



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

Kenneth Katzman
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs

April 4, 2012

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

RL30588

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE 04 APR 2012		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2012 to 00-00-2012	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) The Library of Congress ,Congressional Research Service,101 Independence Ave, SE,Washington,DC,20540				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

Summary

The Obama Administration and several of its partner countries appear to be seeking to reduce U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan more rapidly than was previously envisioned, but without jeopardizing existing gains. Stated U.S. policy is to ensure that Afghanistan will not again become a base for terrorist attacks against the United States. Following policy reviews in 2009, the Obama Administration asserted that it was pursuing a well-resourced and integrated military-civilian strategy intended to pave the way for a gradual transition to Afghan leadership from July 2011 until the end of 2014. During 2009-2010, 51,000 U.S. forces were added that brought U.S. troop numbers to 99,000, with partners providing about 42,000. On June 22, 2011, President Obama announced that the policy had accomplished most major U.S. goals and that a drawdown of 33,000 U.S. troops would take place by September 2012—the first 10,000 were withdrawn by the end of 2011 and the remainder of that number will leave by September 2012. The transition to Afghan leadership began, as planned, in July 2011, and Afghan forces are now in the lead in areas that include over 50% of all Afghans. On February 1, 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta indicated that U.S. military involvement would transition from combat to a training and advisory mission by mid-2013, a timeframe affirmed by President Obama in late March.

The Administration view is that, no matter the U.S. and allied drawdown schedule, security gains could be at risk from weak Afghan governance and insurgent safe haven in Pakistan, and that Afghanistan will still need direct security assistance after 2014. Afghan governance is perceived as particularly weak and corrupt, despite the holding of regular elections since 2004 and the establishment of several overlapping anti-corruption institutions. In order to frame the long-term security relationship, U.S. and Afghan officials are negotiating a “strategic partnership,” although differences over U.S. latitude to conduct operations still hold up completion of that pact.

As the transition proceeds, there is increasing emphasis on negotiating a settlement to the conflict. That process has advanced sporadically since 2010, and have not, to date, advanced to a discussion of specific proposals to settle the conflict. Afghanistan’s minorities and women’s groups worry about a potential settlement, fearing it might produce compromises with the Taliban that erode human rights and ethnic power-sharing.

To promote long-term growth and prevent a severe economic downturn as international donors scale back their involvement in Afghanistan, U.S. officials also hope to draw on Afghanistan’s vast mineral and agricultural resources. Several major privately funded mining, agricultural, and even energy development programs have begun in the past few years, with more in various stages of consideration. U.S. officials also look to greater Afghanistan integration into regional trade and investment patterns—as part of a “New Silk Road (NSR)” economic strategy—to help compensate for the reduction in foreign economic involvement in Afghanistan. Still, Afghanistan will likely remain dependent on foreign aid until 2025. Through the end of FY2011, the United States has provided over \$67 billion in assistance to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, of which about \$39 billion has been to equip and train Afghan forces. During FY2001-FY2011, the Afghan intervention has cost about \$443 billion, including all costs. For FY2012, about \$16 billion in aid (including train and equip) is to be provided, in addition to about \$90 billion for U.S. military operations there, and \$9.2 billion in aid is requested for FY2013. (See CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

Contents

Background.....	1
From Early History to the 19 th Century	1
Early 20 th Century and Cold War Era	1
Soviet Invasion and Occupation Period.....	2
The Seven Major “ <i>Mujahedin</i> ” Parties and Their Activities.....	3
Geneva Accords (1988) and Soviet Withdrawal.....	3
The <i>Mujahedin</i> Government and Rise of the Taliban.....	4
Taliban Rule (September 1996-November 2001).....	5
U.S. Policy Toward the Taliban During Its Rule/Bin Laden Presence.....	5
The “Northern Alliance” Congeals.....	6
Policy Pre-September 11, 2001	7
September 11 Attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom	7
Post-Taliban Governance-Building Efforts	9
U.S. and International Civilian Policy Structure	11
Security Policy, 2011-2014 “Transition, and Beyond”	13
Who Is “The Enemy”? Taliban, Haqqani, Al Qaeda, and Others.....	13
Groups: The Taliban (“Quetta Shura Taliban”).....	13
Al Qaeda/Bin Laden.....	14
Hikmatyar Faction.....	15
Haqqani Faction	15
Pakistani Groups	17
Insurgent Tactics.....	17
Insurgent Financing: Narcotics Trafficking and Other Methods.....	18
The U.S.-Led Military Effort: 2001-2008	19
Perception of “Victory,” Followed by Setback and Deterioration.....	19
Obama Administration Surge	21
Review and December 1, 2009 Surge and Transition Announcement	21
July 2011 “Deadline” Becomes “Transition” By the End of 2014.....	22
Surge Implementation and Results.....	23
Transition and Drawdown	25
First Tranche of Transition.....	25
Unwinding of the Surge Announced June 22, 2011	25
Transition Continues: Second Tranche.....	26
Mission Changes with Drawdown: Faster Transition to Afghan Combat Lead.....	26
Legislatively Mandated Accelerated Drawdown?.....	27
Beyond 2014: Long-Term Commitment/Strategic Partnership Agreement/Alternatives	27
Strategic Partnership Agreement	28
No “SOFA” in Place Currently	29
Threats to Long-Term U.S. Presence: Civilian Casualties and Quran-Mishandling Protests.....	29
Alternatives for the Post-Transition Period.....	30
Transition Pillar: Building Afghan Forces and Establishing Rule of Law	31
Current Size and Target Size	32
Training Overview	32
The Afghan National Army (ANA).....	33
Afghan Air Force.....	34
Afghan National Police (ANP)	34

Rule of Law/Criminal Justice Sector.....	38
ANSF Funding	38
Policy Component: Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)	39
Karzai Criticism of PRTs.....	40
Cooperation With Allies/Preventing Early Allied Exits	40
Major Contingent Developments During the U.S. “Surge”	42
Security/Political Initiatives To Facilitate the Transition	43
“Reintegration” and “Reconciliation” With Insurgents.....	43
Regional Dimension	47
Pakistan/Pakistan-Afghanistan Border	50
Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations	51
Iran.....	52
Iran’s Development Aid for Afghanistan.....	53
Iranian Assistance to Afghan Militants and to Pro-Iranian Groups and Regions.....	53
Bilateral Government-to-Government Relations	54
India.....	55
India’s Development Activities in Afghanistan.....	55
Russia, Central Asian States, and China.....	56
Russia/Northern Distribution Network	56
Central Asian States	57
China	59
Persian Gulf States: Saudi Arabia and UAE.....	59
UAE Involvement	60
Qatar.....	60
Keys to Afghanistan’s Post-War Future: U.S. and International Aid and	
Economic Development.....	61
U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan.....	61
Aid Oversight.....	62
Aid Authorization: Afghanistan Freedom Support Act	62
Direct Support to the Afghan Government.....	63
Sustaining Aid Beyond the Transition.....	65
Development in Key Sectors	66
Education.....	66
Health	66
Roads.....	67
Bridges	67
Railways.....	67
Electricity	68
Agriculture	69
Telecommunications.....	70
Airlines.....	70
Mining and Gems	70
Oil, Gas, and Related Pipelines.....	71
Trade Promotion/Reconstruction Opportunity Zones.....	72
Residual Issues from Past Conflicts.....	83
Stinger Retrieval	83
Mine Eradication	83

