thorough preparation. It suggests measures to enhance the government’s spending and institutional capacity, for example by further improving public financial management, procurement systems, and the budgetary process. It also says public administration reforms and better management and coordination of foreign technical assistance are urgent priorities. In November 2009 the International Monetary fund released its first report on the ANDS. The report was a positive assessment of the programs first year. Progress has been mixed, seeing moderate gains in the areas of monitoring and reporting of development results and major advances in change management process. Despite the growing insecurity progress had been made in the ownership and leadership of Afghanistan’s development program. It had done so by institutionalizing the mechanisms for sustaining intra-governmental coordination and change management process.

**Afghan-led Development Mechanisms**

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Recovery, reconstruction and development efforts were initially led by the UN and other donors. Now leadership in this field is increasingly being handed over to the Afghan government. Nevertheless the largest portion of foreign aid still is implemented outside the government's budget. The following are the key mechanisms for the Afghan government to channel and manage foreign development assistance.

**The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund**

The Afghan government's preference is for donors to directly support its operating budget, both to cover recurring costs in initial years but also to build government capacity and support priority reconstruction programs and projects. The [Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/AFP/B/0,,contentMDK:20152008~pagePK:141137~piPK:217854~theSitePK:305985,00.html) (ARTF) was established in May 2002 for this purpose. From the date of its commencement of operation to December 2007, the ARTF successfully mobilized $2.4 billion in grant contributions from 28 bilateral donors. It has become the primary instrument for financing the civilian operating budget.²³¹

The ARTF is administered by the World Bank.²³² It pools donor funds to the Afghan government into one mechanism, thus facilitating the management and oversight of donor funds.²² However, only a small portion of donor funds go through this mechanism, and donors continue to fund projects bilaterally.²³³ Among the top donors to the ARTF as of December 2007 were: Canada, the UK, the European Union, Germany, the United States, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden (see diagram below). The fund is also managed by the Islamic Development Bank, Asian Development Program and UN Development Program.

The London Conference on January 28th 2010 proved to be fruitful for the ARTF. The Afghan government and its donor agreed that the funds would be focused through a clear Afghan government strategy. The ATRF budget for its 2010-13 window has been set at $2.6 billion which is a 32 percent increase in what was available over the past three years.²³⁴

The new ARTF will focus on agriculture, infrastructure and the irrigation sector. It is the rural area, where 80 percent of the Afghan population live, that receives the most funds from the ARTF. Money is channelled directly through the Afghan government to finance the building of roads, schools and other infrastructure. In addition the ARTF also funds the National Rural Access Program (NRAP) and the National Solidarity Program (NSP). The ARTF also finances Afghanistan’s education program. The funds go towards school construction, upgrade and the 95000 management committees. Through the ARTF and EQUIP 6.3 million children are able to go to school, including 2.2 million girls. Two other trust funds operate in similar fashion, the

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²³⁴ Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund to Support the Afghan Government Development Agenda with anticipated US$2.6 billion over next 3 years World Bank Group (accessed January 29th 2009)
Law and Order Trust Fund (LOFTA) for expenditures related to police and security, and a Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund. Both funds are being administered by UNDP.

The diagram above shows total contributions to the ARTF in Fiscal Year 1386, which corresponds to the period of March 2007 to March 2008.

**National Solidarity Programme (NSP)**

One of the most successful programs supported through the ARTF (as well as a multitude of other funding sources) is the National Solidarity Program. The NSP was created by the Afghan government in June 2003 to develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects. Its goal is to lay the foundation for a sustainable form of inclusive local governance, rural reconstruction, and poverty alleviation.

Based on the idea of local ownership of development, it consists of four key program elements: facilitating the election of Community Development Councils (CDCs, composed of local community leaders), building the capacity of CDCs to prepare proposals for priority development projects, providing direct block grants for the implementation of locally proposed projects, and linking CDCs with government and NGO agencies and donors to improve access to services and resources. Once elected, the CDCs work to identify what their communities most need in terms of development projects. As of May 2008, NSP had completed almost 20,000 subprojects in a total of 351 districts throughout all 34 provinces of the country. The intended result is a more collaborative relationship between communities, central and provincial government, and local and international NGOs. $600 million was given by donors to the NSP through the ARTF.

The World Bank has claimed that the NSP has reached 78% of Afghanistan’s rural population, providing improvements in access to drinking water and sanitation, irrigation systems, schools, markets, and electrical power. Water supply, transport, irrigation, and power projects form the bulk of those proposed so far. While the percentages of people that now have access to these basic needs remains low, such as 11% with access to schools, it is nonetheless an

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improvement on previous levels. The NSP has been hailed as successful in generating development and contributing to stability by donor agencies and NGOs. In its Project Information document on the NSP, the World Bank identified one lesson-learned as being that it is possible to undertake development programs at the community level in the volatile socio-political environment of Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development has written a detailed description of the NSP methodology, available here.

Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA)

MISFA is one of the world's largest microfinance programs. It was established in 2003 as a private financial institution to facilitate coordination among donors to micro-finance programs, and to help meet the demand for small credit. MISFA's ambition is to help young microfinance institutions scale up rapidly, offering performance-based funding for operations and technical assistance. An important goal in this context was and is to use public funding to invest in institutions that would become sustainable and able to grow further without requiring more subsidies.

MISFA's role is to streamline and direct donor funding more effectively. As of March 2008 MISFA had disbursed over $420 million in loans to more than 428,000 clients, more than two thirds of them women. Canada is the largest single donor to the program, having contributed over $96 million to the program as of May 2008. In an October 2006 report, Mid-Term Review of the Micro-Finance Sector and MISFA in Afghanistan, MISFA was credited with highly successful performance in building a microfinance sector, and it was deemed a model for microfinance programs in other post-conflict countries.

According to its most recent review, as of November 30th 2009 the MISFA’s 16 implementing partners have served 438,508 savings and loans clients for a portfolio of $107.9 million. It has done so through a network of 307 branches in 27 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. Since its inception the MISFA has given out 1.5 million loans worth $713 million. The main aim of this is the Afgahization of the microfinance sector. Already microfinance institutions employ 4109 Afghans, 37 percent of them women. Over 90 of the professional positions and 50 percent of the management positions are occupied by Afghans. In an Initial Baseline/Impact Study conducted in 2007 by Dr. Martin Greeley and Mohit Chaturvedi highlighted that majority of the loans were used to create new businesses which created 1.5 new jobs each. 80 percent of female clients reported that their husbands and relatives displayed and improved attitude and over all clients were better off than non clients. Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (MAPA)

The Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (MAPA) is the world's largest mine action program. Today it is an umbrella organization composing a variety of partners working to clear unexploded ordinance. Afghanistan became a signatory to the Ottawa Convention to ban landmines on 1 March 2003. This commits Afghanistan to destroying all of its mine stockpiles by 2007.

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237 MISFA website (January 28th 2009)
238 UNAMA, ‘Special Representative of the Secretary General: Landmines have no place in a civilized country’, UNAMA, 4 April 2006.
Mines/unexploded ordinance and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) directly affect 4.2 million Afghans. More than 2,300 communities in 32 of the 34 Afghan provinces are contaminated by these weapons, killing or injuring 62 Afghans a month, according to a 2006 landmine-impact survey. Best estimates put the number of mine victims and survivors at over 100,000 since 1979. The Government of Afghanistan has established a Mine Action Consultative Group (MACG) and developed an annual "Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan Public Investment Programme."

The United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA), a project of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), currently has de facto responsibility for planning, management and oversight of all mine action activities in Afghanistan on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan. As such, the UNMACA coordinates the government's programme under the direction from the MACG. The UNMACA coordinates the work of some 8,400 Afghans who work for implementing partners under the rubric of the MAPA. Both UNICEF and UNDP play key roles in mine action efforts. As of January 2007 there are seven mine action centres: Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Gardez, and Jalalabad. These offices work in cooperation with 15 Afghan NGOs. The stated goal is to clear all known contaminated areas by 2013.

The 2010 clearance strategy is to reduce by 70 percent the land area contaminated by land mines and unexploded ordinances. By the end of 2010 all unsafe, surplus and ammunition will be destroyed. The MAPA has already completed one objective when, in 2007, it disposed of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines.

**Donor Response**

In March 2008, the NGO coalition ACBAR released a report analyzing the effectiveness of the international donor response in Afghanistan. According to the authors of the report, donors have provided some $25 billion of security-related assistance since 2002 (primarily for building Afghan security forces), yet only $15 billion has been provided for civil reconstruction and development. Funding for development is a fraction of that spent on military activities and operations. Since 2001 the US has appropriated $127 billion for the war in Afghanistan (including for security-related assistance). The US military currently spends nearly $36 billion a year in the country, some $100 million a day; yet the average volume of aid spending by all donors since 2001 is just $7 million per day.

This paucity of aid is reflected in comparative aid per capita figures. It has been estimated that in the first two years following the international intervention in 2001 Afghanistan received $57 per capita, whilst Bosnia and East Timor received $679 and $233 per capita respectively.

The US is by far the largest donor to Afghanistan, contributing one-third of all aid since 2002. Other major donors are: Japan, the UK, EC, WB, Germany and Canada. Given the relative size of their economies, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden also make substantial contributions. France and Spain, however, have made scant bilateral contributions since 2002 of just $80 and $26 million. France’s economy is three times that of The Netherlands’, yet its aid contribution is five times smaller.

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241 Mine Action Information Network
Donors are far quicker to make promises than to report on disbursements and shortfalls. As a whole, the $15 billion of aid to Afghanistan since 2002 is less than two-thirds of the $25 billion that donors had committed to provide over this period. Many donors have failed to fulfill their aid commitments (formal undertakings given to the Afghan government). As exceptions, Japan and Canada have each delivered over 90% of their respective aid commitments for 2002–2008.

These shortfalls are partly attributable to challenging operating conditions, high levels of corruption and weak absorption capacities, and the figures may not capture all donor spending. However, given the magnitude of the shortfalls, they also underscore the importance of donors increasing efforts to mitigate or adapt to such problems, to factor them in to program planning, and to improve the flow of information to the Afghan government.

A report by the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) in March 2008 highlighted that 40 percent of aid spent in Afghanistan went back to rich countries. This was done through corporate profits, consultant salaries and inflated costs. An example of inflated costs is the road built from the centre of Kabul to the international airport. This cost the US $2.3 million per kilometre which is four times the cost of building a road in Afghanistan.

The ACBAR, which is an alliance of international aid agencies working in Afghanistan, commented that reconstruction in Afghanistan required a sustained and substantial flow of aid. The primary goal was to build Afghan capacities and help Afghans help themselves. The report made the following recommendations:

- Increased volume of aid, particularly to rural areas.
- Transparency by donors and improved information flows to the Afghan government.
  1. Better measurement of the impact, efficiency and relevance of aid
  2. An independent commission on aid effectiveness to monitor donor performance.
  3. Effective coordination between donors and with the Afghan government.

The UN itself has spoken out against the lack of coordination and accountability. In July of 2009 the UN in Afghanistan criticized donors for not going through the Afghan government and for not declaring their spending. At a news conference, UN special advisor on development in Afghanistan, Mark Ward, revealed at two out of every three aid dollars is spent outside the Afghan government. This makes it difficult to verify if their projects are in line with the government’s over all development strategy. UNAMA regarded this act as shameful and applauded the Afghan government for public identifying donors who did not report their spending.

Top 10 Aid Donors to Afghanistan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Aid disbursed 2002–2008*</th>
<th>Rank among Donors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>$5.022 billion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chart shows amount committed in blue and amount disbursed in green. From the Afghan Donor Assistance Database Viewed April 2007.

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242 ACBAR (January 31st 2009)
243 Major Donors failing Afghanistan due to $10bn aid short fall Oxfam website (accessed January 30th 2010)
244 Jonathan Burch Donor spending practices shameful: UN Reuters (July 6th 2009)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aid Disbursed</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>$1.393 billion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>$1.266 billion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Comm.</td>
<td>$1.074 billion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>$0.852 billion</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>$0.767 billion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>$0.730 billion</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Dev. Bank</td>
<td>$0.547 billion</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>$0.424 billion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>$0.407 billion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from ACBAR's report "Falling Short, Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan." The table is based on Afghan Ministry of Finance data, provided February 2008.

**10th - 20th largest donors**
- Norway
- Sweden
- Iran
- ECHO
- India
- Australia
- UN Agencies
- Denmark
- Russian Fed.
- Aga Khan

**Total aid disbursed ranges from $277 million to $119 million each.

United States

The US remains the lead donor by far in Afghanistan and has enormous influence.\(^{245}\) From 2001-2011 the US has pledged more than $12.3 billion in development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. From 2002-2008, $5.0 billion were disbursed, while another $5.3 billion were committed but not disbursed.\(^{246}\) USAID, the US government's development agency, is the largest bilateral development aid donor in Afghanistan. The agency's FY 2007 - FY 2008 budget request for Afghanistan is $2.6 billion, with the largest amounts going to roads ($763 million), power ($398 million), and alternative livelihoods ($350 million).\(^{247}\)

\(^{245}\) [Friborg, Afghanistan: Lessons Learned From A Post-War Situation, p. 13](#)
\(^{247}\) [USAID, ‘Budget and Operations’, USAID Afghanistan, USAID](#).
2004, the $1.2 billion spent by USAID was more than all other donors combined. The simple fact of amount spent and resources available, and that the US considers itself to be the nation with the most at stake in Afghanistan's development, gives USAID "the most influence with the Afghan government and with other donors." For example, India has devoted most of its resources to the power sector, and Japan is devoting resources to the Kabul-Kandahar highway at USAID's "insistence."

The special relationship between Afghanistan and the U.S. was clarified in a "joint declaration of strategic partnership," on 23 May 2005. This agreement entails regular high-level exchanges in the political, economic, and security fields. Several key objectives include supporting good governance, the rule of law and human rights, building a strong Afghan government, encouraging the advancement of freedom and democracy in the wider region, reducing regional tensions and restoring Afghanistan's role as a trade bridge, and facilitating the involvement of US businesses that speed the development of Afghan firms and the private sector. The agreement also calls for helping to organize Afghan security forces, continued anti-terrorism activities, strengthening Afghanistan's ties with NATO, the continued stationing of American forces in Afghanistan, and possibly assisting Afghanistan in the case of an external threat.

**World Bank**

The World Bank is the fifth largest donor to Afghanistan in terms of aid disbursed from 2002-2008. In 2007 the Afghan Donor Assistance Database ranked the World Bank as the second largest donor in terms of total grants and credits to the country (US$1.4 billion). Since April 2002, the World Bank has committed over $1.65 billion for 37 development and emergency reconstruction projects and three budget support operations in Afghanistan. This support comprises $1 billion in grants and $436.4 million in interest-free credits. It has an action plan called the Interim Strategy Note (ISN) for Afghanistan, which is aligned with the Afghan government's Interim ANDS (see below). World Bank support under the ISN has shifted slightly from previous the previous Transitional Support Strategy to focus more on the rural economy. Overall, the World Bank strategy focuses on building the capacity and accountability of the state to ensure the provision of affordable, accessible, and adequate services; improving rural livelihoods and promoting the rural economy; supporting the growth of a formal, modern, and competitive private sector.

The World Bank is the largest international donor to the Afghan government's National Solidarity Programme, the flagship program supporting small-scale reconstruction and development projects. As of May 2008, about $482 million had been distributed through this program by the World Bank. The program received 60% of that amount through World Bank financing, 35% through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and 5% through the Japan Social Development Fund. The World Bank also administers the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

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249 Ibid.
252 World Bank, World Bank Afghanistan
The World Bank website on Afghanistan has extensive documents, statistics, data, and other reports concerning World Bank programs, the National Solidarity Programme, and economic indicators in Afghanistan. Some sample documents include a July 2007 report on "Service Delivery and Governance at the Sub-National Level", Project Information for the NSP, and analysis on Afghanistan's Opium Economy.

**Asian Development Bank**

As of December 2007, Afghanistan has received cumulative loans of $892 million since joining the ADB at its founding in 1966. As a result of conflict, ADB's operations in Afghanistan were suspended from 1992 to 2002. Currently, ADB focuses on the road transport, energy, agriculture, and natural resource management sectors. It also manages the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund along with the Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, and the World Bank. A new Country Partnership Strategy will be approved in 2008. The CPS is fully congruent with the ANDS. Overall, this new strategy will be a continuation of the ADB's partnership with the Afghan government in recent years.

More detailed information and extensive publications on ADB activities are available on the ADB website at: [http://www.adb.org/Afghanistan/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/Afghanistan/default.asp)

**European Union**

The European Union has been involved in Afghanistan since 2001. In November 2005, the EU and Afghanistan adopted a Joint Declaration setting out a new partnership. The declaration outlines increased cooperation across a range of areas including support to security sector reform and justice sector reform (for more information on security sector reform, visit the "Coordination Arrangements" page of this website). The European Commission's current Country Strategy Paper for Afghanistan (2007-2013) aims to strike a balance between the continuation of existing, successful programs and new priorities. There are three focal sectors: rural development, governance, and health.