Figures

Figure A-1. Map of Afghanistan.....	86
Figure A-2. Map of Afghan Ethnicities	87

Tables

Table 1. Afghanistan Political Transition Process.....	10
Table 2. U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).....	12
Table 3. Summary of Current U.S. Strategy and Implementation	23
Table 4. Operation Enduring Freedom Partner Forces	31
Table 5. Background on NATO/ISAF Formation and U.N. Mandate.....	42
Table 6. Major Security-Related Indicators	47
Table 7. Afghan and Regional Facilities Used for Operations in and Supply Lines to Afghanistan	49
Table 8. Major Reporting Requirements.....	65
Table 9. Comparative Social and Economic Statistics.....	73
Table 10. Major Non-U.S. Donors to Afghanistan 2002-2011	74
Table 11. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1978-FY1998.....	75
Table 12. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1999-FY2001	76
Table 13. Post-Taliban U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan	77
Table 14. Total Obligations for Major Programs: FY2001-FY2010.....	79
Table 15. NATO/ISAF Contributing Nations	80
Table 16. Provincial Reconstruction Teams.....	81
Table 17. Major Factions/Leaders in Afghanistan	82

Appendixes

Appendix. U.S. and International Sanctions Lifted.....	84
--	----

Contacts

Author Contact Information.....	87
---------------------------------	----

Background

Afghanistan has a history of a high degree of decentralization, and resistance to foreign invasion and occupation. Some have termed it the “graveyard of empires.”

From Early History to the 19th Century

Alexander the Great conquered what is now Afghanistan in three years (330 B.C.E. to 327 B.C.E), although at significant cost and with significant difficulty, and requiring, among other steps, marriage to a resident of the conquered territory. For example, he was unable to fully pacify Bactria, an ancient region spanning what is now northern Afghanistan and parts of the neighboring Central Asian states. (A collection of valuable Bactrian gold was hidden from the Taliban when it was in power and emerged from the Taliban period unscathed.) From the third to the eighth century, A.D., Buddhism was the dominant religion in Afghanistan. At the end of the seventh century, Islam spread in Afghanistan when Arab invaders from the Umayyad Dynasty defeated the Persian empire of the Sassanians. In the 10th century, Muslim rulers called Samanids, from Bukhara (in what is now Uzbekistan), extended their influence into Afghanistan, and the complete conversion of Afghanistan to Islam occurred during the rule of the Gaznavids in the 11th century. They ruled over the first vast Islamic empire based in what is now Ghazni province of Afghanistan.

In 1504, Babur, a descendent of the conquerors Tamarlane and Genghis Khan, took control of Kabul and then moved on to India, establishing the Mughal Empire. (Babur is buried in the Babur Gardens complex in Kabul, which has been refurbished with the help of the Agha Khan Foundation.) Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, Afghanistan was fought over by the Mughal Empire and the Safavid Dynasty of Persia (now Iran), with the Safavids mostly controlling Herat and western Afghanistan, and the Mughals controlling Kabul and the east. A monarchy ruled by ethnic Pashtuns was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani, who was a senior officer in the army of Nadir Shah, ruler of Persia, when Nadir Shah was assassinated and Persian control over Afghanistan weakened.

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

Early 20th Century and Cold War Era

King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) launched attacks on British forces in Afghanistan (Third Anglo-Afghan War) shortly after taking power and won complete independence from Britain as recognized in the Treaty of Rawalpindi (August 8, 1919). He was considered a secular modernizer presiding over a government in which all ethnic minorities participated. He was succeeded by King Mohammad Nadir Shah (1929-1933), and then by King Mohammad Zahir Shah. Zahir Shah’s reign (1933-1973) is remembered fondly by many older Afghans for promulgating a constitution in 1964 that established a national legislature and promoting freedoms for women, including dropping a requirement that they cover their face and hair. In part, the countryside was secured during the King’s time by local tribal militias called *arbokai*.

However, possibly believing that he could limit Soviet support for Communist factions in Afghanistan, Zahir Shah also built ties to the Soviet government by entering into a significant political and arms purchase relationship with the Soviet Union. The Soviets built large infrastructure projects in Afghanistan during Zahir Shah's time, such as the north-south Salang Pass/Tunnel and Bagram airfield.

This period was the height of the Cold War, and the United States sought to prevent Afghanistan from falling into the Soviet orbit. As Vice President, Richard Nixon visited Afghanistan in 1953, and President Eisenhower visited in 1959. President Kennedy hosted King Zahir Shah in 1963. The United States tried to use aid to counter Soviet influence, providing agricultural and other development assistance. Among the major U.S.-funded projects were large USAID-led irrigation and hydroelectric dam efforts in Helmand Province, including Kajaki Dam (see below).

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

Soviet Invasion and Occupation Period

The Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, to prevent further gains by the Islamic militias, known as the *mujahedin* (Islamic fighters). Upon their invasion, the Soviets replaced Amin with another PDPA leader perceived as pliable, Babrak Karmal (Parcham faction of the PDPA), who was part of the 1978 PDPA takeover but was exiled by Taraki and Amin.

Soviet occupation forces numbered about 120,000. They were assisted by Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) military forces of about 25,000-40,000, supplemented by about 20,000 paramilitary and tribal militia forces, including the PDPA-dominated organization called the *Sarandoy*. The combined Soviet and Afghan forces were never able to pacify the outlying areas of the country. DRA forces were consistently plagued by desertions and its effectiveness on behalf of the Soviets was limited. The *mujahedin* benefited from U.S. weapons and assistance, provided through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in cooperation with Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence directorate (ISI).

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

The Seven Major “*Mujahedin*” Parties and Their Activities

The mujahedin were also relatively well organized and coordinated by seven major parties that in early 1989 formed a Peshawar-based “Afghan Interim Government” (AIG). The seven party leaders and their parties—sometimes referred to as the “Peshawar 7”—were Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi (Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan); Sibghatullah Mojaddedi (Afghan National Liberation Front); Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (Hezb-i-Islam—Gulbuddin, Islamic Party of Gulbuddin); Burhanuddin Rabbani (Jamiat Islami, Islamic Society); Yunus Khalis (Hezb-i-Islam); Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf (Ittihad Islami, Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan); and Pir Gaylani (National Islamic Front). Mohammadi and Khalis have died in recent years of natural causes, and Rabbani was killed in a September 20, 2011, assassination. The others are still active in Afghan politics and governance or, in the case of Hikmatyar, fighting the Afghan government.

The *mujahedin* weaponry included U.S.-supplied portable shoulder-fired anti-aircraft systems called “Stingers,” which proved highly effective against Soviet aircraft. The United States decided in 1985 to provide these weapons to the mujahedin after substantial debate within the Reagan Administration and some in Congress over whether they could be used effectively and whether doing so would harm broader U.S.-Soviet relations. The *mujahedin* also hid and stored weaponry in a large network of natural and manmade tunnels and caves throughout Afghanistan. However, some warned that a post-Soviet power structure in Afghanistan could be adverse to U.S. interests because much of the covert aid was being channeled to the Islamist groups including those of Hikmatyar and Sayyaf.