The EU and its member states collectively accounted for over 30% of the funds pledged at the Tokyo Conference in 2002 and the Berlin Conference in 2004. According to its own website, the European Commission states that its reconstruction program is "on track": the pledge to provide €1 billion in reconstruction funding over the 2002-2006 period was exceeded ahead of time in November 2007.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) has been active in Afghanistan since 1992. Since 2001 it has delivered €261 million in humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations in Afghanistan. ECHO's current work in Afghanistan is guided by its Global Plan for Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan 2007.

**Views on Progress**

Among the recommendations advocated by Afghan and international NGOs for improved aid effectiveness in Afghanistan are the following points:

Whole-of-country approach

Development programs should target poor and vulnerable populations throughout the country
in order to reduce pockets of exclusion. Aid should be delivered in an equitable and fair manner among various ethnic groups and geographic regions, based on needs and community priorities rather than political and military objectives. Donor aid to Afghanistan should be coordinated with overall security and diplomacy approaches, but the ultimate aim of this aid must remain the reduction of poverty, economic regeneration, and good governance. Particular caution is required when providing aid to communities in insecure areas. Decades of experience in conflict zones clearly demonstrates that aid delivered in ways that are not sensitive to the conflict dynamics can actually amplify the conflict and put innocent civilians at further risk.

**Poverty reduction**

Unless the 54% of the population living below the poverty line in Afghanistan can access their basic human rights, the country's overall economic, social, and political stability will not improve significantly. The international community should work with the Government of Afghanistan to devise a realistic implementation strategy for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) with heavy attention to pro-poor approaches. All actors must keep in mind that pro-poor growth is not reflected in absolute (monetary) growth but in increased social justice. Practically, such a strategy would begin by addressing immediate needs and then proceed to ensure adequate social protection for the poor, for instance through "pro-poor" budgeting.

**Local needs and priorities**

The design of projects and programs should respect local needs and preferences. Accordingly, continued support should be given to the preparation and execution of clearly structured and feasible provincial development plans. Programs to build the capacity of CDCs should be supported, as they require further mentoring to continue their positive role in community-based development. They should be seen as the primary partners for government and NGOs to engage in development at the community level, but they require additional training and knowledge to perform this role well.

**Presence outside Kabul**

In order to enhance responsiveness and transparency, Afghan authorities and UN agencies must significantly increase their presence outside Kabul. The center of gravity for planning, governance, and implementation needs to shift to the provincial and local levels. Increased technical expertise is needed in the provinces to build the capacity of authorities. In this process, efforts should be made to harness the skills of Afghans, both local as well as Afghan professionals in exile.

**Performance of the Afghan government**

All line ministries of the Afghan Government need to be supported through capacity building so they are able to integrate conclusions set out in the ANDS into the way they design policies, reform their structures, and prepare and implement their public investment programs. Currently, donors have favored some line ministries over others due to personalities or high-profile mandates, and this has left crucial ministries such as those of Agriculture, Labour & Social Affairs as well as Higher Education significantly weaker and under-resourced.

**Coordination**
The quality of coordination among donors and between donors and the Afghan Government must be enhanced. This will require the provision of additional resources to both the JCMB and UNAMA. The JCMB requires a much larger secretariat based in Afghanistan to perform its role properly, and UNAMA at a very minimum must receive the funding required to fully staff its structures.

Humanitarian assistance

A substantial increase in funding – as well as technical support – for humanitarian assistance and coordination is also required. One possibility could involve establishing an independent OCHA office in Afghanistan. At a very minimum, UNAMA’s humanitarian affairs division should be significantly enlarged and sufficiently resourced, and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)’s capacity strengthened significantly. Afghan and international civil society organizations should receive support to be able to participate effectively in the humanitarian cluster system. Donors should allocate more funding and support to disaster preparedness and mitigation programming.

Civil Society Role Updated March 30, 2009

Overview Of Non-Governmental Programs

Non-governmental organizations, both international and indigenous, are major actors in providing relief, reconstruction, development and peacebuilding assistance in Afghanistan. Some have been assisting Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries for decades, while many more have begun programmes since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001.

Relationships between NGOs and the "Peace Operation"

The numerous NGOs working in the field are not components of the Peace Operation, which in Afghanistan refers to the 3 main international missions - the Coalition Forces, ISAF, and UNAMA. NGOs routinely coordinate their activities with other international and national actors in the field in order to share information about programs, to avoid duplication and waste, and to pool security information to best protect the safety of aid workers and beneficiaries. However, NGOs are independent and operate in accordance with guidelines set by their own organizations, and the extent of cooperation with other organizations can vary. Some insist on their political neutrality and operational independence and actively resist ‘being coordinated’ by either their home governments or international organizations.

NGO Work in Afghanistan
A wide range of NGOs currently provide assistance in Afghanistan. Some are non-denominational while others are faith based. The majority of NGOs are Afghan, but the largest programs are implemented by established international relief and development NGOs. The main sectors of NGO programming are health care, emergency relief, school reconstruction and educational programming, community development, capacity building programs, and agricultural development efforts. Some NGOs are active in governance programs, mine action, peacebuilding, and elements of security sector reform as well.

The number of NGOs in Afghanistan is currently unclear. With the enactment of a new Law on Non-Governmental Organizations, the Afghan government has undertaken a re-registration of NGOs. Of the estimated 2,400 national and international NGOs as of May 2005, 700 are now in the process of reregistering with the Ministry of the Economy. The re-registration has been undertaken by the Afghan government to better discriminate between legitimate NGOs and private sector contractors for internationally funded projects. The government's previous weak NGO legislation had in fact defined NGOs as part of the private sector, and NGOs have argued that since many private companies call themselves NGOs, popular anger with the slow pace of reconstruction has unfairly blamed the NGO sector.

A sample of the variety of international and national NGOs currently working in Afghanistan best illustrates the nature of NGO activities.


ActionAid has worked in Afghanistan since 2002. Its current work focuses on education, governance, food rights, HIV and Aids, peacebuilding and women's rights. Its strategies revolve around grass roots community mobilization and local capacity building, research and with networking and international advocacy. ActionAid participates in the National Solidarity Programme and the National Emergency Employment Programme.


Established in 1983 in the U.K, Afghanaid currently works in 4 provinces of Afghanistan with over 500,000 adults and children. It employs 450 mostly Afghan staff, and its work focuses on sustainable rural development strategies, including community development, vocation training, mother and child health projects, microfinance, infrastructure rehabilitation.


Established in 1990, ADA is an Afghan-managed NGO implementing reconstruction and development programmes in Afghanistan, focusing on agriculture, construction, and education and training programs. It currently works in 52 districts inside Afghanistan, and ADA employs about 450 Afghans.


ARO is a purely volunteer organization based in the U.S. that has worked in Afghanistan since 1998. It delivers relief (food, medicine, hygiene supplies, school supplies and winter blankets and clothing) directly to the needy. It also offers general education programs designed to

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encourage self sufficiency at the ARO Technology Education Center (TEC) in Kabul, where it employs Afghan staff.

A national NGO established in 1934, the Afghan Red Crescent is fully financially dependent on International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the ICRC for core structure and activities. It has active branches in 31 out of the 32 provinces of Afghanistan, 1200 staff members and 10,000 volunteers throughout the country, supported by approximately 20 international delegates from the IFRC. Its programs focus on disaster response preparedness and basic and mother-child health care.

Active in Afghanistan since 1995 providing emergency relief, AKDN's programs now encompass large scale rural development, health, education and civil society programmes, the provision of a range of microfinance services, the safeguarding of historic landscapes and neighbourhoods in Kabul and Heart, a mobile phone network, and the renovation of a 5 star hotel in Kabul.

Care International http://www.care.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/index.asp
Care has worked in Afghanistan since 1961. It has 900 staff members (99% of them Afghan), and works in the central, southern and south-eastern regions with focus on education, water and sanitation, food to war widows, income generation and skills training for vulnerable groups and demobilized soldiers.

Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) http://www.dacaar.org/dacaar.asp?id=118
Since 1984, DACAAR has worked towards sustainable livelihoods for rural Afghans, including support to refugees and returnees, with a focus on rural development initiatives and water and sanitation projects. Its work covers 25 out of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan. It employs 950 Afghans and 20-25 foreign development workers and consultants.

International Rescue Committee (IRC) http://www.theirc.org/where/the_irc_in_afghanistan.html
The IRC has worked since 1980 aiding Afghans, and currently supports major programs in protection, reintegration of returnees and emergency infrastructure support (shelter/water and sanitation), vocational training, education, child protection, health, security, capacity building and community development.

Islamic Relief Worldwide http://www.islamic-relief.com/
Islamic Relief (IR) has worked in Afghanistan since 1992, responding to natural disasters, emergencies, and running development projects such as water, sanitation, and micro-credit schemes. Current activities include work in: Food security, including partnership projects with UN WFP; Drought Alleviation; Health; Education; Water & Sanitation; Sustainable Livelihoods; and building basic community infrastructure such as a health clinic outside Kabul to serve 40,000 people, and income generation projects such as the Kandahar women's bakery and programs for street children in Kabul.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) http://www.icrc.org/eng/afghanistan
ICRC has been present in Afghanistan since 1986 and employs 1200 staff, including 61 expatriates. Its priority is to protect the welfare of detainees, but ICRC also runs assistance
programmes focussing on health care, water and sanitation, support to mine victims, and teaching international humanitarian law for Afghan security forces.

**NGO Coordination and Networks**

NGOs with common interests and areas of operation in Afghanistan have made serious efforts to coordinate amongst themselves, to maximize their efficiency and resources, to better ensure the security of their staff and partners, to advocate on humanitarian and development issues with the government and international agencies. Such coordination has been undertaken by several NGO networks:

The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) [http://www.acbar.org](http://www.acbar.org)
ACBAR is the most active Afghanistan-based coordinating agency, with 95 international and national NGO members. It is funded by the European Commission and European development agencies and provides an array of services. It compiles an NGO directory, with basic information on 298 Afghan and 182 International NGOs. [http://www.acbar.org/directory](http://www.acbar.org/directory) It runs an NGO Security Office which liaises with the military and government and provides regular updates to the NGO community. It also provides briefings, networking and advocacy on key issues with the government and the international community.

In addition, ACBAR runs a civil society forum ([CS-ANDS](http://www.acbar.org/directory)) to provide input to the Afghan government's development strategy. Member NGOs are unified on major issues like security, NGO image, and laws and regulations and ACBAR is working on a communications strategy to address the growing animosity towards NGOs in the country. ACBAR has four offices: Kabul, Jalalabad, Heart, and Mazar-i-Sharif.

Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB) [http://www.pcpafg.org/Organizations/ANCB/](http://www.pcpafg.org/Organizations/ANCB/)
ANCB is a coordination body for Afghan NGOs in existence since 1991. It currently lists 104 member NGOs and provides a range of coordination and capacity building services and trainings to Afghan NGOs.

British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) [http://www.baaq.org.uk/](http://www.baaq.org.uk/)
BAAG has been operating since 1987 as an umbrella group to draw public attention to the humanitarian needs of the population of Afghanistan and of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan. Its members comprise 27 major U.K. and Irish aid agencies operating in or supporting projects in Afghanistan. BAAG provides regular information on the political, economic and security situation in Afghanistan and is an effective network for international NGOs operating in Afghanistan.

**NGO Code of Conduct**

In May 2005, 90 national and international NGOs launched a [Code of Conduct for NGOs engaged in Humanitarian and Reconstruction Activities in Afghanistan](http://www.acbar.org/directory) to regulate their activities, following high profile accusations that NGOs had misused international funds given for Afghan reconstruction. The 21-article code sets high standards to ensure greater transparency and accountability, as well as to improve the quality of services provided by NGOs. At the launch, UN Secretary General’s Special Representative issued a [statement](http://www.acbar.org/directory) calling the Code of Conduct a better framework for reconstruction in which the respective roles of NGOs, the government and the private sector are clearly defined, monitored and regulated.

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255 Email communication with M.H. Mayar, Deputy Director ACBAR, 11 April 2006.
Major Issues for NGOs in Afghanistan

NGO Insecurity

Afghanistan has become the most dangerous country in the world for aid agencies. The Global Civil Society yearbook shows that "terrorist incidents" targeting NGOs have gone up 1300% from the early 1990s to 2005.\(^\text{256}\)

While the average number of violent deaths among aid workers was 2.6 annually from the period 1997 to September 2001, in 2003 there were 12 fatalities, doubling to 24 fatalities in 2004, and jumping again to 31 killed in 2005 - the majority of victims Afghan national staff.\(^\text{257}\) Fatalities for 2006 are likely to rise higher still. In April 2006, five medical staff of the NGO, Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (RRAA) were killed. In May 2006 alone, there were 10 killings across the country - 2 UNICEF staff and 4 ActionAid staff were shot in their vehicles in separate incidents, and 4 healthworkers from the group Afghan Health Development Services were killed when their vehicle was hit by a remote controlled explosive device.

Attacks on aid workers have also become more geographically widespread. While killings used to be focused in the south and southeast, where the Taliban remnants remain strongest, since 2004 attacks happen equally in the north and west as well.\(^\text{259}\)

The targeting of aid agencies has led to a situation where some NGOs cease operations altogether, while others must curtail programs. The cost, beyond the tragic loss of lives of aid workers, is major disruptions in assistance and implementation of urgently needed projects that affect millions of Afghans, which could fuel civil unrest as popular anger mounts at the lack of visible reconstruction results and regional disparities in aid.

In a survey of 52 NGOs across Afghanistan conducted jointly by ANSO and CARE in 2005, fully 30% reported an attack on a staff member in the last year, and almost half (44%) reported that the security situation had led them to curtail or modify planned projects, with 35 % reported that the deteriorating security had led to them operating in fewer districts.\(^\text{260}\)

NGO-Military Tensions

Many aid groups believe that the main reason for the deliberate targeting of aid workers is a dangerous "blurring of the lines" between aid workers and foreign military forces, given the

\(^{256}\) Marlies Glacius, Mary Kaldor and Helmut Anheier, Global Civil-Society 2005/2006: Record 19, Attitudes towards NGOs, Terrorist Incidents Targeting NGOs Centre for the Study of Global Governance, 2005, 432.

\(^{257}\) ANSO and CARE, NGO Insecurity in Afghanistan, May 2005, p. 3-4.

\(^{258}\) Ibid, p.2.

\(^{259}\) Ibid.

\(^{260}\) Ibid, p.6.
heavy involvement of the military in humanitarian and relief work through "hearts and minds" projects and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams model.

They point to the fact that the US military has openly said it can 'use' humanitarian actors as 'force extenders' for its own ends, 261 and that spokespersons for the Coalition have said repeatedly that the military and NGOs 'share the same goals'. They point to numerous incidents where Coalition soldiers engaged in reconstruction activities have operated in plainclothes and drive in the same unmarked vehicles that NGOs use.

In the most high profile NGO pull-out, Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF) ceased all operations in Afghanistan after 24 years of providing health care to Afghans, when five of its staff were shot and killed in June 2004. In explaining its decision, MSF cited the targeted killing of its staff, the government's failure to arrest the local commanders who were the suspected perpetrators, and the assertion made by Taliban representatives after the killings that organizations like MSF work for US interests and were therefore targets for future attacks. MSF had publicly and repeatedly denounced the consistent efforts by the US-led coalition to use humanitarian aid to build support for its military and political aims. Furthermore, in May 2004, MSF publicly condemned the coalition's decision to distribute leaflets in southern Afghanistan that conditioned the continued delivery of aid on local people's willingness to provide information about the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. (for more see http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/countries/asia/afghanistan/index.cfm).

Many NGOs worry that such military tactics have compromised public perceptions of humanitarian assistance as politically neutral. Some NGOs believe that neutrality is critical to ensure the security of aid workers and their access to needy populations on all sides of a conflict. In Afghanistan, many NGOs fear such military tactics lead the population to see NGOs as part of the foreign military presence. One researcher found that U.S. military personnel interviewed held similar views - they believed that Afghans see no separation between the military and foreign NGOs. 262

Not all NGOs share this view however, and in a 2005 survey of 52 NGOs, only a small number pointed to such 'blurring of the lines', while more saw deteriorating security as a result of increased criminal activity, resistance to poppy eradication efforts, increased activity by armed groups during the elections, and a worsening public perception of NGOs. 263 In a May 2006 Report on military-NGO relations, Dutch NGO Cordaid stated that "Attacks on Aid Agencies are, however, primarily a result of the general context, rather than of the blurring of lines between aid workers and the military." 264

**NGO Concerns with Provincial Reconstruction Teams**

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model of combined military and civilian teams for reconstruction is a focal point for such NGO concerns. Because the politically motivated PRTs undertake many of the same reconstruction activities as NGOs, NGO programs in the same

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263 ANSO and CARE, p.5.
areas can potentially be perceived as political. In a recent example, local partners of the International NGO CARE in one region were reportedly "...approached by the Taliban and told that as long as they continued to operate in the same way, they would not be targeted. But if they accepted funding from the military-led "provincial reconstruction team" (PRTs) their security might be threatened."

Reflecting the diversity of the NGOs active in Afghanistan, NGO views on PRTs run the spectrum from blanket refusal to engage with the military to what some see as "principled pragmatism" on the other - that is that NGOs should engage with the PRTs in order to minimize negative impacts on their work.

NGO concerns about the PRT model are frequently voiced as the need to protect humanitarian space, that is, the principle that civilians in war should receive humanitarian assistance as a right, not only when it helps further political goals as a tool of a larger stabilization strategy. In Afghanistan, foreign militaries provide relief and reconstruction assistance to civilians largely for instrumental reasons - force protection, enabling intelligence gathering, and helping ease acceptance of foreign military forces.

Frequently policy makers and the military have dismissed such NGO concerns as motivated by 'turf wars', but the position of NGO networks such as ACBAR and independent NGO advocacy has been highly consistent. Some NGO concerns have been partially addressed and PRTs now exist in a variety of working models. So far the American model of the PRT has focused a lot on joint military civilian actions (MCAs) and personnel have, in the past, operated out of uniform in unmarked vehicles. The UK PRTs, established in 2003 in the northern cities of Mazār-e-Shārif and Mēymaneh, unlike their American counterparts, split their civil and military tasks, with the military focusing on demobilization, police-training and other security sector projects, and the civilian elements of the PRT focusing on reconstruction. The PRT model fielded by the UK was the result of a series of consultations between the British government and U.K. NGOs- and it has received praise from NGO personnel. UNAMA, with some NGO support, lobbied for the British model to be universal for all PRTs in 2003, and was partially successful in securing a shift toward focusing on security sector reform in ISAF-led PRTs. The U.S.-led PRTS, now under ISAF command, as well as other ISAF PRTs, have continued to implement military-civilian quick impact projects as a key part of the counter-insurgency strategy.

**NGO Civil-Military Working Group**

In 2004, a Civil Military working group was established by UNAMA with the purpose of resolving operational issues and to provide a channel for NGO concerns and perspectives to the military, the Afghan government and foreign donors. UNAMA has been the main coordination point between the PRTs and NGOs, while another point of contact has been through the NGO network ACBAR, or more specifically the Afghan NGO Security Office.

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268 Hugh and Gostelow, p.28.
269 Stapleton, p.2.
270 Ibid, p.3.
(ANSO). In addition, some NGOs have contacts directly with PRTs in their areas. While PRTs at the local and national level feel they have good contacts with NGOs, this is not always the view of the NGOs. There is a sense of unease about working with the PRTs, especially among Afghans who worry about being seen as cooperating with what some see as a foreign occupation force.271

NGOs have also raised other concerns - that the PRTs do not have the capacity or terms of operation to provide real security for the population, that aid projects undertaken by the military have shown to be neither cost-effective, nor sustainable, yet can displace other aid efforts, and that scarce government development funding is channelled to the military for these purposes. For example, in Afghanistan's Badghis province, one of CARE's local partners had started up a micro-loan business with interest rates of around 10 percent, as part of a long-term community project. The PRT came in and set up a short-term loans project with no fee, which brought people flocking to what CARE sees as a less sustainable option.272

For more on NGO positions on PRTs, see ACBAR presentation:  

**Negative Views of NGOs**

NGOs have become targets of public anger at the overall slow pace of the reconstruction effort so far, in the face of raised expectations by the Afghan population. Afghans believe little has been done to date, despite the billions of dollars of international funds pledged. Afghan government figures have publicly accused aid agencies of hindering the growth of local firms and squandering billions of US dollars earmarked for reconstruction efforts. Asraf Ghani, Afghan Finance Minister from 2002-2004, has been highly critical of the funds devoted to aid organizations in Afghanistan. Mr. Ghani claimed that the Afghan government, if given the funds, could provide similar services for a fraction of the cost and that capable Afghans were being lured away from government positions by lucrative salaries offered by foreign aid agencies.273

NGOs in Afghanistan are concerned about these negative perceptions and the NGO network ACBAR has adopted a communications strategy to counter these charges. As well, the 2005 NGO Code of Conduct, mentioned above, was a direct product of efforts by leading NGOs to respond to these attitudes. But public anger at NGOs has seen the offices of NGOs attacked, and many fear it is partly behind the rise in targeted attacks against aid workers.

NGOs responded in 2004 with ACBAR asserting that NGOs are not the reason for the current wage inflation, and demonstrating that NGOs were losing staff at increasing rates, with UN and donors offering higher salaries. Aid workers say the government is confusing them with highly paid private contractors and profitable organisations, many of which are registered as NGOs with the Ministry of Economy. Prior to the new NGO law and re-registration, most of the 2400 NGOs registered with the Afghan government were in fact contractors. In enacting the new law, the Government agreed there is a need to differentiate between NGOs and the

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271 Powell, p.4.  
private sector and through the re-registration process, many of these "fake" NGOs are expected to be weeded out.²⁷⁴

Furthermore, in trying to untangle responsibility for the poor results to date, ACBAR pointed to a report from the Afghan Ministry of Finance showing that out of US $13.4 billion pledged between 2002 and 2004, only $3.9 billion had been physically disbursed to the country by mid-2005. The same report indicates that only 9% of donor funding was given directly to NGOs, with 45.5% going directly to the United Nations, nearly 30% to the government, and 16% to private contractors. ACBAR is trying to find out from the government and UN how much funding they have given to NGOs to implement their projects."²⁷⁵

Other Resources on NGOs in Afghanistan


Afghanistan: Peacebuilding in a Regional Perspective - NGOs [http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/?id=110&NGOs](http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/?id=110&NGOs)

Afghan Reconstruction Page, Development Gateway. [http://topics.developmentgateway.org/afghanistan](http://topics.developmentgateway.org/afghanistan) (online community of aid professionals in Afghanistan).


²⁷⁵ IRINNews, 'AFGHANISTAN: New code of conduct to regulate NGOs’
Backgrounder on NGOs

What are NGOs and CSOs?

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), are independent citizen's organizations established on a non-profit basis to work on social issues. They exist in almost every country in the world and mostly address domestic issues, though some percentage are internationally oriented and work on issues of humanitarian assistance, development and peacebuilding outside of their home countries. Those groups that work across national borders are known as international NGOs. NGOs work in a variety of ways: through advocacy campaigns that aim to influence policy, such as the international campaign to ban land mines (ICBL) or the campaign for the International Criminal Court, through an advocacy role at the United Nations and other international institutions, and through direct work in areas of conflict "in the field" providing humanitarian relief and development assistance, and also supporting peace and reconciliation efforts, in countries around the world.

Some of the biggest and most well known in the relief and development field are the International Committee of the Red Cross, Medicines Sans Frontieres, CARE International, Oxfam, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee, World Vision, and Catholic Relief Services.

According to the NGO project of the Global Policy Forum, international NGOs who work in the field face many challenges:

- governments or rebel groups deny them access to those in need
- corrupt officials or warlords demand payoffs
- local violence threatens the safety and even the lives of field personnel
- government, corporate and private donors can subject NGOs to political pressure, diminishing their neutrality.
- Military forces increasingly distribute humanitarian assistance to civilians in countries they occupy, blurring the traditional military/humanitarian distinction and making civilian humanitarian workers targets for resistance fighters.
- the new doctrine of "humanitarian intervention" (which provides a humanitarian rationale for armed conflict), further erodes humanitarian neutrality and blurs the longtime distinction between humanitarian action and the anti-humanitarian nature of warfare and organized violence

NGO Funding

NGOs rely on funding from individual donors, foundations, corporations and governments. As NGOs have proved their effectiveness in delivering programs in the field in the 1990s, they

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276 Global Policy Forum, ‘NGOs in the Field’, NGOs
have increasingly received funding from governments of major donor countries, usually through the state development agencies, or from United Nations agencies. Presently, governments of the world’s wealthiest countries provide a large percentage of the funding for major international NGOs. Some critics charge that receiving funds from governments that have political agendas in a given country, or corporations or foundations with vested interests compromises the independence and neutrality of NGO work. Many NGOs respond that even when their programs rely on government funds, they are not simply arms of these donors, but negotiate programs that are consistent with their own values and operating principles.

Gender/Peace Issues Updated February 3rd 2010

SECTION CONTENTS: Gender Equality and Peace Operations in Afghanistan | B The Bonn Agreement | The Afghanistan Compact | ISAF | UNAMA | Continuing Cr Canada’s role in Afghanistan's Peace Operations

Gender Equality and Peace Operations in Afghanistan

Some key statistics:

There are an estimated 2 million war widows from the civil war, 50,000 of which reside in Kabul alone. There are even more female headed households.

Only 34% of school-age girls are in school. This is a high estimate since the rate in rural areas outside Kabul City can be lower than 15%.

Female illiteracy rate: 85.9%; male illiteracy rate: 58.6.

57% of girls are married before age 16

Maternal mortality rate: 1,600 per 100,000 live births (Norway, the top country on the HDI, has a maternal mortality rate of 6)

200 women accounted for 13 per cent of the delegates who participated in the June 2004 presidential elections

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278 UNAMA, ‘Gender Issues’, UNAMA.
280 UNAMA, ‘Gender Issues’, UNAMA.
10.5 million Afghans registered to vote for the presidential 2003 elections, four million, or 41.3%, were women.\(^{282}\)

**Background**

Afghanistan’s first Human Development Report in 2004 revealed a Human Development Rank of 173 of 178 ranked countries in terms of life expectancy and standard of living for the overall population. The same report reveals a Gender Development Index (GDI) of 143 of 145 ranked countries. The GDI measures and reflects disparity between men and women in terms of standards of living, educational achievements, and life expectancy indicators.

In 2003, Afghanistan ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is often described as an international bill of rights for women. However, the Afghan Government has not yet submitted its initial report, due in April 2004, nor has it formulated a national mechanism to ensure effective protection or signed the Optional Protocol to the convention. The Loya Jirga which adopted the country’s first post-Taliban constitution on 4 January 2004 recognizes equal rights and responsibilities before the law between men and women and guarantees at least 25 per cent of seats in the lower house of parliament (Wolesi Jirga) are to be held by women (article 83). The constitution also clearly states that no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of Islam. The laws of Islam in Afghanistan, however, are open to interpretation by the judiciary thereby weakening the constitution. These advances in legal, civil and constitutional rights for women are challenged and undermined by continuing high levels of violence against women in the forms of physical violence, intimidation and discrimination in the domain of civil and political rights, and the continuing low socio-economic status of girls and women in Afghan society.

The Afghan government, in the Interim Afghan National Development Strategy, identified several serious continuing challenges to the mainstreaming of gender issues: cultural, social and religious sensitivities, obstacles to education for girls and women, consequent limited participation in the economy, lack of equal protection before the law, and lack of women in leadership, supervisory, managerial, policy and decision-making roles.\[^{IANDS Summary Report http://www.ands.gov.af/ands/I-ANDS/summary-report.asp}\]

Over five years after the fall of the Taliban regime widely recognized for perpetuating violence and discrimination against girls and women - overall programming on part of the international community to advance gender equality and the rights of girls and women remains a challenge. Insecurity and poverty dominate the lives of women hindering equal access to basic needs such as clean water, health services, education, livelihood opportunities, and access to justice and legal systems.

**Interim Afghan National Development Strategy (IANDS) of the Afghanistan Government and Gender**

The IANDS includes gender as a cross-cutting theme, designed to be considered in the implementation of the three development pillars of the IANDS: security, governance, rule of law and human rights, and economic and social development. The government has developed a 10-year National Plan of Action for Women to encourage the mainstreaming of gender in its...\(^{282}\) Ibid.
programs and ministries. Each ministry is to create a unit to monitor its implementation. Other initiatives will include capacity building of government agencies to engage in gender analysis and drafting gender-sensitive policies, undertake a national advocacy campaign to broaden the understanding of the citizenry, improve women's access to health services and education, promote targeted social protection for vulnerable women, encourage women's economic empowerment, and improve women’s access to political participation.

**International Commitments to Gender Equality in Afghanistan**

**The Bonn Agreement**

The body of the Bonn Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions includes three references to gender: 1) one reference to interim arrangement being *inter alia* gender-sensitive and 2) two references to women's participation in Interim Administration and the Emergency Loya Jirga. Reference to establishing an independent Human Rights Commission does not include specific mention of the rights of girls or women. The Annex on Establishment of an International Security Assistance Force does not include explicit consideration for women's security.

**The Afghanistan Compact**

The compact focuses on three goals: 1) Security; 2) Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights; and 3) Economic and Social Development. The Principles of Cooperation in the Compact recognizes the importance of building capacities of men and women and the equal rights and responsibilities of men and women.

The section within the Compact on Security which describes the role of ISAF, Operation Enduring Freedom and PRTs does not include reference to protection of civilians in general, nor specifically to girls, boys and women.

The section on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights reaffirms commitment to the promotion and protection of rights recognized in the constitution and to international human rights instruments to which Afghanistan is party. The Annex 1 document to the compact outlining benchmarks and timelines refers to full implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan by 2010, which includes the goal of female participation in governance institutions.

The section on Economic and Social Development also does not explicitly refer to gender equality or the rights of girls and women, though the Annex 1 document outlining benchmarks and timelines includes specific goals in relation to girls and women. A minimum 60% net enrolment rate of girls in primary education by 2010 is set out as a clear target, the rate for boys is set at 75%. Further a goal of a 50% increase in female teachers is mentioned. The 2010 goal for female university students is 35% (of 100 000). The paragraph on skills development also includes reference to women. The sections on Health and Nutrition make
clear goals for reducing maternal mortality by 15% by 2010 and full immunisation for infants under 5. In addition to benchmarks for refugees and IDP rehabilitation (which does not explicitly mention women), the section on Social Protection includes language on vulnerable women, chronically poor female headed households with a goal of reducing the chronic poverty of such women by 20% by 2010, and increasing the employment rates for such women by the same timeline.

**ISAF**

Security Council Resolution 1386 (2001) recognizes the obligation under international human rights law, including respect for the rights of women, however the operative paragraphs lack reference to gender equality and the rights of girls and women. Of the eight Security Council resolutions authorising ISAF (1386, 1413, 1444, 1510, 1563, 1623, 1659, 1707), only SC Resolution 1386 includes minimal consideration for the rights of women, stressing all Afghan forces must adhere strictly to their obligations under human rights law, including respect for the rights of women.

The 8 December SACEUR Operational Plan (revised) referred to three supporting tasks which may implicitly involve specific consideration for girls and women: provision of humanitarian assistance, support of UNHCR, and combating human trafficking. However, consideration for the rights of girls and women in such tasks is not made explicit.

**UNAMA**

The United Nations Security Council established the UNAMA through resolution 1401 (March 28, 2002) with a mandate to support rebuilding and national reconciliation as outlined in the December 2001 Bonn Agreement. Similarly to ISAF, UNAMA’s mandate is renewed yearly by the UNSC. One of UNAMA’s tasks is to coordinate and facilitate UN agencies to mainstream gender throughout their activities. UNAMA has been facilitating information and knowledge sharing among gender focal points from 12 UN agencies since 2002. In 2002, the Government of Afghanistan also established an Advisory Group on Gender which is mandated to ensure that gender equality and the advancement of women is integrated into each national priority program. The Advisory Group is made up of representatives from international and national NGOs, women’s professional associations, donor communities, and the UN. For more information on the Advisory Group, see Advisory Group on Gender Background Note.

The Security Council Resolutions authorising UNAMA have slightly more consideration for gender equality than the ISAF resolutions. Three out of the five SC Resolutions include operative paragraphs which refer to the rights of women, and Resolution 1536 calls for the inclusion of women and refugees in electoral process (operative paragraph 4).

While all UN agencies are expected to incorporate gender as a cross-cutting issue in their programming, UNIFEM is tasked specifically with improving the situation of girls and women in Afghanistan.

This cursory glance of international commitments in Afghanistan reveals that the area of security regarding protection of civilians, in particular girls and women, is not clearly

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283 Release of unclassified version of Saceur Oplan 10302 (revise 1): J5Plans/7340-093/05106409, December 2005
284 UNSC Resolutions 1662, 1589, 1536 include provisions for women’s rights, SC Resolutions 1401 and 1471 do not include any language on gender.
articulated in SC Resolutions, mandates of ISAF, the Afghanistan Compact, nor the Bonn Agreement. Considering that articles 14, 15 and 17 of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) call on the Security Council to consider gender and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups, and to consider the potential impact on civilian populations, especially girls and women, these resolutions vis-à-vis women's and girl's rights are arguably weak. The aforementioned mandates do mention creating a stable and secure environment but do not go into deeper detail. See Mandates.