Partly because of the effectiveness of the Stinger in shooting down Soviet helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, the Soviet Union’s losses mounted—about 13,400 Soviet soldiers were killed in the war, according to Soviet figures—turning Soviet domestic opinion against the war. In 1986, after the reformist Mikhail Gorbachev became leader, the Soviets replaced Karmal with the director of Afghan intelligence, Najibullah Ahmedzai (known by his first name). Najibullah was a Ghilzai Pashtun, and was from the Parcham faction of the PDPA. Some Afghans say that some aspects of his governing style were admirable, particularly his appointment of a prime minister (Sultan Ali Keshtmand and others) to handle administrative duties and distribute power.

Geneva Accords (1988) and Soviet Withdrawal

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

The State Department has said that a total of about \$3 billion in economic and covert military assistance was provided by the U.S. to the Afghan *mujahedin* from 1980 until the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989. Press reports say the covert aid program grew from about \$20 million per year in FY1980 to about \$300 million per year during FY1986-FY1990.² The Soviet pullout

² For FY1991, Congress reportedly cut covert aid appropriations to the *mujahedin* from \$300 million the previous year (continued...)

decreased the perceived strategic value of Afghanistan, causing a reduction in subsequent covert funding. As indicated in **Table 11**, U.S. assistance to Afghanistan remained at relatively low levels from the time of the Soviet withdrawal, validating the views of many that the United States largely considered its role in Afghanistan “completed” when Soviets troops left, and there was little support for a major U.S. effort to rebuild the country. The United States closed its embassy in Kabul in January 1989, as the Soviet Union was completing its pullout, and it remained so until the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

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

The *Mujahedin* Government and Rise of the Taliban

The fall of Najibullah exposed the differences among the *mujahedin* parties. The leader of one of the smaller parties (Afghan National Liberation Front), Islamic scholar Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, was president during April-May 1992. Under an agreement among the major parties, Rabbani became president in June 1992 with agreement that he would serve until December 1994. He refused to step down at that time, saying that political authority would disintegrate without a clear successor. That decision was strongly opposed by other *mujahedin* leaders, including Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Pashtun, and leader of the Islamist conservative Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin *mujahedin* party. Hikmatyar and several allied factions began fighting to dislodge Rabbani. Rabbani reached an agreement for Hikmatyar to serve as Prime Minister, if Hikmatyar would cease the shelling Kabul that had destroyed much of the western part of the city. However, because of Hikmatyar’s distrust of Rabbani, he never formally assumed a working prime ministerial role in Kabul.

In 1993-1994, Afghan Islamic clerics and students, mostly of rural, Pashtun origin, formed the Taliban movement. Many were former *mujahedin* who had become disillusioned with conflict among *mujahedin* parties and had moved into Pakistan to study in Islamic seminaries (“madrassas”) mainly of the “Deobandi” school of Islam.⁴ Some say this interpretation of Islam is similar to the “Wahhabism” that is practiced in Saudi Arabia. Taliban practices were also consonant with conservative Pashtun tribal traditions. The Taliban’s leader, Mullah Muhammad Umar, had been a fighter in Khalis’s Hezb-i-Islam party during the anti-Soviet war—Khalis’ party

(...continued)

to \$250 million, with half the aid withheld until the second half of the fiscal year. See “Country Fact Sheet: Afghanistan,” in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, vol. 5, no. 23 (June 6, 1994), p. 377.

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

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

was generally considered moderate Islamist during the anti-Soviet war, but Khalis and his faction turned against the United States in the mid-1990s. Many of his fighters, such as Mullah Umar, followed Khalis' lead. Umar had lost an eye in the anti-Soviet war.

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

Taliban Rule (September 1996-November 2001)

The Taliban regime was led by Mullah Muhammad Umar, as noted. Umar held the title of Head of State and “Commander of the Faithful,” remaining in the Taliban power base in Qandahar and almost never appearing in public, although he did occasionally receive high-level foreign officials. Al Qaeda leaders Osama bin Laden relocated from Sudan to Afghanistan, where he had been a recruiter of Arab fighters during the anti-Soviet war, in May 1996. He at first was located in territory in Nangarhar province controlled by Hezb-i-Islam of Yunus Khalis (Mullah Umar's party leader) but then had free reign in Afghanistan as the Taliban captured nearly all the territory in Afghanistan. Umar reportedly forged a political and personal bond with Bin Laden and refused U.S. demands to extradite him. Like Umar, most of the senior figures in the Taliban regime were Ghilzai Pashtuns, which predominate in eastern Afghanistan. They are rivals of the Durrani Pashtuns, who are predominant in the south.

The Taliban lost international and domestic support as it imposed strict adherence to Islamic customs in areas it controlled and employed harsh punishments, including executions. The Taliban authorized its “Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice,” headed by Maulvi Qalamuddin, to use physical punishments to enforce strict Islamic practices, including bans on television, Western music, and dancing. It prohibited women from attending school or working outside the home, except in health care, and it publicly executed some women for adultery. In what many consider its most extreme action, and which some say was urged by Bin Laden, in March 2001 the Taliban blew up two large Buddha statues carved into hills above Bamiyan city, considering them idols.

U.S. Policy Toward the Taliban During Its Rule/Bin Laden Presence

The Clinton Administration opened talks with the Taliban after it captured Qandahar in 1994, and engaged the movement after it took power. However, the Administration was unable to moderate its policies and relations worsened throughout the Taliban period of rule. The United States withheld recognition of Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, formally recognizing no faction as the government. The United Nations continued to seat representatives of the Rabbani government, not the Taliban. The State Department ordered the Afghan embassy in Washington, DC, closed in August 1997. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1193 (August 28, 1998) and 1214 (December 8, 1998) urged the Taliban to end discrimination against women.

Women's rights groups urged the Clinton Administration not to recognize the Taliban government. In May 1999, the Senate-passed S.Res. 68 called on the President not to recognize an Afghan government that oppresses women.

The Taliban's hosting of Al Qaeda's leadership gradually became the Clinton Administration's overriding agenda item with Afghanistan. In April 1998, then-U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson (along with Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth and NSC senior official Bruce Riedel) visited Afghanistan, but the Taliban refused to hand over Bin Laden. They did not meet Mullah Umar. After the August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Clinton Administration began to strongly pressure the Taliban to extradite him, imposing U.S. sanctions on Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and achieving adoption of some U.N. sanctions as well. On August 20, 1998, as a response to the Africa embassy bombings, the United States fired cruise missiles at alleged Al Qaeda training camps in eastern Afghanistan, but Bin Laden was not hit.⁵ Some observers assert that the Administration missed several other opportunities to strike him, including a purported sighting of him by an unarmed Predator drone at the Tarnak Farm camp in Afghanistan in the fall of 2000.⁶ Clinton Administration officials said that domestic and international support for ousting the Taliban militarily was lacking.

The "Northern Alliance" Congeals

The Taliban's policies caused different Afghan factions to ally with the Tajik core of the anti-Taliban opposition—the ousted President Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Masud, and their ally in the Herat area, Ismail Khan. Joining the Tajik factions in the broader "Northern Alliance" were Uzbek, Hazara Shiite, and even some Pashtun Islamist factions discussed below. Virtually all the figures mentioned remain key players in politics in Afghanistan, sometimes allied with and at other times adversaries of President Hamid Karzai. (For more information on many of these figures, see CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

- **Uzbeks/General Dostam.** One major faction was the Uzbek militia (the Junbush-Melli, or National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) of General Abdul Rashid Dostam. Frequently referred to by some Afghans as one of the "warlords" who gained power during the anti-Soviet war, Dostam first joined those seeking to oust Rabbani during his 1992-1996 presidency, but later joined him and the other Northern Alliance factions opposed to the Taliban.
- **Hazara Shiites.** Members of Hazara tribes, mostly Shiite Muslims, are prominent in Bamiyan, Dai Kundi, and Ghazni provinces (central Afghanistan) and are always fearful of, and subject to some extent to, repression by Pashtuns and other larger ethnic factions. The Hazaras have tended to serve in working class and domestic household jobs, although more recently they have been prominent in technology jobs in Kabul, raising their economic status. They are also increasingly cohesive politically, leading to gains in the September 2010 parliamentary elections. During the various Afghan wars, the main Hazara Shiite

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

⁶ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4540958>.

militia was Hizb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party, composed of eight different groups). Hizb-e-Wahdat suffered a major setback in 1995 when the Taliban captured and killed its leader Abdul Ali Mazari. One of Karzai's vice president's Karim Khalili, is a Hazara. Another prominent Hazara faction leader, Mohammad Mohaqeq, is a Karzai critic.

- **Pashtun Islamists/Sayyaf.** Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf, now a leading Islamic conservative in parliament, headed a Pashtun-dominated hardline Islamist *mujahedin* faction (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, *Ittihad Islami*) during the anti-Soviet war. Even though he is an Islamist conservative, Sayyaf viewed the Taliban as selling out Afghanistan to Al Qaeda and he joined the Northern Alliance.

Policy Pre-September 11, 2001

Throughout 2001, but prior to the September 11 attacks, Bush Administration policy differed little from Clinton Administration policy—applying economic and political pressure on the Taliban while retaining some dialogue with it, and refraining from militarily assisting the Northern Alliance. The September 11 Commission report said that, in the months prior to the September 11 attacks, Administration officials leaned toward such a step. The report added that some officials wanted, in addition, to assist ethnic Pashtuns who were opposed to the Taliban. Other covert options were reportedly under consideration as well.⁷ In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, in February 2001 the State Department ordered the Taliban representative office in New York closed, although Taliban representative Abdul Hakim Mujahid continued to operate informally.⁸ In March 2001, Administration officials received a Taliban envoy to discuss bilateral issues. In one significant departure from Clinton Administration policy, the Bush Administration stepped up engagement with Pakistan to try to reduce its support for the Taliban. At that time, there were widespread but unconfirmed allegations by U.S. experts that Pakistani advisers were helping the Taliban in their fight against the Northern Alliance.

Even though the Northern Alliance was supplied with Iranian, Russian, and Indian financial and military support—all of whom had different motives for that support—the Northern Alliance nonetheless continued to lose ground to the Taliban after it lost Kabul in 1996. By the time of the September 11 attacks, the Taliban controlled at least 75% of the country, including almost all provincial capitals. The Alliance suffered a major setback on September 9, 2001 (two days before, and possibly an integral part of, the September 11 attacks), when Ahmad Shah Masud was assassinated by Al Qaeda operatives posing as journalists. He was succeeded by his intelligence chief, Muhammad Fahim,⁹ a veteran figure but one who lacked Masud's undisputed authority.

September 11 Attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom

After the September 11 attacks, the Bush Administration decided to militarily overthrow the Taliban when it refused a final U.S. offer to extradite Bin Laden in order to avoid military action. President Bush articulated a policy that equated those who harbor terrorists to terrorists

⁷ Drogin, Bob. "U.S. Had Plan for Covert Afghan Options Before 9/11." *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 2002.

⁸ Mujahid has reconciled with the current Afghan government, and serves as one of the deputy leaders of the 70-member High Council on political reconciliation.

⁹ Some Afghan sources refer to him by the name "Fahim Khan," or "Marshal Fahim."

themselves, and judged that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to enable U.S. forces to search for Al Qaeda personnel there. The Administration sought and obtained U.N. backing: U.N. Security Council Resolution 1368 of September 12, 2001, said that the Council “expresses its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond (implying force) to the September 11 attacks.”

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

In Congress, S.J.Res. 23 (passed 98-0 in the Senate and with no objections in the House, P.L. 107-40, signed September 18, 2001), was somewhat more explicit than the U.N. Resolution, authorizing¹⁰ “all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 *or harbored such organizations or persons.*”

Major combat in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF) began on October 7, 2001. It consisted primarily of U.S. air-strikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, facilitated by the cooperation between reported small numbers (about 1,000) of U.S. special operations forces and Central Intelligence Agency operatives. The purpose of these operations was to help the Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces by providing information to direct U.S. air strikes against Taliban positions. In part, the U.S. forces and operatives worked with such Northern Alliance contacts as Fahim and Amrollah Saleh, who during November 2001-June 2010 served as Afghanistan’s intelligence director, to weaken Taliban defenses on the Shomali plain north of Kabul (and just south of Bagram Airfield, which marked the forward position of the Northern Alliance during Taliban rule). Some U.S. combat units (about 1,300 Marines) moved into Afghanistan to pressure the Taliban around Qandahar at the height of the fighting (October-December 2001), but there were few pitched battles between U.S. and Taliban soldiers.

The Taliban regime unraveled rapidly after it lost Mazar-e-Sharif on November 9, 2001, to forces led by Dostam.¹¹ Northern Alliance (mainly the Tajik faction) forces—the commanders of which had initially promised then-Secretary of State Colin Powell that they would not enter Kabul—entered the capital on November 12, 2001, to popular jubilation. The Taliban subsequently lost the south and east to U.S.-supported Pashtun leaders, including Hamid Karzai. The end of the Taliban regime is generally dated as December 9, 2001, when the Taliban surrendered Qandahar and Mullah Umar fled the city, leaving it under Pashtun tribal law.

Subsequently, U.S. and Afghan forces conducted “Operation Anaconda” in the Shah-i-Kot Valley south of Gardez (Paktia Province) during March 2-19, 2002, against 800 Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. In March 2003, about 1,000 U.S. troops raided suspected Taliban or Al Qaeda fighters in villages around Qandahar (Operation Valiant Strike). On May 1, 2003, then-Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld announced an end to “major combat.”

¹⁰ Another law (P.L. 107-148) established a “Radio Free Afghanistan” under RFE/RL, providing \$17 million in funding for it for FY2002.

¹¹ In the process, Dostam captured Taliban fighters and imprisoned them in freight containers, causing many to suffocate. They were buried in a mass grave at *Dasht-e-Laili*.

Post-Taliban Governance-Building Efforts¹²

The Bush Administration argued that leaving the region after the 1989 Soviet pullout allowed Afghanistan to degenerate into chaos, and it decided to try to build a relatively strong Afghan central government and economy, both of which were devastated by decades of war. The effort, which many outside experts described as “nation-building,” was supported by the United Nations, international institutions, and U.S. partners in several post-Taliban international meetings.

The Obama Administration’s strategy review in late 2009 narrowed official U.S. goals to preventing terrorism safe haven in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the elements of Obama Administration strategy during 2009-2011 continued, and in some cases expanded, the nation-building programs put in place by the Bush Administration.¹³ No matter how expansively the U.S. mission has been defined, building the capacity of and reforming Afghan governance—particularly reducing governmental corruption—have been consistently and widely judged to be key to the success of U.S. policy. This has been stated explicitly in each Obama Administration policy review, strategy statement, and report on progress in Afghanistan, as well as all major international conferences on Afghanistan, including the major conference in Bonn on December 5, 2011. That was held at the 10th anniversary of the Bonn Agreement that began the post-Taliban political transition.