Continuing Challenges

Violence against women: warlords, conservative religious leaders, the Taliban and other insurgents continue to use death threats and physical attacks to intimidate women and men and women working in women's organizations. This has resulted in the closure or scaling back of opportunities and services for women. In 2004, Human Rights Watch reported that as a result of fear of retaliation, women have resorted to self-censorship regarding the fundamental rights of girls and women. In September of 2006, the head of the Department of Women's Affairs in Kandahar was shot and killed, and intimidation and murders of female NGO workers continued through 2006.

Child marriage and forced marriage: According to 2005 U.N. and Afghan government figures, most marriages continue to involve girls below the age of sixteen, many of them forced. Legally, girls should be at least 16 years of age and boys at least 18 years of age for marriage. Early marriage often leads to early pregnancy and motherhood with increased risks of infant and maternal mortality. Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world (1600 out of 100,000 in 2005). Womankind International noted that warlords can exercise particular influence over marriages as parents and families will often be too scared to refuse the requests of a warlord if he identifies a girl for marriage.

Honour crimes and domestic violence: In 2005, Womankind International reported that honour crimes were on the rise with 47 documented murders in 2005 and 20 until October 2006. Estimates place unreported cases at 5,000. The same report notes that violence against women is usually perpetrated by direct family member, 10% of the time by female family members.

Education: access to schooling is not universal to all districts, particularly in rural areas schools can be miles away from home making access to education an even greater challenge for girls and boys. Schools have been targeted for attacks, often leading to their closure. Due to the already low number of girls' education facilities the increase in school closures has made the situation of girls' education even worse. Only 10 percent of girls attend secondary school. In five Afghan provinces in the south, at least 90 percent of school-age girls do not

289 Ibid.
attend school. Only 19% of available schools are designated as girls only, 29% of Afghanistan's 415 educational districts have no girls' school.²⁹⁰

Widows and female-headed households: there are very limited opportunities for women to find gainful employment and to be able to support their family. Widows are often denied employment opportunities and have to resort to begging to provide for their families. Women are adversely affected by the deaths of male members of their family due to increased economic burden as they become responsible for their family's security and income, yet with limited economic and educational opportunities. Limited economic opportunities for female-headed households tend to drive women into illegal activities such as prostitution and drug trafficking to support themselves and their families.

**IDPs and Refugees:** According to UNIFEM research, Afghan women together with children account for approximately 65% of the internally displaced population (IDP) and refugee population, estimated in early 2002 at 1.2 million and 3.6 million respectively.

In August 2009 President Karzai passed a law which further sets back the rights of women in Afghanistan. The law also puts children under the sole guardianship of their fathers and grandfathers. It has been said that the Karzai passed this law in an attempt to court political support before the upcoming presidential elections. Human Rights Watch called on all election candidates to repeal this law which went against the country’s constitution.²⁹¹

Two recent reports by the UN and by Human Rights Watch paint a bleak picture for women’s rights in Afghanistan. The report by UNAMA highlighted the point that the lives of a large number of Afghan women are serious compromised by the levels of violence in the country and by the culture of impunity that exists with regard to the treatment of women.²⁹² It looked at the violence that exists regarding women’s participation in public life and the prevalence of sexual violence in the context of rape. The report called for action to be taken that goes beyond that of rhetoric.

Human Rights Watch also reflected the UN’s concern that commitments to women’s rights are left to the realm of rhetoric in its report on women in Afghanistan. The report focused on five areas of ongoing areas of women’s rights violations: Attacks on women in public life; violence against women; child and forced marriages; access to justice; and girl’s access to secondary schools. Due to the presence of social and legal obstacles violation against women are not being addressed.²⁹³

**The London Conference on Afghanistan 2010**

At the recently concluded London Conference on January 28th Ms. Arzo Qahni, of the Afghan Women’s Network, read out a statement to the plenary meeting on behalf of all Afghan women. She was also the only woman scheduled to address the meeting. She said that Afghan women were aware of the need for peace and security and often times they paid the heaviest

²⁹⁰ Ibid.
²⁹¹ John Boone Afghanistan passes barbaric law which diminishes women’s rights The Guardian (January 31st 2010)
²⁹² Silence is Violence: End the abuse of women in Afghanistan UNAMA/OCHA (January 31st 2010)
²⁹³ We have the promises of the world: Women’s rights in Afghanistan Human Rights Watch (December 6th 2009)
price during the resurgence in violence. Her statement was prepared after extensive consultations with Afghan women leaders and came up with the following key issues:

Women must have a voice in all decision making regarding the future of the country.

Women’s rights and statuses must not be bargained away in efforts to reconcile competing factions.

The military surge must be complimented by an equally robust effort to boost civilian support for recovery and long term reconstruction.

In seeking to enhance the rule of law make sure to protect the rights of women.

Despite the broad based implications of the agreements reached at the London Conference there was no official delegation to represent Afghan women sent to take part in discussions. Ms. Arzo Qahni was the only women representative who spoke as part of the official agenda. However, the Afghan Women’s Network was able to send four Afghan women civil society leaders to London. There they were able to put forward their agenda to official delegates such as the foreign ministers, US Special Representative Richard Holbrooke, UN Special Representative Kai Eidi and the Afghan president Hamid Karzai. The representatives also drew up a list of recommendations to ensure a consideration for women in the areas of security, governance and development, and regional frameworks and international architecture.

The efforts were reflected in the final communiqué. There was a renewed commitment to implement the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan and the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law. There was also a promise to strengthen the participation of women in all Afghan governance institutions and elected bodies and civil societies. Afghan women leaders welcomed these commitments and called for affirmative action policies to be set up to back their promises. To read the full reaction to the communiqué refer to the UNIFEM website.

**Canada’s role in Afghanistan’s Peace Operations**

Since 2002 Afghanistan has been Canada's largest recipient of bilateral aid. Most of this funding has been directed to military efforts though an additional Cdn$1 billion has been allocated to development assistance for the period 2001-2011. As part of its commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, promoting gender equality is an overarching principle in Canada's development policy. CIDA has demonstrated efforts to include gender-sensitive programming in Afghanistan, one such example being a micro-credit programme that has provided small loans to nearly 150,000 women. Official Canadian publications claim that Canada works multi-laterally through the UN General Assembly, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and the UN Commission on the Status of Women to encourage respect for human rights in Afghanistan and in the work of the international community.

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294 Statement read on behalf of Afghan women at the London Conference on Afghanistan UNIFEM (January 31st 2010)
295 Afghan women’ leader priorities for stabilization: Statement and Recommendations UNIFEM (January 31st 2010)
296 Reaction from Afghan women civil society leaders to the communiqué of the London Conference on Afghanistan UNIFEM (January 31st 2010)
297 Canadian International Development Agency, Afghanistan: Canada’s Commitment.
Canadians: Rebuilding Afghanistan "Canada-Afghan Relations."

For more on Canada's role in Afghanistan, please see:


CIDA: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-129153625-S6T

Protecting Canadians: Rebuilding Afghanistan (Government of Canada):

**Further Resources:**

Womankind International *Taking Stock: Afghan women and girls five years on*, October, 2006:
http://www.womankind.org.uk/takingstockdownloads.html

UNAMA August 2006 fact sheet:
http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/UN-Docs/fact-sheets/August2006-FactSheet-UNIFEM-eng.pdf

UNIFEM Portal on Women, War and Peace:
http://www.womenwarpeace.org/afghanistan/afghanistan.htm

Protecting Canadians: Rebuilding Afghanistan (Government of Canada):

Afghanistan (CIDA): http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-129153625-S6T


Canada’s Contributions To Peace Operations In Afghanistan

This section tracks Canada's governmental and non-governmental contributions to peace and development in Afghanistan. It examines the political and legal basis for Canada’s (governmental) involvement, provides details on past and current programming, and documents some of the recent debates about Canada’s role in Afghanistan.

Political and Legal Basis for Canadian Involvement

According to official sources, Canada is in Afghanistan to help Afghans rebuild their country as a stable, democratic and self-sufficient society. Canada and over 60 other nations and international organizations provide their assistance at the request of the democratically-elected Afghan government. Canadian military forces act as part of a NATO-led, UN sanctioned mission (for more details, see Mandates page).

From the perspective of domestic Canadian legislation, the most important element of the legal basis for the country’s involvement in Afghanistan is the parliamentary motion passed by the House of Commons on March 13, 2008. Its main elements are as follows:

1) Canada should continue a military presence in Kandahar beyond February 2009, to July 2011, in a manner fully consistent with the UN mandate on Afghanistan, and that the military mission shall consist of:

   - training the Afghan National Security Forces so that they can expeditiously take
     increasing responsibility for security in Kandahar and Afghanistan as a whole;
   - providing security for reconstruction and development efforts in Kandahar; and
   - the continuation of Canada's responsibility for the Kandahar Provincial
     Reconstruction Team;

2) Canada's contribution to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan should be revamped and increased to strike a better balance between the country's military and development efforts. Furthermore, Canadian civilian assistance should focus on its traditional strengths, i.e. sectors such as reform of judicial and correctional systems.

3) Canada should assert a stronger and more disciplined diplomatic position regarding Afghanistan and the regional players.
The extension of Canada’s military presence in Afghanistan was approved on condition that NATO secure a battle group of approximately 1,000 to rotate into Kandahar and that the Canadian government secure medium helicopter lift capacity and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

**Whole-of-Government Approach**

For a number of years, Canada has been applying an inter-departmental approach to issues of strategic interest such as the stabilization of certain fragile states (esp. Sudan, Haiti and Afghanistan). This so-called ‘whole-of-government’ approach generally brings together diplomatic, defence, development, trade and investment strategies in a way that ensures policy coherence and maximizes impact.298

From 2005 to early 2008, interdepartmental coordination was led by an associate deputy minister of foreign affairs working with representatives from the Departments of National Defence (DND), Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Correctional Service Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). CIDA had its own Afghanistan Task Force, and some other departments had parallel units responsible for activities in Afghanistan. Experience showed that separate departmental task forces were not the answer to inadequate coordination of Canadian activities.

The government concluded that its coordinating efforts would have stronger effect, and achieve greater cross-government coherence, if they were led by the Prime Miniser, supported by a cabinet committee and staffed by a single full-time task force. The establishment of such a "Cabinet Committee on Afghanistan" as well as an "Afghanistan Task Force" within the Privy Council Office was announced in February 2008. In addition, the Canadian House of Commons established a "Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan" which meets regularly with ministers and other senior officials to get detailed information on Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan and make frequent recommendations on the conduct and progress of those efforts.

On 10 June 2008, the Canadian government announced its new approach in Afghanistan. It stated that for the next three years (2008-2011) its objective was to advance six focused priorities. The first four priorities focus primarily on Kandahar Province:

- Maintain a more secure environment and establish law and order by building the capacity of the Afghan National Army and Police, and supporting complementary efforts in the areas of justice and corrections.
- Provide jobs, education, and essential services, like water
- Provide humanitarian assistance to people in need
- Enhance the management and security of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border

Nationally, Canada will help

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Build Afghan institutions that are central to its Kandahar priorities and support democratic processes such as elections

Contribute to Afghan-led political reconciliation efforts aimed at weakening the insurgency and fostering a sustainable peace

**Military Presence**

The Department of National Defence (DND) website outlines six objectives for Canada’s military involvement in Afghanistan:

Extend government authority to the south of Afghanistan

Establish the security necessary to promote development;

Help strengthen the capacity of the Afghan government;

Conduct operations to support the Afghan National Army;

Assist in addressing the humanitarian needs of Afghans;

Assist in the delivery of programs to support economic recovery;

The Canadian Forces (CF) have been involved in Afghanistan since participating in the initial US-led Coalition that ousted the Taliban regime. Since then, Canada has provided significant support to both the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The country has consistently been among the top 10 contributors of troops and support, and often among the top five troop contributing countries. Since October 2001 it has deployed over 18,000 soldiers, sailors, and air force personnel in support of OEF and ISAF.

According to DND, by March 2008, the total cost of all Canadian military operations in Afghanistan was $7.7 billion in full costs (aggregate total of all expenses incurred in conducting the operation) and $3.5 billion in incremental costs (calculated by subtracting certain costs such as salaries and equipment depreciation and attrition). The actual figure is highly debated.³⁰⁰

**Canada’s current contribution to ISAF: Operation ATHENA**

Operation ATHENA stands for the Canadian contribution to ISAF. All Canadian units participating in this operation are part of Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg), which currently totals about 2,500 soldiers. It is headquartered at Kandahar Airfield and consists of the following units:

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a Battle Group operating as part of the Multinational Brigade in ISAF Regional Command (South)

the National Support Element (NSE)

an Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT)

a Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle unit

a Health Services Support Company

the Provincial Reconstruction Team (at Camp Nathan Smith)

the Theatre Support Element (in the Persian Gulf region)

The largest component of JTF-Afg is the Battle Group, mainly from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI). Its duties include patrolling the area of responsibility of Regional Command (South), suppressing hostile activity, and escorting road convoys.

The Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT) advise, mentor and assist the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) in their capacity-building efforts. According to DND's website, it is not possible at this time to set out a schedule for completion of the development process of Afghanistan's national security forces (ANSF). In order to deepen its mentoring role with the ANSF, JTF-Afg is using Combined Quick Reaction Forces, which are made up of ANA and ANP units, Canadian infantry and mission-specific assets and enablers.

Note: This Operation was formerly under Operation Enduring Freedom, the US-led coalition. On 31 July 2006 it transferred to ISAF command.

**Canada's current contribution to OEF: Operation ARCHER**

**Operation ARCHER** is Canada’s contribution to OEF. The primary activity under this operation is the deployment of 12 senior CF members in Kabul with the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A), a US-led multinational organization that provides mentors and trainers to help Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior build up the country's security sector.

**Strategic Advisory Team - Afghanistan: Operation ARGUS**

**Operation ARGUS** is the team of strategic military planners the Canadian Forces maintains in Kabul to assist the Government of Afghanistan. Since September 2005 the CF have, on a bi-lateral basis, provided such mixed military-civilian teams of 14-15 military strategic planners and one CIDA representative. The primary role of this **Strategic Advisory Team - Afghanistan (SAT-A)** is to work with Afghan counterparts in specific ministries and Afghan National Army chiefs of staff towards the design of the strategic plans necessary to guide the state-building effort in Afghanistan. The SAT also works closely with Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan.

**Civilian Assistance (Governmental)**
Canada’s efforts in Afghanistan are guided by the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Its pledge of $1.3 billion from 2001-2011 for development and reconstruction ranks it among the top donors. As of 2007, Canada had allocated a total of $741 million to civilian programs in Afghanistan, making it the single largest recipient of Canadian bilateral aid. Canada works through a combination of partnerships with other agencies, bilateral aid directly to the government, and funding of multilateral institutions such as UN agencies and the World Bank.

Its civilian assistance program emphasizes three areas:

**Sustainable livelihoods and community development**

*Here* the objective is to help Afghans, particularly the rural poor, develop sustainable and productive livelihoods to increase income levels, food self-sufficiency, and reduce dependence on poppy cultivation. Projects include the (re)construction of infrastructure such as clinics, roads, schools, electricity, or drinking water; mine action; and support for the provision of basic services. One of the most successful programs in this area is the National Solidarity Program (for details see Development & Relief Efforts), to which Canada has contributed more than $131 million from 2003-2008. Furthermore, Canada contributes to food distribution programs and to assistance programs that are increasing legal livelihood options to reduce dependence on illicit poppy cultivation.

Democratic development and effective governance

In *this area*, Canada's objective is to strengthen democratic development and effective governance from the grass roots up to the national level, and to build public institutions worthy of the trust and confidence of all Afghan citizens. Key forms of support include

- helping Afghans participate in grass roots democracy through the election of members to thousands of local councils that give communities a voice in their country's development;

- supporting a host of programs that are helping the most vulnerable groups gain access to legal services;

- and supporting mechanisms for building the Afghan government's planning capacity, fiduciary controls, fiscal discipline, accountability, and transparency.

Canadian police are working in Kabul and Kandahar at the Police Reform Unit under CSTC-A and the Afghan Ministry of the Interior. They have assisted in providing logistical and training support to ANP units, upgraded police stations and monitored the standards used by Police Mentoring Teams working with ANP units in various parts of the country. Some of the Canadian police officers have been deployed under the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL).

Enhancing the role of women and girls in society

In this area, assistance programs aim to empower women and girls by ensuring that they have a greater voice in society and better access to services, financing, education, and sustainable livelihoods. A focal point for Canada's assistance is MISFA (for details see Development & Relief Effort). Moreover, programming also includes initiatives to improve maternal and infant health, the promotion of women's rights, increased access to education, the labor market, and political life.
Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT)

Many programs supported by Canada are country-wide. However, the main geographic focus of Canadian assistance in Afghanistan is in Kandahar Province, where its ISAF contingent is based. As of May 2008, 25 of the 50 civilian personnel deployed in Afghanistan by Canada are based in Kandahar, directed by the “Representative of Canada in Kandahar” (ROCK), Mr. Ken Lewis. Lewis was sworn into his new role on January 10, 2009, taking over from Elissa Golberg who had held the role for the past 11 months. The number of civilian personnel is projected to increase to 100 by 2010.