The conclusion of virtually every Administration and outside assessment has been that the task of building governmental capacity, effectiveness, and transparency has proved slower and more difficult than anticipated. The deficiencies in governance have been widely assessed as a key factor that could cause Afghanistan to descend back into chaos following the transition to Afghan leadership that is to take place by 2014. Some observers believe the international community had unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved in a relatively short time frame. A major factor that most assessments of Afghan governance highlight is the still-rampant corruption and cronyism in government and elite circles, which hampers the effectiveness of transparent and trusted government and private economic institutions and processes. All of the major measures of Afghan governance, such as the government’s capacity, effectiveness, and competence, as well as elections, corruption, and human rights issues, are assessed extensively in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman. **Table 1** depicts, in brief, the process and events that led to the formation of the post-Taliban government of Afghanistan.

¹² Governance issues are analyzed in detail in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman.

¹³ Text of the released summary is at <http://documents.nytimes.com/the-obama-administrations-overview-on-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

Table I. Afghanistan Political Transition Process

Interim Administration	Formed by Bonn Agreement. Headed by Hamid Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, but key security positions dominated by mostly minority “Northern Alliance.” Karzai reaffirmed as leader by June 2002 “emergency <i>loya jirga</i> .” (A <i>jirga</i> is a traditional Afghan assembly.)
Constitution	Approved by January 2004 “Constitutional <i>Loya Jirga</i> ” (CLJ). Set up strong presidency, a rebuke to Northern Alliance that wanted prime ministership to balance presidential power, but gave parliament significant powers to compensate. Gives men and women equal rights under the law, allows for political parties as long as they are not “un-Islamic;” allows for court rulings according to Hanafi (Sunni) Islam (Chapter 7, Article 15). Set out electoral roadmap for simultaneous (if possible) presidential, provincial, and district elections by June 2004. Named ex-King Zahir Shah to non-hereditary position of “Father of the Nation;” he died July 23, 2007.
Presidential Election	Elections for president and two vice presidents, for five-year term, held October 9, 2004. Turnout was 80% of 10.5 million registered. Karzai and running mates (Ahmad Zia Masud, a Tajik and brother of legendary <i>mujahedin</i> commander Ahmad Shah Masud, who was assassinated by Al Qaeda two days before the Sept. 11 attacks, and Karim Khalili, a Hazara) elected with 55% against 16 opponents. Second highest vote getter, Northern Alliance figure (and Education Minister) Yunus Qanooni (16%). One female ran. Funded with \$90 million from donors, including \$40 million from U.S. (FY2004, P.L. 108-106).
First Parliamentary Elections	Elections held September 18, 2005, on “Single Non-Transferable Vote” System; candidates stood as individuals, not in party list. Parliament consists of a 249 elected lower house (<i>Wolesi Jirga</i> , House of the People) and a selected 102 seat upper house (<i>Meshrano Jirga</i> , House of Elders). 2,815 candidates for <i>Wolesi Jirga</i> , including 347 women. Turnout was 57% (6.8 million voters) of 12.5 million registered. Upper house is appointed by Karzai (34 seats, half of which are to be women), and by the provincial councils (68 seats). When district councils are elected, they will appoint 34 of the seats. Funded by \$160 million in international aid, including \$45 million from U.S. (FY2005 supplemental, P.L. 109-13).
First Provincial Elections/ District Elections	Provincial elections held September 18, 2005, simultaneous with parliamentary elections. Exact powers vague, but now taking lead in deciding local reconstruction Provincial council sizes range from 9 to the 29 seats on the Kabul provincial council. Total seats are 420, of which 121 held by women. 13,185 candidates, including 279 women. District elections not held due to complexity and potential tensions of drawing district boundaries.
Second Presidential/Provincial Elections	Presidential and provincial elections were held August 20, 2009, but required a runoff because no candidate received over 50% in certified results issued October 20. Second round not held because Dr. Abdullah pulled out of runoff. Election costs: \$300 million.
Parliamentary Elections	Originally set for May 22, 2010; held September 18, 2010. Results disputed, but agreement reached for Karzai inaugurate new lower house on January 26, 2011, six days after original date. 70 women elected, two more than quota. Speaker selected on February 27, Abdul Raouf Ibrahim, an ethnic Uzbek. Special tribunal set up to investigate results and on June 23 ruled that 62 results be altered, prompting a backlash from those who might be deprived of seats and threats of impeaching Karzai. Crisis eased on August 11, 2011, when Karzai disbanded special tribunal and announced that only the election bodies have standing to overturn results. Independent Election Commission announced August 21 that nine lower house winners would be unseated for fraud. They were sworn in September 4; but a broad lower house boycott rendered it non-functional until October 9, when boycott ended. For the upper house, 68 seats council are appointed to four-year terms by the elected provincial councils in each of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, and remain in office. Karzai made his 34 appointments on February 19, 2011. The speaker of that body is Muslim Yaar (a Pashtun).
Third Presidential Election	To be held in 2014. In August 2011, Karzai told members of the National Assembly he will not seek to alter the constitution to allow him to run again (the constitution permits only two consecutive terms). Press reports in December 2011, quoting German intelligence estimates, questioned that commitment, saying Karzai might try to restructure the government to allow him to retain power. Karzai publicly reiterated his vow to leave office on <i>Meet the Press</i> on December 19, 2011. Some observers say his elder brother, Qayyum, is considering running in 2014. Female parliamentarian Fawzia Koofi is running.

U.S. and International Civilian Policy Structure

Building the capacity of the Afghan government, and helping it develop economically, is primarily, although not exclusively, the purview of U.S. and international civilian officials and institutions. In line with the prioritization of Afghanistan policy, in February 2009, the Administration set up the position of appointed “Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan” (SRAP), occupied first by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, reporting to Secretary of State Clinton. Holbrooke died on December 13, 2010, but his team at the State Department, led as of February 2011 by Ambassador Marc Grossman, remains largely intact, consisting mainly of members detailed from several different agencies.

At the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Ambassador Ryan Crocker replaced Karl Eikenberry on July 25, 2011. There is a “deputy Ambassador” and separate Ambassador rank officials to manage U.S. economic assistance issues and to oversee Embassy operations. Another official of Ambassador rank coordinates U.S. rule of law programs. Under various programs, U.S. civilian and coalition military personnel are assigned to various Afghan ministries in advisory capacities. Some of those programs were briefly interrupted in late February—early March 2012 after the killing of two U.S. military personnel at the Afghan Interior Ministry by a ministry employee angered by the mistaken U.S. burnings of several Qurans on February 20, 2012.

The U.S. Embassy has progressively expanded its personnel and facilities to accommodate the additional civilian hires and Foreign Service officers who have been posted to Afghanistan since 2009 as mentors and advisers to the Afghan government. U.S. officials say there are more than 1,130 U.S. civilian officials in Afghanistan, as of late 2011, up from only about 400 in early 2009. Of these at least 400 serve outside Kabul as part of initiatives such as the 32 “District Support Teams” and the “District Working Groups.” That is up from 67 outside Kabul in 2009.

On February 7, 2010, in an effort to improve civilian coordination between the United States, its foreign partners, and the Afghan government, a NATO “Senior Civilian Representative” in Afghanistan, UK Ambassador Mark Sedwill, took office. This official works not only with U.S. military officials but with representatives of the embassies of partner countries and with a special U.N. Assistance Mission-Afghanistan (UNAMA, see **Table 2**). In April 2011 Sedwill was replaced by the former British Ambassador to Iran, Sir Simon Gass. The contribution of the United Nations to enhancing governance and coordinating donors is discussed below.

Afghan Ambassador to the United States Sayed Tayib Jawad served as Ambassador from 2004 until his recall in August 2010. Then deputy Foreign Minister Eklil Hakimi replaced him on February 23, 2011.

Consulates in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat

The tables at the end of this report include U.S. funding for State Department and USAID operations, including Embassy construction and running the “Embassy air wing,” a fleet of twin-engine turboprops that ferry U.S. officials and contractors around Afghanistan. In a significant development attempting to signal normalization of certain areas of Afghanistan, in early 2010 the United States formally inaugurated U.S. consulates in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. In November 2010 contracts were announced for expansion of the U.S. Embassy (\$511 million) and to

construct the two consulates (\$20 million for each facility). As discussed below, both cities were in the first tranche of areas to be transitioned to Afghan control.

Table 2. U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

The United Nations is extensively involved in Afghan governance and national building, primarily in factional conflict resolution and coordination of development assistance. The coordinator of U.N. efforts is the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It was headed during March 2010-December 2011 by Swedish diplomat Staffan de Mistura, replacing Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide. Mistura formerly played a similar role in Iraq. Slovakian diplomat Jan Kubis has been named to replace him in January 2012, two months before a re-evaluation of the UNAMA mandate.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1806 of March 20, 2008, expanded UNAMA's authority to strengthen cooperation between the international peacekeeping force (ISAF, see below) and the Afghan government. In concert with the Obama Administration's emphasis on Afghan policy, UNAMA is to open offices in as many of Afghanistan's 34 provinces as financially and logistically permissible. The mandate of UNAMA, was renewed for another year on March 22, 2011, by Resolution 1974. As did Resolution 1917 the previous year, Resolution 1974 largely restated UNAMA's coordinating role with other high-level representatives in Afghanistan and election support role, while referring to UNAMA's role in facilitating the coming transition to Afghan leadership. As part of the expansion of its mandate, UNAMA is playing a role in reintegration of surrendering insurgent fighters that is receiving increased emphasis. It is doing so through a "Salaam (Peace) Support Group," working with Afghanistan's High Peace Council that is promoting reconciliation and reintegration. UNAMA has always been involved in local dispute resolution and disarmament of local militias, but its donor coordination has never materialized because of the large numbers and size of donor-run projects in Afghanistan. Under a March 2010 compromise with Karzai, it nominates two international members of the five person Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), one fewer than the three it selected under the prior election law.

UNAMA is also playing a growing role in engaging regional actors in Afghan stability. It was a co-convenor of the January 28, 2010, and July 20, 2010, London and Kabul Conferences, respectively. Along with Turkey, UNAMA chairs a "Regional Working Group" to enlist regional support for Afghan integration.

On donor coordination, UNAMA is co-chair of the joint Afghan-international community coordination body called the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), and is helping implement the five-year development strategy outlined in a "London Compact," (now called the Afghanistan Compact) adopted at the January 31-February 1, 2006, London conference on Afghanistan. The priorities developed in that document comport with Afghanistan's own "National Strategy for Development," presented on June 12, 2008, in Paris.

The difficulties in coordinating U.N. with U.S. and NATO efforts were evident in a 2007 proposal to create a new position of "super envoy" that would represent the United Nations, the European Union, and NATO in Afghanistan. The concept advanced and in January 2008, with U.S. support, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon tentatively appointed British diplomat Paddy Ashdown as the "super envoy." However, Karzai rejected the appointment reportedly over concerns about the scope of authority of such an envoy. Ashdown withdrew his name on January 28, 2008, and further discussion has withered. The NATO senior civilian representative. post, discussed above, appears to represent a step in the direction of improved donor coordination in Afghanistan and streamlining of the foreign representative structure there.

For more information on UNAMA, see CRS Report R40747, *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: Background and Policy Issues*, by Rhoda Margesson.

Security Policy, 2011-2014 “Transition, and Beyond”¹⁴

The formal Obama Administration policy goal is to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a safe haven for global terrorism, but the U.S. criteria for judging achievement of that goal have generally included the degree to which the Afghan government and security force can defend itself, govern effectively, and develop economically. U.S. plans discussed by Defense Secretary Panetta in early 2012 envision an accelerated transition to Afghan security lead, with the U.S. and partner forces adopting a mentoring “overwatch” role by mid-2013. This raises questions as to whether the Administration might be reducing some of its goals in the interests of more rapidly winding down U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. Still, the basic pillars of U.S. and NATO security strategy that have been in place since 2001 remain intact.

Who Is “The Enemy”? Taliban, Haqqani, Al Qaeda, and Others

Security in Afghanistan is being challenged by a confluence of related and, to varying degrees, cooperating armed groups whose tactics continue to evolve based on experiences from previous fighting.¹⁵ There has not been agreement about the relative strength of insurgents in all of the areas where they operate. The top commander in Afghanistan, General John Allen, told journalists in October 2011 that the numbers of insurgents may be far fewer than the 25,000 previously assessed.

Groups: The Taliban (“Quetta Shura Taliban”)

The core of the insurgency remains the Taliban movement loyal, for the most part, to Mullah Umar, who led the Taliban regime during 1996-2001. He and many of his top advisers reportedly operate from Pakistan, probably the city of Quetta but possibly also Karachi, thus accounting for the term usually applied to Umar and his aides: “Quetta Shura Taliban” (QST). Still, the exact level of Mullah Umar’s control over insurgent ranks is unclear, and little precise information exists on Mullah Umar’s remaining inner circle. In recent years, he has lost some of his top aides to U.S.-led military action, including Mullah Dadullah and Mullah Usmani.

Umar has been making appointments to replenish the QST leadership ranks. When his top deputy, Mullah Bradar, was arrested in Pakistan in February 2011, Umar replaced him with younger and reputedly hardline, anti-compromise leaders Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir, a U.S. detainee in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba until 2007; and Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor, a logistics expert.¹⁶ The Taliban has several official spokespersons still at large, including Qari Yusuf Ahmadi and Zabiullah Mujahid, and it operates a clandestine radio station, “Voice of Shariat” and publishes videos.

¹⁴ Some of the information in this section is taken from U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” April 2011.

¹⁵ http://www.defense.gov/news/1230_1231Report.pdf.

¹⁶ Ibid.; Moreau, Ron. “New Leaders for the Taliban.” *Newsweek*, January 24, 2011.