Almost all civilian personnel in Kandahar are working in Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kandahar City, which is supporting projects throughout the province. These civilians (from DFAIT, CIDA, RCMP and other police, Corrections Services, USAID, US State Department) work alongside about 250 soldiers who provide protection and support for project implementation. The PRT supports key national Afghan projects such as the NSP and carries out a broad range of enabling roles such as police training and strengthening of all areas of local governance capacity, justice and humanitarian assistance. With the killing of diplomat Glyn Berry in January 2006, the civilian members of the PRT were withdrawn, leaving CIDA's six million dollars in aid assistance unused for a short period. Civilians were re-deployed by May 2006. The PRT does not operate from Kandahar Air Field (KAF) like the rest of Canada's Task Force, but is based at Camp Nathan Smith within Kandahar City itself.

Civilian Assistance (Non-Governmental)

Several Canadian NGOs conduct operations in Afghanistan. However, many of these organizations see themselves as neutral and not as part of the Canadian government's efforts to rebuild Afghanistan. There is no formal coordinating body specifically for Canadian NGOs working in Afghanistan, though two NGO umbrella organizations, "Peacebuild - The Canadian Peacebuilding Network" and the "Canadian Council for International Cooperation", have helped establish the Afghanistan Reference Group (ARG), which is working to bring some NGOs together on policy issues. Since mid-2007, this group of NGOs has met with the Manley Panel (see below), issued press releases and given media interviews on Canada's Afghan policy, engaged Members of Parliament, held roundtable discussions and engaged CIDA and DFAIT in a regular policy dialogue. Most recently, three members of ARG participated in the Civil Society And Private Sector Forum in Paris on May 24, 2008, in preparation for the International Afghanistan Support Conference on June 12.

A sample of Canadian NGOs currently (February 2008) operating in Afghanistan includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Red Cross</td>
<td>Throughout the country</td>
<td>Supports the Intern Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Women</td>
<td>Throughout the country</td>
<td>Empowerment of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights 8</td>
<td>Various parts</td>
<td>Provides funding for organizations promoting human rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

301 Stephanie Rubec, ‘Canada Halts Kandahar Aid Work’, Toronto Sun Online, 16 April 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Province(s)</th>
<th>Assistance Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARE Canada</td>
<td>12 provinces (including Khost, Gardez, Paktia)</td>
<td>Humanitarian and development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Vision Canada</td>
<td>Herat, Ghor, Badghis</td>
<td>Humanitarian and development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDA</td>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td>Development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aga Khan Canada</td>
<td>Herat, Kabul, Bamiyan, Badakhshan, Takhar, Samangan, Baghlan</td>
<td>Development assistance, esp. private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfam Canada</td>
<td>Badakhshan and Da</td>
<td>Humanitarian assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Dividend</td>
<td>Throughout the country</td>
<td>Analysis of procurement practices and impact on local economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WUSC</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>Widows' project, implemented in partnership with CARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Child</td>
<td>Herat, Kabul</td>
<td>Child protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Herat, Ghor, Kabul, Kapisa</td>
<td>Supporting CRS and Women’s Resource Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Debates About Canada's Role

The domestic debate about Canada's role in Afghanistan has been highly politicized and dominated by discussions on the country's military engagement. One of the most important reasons for the politicized, adversarial nature of the debate - esp. among parliamentarians - is that Canada's current government does not have a majority of seats in the House of Commons. Controversial issues like the mission in Afghanistan therefore present an opportunity for the opposition to vote against confidence motions, bring down the minority government, and send Canadians to the polls.

To avoid such an outcome and neutralize the political debate before the most recent extension of the mandate for Canadian troops in Afghanistan, the government appointed an "Independent Panel on the Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan". Within about three months (October 2007 - January 2008), this five-person committee carried out a series of consultations with Canadian and international experts, including individuals from the political, diplomatic, development and security sectors, in order to develop recommendations on Canada's future role in Afghanistan. In addition these meetings, the panel invited the wider public to submit briefs for its consideration. Taken together, the 219 submissions reflect the divergent perspectives among Canadian and international stakeholders.

Once the Independent Panel had released its report and the parliamentary motion on Canada's mission in Afghanistan had been adopted, the debate became less heated. As the Afghan government and the international community met in Bucharest (NATO summit, April 2008) and Paris (International Afghanistan Support Conference, June 2008) to take major decisions on future efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, the focus of most discussions shifted towards the modalities of implementing the new parliamentary mandate.

### Aid Efforts
Development and humanitarian aid are pillars of the international strategy to stabilize Afghanistan, as emphasized by former ISAF Commander Lt. General David Richards' comments that the military has done all it can and aid needs to flow to southern Afghanistan. Indeed, many sources point to the lack of effectively implemented development aid and enduring poverty as driving forces of the insurgency in the south. In response to this Canada's government, throughout the fall of 2006 and in early 2007, made several announcements of new spending on development assistance for Afghanistan and in particular the Kandahar region.

However, in April 2006, the Conservative government dismissed the idea of providing more funds through the Afghan government, calling it corrupt and lacking capability. The Afghan government has called for more funds to be directed through it so as to increase its legitimacy and improve Afghan ownership of the development process.

A Senate Standing Committee on National Defence report, Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission, has claimed that the committee can find no substantial evidence of CIDA's efforts in southern Afghanistan. In response to this Development Minister Josee Vernier made a trip to Afghanistan on 22 October 2006, promoting CIDA's efforts and making claims about Cdn$29.5 million on spending on several projects. The Senate Committee's argument can also be countered by the fact that CIDA's money is often distributed through other multilateral organizations, making it hard to trace exactly how the money is spent, though not necessarily implying that it is wasted. CIDA provides a Project Browser on its website showing where and how money has been spent, but measuring the impact of these projects against the long-term stability of Afghanistan is not possible in the short term.

Nevertheless, the voices claiming that development and aid efforts have been insufficient have been increasing. In October 2006 the Senlis Council, a Europe-based think tank, released a report, Losing Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan, based on extensive field research stating that the failure to address development and poverty is fueling the insurgency. This report was followed in May 2007 with the release of the new report, Canada in Afghanistan: Charting A New Course to Complete the Mission. Senlis indicated that poverty remained a concern, that the counternarcotics strategy of eradication was making the situation much more challenging, and that CIDA has had little to no impact on the ground. The report called for the creation of a Special Envoy to replace CIDA and implement emergency assistance and development programs in Kandahar.

Restrictions on the travel of CIDA and DFAIT personnel within Afghanistan are being accused of hampering development efforts. Money that has been committed to development in Kandahar has been sitting unused as CIDA employees complain of being "nannied" by Ottawa. In October 2006 Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay said that the government is working on lifting travel restrictions to improve the delivery of aid. In January 2007 a group of MPs from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on National Defence travelled to Afghanistan to observe progress in development, but were not allowed to leave Kandahar Air Field or a nearby Afghan Army base for 'security reasons.'

Military Efforts

303 Stephanie Rubec, 'Afghans want cash in hand', Calgary Sun, 18 April 2006.
304 CTV News Online, "Minister Visits Afghanistan for aid announcement." 22 October 2006
305 Globe and Mail, "Travel restrictions too tight for aid workers in Afghanistan", Globe and Mail, 22 October 2006
Canada’s military mission has generated a lot of controversy and debate. The issues that have been raised are:

1. Lack of clarity on how exactly Canada's efforts in Afghanistan are a vital national interest, especially in terms of Canada's contribution to the U.S. led war on terror, expressed during the April 10, 2006 Parliamentary debate on the Afghan mission.

2. Concerns that this mission has taken up all the capacity of the Canadian military to engage in peace support operations, leaving no ability to respond to security and humanitarian needs in other regions.

3. Concerns that Canada's efforts in southern Afghanistan have focused too much on confronting insurgents at the expense of development and diplomatic efforts. A proportion of 9:1 (military spending to development spending) is often used in arguing this position.

Two articles that address this debate are: "A military at war with peacekeeping" by James Travers and "After a Deadly Week, Canada Debates Role in Afghanistan" by Christopher Mason.

Canada’s end to its combat role in Afghanistan
While Canada intends to continue its involvement in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, it has begun to prepare for the withdrawal of its military from the country. On November 5th 2009 Canada’s Chief of Defense Staff Gen. Walt Natynczyk ordered the beginning of the planning of the Canadian military’s pull out of Afghanistan. This was done in accordance with a March 2008 Parliamentary vote which extended but also set and end date of July 2010 to the Canadian mission.

Plans for Canada’s troop withdrawal have begun to take shape, pending any new plans which the Canadian government has for the military. However, the Canadian government, including Defense Minister Peter Mackay, have suggested that Canadian troops could stay on past the July 2011 date in a non-combat role. This has muddied the waters as to what Canada’s role will be past July 2011. It has also prompted criticisms from former military experts and commanders including Retired Gen. Rick Hillier who said that a non-combat role was impossible.

One of the key issues surrounding Canada’s military pull out of Afghanistan is that of cost. $2 million worth of gear needs to be brought back to Canada and millions of dollars worth of infrastructure have to be brought down. It will take a force of about 500 soldiers one year to accomplish this task. Canada does not have a military air lift capability to accomplish this job on its own. Therefore, arrangements will have to be made to ship 2000 to 3000 sea containers. Transporting equipment will be an expensive endeavor as using Russian or Ukrainian cargo planes will costs the government up to $1.5 million per trip. As Canada begins preparations to pack up and leave the reality of the insurgency makes the task much more difficult.

Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan
While Canada is looking to draw down its combat role in Afghanistan there is not clear definition of what its future role will look like. Canada will continue to maintain its humanitarian and developmental missions. In fact on January 28th Canada announce $25 million.

306 39th Parliament, 1st Session, Canada’s Commitment in Afghanistan, 10 April 2006.
307 James Cudmore Defense Chief plans for 2011 Afghan pull out CBC (November 5th 2009)
308 Matthew Fisher Afghanistan pullout to cost hundreds of millions of dollars National Post (December 13th 2009)
million toward counter narcotics, policing and the criminal justice system.\textsuperscript{309} With regard to its military, while there was talk of a “different” or non combat role, there was the possibility of redeployment to the more peaceful parts of the country.\textsuperscript{310} Canadian PM Steven Harper seemed to justify his governments plan by saying that this is part of an overall downgrading of the international community’s expectations of what is achievable in Afghanistan.

Canada’s combat disengagement from Afghanistan is also part of its overall shrinking of influence in the country. Where once it made up 13 percent of the combat forces where it now only makes up three percent of the 84,000 troops in Afghanistan. Its influence in Kandahar has shrunk from being responsible for a while province to sharing management of a single district. While Canada has not lost the respect of the international community in Afghanistan it simply does not have to financial or military capacity to expand its role in Afghanistan. Thus marginalizing the country’s voice in the Afghanistan debate.\textsuperscript{311}

The legacy of Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan looks to be tainted by the prisoner abuse scandal that was reveal in November 2009. A government whistleblower revealed that Canadian soldiers handed over to prisoners to Afghan authorities who most likely tortured them.\textsuperscript{312} It also seemed that these prisoners were most likely innocent. The whistle blower was Canadian diplomat Richard Colvin who served in Afghanistan for 17 months. In his testimony before a House of Commons committee, Mr. Colvin described the military’s action towards prisoner abuse from 2006 to 2007 as ranging from initial indifference to obstructing his attempts to warn higher ups. The implications of this case are as yet unclear as the Canadian parliament was prorogued on December 30\textsuperscript{th} 2009 and will not restart until March 3\textsuperscript{rd} 2010.\textsuperscript{313}

\textsuperscript{309} Richard J Brennan Ottawa adds $25M to fight drug trade The Star (January 28\textsuperscript{th} 2010)
\textsuperscript{310} David Akin Afghan role will be strictly civilian : PM The Gazette (January 7\textsuperscript{th} 2010)
\textsuperscript{311} Doug Saunders Canada on sideline of Afghan strategy The Globe and Mail (January 28\textsuperscript{th} 2010 )
\textsuperscript{312} Steve Chase Canada complicit in torture of innocent Afghans, Diplomat says The Globe and Mail (November 18\textsuperscript{th} 2009)
\textsuperscript{313} Daniel Leblanc Harper to Shutdown Parliament The Globe and Mail (December 30\textsuperscript{th} 2009)
**Key Challenges** Updated February 3rd 2010

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**OPIUM TRADE**

**Quick Figures**

Hectares of opium poppy cultivated in Afghanistan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>104,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>165,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>193,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>157,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>123,000</td>
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Number of Afghans involved in the opium cultivation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2.0 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2.9 million</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>3.3 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2.4 million</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>1.6 million</td>
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Percentage of global production of opium:

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Approximately 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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Estimated farm-gate value of opium production:

<table>
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<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>US$ 1 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>US$ 732 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>US$ 438 million</td>
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</table>

Hectares Eradicated:

<table>
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<th>Hectares</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15,300</td>
</tr>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>19,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source for above figures:


Opium cultivation declined significantly in 2008, a decrease of 19% on 2007 figures. Opium production also declined in 2008 by 6%. According to UNODC, the decline can be attributed firstly to good local leadership by some governors, who discouraged farmers from planting opium and secondly, drought, which contributed to crop failure, particularly in the north and north-west. In 2008 the number of poppy-free provinces increased and no opium is grown in more than half of the country's 34 provinces. 98% of Afghanistan's opium is now grown in seven provinces in south-west Afghanistan, underscoring the link between drugs and conflict.

The 2009 UNODC report on opium in Afghan suggest that progress is being made in the fight against opium in Afghanistan. The key statistic in the report is that the potential gross export value of Afghan opium has reduced by 18%, from US$3.4 million in 2008 to US$2.8 million in 2009. This is a reduction of the value from one third of the country’s licit GDP to one quarter of the licit GDP. 2009 have seen improvements on all points of measurement i.e. cultivation, production, work force, prices, revenues, exports and percentage of licit GDP. Also, the number of opium free provinces have also increased from 18 to 20.

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314 Export value of Afghan opium is falling, says UNODC UNODC (December 17th 2009)
Overview

Opium currently makes up 30% to 50% of Afghanistan’s economy, and Afghanistan supplies around ninety percent of the heroin found in Europe. Opium has been a traditional cash crop for many farmers in Afghanistan. Poppy farming is attractive to farmers because they can earn up to ten times more per hectare of poppies than for cereals. For many, it is the only way they can obtain credit, cash incomes, access to land, and access to water from wells.

Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan (in hectares, 1994-2008)


Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, 2008 (by province)
Opium has routinely been tied to conflict in Afghanistan. It was used as a source of income by the Mujaheddin in the 1980s and by the various warlords in the 1990s, including the Northern Alliance. The Taliban reaped the largest rewards from opium production after they took over 90% of the country in the late 1990s. According to testimony at a US Congressional Hearing by Asa Hutchison, then the Drug Enforcement Agency administrator, the Taliban used opium as a major source of income, supplying over 70% of the world’s heroin in 2000. The opium trade was institutionalized to the point where taxes were collected and receipts provided, with Pakistan, Iran, and the Central Asian states serving as transit routes. Following a decree issued by Mullah Omar on 28 July 2000, the Taliban effectively enforced a ban on opium cultivation, cutting production from over 3,600 tons in 2000 to only seventy-four in 2001. However, Hutchison claimed that the Taliban used the cut in supply to raise the price of stockpiled opium, thereby appearing to respond to international pressure to crack down on opium while continuing to profit greatly from its sale.

Up to 80% of the profits from illegal drugs in Afghanistan go to drug smugglers and heroin processors, as opposed to the farmers that cultivate the poppies. In 2007, insurgents made more than $100 million from imposing taxes and providing protection to the country’s opium trade. They collected a 10% tax on the earnings of opium poppy farmers and processors in Taliban-controlled areas. Furthermore, they made money by providing protection to laboratories and moving opium across the border into Pakistan and Iran. These growing links between the drugs trade and the insurgency in southern Afghanistan will provide longevity to the Taliban.

Drug use in Afghanistan is hard to estimate because of societal taboos associated with opium use. While not on the level of Pakistan and Iran, it is estimated that in some northern areas up to 30% of people are addicted to opium. UNODC gave a figure of 60,000 addicts in Kabul alone. Returning refugees are a large proportion of Afghan addicts. A separate UNODC report estimated that the number of addicts in the country could be as high as 920,000. The Afghan government has established about 40 drug addiction clinics throughout the country, but experts believe that number needs to dramatically increase.

The Afghan government established a Counter-Narcotics Directorate in 2002. In 2005, the government announced a drug control strategy that aimed for the total eradication of opium cultivation. The current strategy involves alternative livelihood development, the extension of drug law enforcement, the implementation of drug legislation, the establishment of effective institutions, and treatment for drug addicts.