Some believe that Umar and his inner circle blame their past association with Al Qaeda for their loss of power. Others believe the Taliban is unlikely to completely sever its ties to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, but the death of Al Qaeda founder Osama Bin Laden on May 1, 2011, has perhaps strengthened the arguments of those in the movement advocating distance from Al Qaeda. U.S. officials argue that the successes produced by the U.S. “surge” in Afghanistan are causing some Taliban leaders to at least consider the concept of a political settlement, and in the process causing a reported split in its ranks over the issue. Suggesting he may be leaning toward those urging compromise, Mullah Umar released a statement on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the United States (September 11, 2011) acknowledging there have been some talks, although only over prisoner exchanges. His subsequent statement marking a Muslim holiday on November 10, 2011 admonished Taliban commanders to avoid causing civilian casualties.

Al Qaeda/Bin Laden

U.S. officials have long considered Al Qaeda to have been largely expelled from Afghanistan itself. U.S. commanders have, for several years, characterized any Al Qaeda militants in Afghanistan as facilitators of militant incursions into Afghanistan rather than active fighters in the Afghan insurgency. That view was expressed by Director of National Intelligence James Clapper in his annual worldwide threat assessment testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee on January 31, 2012. Then-Director of Central Intelligence (now Secretary of Defense) Leon Panetta said on June 27, 2010, that Al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan itself might number 50-100—a range since reiterated by other officials.¹⁷ Some of the Al Qaeda fighters are believed to belong to Al Qaeda affiliates such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).

Until the death of Bin Laden on May 1, 2011, there had been frustration within the U.S. government that Al Qaeda’s top leadership had eluded U.S. efforts to capture them. In December 2001, in the course of the post-September 11 major combat effort, U.S. Special Operations Forces and CIA operatives reportedly narrowed Osama Bin Laden’s location to the Tora Bora mountains in Nangarhar Province (30 miles west of the Khyber Pass), but the Afghan militia fighters who were the bulk of the fighting force did not prevent his escape into Pakistan. Some U.S. military and intelligence officers (such as Gary Berntsen and Dalton Fury, who have written books on the battle) have questioned the U.S. decision to rely mainly on Afghan forces in this engagement.

U.S. efforts to find Al Qaeda leaders now reportedly focus on his close ally Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is also presumed to be on the Pakistani side of the border and who was named new leader of Al Qaeda in June 2011. CNN reported October 18, 2010, that assessments from the U.S.-led coalition said Zawahiri (and Bin Laden) was likely in a settled area near the border with Afghanistan, and not living in a very remote uninhabited area. A U.S. strike reportedly missed Zawahiri by a few hours in the village of Damadola, Pakistan, in January 2006.¹⁸ Many observers say that Zawahiri is not well liked within Al Qaeda and has had trouble holding the group together since bin Laden’s death.

Other senior Al Qaeda leaders are either in or are allowed to transit or reside in Iran. Among them are Al Qaeda’s former spokesman, Kuwait-born Sulayman Abu Ghaith, as well as Sayf al Adl.

¹⁷ Text of the Panetta interview with ABC News is at <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=11025299>.

¹⁸ Gall, Carlotta and Ismail Khan. “U.S. Drone Attack Missed Zawahiri by Hours.” *New York Times*, November 10, 2006.

The United States has no diplomatic relations with Iran and has called on Iran to arrest and submit any Al Qaeda operatives to international authorities for trial.

U.S. efforts have killed numerous senior operatives other than Bin Laden. A January 2008 strike near Damadola killed Abu Laith al-Libi, who purportedly masterminded, among other operations, the bombing at Bagram Air Base in February 2007 during then Vice President Cheney's visit. In August 2008, an airstrike was confirmed to have killed Al Qaeda chemical weapons expert Abu Khabab al-Masri, and two senior operatives allegedly involved in the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa reportedly were killed by an unmanned aerial vehicle (Predator) strike in January 2009. Following the killing of Bin Laden, another top Al Qaeda leader, Ilyas Kashmiri, was reportedly killed by an armed drone strike in June 2011. Such aerial-based strikes have become more frequent under President Obama, indicating that the Administration sees the tactic as effective in preventing attacks.

Hikmatyar Faction

Another "high value target" identified by U.S. commanders is the faction of former *mujahedin* party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, HIG). He has been allied with Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents although his faction has sometimes competed with and clashed with Taliban elements. As noted above, Hikmatyar was one of the main U.S.-backed *mujahedin* leaders during the Soviet occupation era but he turned against his colleagues after the Communist government fell in 1992. He was ultimately displaced by the Taliban as the main opposition to the 1992-1996 Rabbani government. As noted, Hikmatyar's faction received extensive U.S. support against the Soviet Union, but it is now active against U.S. and Afghan forces in Kunar, Nuristan, Kapisa, and Nangarhar provinces, north and east of Kabul. On February 19, 2003, the U.S. government formally designated Hikmatyar as a "specially designated global terrorist," under the authority of Executive Order 13224, subjecting it to financial and other U.S. sanctions. It is *not* designated as a "foreign terrorist organization" (FTO).

Hikmatyar has expressed a willingness to discuss a cease-fire with the Karzai government since 2007, and several of Karzai's key allies in the National Assembly are members of a moderate wing of Hikmatyar's party, Hizb-e-Islam. In January 2010, Hikmatyar outlined specific conditions for reconciliation, including elections under a neutral caretaker government following a U.S. withdrawal. On March 22, 2010, both the Afghan government and Hikmatyar representatives confirmed talks in Kabul, including meetings with Karzai, and Karzai subsequently acknowledged additional meetings with group representatives. Some close to Hikmatyar apparently attended the consultative peace *loya jirga* on June 2-4, 2010, which discussed the reconciliation issue.

Haqqani Faction¹⁹

Another militant faction, cited by U.S. officials as perhaps the most potent threat to Afghan security, is the "Haqqani Network." It is led overall by Jalaludin Haqqani, but he is aging and his sons Siraj (or Sirajjudin) and Badruddin exercise operational control. As a *mujahedin* commander during the U.S.-backed war against the Soviet Union, Jalaludin Haqqani was a U.S. ally. He

¹⁹ A profile of the faction and its activities is provided in: Joshua Partlow. "In Afghan War, Haqqani Group Is 'Resilient' Foe." *Washington Post*, May 30, 2011.

subsequently joined the Taliban regime (1996-2001), serving as its Minister of Tribal Affairs. Since 2001, he has staunchly opposed the Karzai government and his faction is believed closer to Al Qaeda than to the Taliban in part because one of the elder Haqqani's wives is purportedly Arab. Press reports indicate that the few Al Qaeda fighters that are in Afghanistan are mostly embedded with Haqqani fighters. On the other hand, the faction is believed primarily interested in earning illicit monies and in controlling parts of Khost Province than in imposing an extreme Islamic ideology throughout Afghanistan. As discussed below, the faction is increasingly targeting key locations in Kabul and elsewhere.

Suggesting it may act as a tool of Pakistani interests, the Haqqani network has primarily targeted Indian interests. It claimed responsibility for two attacks on India's embassy in Kabul (July 2008 and October 2009), and reportedly was involved, possibly with other groups, on the December 2009 attack on a CIA base in Khost that killed seven CIA officers. U.S. officials attribute the June 28, 2011, attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul and a September 10, 2011, truck bombing in Wardak Province (which injured 77 U.S. soldiers) to the group. U.S. officials say the attacks on the U.S. Embassy and ISAF headquarters in Kabul on September 13, 2011, were the work of the faction as well.