**Afghan narco-cartels**

Despite the positive figures from the 2009 UNODC survey, tougher counter-narcotics and improved intelligence has produced evidence of antigovernment elements transforming into narco-cartels. This is not a new phenomenon as the Columbian example of FARC and ELN have demonstrated. Initially, drug production starts of as a means to fuel an ideological movement. However, as has been demonstrated the world over, drug money trumps ideology and becomes as addictive as the drugs itself. The UNODC report warns that Afghanistan is reaching this point. The collusion among criminal gangs, corrupt government official and

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315 Afghanistan Opium Survey 2009 UNODC (September 2009)
insurgents has created a symbiotic relationship. This has allowed some insurgents to become further involved in the drug production rather than just taxing it. The UNODC calls for greater attention to be paid to this problem.

**Counter-Narcotics Strategies**

Dealing with the opium issue in one way or the other is seen as essential to securing peace in Afghanistan. Discussions tend to focus on the promotion of alternative livelihoods and law enforcement measures.

**Alternative Livelihoods**

Efforts to switch farmers to alternative livelihoods have been unsuccessful. Some NGOs that were supposed to implement the programs even returned the money given by the US, claiming alternative livelihood schemes were unworkable at the time. Southern Afghanistan, where most of the opium poppy is grown, has suffered from a drought for several years. Poppy is a notably drought-resistant crop. Farmers would need expensive irrigation systems to switch to other crops. Research has continually reaffirmed that most Afghan farmers, esp. poorer ones, are constrained by a variety of factors (e.g. credit, water, roads, corruption) and cannot simply shift to alternative crops or types of livelihoods.

Furthermore, experts argue that poppy cultivation is not a choice of crop that requires another crop to substitute for lost income. It is a component of complex livelihood strategies of extended families (incl. labor migration, education, seeking wage labor, and serving in armed groups). Consequently, rural families do not need just another "crop"; they need access to opportunities and assets that enable them to support themselves without poppy cultivation.

**Law Enforcement**

In December 2005, a new Counter-Narcotics Law was passed by the Afghan parliament, creating criminal and procedural provisions for investigation, prosecution, and trial. In addition, the Afghanistan Compact outlined a drug control strategy that focuses on providing alternative livelihoods for farmers, institution-building at local levels, drug-use reduction, and combating drug trafficking. While these steps helped create a normative framework for counter-narcotics efforts, the debate on what elements should be prioritized continues.

There is a general consensus that licensing the sale of poppy for medical purposes will not help reduce the demand for illegal opium. In fact, some argue that it would just create a new cash crop for farmers, meaning that even more opium would be grown. Current experience suggests that Afghan police would be hard-pressed to stop drug traffickers from forcing farmers to divert part or all of their crop for heroin. Furthermore, it is worth keeping in mind that the price of legal opiates on the world market is $35 to $40 a kilogram while illegal opiates are sold for approx. $100 a kilogram. Exorbitant subsidies would be needed to bridge the gap between legal and illegal prices.

The US government favors a more aggressive approach. In July 2007, the U.S. State Department unveiled an update to its Afghanistan counter-narcotics strategy. The new program has three main elements 1) increasing development assistance to encourage licit development, 2) improving coordination of counter-narcotics and counter-insurgency planning and operations, and 3) encouraging consistent political will among the Afghan government, allies and international organizations. The new initiatives, based on input by an interagency
Critics of this approach argue that the new Counter Narcotics Strategy overemphasizes eradication. In fact, the US government has invested a disproportionate amount of resources in eradication of poppy crops, which contributes only 20 percent of the value of the opiate industry in Afghanistan. According to Rubin, the result of failed eradication programs has been the migration of cultivation, its concentration in insecure areas, an increase in the value of the opium economy, and closer links among farmers, traffickers, corrupt officials and the Taliban. The most controversial element of US eradication plans is the idea of spraying of poppy crops. Those advocating spraying claim that, largely due to corruption among government officials, all else has failed, and that a strong message must be sent to farmers. Yet, critics believe that an aggressive eradication-led approach will exacerbate insecurity and play into the hands of insurgents trying to incite the population against the Afghan government and its international backers. In the past, Karzai's government has repeatedly declared its opposition to spraying the poppy fields, whether by air or by eradication teams on the ground. But Afghan officials indicated in early October 2007 that the Afghan administration is now re-evaluating that stance. While some proponents within the government are pushing a trial program of ground spraying that could begin before the harvest next spring, Karzai is seeking the formation of an international scientific committee to review the safety of chemical herbicides.

In general, one of the greatest problems with regard to law enforcement measures as part of a counter-narcotics strategy in Afghanistan is the lack of rule of law. Especially in southern Afghanistan, government institutions are virtually non-existent a few kilometers away from the center of provinces and districts. Provincial governors rely on powerful warlords and drug lords for their own protection, and in exchange close their eyes on their illicit activities. Corruption has become an accepted norm and seeking personal wealth the ultimate goal for elite politicians.

In this context, it is important to mention that both the drug problem as well as deficits regarding the rule of law are regional phenomena that are not limited to Afghanistan alone. Only a fraction of Afghanistan's opiates is being seized worldwide (24% against 48% of the Colombian cocaine seized). In Central Asia the interdiction rate is less than 4%, mostly in Tajikistan. Since 2005, new heroin routes have emerged via Pakistan and via Central Asia to China and India. To help address these transnational challenges, UNODC has promoted the establishment of a Central Asia Regional Information Centre and has brokered a Trilateral Initiative to improve counter-narcotics cooperation among Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. In June 2008, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1817, which calls on member states to increase international and regional cooperation in monitoring international trade in chemical precursors, notably acetic anhydride, and prevent their diversion from licit international trade.

The international community’s efforts to tackle the opium cultivation in Afghanistan suffered another blow in a recent report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). The INCB’s Annual Report 2008 criticised the international community for it poor progress in dealing with drug cultivation. Also, cannabis is rivalling poppy in the drug cultivation industry in Afghanistan. As cannabis is proving to be more lucrative many farmers are switching from growing poppies to growing cannabis. The INCB also pointed out that the lack of security is severely hampering any effort to control the drug industry.

Comprehensive solutions
Experts suggest that Afghanistan needs a greater active commitment to all of the elements of its National Drug Control Strategy, which is a combination of interdiction, public information, prosecution of known drug dealers, and development of the legal economy. As Barnett Rubin writes, poppy does not give access only to income, but to credit, land, water, food security, extension service, and insurance. The opium industry privatized the provision of essential support services to the agricultural sector, as its rate of profit and global size made it the only industry with the resources and incentives to supply such public goods. In light of this trend, counter-narcotics in Afghanistan requires a macroeconomic and political strategy over a period of decades, not a quick-fix based on accelerated eradication before that development policy is even formulated.

Lastly, it may also help to look at the demand side of the equation. In Afghanistan, profitability has soared in the production of opium as an internationally illegal good. If heroin was legalized in Europe and North America, the production of opium would be much less profitable. The key is that meaningful reforms regarding the drug industry do not begin in Afghanistan, but in the rich world that is the main consumer of its products.

**Critical Analysis** Updated February 3rd 2010

Specifications and opinions about the progress and degree of success reached by international efforts in Afghanistan are extensive and varied. Many official sources point to successes such as democratic elections and refugee returns, schools and clinics built, kilometres of irrigation canals and roads built, and millions of children returning to school. Critics describe a situation of misused resources, lost chances to deal or negotiate with the Taliban/insurgents and Al Qaeda, the booming opium economy, and a failure to stem continued meddling by neighbouring states.

This site does not endorse one position over another and endeavours to provide as many different viewpoints as possible, allowing the user to draw his or her own conclusions about the situation in Afghanistan.

**General**

In an interview with the Sunday Times on October 5th, 2008, the outgoing commander of British forces in Afghanistan, Brigadier Mark Carleton-Smith, said he believed that the Taliban would never be defeated. War on Taliban Cannot be Won

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released in February 2007 a report evaluating the progress of the reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan. The report, Breaking Point: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan, found that since 2005 progress has reversed in all sectors except the economy, and particularly with security. The report termed 2007 a breaking point, and recommended changes in the way assistance from the international community is delivered so that a critical mass of Afghans will experience positive change.


Barnett Rubin, "Saving Afghanistan," Foreign Affairs January/February 2007. Rubin identifies numerous faults in US policy towards Afghanistan, pointing out in particular Pakistan's unwillingness to address the Taliban presence in its borders, corruption amongst warlords the US supported, counterproductive opium poppy eradication schemes, and a lack of resources committed to the country. A good overview of the immense challenges facing Afghanistan in December 2006.

Kofi Annan and Ban Ki Moon's Secretary General's Reports to the Security Council provide information on progress, achievements, and obstacles still faced. The most recent report, 21 September 2007, calls for stronger leadership from the Afghan government, citing weak governance, increasing corruption, wavering public confidence and a blossoming narcotics economy.

United Nations Report of the Security Council Mission to Afghanistan. 4 December 2006. This report gives an extensive list of challenges faced in Afghanistan in late 2006. Challenges listed included: the inadequacy of the Afghan National Police, convincing Afghans that the international community was committed to rebuilding the country, corruption, the opium trade, lack of governing capacity and poorly coordinated technical assistance strategies, unemployment, and Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan. However, the Report concluded that the Afghan government and the international community have "established a sound strategy to overcome these challenges," and it also praised the work of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board and its growing ability to address bottlenecks in implementing the Afghanistan Compact. The report gave renewed endorsement to the Afghanistan Compact as the primary strategic framework for cooperation between the international community and the Afghan government.


ACBAR Brief to the United Nations Security Council on the 'Situation in Afghanistan.' ACBAR, an NGO coordination agency in Afghanistan, presented its briefing to the UN Security Council in November 2006. The briefing gives a good 'from the ground' perspective of the problems facing the country.

"Interview with Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Christopher Alexander, 2 November 2006." Audio file. Mr. Alexander addresses the UN relationship to NATO, the insurgency, the slow pace of development, narcotics trafficking, debates about the international community and Afghanistan, and negotiating peace with the Taliban. He provides both indicators of progress while acknowledging the serious challenges posed.
United States Government Accountability Office, "Securing, Stabilizing, and Reconstructing Afghanistan: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight." 24 May 2007. This report examines several security-related areas: counternarcotics, army and police training, judicial reform, NATO limitations, and reconstruction efforts. The report finds some progress in all areas but sees continuing insecurity as severley limiting to the overall reconstruction effort.

United States Institute of Peace Briefing, "The Situation in Afghanistan: A Re-evaluation Needed." April 2007. This is USIP's report on a presentation given by Special Representative for the Secretary General Tom Koenigs. Mr. Koenigs stresses that the insurgency is reaching ever-higher levels and that promoting governance must be the first priority of the international community and Afghan government.

David Corn questions the Bush Administration's commitment in Afghanistan, citing the lack of clear leadership and low funding commitment. Corn quotes Barnett Rubin as saying "Everyone in the region assumes that the United States is not serious about succeeding in Afghanistan." David Corn, "Who's running Afghan policy?" The Nation 13 October 2006 http://thenation.com/doc/20061030/corn

Leo Docherty, "Why NATO is losing the war." Dawn 14 June 2007. Docherty, a former British soldier with experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, discusses Britain's failed strategy in Helmand province. He focuses in particular on the failure to properly implement the 'ink blot' strategy.

Col M. D. Capstick, "A Year in Kabul: Strategic Reflections." On Track 11:3 Autumn 2006: 16-18. Col. Capstick, who served for a year on Canada's Strategic Advisory Team to the Afghan Government in Kabul, claimed that much progress has been made in Afghanistan to date with elections, school enrollment and construction, and that most provinces in Afghanistan are stable enough for reconstruction to occur. Capstick also warned that more money is needed for development, comparing expenditures by the international community in Bosnia (US$649 per capita) to Afghanistan (US$57 per capita).

Stephen Zunes, "Afghanistan: Five Years On." Foreign Policy In Focus 13 October 2006. Stephen Zunes of the International Relations Centre presents a scathing account of the failure of US policy to date in Afghanistan, highlighting multiple areas of policy mistakes.


Rory Stewart, "When less is best." 20 March 2007. Stewart, who currently works with an NGO in Afghanistan and served with the UK Foreign Ministry in Iraq, says that the international community’s goals in Afghanistan have been set too high. The counter-insurgency campaign is a misguided policy, as it goes too far beyond securing the initial objective of fighting terrorism. Afghans, according to Stewart, are growing disillusioned with the failure of the international community to deliver on development. Stewart believes the international community should have only a limited role in Afghanistan.

Rory Stewart, "Where Less Is More." New York Times 23 July 2007. Stewart reiterates his point that sending more troops into Afghanistan will only serve the interests of the Taliban, who gain support for being the Islamic defenders against foreign occupiers. Stewart says the current troop presence actually provoked the insurgency, and that the situation in Afghanistan
is different from that of Malaysia and requires a different counter-insurgency strategy. He recommends focusing development on the secure areas of the centre and north.

Estanislao Oziewicz, "Winning hearts and minds, in Afghanistan and Canada." Globe and Mail 12 January 2007. Since returning to Canada, BG Frasier continued his support for the mission through a series of public speaking and media articles. Frasier presents anecdotes about the changing styles of governance by some Afghan local officials, and also speaks against opium eradication.

Lyse Doucet, "Afghanistan: a job half done." BBC World, 4 December 2006. BBC Afghan analyst Doucet repeats now familiar critiques about warlords and corruption in Afghanistan, but also cites former Special Representative of the Secretary General Lakdar Brahimi on the issue of failing to negotiate with the Taliban in 2001, and failing to commit sufficient resources to the mission early on. Doucet also adds the voice of former US ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad to the weight of critiques.

Adam Holloway, "What the government won't tell you: we are losing Afghan hearts."

8 April 2007. Holloway, an British Conservative MP, claimed development efforts in Helmand province were not meeting the expectations of Afghans. He felt the military mission was out of touch with what the people needed, and that a more coordinated effort is required to win the hearts of the populations.

Karl F. Inderfurth, "Losing the 'other war' in Afghanistan?" International Herald Tribune 29 May 2007. Inderfurth criticizes the number of civilian casualties caused by US and NATO actions in Afghanistan, and calls for a zero casualty policy.

BBC and ABC news have released results of an opinion survey of Afghans conducted in October 2006. "Afghanistan: Where Things Stand." The results indicated that most (55%) Afghans remained hopeful that their country will improve, though the numbers were down by 22 points since October 2005. There remained majority support for a foreign troop presence, and country-wide Afghans did not show majority support for the Taliban. There were regional differences in such support. Other issues covered in the survey included opium production, women's rights, and the use of suicide bombings.

United States General Accountability Office (GAO), "Afghanistan Reconstruction: Despite some Progress, Deteriorating Security and Other Obstacles Continue to Threaten Achievement of US Goals." July 2005

**Insurgency & Counterinsurgency**

A detailed UNAMA study of suicide attackers in Afghanistan (released in early September 2007) found that people, children included, are coerced or duped into carrying out such attacks. The study "Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan (2001-2007)" presents data and analysis and includes interviews with more than two dozen failed and alleged suicide attackers.

UK Parliament Select Committee on Defence, "Thirteenth Report." 3 July 2007. Citing spreading violence, this report makes numerous recommendations for the mission in Afghanistan, focusing in particular on the lack of troops committed by other European nations,
civilian casualties, and the poor state of the Afghan National Police. The report recommends that the UN appoint a high-ranking official to coordinate international efforts in Afghanistan.

Derek Fraser, "Afghanistan: The Realities of Peacebuilding in a Failed State." October 2006. Fraser focuses his critique on the lack of resources devoted to both security and development in Afghanistan, comparing numbers from past counter-insurgency campaigns in Malaysia and Northern Ireland to what has been committed in Afghanistan.

Peggy Mason, "Analyst says current strategy making matters worse." Globe and Mail 7 March 2006. Peggy Mason of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre also expressed the view that there should be a greater effort towards a diplomatic solution to the Taliban conflict. Mason also alleged that coalition warfighting and reconstruction activities are not compatible missions, and create confusion.

Roland Paris, a University of Ottawa professor, claimed the international effort in Afghanistan has been insufficient. His remarks and policy recommendations are in: "NATO: go big or get out." Globe and Mail 25 October 2006.

Richard Norton Taylor, "We can win battles, says chief of NATO forces, but we need hearts and minds." Guardian Online 22 January 2007. General David Richards, in an interview with the Guardian newspaper, said NATO had proven to the Taliban that they could not be defeated on the battlefield. He called Operation Medusa a key turning point, but warned that civilian partners like DFID must speed up the reconstruction and development effort.


Nicholas Watt and Ned Temko, "Failure in Afghanistan risks rise in terror, say generals." The Observer 15 July 2007. UK Generals have warned that the consequences of failure in Afghanistan are much bigger than a failure in Iraq. They refer to the status of the US-European security arrangement, and the possibility of a wider war across the Middle East between Sunni and Shia. The lack of a coordinated strategy and the failure to deliver development are cited as two key reasons for the worsening situation.

Graeme Smith, "As more blood spills, the military sees progress." Globe and Mail 2 July 2007. Smith does not deny the incredible difficulties currently faced by the international mission in Afghanistan, but he does highlight what some see as positive changes. He quotes military officials as saying the rate of increase of violence is down, and points to successes in eliminating some of the Taliban’s leadership. He also says the UN casts doubts on the spreading insecurity in the north of the country.


Sanjay Suri, "Afghanistan: Military Policy ‘Barking Mad.’" IPS 25 September 2006. Suri cites British soldiers expressing their dismay at the way counter-insurgency operations are currently conducted in Afghanistan.
The United States Central Command website provides a large number of news articles on Afghanistan, often from an on-the-ground perspective. These stories are often about the activities of soldiers and often have a civil affairs focus. They are a good source to learn about the reconstruction activities of soldiers.

The NATO in Afghanistan website provides information on the NATO mission, as well as a link to the ISAF website, which contains operational news updates on ISAF activities.

The Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) webpage contains a strategy for disbanding illegal armed groups, and a concept of operations. Online at: http://www.diag.gov.af/

Fred Kaplan, "Can Freedom and Opium Coexist?" Slate 21 June 2006. Kaplan discusses the challenges of fighting a counter-insurgency, and quotes NATO officials as saying eradication is not a viable strategy. Kaplan quotes General David Richards as saying basic development, not complex governance structures, are what is needed first in Afghanistan.

Conrad Schetter, "Understanding Local Violence Security Arrangements in Kandahar, Kunduz and Paktia (Afghanistan)." University of Bonn May 2007. Schetter and colleagues of the University of Bonn did a study looking at the complexities of the warlord and tribal security structures in three Afghan provinces, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Paktia. The study discusses briefly how US backing of warlords in the struggle against the Taliban and Al Qaeda affected power relationships.

Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan." Center for Contemporary Conflict 17 November 2006. Johnson argues that the Taliban is more of a tribal than an Islamist movement. Johnson identifies the Ghilzai tribe as the main basis of the Taliban. Johnson also claims that the coalition forces and NATO have a very poor understanding of the insurgency and are pursuing ineffective tactics reminiscent of the Vietnam War. A much larger reconstruction effort, and a change in tactics, is needed to keep Afghanistan from "capsizing in a perfect storm of insurgency, terrorism, narcotics, and warlords."

Alan Freeman, "'Dramatic' Taliban Resurgence Detailed." Globe and Mail 14 June 2007. Freeman reported on a November 2006 Privy Council Office Report that provided an account of the situation in Afghanistan that differed from the message being delivered by the Canadian government. The PCO report, obtained through Access to Information requests, contradicted positive develop stories being released by the government.

Paul Manson,"The Taliban are Overrated." Winter 2007. Manson, the former Chief of Defence for the Canadian Forces, claimed that the Taliban suffered a severe blow in their failed attempt to take Kandahar in fall 2006. Manson argues that suicide and other bomb attacks are a symptom that the movement is currently militarily weak.

Jason Burke, "Hunt for 'traitors' splits Taliban." Guardian Unlimited 27 May 2007. Burke reports on divisions and 'spies' within the Taliban and other militant movements that are leading to some high-profile killings of Taliban leaders such as Mullah Dadullah.

Michael Scheuer, "Two wars, one approach." 19 April 2007. Scheuer, the former chief of the Bin Laden unit at the CIA from 1996-1999, analyses the sharing of tactics between the Iraq and Afghanistan insurgents, and the increasingly effective media campaign waged by the insurgencies.

Reuters, "INTERVIEW-Only peace talks can save Afghanistan-former rebel." Abdul Salaam Zaeef, the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, is one of fifty former Taliban officials approached by President Karzai to act as an intermediary in negotiations with the Taliban. Zaeef claims Karzai is serious about negotiations, though he says many are skeptical that his international backers will not allow him to go forth with such a policy. Karzai himself has claimed to have spoken to the Taliban, though a Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahedd, says the Taliban will not speak to a puppet government. Karzai has differentiated between Afghan Taliban and foreign militants, whom he says must be ‘destroyed.’ 6 April 2007 Boston.com "Afghan President: I met with Taliban."

David Montero, "New strategy in Taliban’s offensive." David Montero examines recent Taliban tactics and sees the promised spring offensive being aimed at NATO home-country audiences in the battle for public support for the Afghan operation. Kidnappings and killings are being used to terrorize Afghans and foreigners in Afghanistan, with the desired effect. Aid workers and journalists are proving to not be exempt from Taliban targeting, and this could have implications for debates on NGO neutrality in this conflict environment.

Claudio Franco, "In remote Afghan camp, Taliban explain how and why they fight." San Francisco Chronicle 21 January 2007. Journalist Claudio Franco visited an insurgent group that discussed relations between Afghans and foreign, Al Qaeda fighters, and boasted of their tactical superiority over foreign troops.

Selig Harrison, "Discarding an Afghan Opportunity." Washington Post 30 January 2007. In this article, Harrison pointed to the tribal link to the Taliban movement and the Ghilzai Pashtuns. Harrison also accused the US of being in too close collusion with the Tajik leaders of the former northern alliance, and gave praise to peace deals British forces made with tribal leaders in Helmand.

Ahmed Rashid, "Pashtuns want an image change." BBC News, 2 December 2006. Rashid covers a November 2006 ‘peace jirga’ held by Pashtuns in western Pakistan. The jirga indicated that there is a growing number of Pashtuns that want peace and a dissociation from the Taliban. The article presents interesting information on Pakistani propaganda efforts to identify the Taliban with Pashtun society, from when Pakistan openly supported the Taliban prior to 9/11.

Taliban Laheya (Book of Rules). In November, two interviewers were given this new Taliban rule book in an interview with a high-level Taliban leader, Mullah Sabir. The interview with Sabir sees him claiming widespread Taliban influence and a popular base of support amongst the population. Sabir also discusses ‘necessary’ tactics like beheadings and suicide bombings. He declares the Taliban policy to be "no official schools." The Laheya also declares all NGOs to be enemies of the Taliban and agents of the government. See: Interview with Mullah Sabir Signandsight, 28 November 2006. Warning: As of December 2006, the validity of this document must be questioned. Furthermore, the interview with Sabir must be seen in the context of propaganda.

Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan: Taliban's Second Coming." BBC Online, 30 May 2006. Rashid is a prolific writer and a journalist who has published extensively on Afghanistan. He offers
opinions on why the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated. He cites a security vacuum in the south, the failure of the West to commit sufficient financial and military resources, failed opium policies, corruption among warlord-governors, and safe havens for anti-government forces in Pakistan.

David Loyn, "Travelling with the Taliban." BBC World Online 24 October 2006. Loyn, a BBC correspondent who traveled with the Taliban in 2006, wrote of the Taliban as anti-corruption fighters and as of defending the interests of poor Afghans. The Afghans he quoted portray the British forces in Helmand as ruthless occupiers.

In an online forum where people asked questions to Loyn, Loyn said he believed the Taliban leadership is not open to dialogue with the Karzai government, and hold Karzai in contempt. Loyn also said many analysts believe Afghanistan will split into northern and southern countries. The discussion contains multiple insights into the Taliban movement. The transcript of this forum is at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/6091532.stm


Chris Sands, "Bloodshed is spreading across Afghanistan, warn aid workers." The Independent 6 June 2007. Sands reports that UN and NGO workers awitnesing teh spread of insecurity to previously stable parts of Afghanistan, jeopardizing the deliverance of development and other assistance.

Matt Dupee, "Starving Wolves: The slow death of Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami." Afgha.com 28 May 2007. Dupee chronicles the decline of Hekmatyar's once-powerful organization, telling of internal dissent, commanders switching to the government side, and a weakening of military capability. However, Dupee's sources say that until Hekkmatyar himself is captured, Hezb-i-Islami will remain a threat to government and NATO forces in the east of Afghanistan.

Imtiaz Gul, "Pakistan's Achilles Heel." The News 28 January 2007. Gul addresses the accusations by some that Pakistan is the chief factor in the insurgency by examining other factors such as narcotics, insufficient military effort, and a poorly planned political process.


The Senlis Council released a report in March 2007, "On a Knife Edge: Rapid Assessment Field Survey Southern and Eastern Afghanistan." They continue to claim hearts and minds efforts are not meeting expectations and warn that support is shifting towards the Taliban in the south.


On its website, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) presents its own perspective on the situation in Afghanistan. It provides information on its efforts 'to assist the young government [of Afghanistan] with mentoring, training, and governance, as well as counter terrorist and security support.' The multi-national coalition led by CENTCOM, called 'Combined Joint Task
Force 82', has a separate website with background information on Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

International Crisis Group "Afghanistan: New US administration new directions" 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2009. A policy review by the Obama administration has reopened debate about how to defeat the forces of violent global jihadism – al-Qaeda and its Taliban protectors – in Afghanistan and in neighbouring Pakistan. In most cases, the ideas on offer – from declaring victory and pulling out, to negotiating with the insurgents, to organising regional conferences, to prioritising relationships with favoured individuals and allies over the development of strong democratic institutions – have been tried at least once in the past two decades, with no success: we know now what not to do.

**Canada's Role**

Peter MacKay, "Canadian Foreign Policy and Our Leadership Role in Afghanistan." Keynote address given to CDFAI Conference, 30 October 2006. Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, Peter MacKay, in an address to the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, spoke only of progress and development in Afghanistan, citing money allocated to aid projects, successful elections, and Canadian democratic values at work.

Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, "Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission." (February 2007) The Standing Committee's contribution to the ongoing Afghanistan dialogue in Canada, this report is pessimistic in its findings, focusing on such problems as corruption, a lack of development, and the difficulties of operating in such a foreign culture. The report makes several recommendations including more money for development, a military role in development, more military and police trainers, and more pressure on NATO allies to make bigger contributions to the mission.

Government of Canada, "Report to Parliament: Canada's Mission in Afghanistan: Measuring Progress." February 2007 This report focuses on what has been achieved in Afghanistan, mentioning elections and funds contributed by Canada to the National Solidarity Program and other initiatives. The report does point out continuing security challenges and the problem of the fluidity of the border with Pakistan, though it says there is grounds for 'cautious optimism.'

Ernie Regehr, "Canada is ignoring its own advice." Inroads 20 Winter/Spring 2007: 62-71. Project Ploughshares Policy Advisor Regehr comments on the need for increased development and better governance, so Afghan's can find legitimacy in the Karzai government. Regehr argues that making a case for Canadian participation in the Afghan operation is easy, but current strategies must be reviewed.

Ernie Regehr, "Rethinking the Afghanistan Mission." 23 July 2007. Regehr asserts that a political process to include disaffected groups in southern Afghanistan is essential if any lasting stability is to emerge. He cites recent reports that focus on the economic and social factors behind the insurgency to support a political approach.

The Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute has published a study, "Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?" This report, authored by Gordon Smith of the University of Victoria, recommends that Canada seek to negotiate with the Taliban and separate them from Al Qaeda. It also concludes that the '3Ds' of defence, diplomacy, and development are not
working very well, and that NATO will not be able to meet its objective of creating a stable Afghanistan.

Marc André Boivin, "The Afghan mission is in Canada's national interest." Inroads 20 Winter/Spring 2007: 31-41. Boivin, coordinator of the Réseau Francophone de Recherche sur les Opérations de Paix, defended the international presence in Afghanistan and made the case for the mission being in Canada's national interest. Boivin did not, as some commentators do, deny that the situation is in need of great action.

Doug McArthur, "Don't leave Afghanistan in American hands." Inroads 20 Winter/Spring 2007: 42-52. Simon Fraser University Professor McArthur puts the common criticism of insufficient efforts in governance and development into a Canadian context. He suggests Canada's relatively large contribution in Afghanistan puts it in a position of leadership. Canadian efforts to reform development assistance and governance structures could lead others, particularly the US, to follow.

Seddiq Weera, "Can Canada Succeed in Afghanistan?" Interview in Mondial June 2006. Weera criticizes the lack of a peace process in Afghanistan, claiming that the Bonn process excluded one side of a civil war. Without bringing the Taliban into the political proc reconciliation cannot be achieved in Afghanistan. See also: Seddiq Weera, "Canada should also invest in peace in Afghanistan." Toronto Star 3 March 2006


Bruce Campion-Smith, "Hillier touts Afghan exit plan." Toronto Star 12 July 2007. General Rick Hillier has suggested Canada's mission in Afghanistan will switch to one of supporting the Afghan National Army, rather than leading operations. He claims the ANA units in Kandahar have shown a 'night-and-day shift' in improvements, and expects to see more by next spring.

Bob Bergen, "Canada's Afghan contribution needs to be seen in proper context." CDI website 10 January 2007. Dr. Bob Bergen, a research fellow with the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, wrote a rebuttal to critics of Canada's mission in Afghanistan, citing funding donations for police salaries and reconstruction as examples of Canada's commitment to a wider, non-military strategy. Bergen also criticizes those who interpreted Barnett Rubin's work as being evidence that Afghanistan is sliding into chaos, saying that Rubin provides advice for saving Afghanistan.

Sue Bailey, "Canadian to hand over NATO command." Globe and Mail 29 October 2006. Brigadier-General David Frasier, on leaving his command in Afghanistan in October 2006, expressed optimism about the situation in Kandahar. He claimed there is increased activity in the city market, and that international troops are now pushing into former 'no-go' zones.

The Senlis Council, “Five Years Later: The Return of the Taliban.” 5 September 2006; “Canada in Kandahar: No Peace to Keep.” 28 June 2006; and “Helmand at War: The changing nature of insurgency in Southern Afghanistan and its effects on the country.” 6 June 2006. This Europe-based think-tank has released several reports based on field research in Afghanistan. These reports are critical of the international community’s efforts to eradicate opium and the failure to bring development to Afghanistan.
Governance

International Crisis Group, "Afghanistan's Endangered Compact." 29 January 2007. This policy brief is a critique of the Afghanistan Compact and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board set up to oversee the Compact. It focuses on the lack of international accountability and monitoring in the process, the insufficient involvement of the National Assembly, the lack of a secretariat for the JCMB, and setting unattainable benchmarks.

World Bank, "Service Delivery and Governance at the Sub-National Level in Afghanistan." 18 July 2007. This report says not enough resources have been devoted to strengthening governance at subnational levels, allowing centralized ministries to become too powerful and giving governors too much influence in administrative affairs. It also speculates on the fate of Community Development Councils created under the National Solidarity Program once their funding expires.


Ahto Lobjakas, "Afghanistan: Kabul's Record Criticized at Brussel's Forum." 28 April 2007. Former US ambassador Richard Holbrooke said the Afghan government is moving away from democracy and alienating the Afghan public. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer echoed concerns about the values of the Afghan government, and expressed concerns that coordination of international efforts is not sufficient, and that an international coordinator was needed. Fawzai Koofi, an Afghan parliamentarian, said perhaps the current system of government in Afghanistan is too centralized.


Ann Scott Tyson, "General Warns of Perils in Afghanistan."(14 February 2007) General Karl Eikenberry, the commander of US forces in Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007, warned that the Afghan government is losing the struggle against corruption and narcotics, and that justice and law enforcement are poorly developed. Eikenberry also recommended applying more pressure on Pakistan to crack down on Taliban leadership networks in Pakistani territory.

Mike Blanchfield, "Corruption fighters." Ottawa Citizen 22 July 2007. Interviews with soldiers and Deputy SRSG Chris Alexander portray the huge extent of corruption in Afghanistan, from village councils to the highest levels of government. Both sources say the fight against corruption has only just begun.

Pamela Constable, "Top Prosecutor Targets Afghanistan's Once Untouchable Bosses." Washington Post 23 November 2006. Abdul Jabar Sabit was appointed Attorney General in August 2006. Since his appointment he has been heralded as an anti-corruption crusader,
though the resiliency of the corrupt warlords presents an enormous challenge. Sabit has said that the international community must remove the warlords from power.

International Crisis Group "Afghanistan: Elections and Crisis of Governance" 25th November 2009. This report analyzes the flawed election results and crisis of confidence it has created among the Afghan people in their government. The ICG criticises the international community for too often looking at elections as a box they can check off. This report warn them that military strategies, state-building concepts and troop deployment matter little if they cannot cauterize the damage.

International Crisis Group "Afghanistan: What now for refugees?" 31st August 2009. As international efforts focus on the worsening insurgency in Afghanistan, the issues of refugee return and the mobility of Afghans in their country and around the region have been overshadowed. Cross-border mobility will continue regardless of any attempts to curtail it. Efforts to improve security within Afghanistan and in the region must therefore integrate internal and cross-border population movements.

International Crisis Group "Afghanistan’s election challenge" 24th June 2009. With the upcoming presidential elections, The weakness of state institutions, the deteriorating security situation and the fractured political scene are all highlighted by – and will likely have a dramatic effect on – the electoral process.

**Security Sector Reform**

International Crisis Group, "Reforming Afghanistan's Police." August 2007. The authors of this report emphasize that policing goes to the very heart of state building, since a credible national institution that helps provide security and justice for the population is central to government legitimacy. They found that Afghanistan's citizens often view the police more as a source of fear than of security. The authors suggest that instead of emphasising their coercive powers, reform should focus on accountability, ethnic representation and professionalism, along with an urgent need to depoliticise and institutionalise appointments and procedures.

Andrew Wilder, "Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police," AREU July 2007. This detailed report identifies five key problem areas with police training: lack of a shared vision for the police (German civil protection view versus an American counter-insurgency view), reform of the highly corrupt Ministry of Interior, training quality police officers a opposed to more poorly trained officers, integrating the five SSR pillars into a coherent and coordinated plan, and creating security structures that are fiscally sustainable.

The United States General Accountability Office has reports available on Afghanistan. See: "Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police have made Progress, but Future Plans Need to be Better Defined." June 2005


Terry Friel, "Afghan police turn Taliban strengths against them," Reuters 15 November 2006. Terry Friel discusses a renewed emphasis on strengthening the Afghan police in Kandahar province. His article addresses the issue of who can provide security. By strengthening and improving police, locals will look to them for security as opposed to the Taliban.
**Reconstruction**

The Afghan National Development Strategy website provides updates on ANDS implementation and consultations, in addition to the ANDS itself.


The "Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007" presents the latest statistics on human development in the country, including progress made so far in achieving its Millennium Development Goals. The focus of this year’s report is on rule of law.

The Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), "'A to Z Guide' of Afghanistan Assistance." This guide includes a glossary of terms connected to the operation in Afghanistan, maps, an overview of Afghanistan’s government structure, downloadable documents, and an extensive contact list. This is a very comprehensive source.

USAID provides detailed information on its operations in Afghanistan, along with its aid strategy. See the USAID Afghanistan website.

United Nations Development Program's website provides extensive information on UNDP's and other international development activities in Afghanistan. The site also links a UNDP newsletter which highlights major UNDP activities.


Lara Logan, "Billions In Aid Wasted In Afghanistan," CBS News 25 May 2007. Poorly planned and unfinished reconstruction projects have led to great waste and contribute to the failure to win 'hearts and minds.'

Christina Caan and Scott Worden, "Rebuilding Civil Society in Afghanistan: Fragile Progress and Formidable Obstacles," United States Institute of Peace July 2007. This report highlights the difficulties in creating a capable civil society in Afghanistan. It claims the Afghan government is largely opposed to Afghan NGOs.

Jon Hemming, "Next to violence, corruption biggest problem," Reuters Alertnet 9 July 2007. Hemming interviews Afghan Central Bank governor Noorullah Delawari discusses the impact corruption has on Afghanistan, and claims sixty percent of development funds are lost to corruption. He estimates eighty percent of this goes back into the pockets of foreigners, and that money should be channeled through the Afghan government to avoid this.

Barry Bearak, "As War Enters Classrooms, Fear Grips Afghans," New York Times 10 July 2007. Bearak reports on the impact the recent slaying of two women Afghan students has had on public confidence, and discusses the apalling state of some 'schools' in the country. Mohammad Atmar, the new education minister, hopes to make a difference. His plans include building madrassas to keep students from going to Pakistani madrassas.

Soutik Biswas, "Afghan schools try to make a new start," BBC World Service 20 June 2007. Attacks on Afghan schools have hindered development, but a program encouraging locals to defend schools themselves is apparently bearing some fruit. However, people insist that the
government must take responsibility for the security of schools and must also spend more on education.

David Loyn, "Aid failings 'hit Afghan progress.'" BBC World Service 26 June 2007. Loyn investigates the inefficiency of aid and the unwillingness of the US to channel aid through the Afghan government. He reports slow progress in this area and comments on an invigorated British effort, but also claims some officials now believe the opium problem is out of control.


This documentary tracks the efforts of former journalist Sarah Chayes in undertaking a housing reconstruction project in Kandahar province. The film illustrates the challenges of official corruption and coordinating efforts with recipients.

**Protection of Civilians**

Human Rights Watch has released a new study, "The Human Cost: The Consequences of Insurgent Attacks in Afghanistan." HRW's new report calculates the number of civilians killed by insurgent and NATO attacks in Afghanistan in 2006, though the report focuses on the insurgent attacks. The report says many attacks on civilians were intentional, and are in violation of the laws of war.

In its report "Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan II", the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) outlines key challenges and recommendations with regard to the advancement of economic and social rights in Afghanistan. Over 11,000 people were interviewed, with particular attention to returnees, vulnerable groups as well as people living in remote rural areas.

**Opium**

UNODC "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2009" December 2009

In August 2007, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that opium production in Afghanistan had 'soared to frightening redord levels' with an increase on 2006 of more than a third. The "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2007" found that despite the overall increase, twice as many provinces are now drug-free in northern and central Afghanistan, and the report says growing opium poppies is now closely linked to the insurgency in the south.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan: Opium Winter Rapid Assessment Survey." February 2007. An annual survey of opium in Afghanistan citing hectares cultivated, hectares eradicated, number of people involved in opium cultivation, value of the opium crop, and even the estimated profits earned by foreign traffickers. A very comprehensive resource. The 2006 survey claimed that licit opium production is a generation away, as the Afghan government has no capacity to manage this.

The US Department of State issued a Reply to the UNODC's 2006 Afghanistan Opium Survey. While the UNODC reported marked increases in cultivation and poor results from eradication policies, the US reply was that the current strategy of alternative livelihoods, eradication, interdiction, and prosecution is sound and just needs more time to become effective.

Jon Lee Anderson, "The Taliban's Opium War." The New Yorker 9 July 2007. Anderson reports on eradication efforts from the perspective of a DEA official and a group of DynCorp employees working in Uruzgan. The various tensions with the ISAF forces, the local police, and local farmers all become apparent. The article demonstrates how ISAF forces view eradication as counterproductive to their mandate.

Eric Green, "United States Opposes Legalizing Opium Poppy Crop in Afghanistan." US Department of State 5 June 2007. Thomas Schweich, the US coordinator for counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan, makes the case for not legalizing opium poppy cultivation. His primary objection is that legal opium cannot compete with illegal opium.

Nick Grono and Joanna Nathan, "Defeating Afghanistan's drug fix." Christian Science Monitor 31 May 2007. Grono and Nathan argue against the strategy of opium eradication, saying that it will only drive up demand in the end. They also argue against the licensing production option presented by the Senlis Council, saying legal crops are not as profitable for farmers and that Afghanistan lacks the infrastructure to manage this. They see a long process of building governance and a justice system, along with a major development effort to address rural poverty, combined with targeting major traffickers as the only viable solution to the opium issue.

James Risen, "Poppy Fields Are Now a Front Line in Afghanistan War." NY Times 16 May 2007. This New York Times articles discusses current US efforts to combat the drug trade while also looking at the failure of the US administration to develop a counter-narcotics strategy for Afghanistan until 2004. The article refers to differing opinions between the State and Defence departments, and a failure to see the connections between the drug trade and the insurgency.

Dr. Doug Bland of Queen's University argued in his piece "There is no Afghan poppy problem" that opium is not an Afghan problem, it is a western problem. Until the demand side is properly dealt with, no progress will be made fighting a war on drugs at the field level in Afghanistan.

Ann Jones, "US's Afghan policies going up in smoke." Asia Times Online 1 November 2006. Ann Jones, who spent four years living and working in Kabul after the fall of the Taliban, writes of the US government's opium eradication policy and its ineffectiveness in curbing the global supply of heroin, reducing the amount of opium cultivated, stemming the insurgency, and the fact that the US encouraged Afghans to grow opium during the Soviet occupation in order to fund anti-Soviet activities. Jones gave the following discouraging numbers about the government: of 249 members of the lower house, 17 are known drug traffickers, 40 are commanders of armed militias, 24 are members of criminal gangs, and 19 are accused of serious human rights violations and war crimes.

Civil-Military Relations


Cordaid, a Dutch NGO, released a study on the debate over NGO and military interaction in Afghanistan. This study, "Principle's and Pragmatism: Civil-Military Action in Afghanistan and
Liberia.” is summarized and available online at Reliefweb: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/AMMF-6QDDKH?OpenDocument

The United States Institute of Peace has published an oral history project of interviews of government officials, soldiers, and NGO personnel who have worked with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Most of the interviews were conducted in 2005. Online at: http://www.usip.org/library/oh/afghanistan_prt.html


Regional Issues (Iran, Pakistan)

Ahmed Rashid, "America's Bad Deal with Musharraf Going Down in Flames." 17 June 2007. Rashid discusses Musharraf's efforts to remain in power and the unequivocal support offered to him by the US Department of State. According to Rashid, this is undermining democracy in the country and steering it towards failure. Rashid laments the lack of personnel knowledgeable on Pakistan in the State Department.

Globe and Mail, "Full text of interview with Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf." 23 May 2007 President Musharraf gives his take on events in Pakistan, including the relationship of Pakistan to the growth of the Taliban movement and the understanding of the West of events in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

NPR Frontline, "Return of the Taliban." 15 August 2006. Afghanistan expert Barnett Rubin talks about the historical context of the conflict along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Among many topics, Rubin mentions the fact that this is not the 'War on Terror' for Pakistan, it is part of a much longer historical struggle. Rubin claims the American administration has failed to recognize this.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Threats to Afghanistan's Transition." 8 May 2007. This transcript of a discussion with William Maley, Marvin Weinbaum, and Teresita Schaffer provides perspectives on the involvement of Pakistan in Afghanistan and also the spread of Taliban influence in Pakistan. The participants also discuss the possible roles and motivations Iran has in Afghanistan.


Dario Christiani, "Afghanistan's Role in Iranian Foreign Policy." Power and Interest News Report 26 April 2007. A discussion of Iranian motives for either assisting the Afghan government or aiding the insurgency. It is not clear if the latter is occurring.

Ismail Khan, "The root of the problem." Dawn 29 April 2007. This article delves into the tensions, tribal issues, and politics behind 'talibanization' in Pakistan.

PBS Frontline, “The Return of the Taliban.” Originally aired 3 October 2006. Available online: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/view/ This one-hour program examines the support for the Taliban in the tribal areas of Pakistan's western frontier, and the degree of involvement of the Pakistani government in dealing with this issue.


International Crisis Group “Pakistan: Countering Militancy in FATA” 21 October 2009. While state institutions in FATA are increasingly dysfunctional, the militants have dismantled or assumed control of an already fragile tribal structure. This encroaching Talibanisation is not the product of tribal traditions or resistance. It is the result of short-sighted military policies and a colonial-era body of law that isolates the region from the rest of the country, giving it an
ambiguous constitutional status and denying political freedoms and economic opportunity to the population. While the militants’ hold over FATA can be broken, the longer the state delays implementing political, administrative, judicial and economic reforms, the more difficult it will be to stabilise the region.

International Crisis Group “Pakistan’s IDP crisis: Challenges and opportunities” 3 June 2009. Almost three million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have fled to camps, homes, schools and other places of shelter across Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). The challenge for the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP)-led government and international actors is to make relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts responsive to needs and empower local communities in Malakand Division. Failure to do so will reverse any gains on the battlefield and boost radical Islamist groups.

Gender Issues

UNAMA/OCHA “Silence is Violence: End the abuse of women in Afghanistan” July 2009 July 2009. Violence is pervasive throughout Afghanistan. It has diverse manifestations in different parts of the country. Violence against women is widespread and deeply-rooted as well as acute. The violence which scars the lives of a huge proportion of Afghan women and girls is rooted in Afghan culture, customs, attitudes, and practices. The report seeks to put back on the agenda some of the issues pertaining to the enjoyment of all human rights by all Afghan women that are being increasingly ignored.

Human Rights Watch "We have the promises of the world" December 2009. This 96-page report details emblematic cases of ongoing rights violations in five areas: attacks on women in public life; violence against women; child and forced marriage; access to justice; and girls’ access to secondary education.

Soutik Biswas, "Women under siege in Afghanistan," BBC World Service 20 June 2007. Biswas reports on the state of constant threat endured by some women MPs, as well as the social difficulties facing many Afghan women.

Craig Charney and Isobel Coleman, "There are grounds for hope in Afghanistan," Globe and Mail 18 June 2007. Charney and Coleman cite results from and ABC news survey to indicate that Afghans have mostly turned away from the Taliban's strict policies towards women. They cite anecdotal evidence of schools being rebuilt four times by local communities to show Afghan determination.

Brinley Bruton, "Afghan women suffer in silence," Reuters 14 November 2006Brinley Bruton, using the experience of one woman's plight in Afghanistan, not only demonstrates the societal challenges women face, but also the dangers of aid projects that focus exclusively on women. By excluding men in a patriarchal society, there can be a backlash at women's expense.

"Afghan women seek death by fire." BBC 16 November 2006 The title of this article is explicit in its position on the plight of Afghan women. One issue focused on is forced marriage and the trauma it can cause.

"Afghanistan's only female minister takes on domestic violence," Associated Press 21 November 2006 This article discusses the efforts of Minister Hussn Banu Ghazanfar to pass legislation banning forced marriages and establishing safe shelters for women.
Natasha Walter, "We are just watching things get worse." The Guardian 28 November 2006

Natasha Walter summarizes the plight of Afghan women and their disappointment in the lack of change since the US-led intervention. Walter ties the lack of progress in women's rights to the failure of the international community to deliver on development promises, and US backing of the warlords.


**News feeds & Internet Resources**

**Afghanistan Conflict Monitor** This website is a project of the Human Security network at Simon Fraser University. The site summarizes and links to the latest studies, news items, and reports on Afghanistan. It is complimented by a news update service that users can subscribe to, **Afghanistan Security News**.

**Afghanistan News.net** is an online news site that provides daily news stories on the situation in Afghanistan.

**e-Ariana** is another online news source providing current news articles on Afghanistan from a large variety of sources. It also includes archived articles.

**Afghan Links** presents users with up-to-date news items on Afghanistan as well as linking key Afghan resources. Users can contribute material to the site, and there is also a listserv available.

**WarReport** is a site providing news updates, opinion pieces, and articles on Afghanistan (and Iraq). Old material is archived, and it includes an 'Editor's picks' section. WarReport is a project of the US-based Project on Defence Alternatives. A very in-depth resource.

**Opérations de Paix** provides information on the mission in Afghanistan as well as 32 other peace operations, in French.

**Crisis Profile, Afghanistan**, Reuters Alertnet

**Afghanistan Watch** collects news feeds on Afghanistan-related articles and organizes them by subject heading.

**Afghanwire** is a collection of stories from Afghan news sources, providing a local perspective on various issues. The site offers a daily email listserve of events.

**Development Gateway** maintains a website providing news updates and links to other resources on Afghanistan.

**Reliefweb Country Page for Afghanistan** Provides a newsfeed of development and security-related articles and resources.

International Crisis Group **Security in Afghanistan** Provides assessments and evaluations of the current situation in Afghanistan.
British Agencies Afghanistan Group publishes a Monthly Review on Afghanistan. This publication functions as an update of the situation on the ground.

**Monographs**


Further Sources

The Center on International Cooperation maintains a research project on Afghanistan and has links to a number of publications related to Afghanistan's development. http://www.cic.nyu.edu/archive/conflict/conflict_project4.html

McMaster University in Canada ran an Afghan Peace Project. This site has not been updated since 2003, but it does offer an excellent and detailed conflict map of Afghanistan, highlighting multiple historical and current sources of conflict in the country. Online at: http://humanities.mcmaster.ca/~mpeia/afghanistan.htm

Barnett Rubin also administers a Yahoo! user group on Afghanistan, Barnett Rubin's Afghanistan List. The group includes a newsletter of up-to-date news releases and articles on Afghanistan, as well as a forum for discussion. It is available at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/brrafghan/

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This site contains regular news updates on the situation in Afghanistan and UN-related activities, in addition to a conflict background, a link to relevant publications and UN documents, and an overview of the UN in Afghanistan.

UNAMA produces a publication, Afghan Update, which is released irregularly. This publication offers a variety of UN-related and non-related stories.

Swisspeace manages "FAST International" which provides a detailed country update on Afghanistan. http://www.swisspeace.org/fast/asia_afghanistan.htm

International Crisis Group monitors conflicts based on qualitative data and produces comprehensive reports on selected topics to the overall situation in Afghanistan. http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1266&i=1


Internet Guide to Sources on Afghanistan, INCORE, http://lugh.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries/afghan.html

Afghanistan Research Newsletter, No. 9, April 2006. (Lists all latest research and publications on Afghanistan) http://www.areu.org.af/newsletter/Research%20Newsletter%20April%202006%20ENGLISH.pdf

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http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0IBR/is_3_35/ai_n15674659

"Afghanistan: Peacebuilding in a Regional Perspective." Christian Michelsen Institute,
http://www.cmi.no/afghanistan/index.cfm?id=1&Home


Afghanistan Interactive Map, Reuters Alertnet Site
http://www.alertnet.org/map/index.htm?places=&fb_emergencycodes=AF_REC

http://www.slate.com/id/2144094/

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http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/

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http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/08/the_ultimate_afghan_reading_list

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime – Afghanistan
http://www.unodc.org/afghanistan/

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