That the faction is tolerated or protected in the North Waziristan area of Pakistan and also its purported ties to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) has caused sharp U.S. criticism of Pakistan. The most widely cited criticism was by then Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mullen, following the September 2011 attacks on the U.S. Embassy. Admiral Mullen testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 22, 2011, that the Haqqani network acts "as a veritable arm" of the ISI. Other senior officials reiterated the thrust of that criticism, although with caveats. The ISI is believed to see the Haqqanis as a potential ally in any Afghan political structure that might be produced by a political settlement in Afghanistan.

In addition to pressing Pakistan to deny the group safe haven, U.S. officials say they are increasingly pressuring the Haqqani network with military action in Afghanistan and air strikes on the Pakistani side of the border, as well as with direct ground action, such as a raid in late July 2011 that reportedly killed over 80 Haqqani network militants. One other Haqqani brother, Mohammad, was reportedly killed by a U.S. unmanned vehicle strike in late February 2010, although Mohammad was not thought to be a key militant commander. However, the faction, which may have about 3,000 active fighters and operatives, is viewed as resilient and able to tap a seemingly infinite pool of recruits.

The faction has generally been considered least amenable to a political settlement with the Afghan government, but it is possible that the May 1, 2011, raid that killed Osama Bin Laden will reinforce those within the faction who might want to reassess that stance. Siraj Haqqani said after the September 13, 2011, attacks on the U.S. Embassy that the faction might, at some point, participate in settlement talks. It has also been reported that U.S. officials—as part of their drive to facilitate a political settlement of the Afghanistan conflict—met with Haqqani representatives over the summer of 2011, in meetings in UAE facilitated by the ISI.²⁰

The faction's calculations could be affected by how the United States characterizes the group. In July 2010, then-top U.S. commander in Afghanistan General David Petraeus advocated that the Haqqani network be named as an FTO under the Immigration and Naturalization Act—a signal to

²⁰ Matthew Rosenberg. "U.S. Secretly Met Afghan Militants." *Wall Street Journal*, October 5, 2011.

Pakistan that it should not continue to support the Haqqani network.²¹ Secretary of State Clinton stated shortly after the September 13, 2011, attack on the U.S. Embassy that such a designation is being prepared by the Administration. No such designation has been made, to date, probably in part to incent Pakistan to crack down on the group, which it has apparently not done to date. However, a number of Haqqani leaders have been sanctioned as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT) under Executive Order 13224, most recently in November 2011. An FTO designation could make it difficult to conduct further contacts with the faction. S. 1959, which passed the Senate on December 17, 2011, requires an Administration report on whether the group meets the criteria for FTO designation and, if not, explanation of why not.

Pakistani Groups

The Taliban of Afghanistan are increasingly linked politically and operationally to Pakistani Taliban militants. The Pakistani groups might see a Taliban recapture of Afghanistan's government as helpful to the prospects for these groups inside Pakistan or in their Kashmir struggle. A major Pakistani group, the Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, TTP), is primarily seeking to challenge the government of Pakistan, but they facilitate the transiting into Afghanistan of Afghan Taliban and support the Afghan Taliban goals of recapturing Afghanistan. The TTP may also be seeking to target the United States, an assessment based on a failed bombing in New York City in May 2010. The State Department designated the TTP as an FTO under the Immigration and Naturalization Act on September 2, 2010, allegedly for having close connections to Al Qaeda. Its current leader, Hakimullah Mehsud, was named as terrorism supporting entities that day. (He succeeded Baitullah Mehsud, who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in August 2009.) There were unconfirmed reports that Hakimullah Mehsud may have been killed in a U.S. armed drone strike in early January 2012.

Another Pakistani group said to be increasingly active inside Afghanistan is Laskhar-e-Tayyiba (LET, or Army of the Righteous). LET is an Islamist militant group that has previously been focused on operations against Indian control of Kashmir.

Insurgent Tactics

As far as tactics, prior to 2011, U.S. commanders worried most about insurgent use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including roadside bombs. IEDs are the leading cause of U.S. combat deaths, although the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, a part of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), reported in February 2011 substantial progress finding IEDs before they explode. In January 2010, President Karzai issued a decree banning importation of fertilizer chemicals (ammonium nitrate) commonly used for the roadside bombs, but there reportedly is informal circumvention of the ban for certain civilian uses, and the material reportedly still comes into Afghanistan from at least two major production plants in Pakistan. U.S. commanders have said they have verified some use of surface-to-air missiles,²² although it does not appear that sophisticated missiles were involved in the apparent shutdown of a U.S. Chinook helicopter in which about 30 U.S. soldiers (mostly special forces) were killed on August 6, 2011.

²¹ Jane Perlez, Eric Schmitt, and Carlotta Gall, "Pakistan Is Said to Pursue Foothold in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, June 24, 2010.

²² Major General John Campbell, commander of RC-E, July 28, 2010, press briefing.

During 2011 and thus far in 2012, insurgents have made increasing use of infiltrators within the Afghan security forces, persons impersonating Afghan security personnel, or recruits to their ranks from among aides trusted by Afghan leaders. There is debate as to whether some of the Afghan security force attacks on U.S. and other coalition personnel in 2012, particularly those that occurred following some of the errant U.S. abuses in 2012 (such as the February Quran burnings, discussed below), were Taliban-inspired or self-inspired by vengeful members of the Afghan force. Afghan officials have tried to increase monitoring over the sale of military-style clothing that might be used for such attacks. Other insurgents appear to be making increasing use of bombs hidden in turbans, which have, until October 2011, generally not been searched out of respect for Afghan religious traditions. Such a bomb killed former President Rabbani on September 20, 2011, as noted above.

Insurgent Financing: Narcotics Trafficking and Other Methods

All of the insurgent groups in Afghanistan benefit, at least in part, from narcotics trafficking. However, the adverse effects are not limited to funding insurgents; the trafficking also undermines rule of law within government ranks. At the same time, narcotics trafficking is an area on which there has been progress in recent years, although some question whether progress is sustainable. The trafficking is said to generate an estimated \$70 million-\$100 million per year for the Taliban. A UNODC report of September 2011 reversed, to some extent, the relatively positive trend in reporting on this issue, noting that 17 provinces out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan) fall into the “poppy free” category; that is down from 20 provinces in the previous year’s UNODC report. The value of the opium roughly doubled in 2011 to \$1.4 billion. The report attributed these trends to a sharp rise in the price of opium crops. One bright spot is that the area under poppy cultivation in Helmand province, the main opium producing center of Afghanistan, fell by about 3% from the prior year.²³

The Obama Administration approach focuses on promoting legitimate agricultural alternatives to poppy growing in line with Afghan government preferences. In July 2009, the United States ended its prior focus on eradication of poppy fields on the grounds that this practice was driving Afghans into the arms of the Taliban as protectors of their ability to earn a living. The de-emphasis on eradication also put aside the long-standing differences with Karzai over whether to conduct aerial spraying of fields. Congress apparently has sided with Karzai’s view; successive annual appropriations laws since FY2008 have prohibited U.S. counter-narcotics funding from being used for aerial spraying on Afghanistan poppy fields without Afghan concurrence. Some U.S. programs, such as “Good Performance Initiative” (GPI) funds, give an incentive to provinces to actively work against cultivation. In 2011, 22 of 34 provinces received awards totaling a combined \$19.2 million.

The U.S. military, in support of the effort after initial reluctance, is flying Afghan and U.S. counter-narcotics agents (Drug Enforcement Agency, DEA) on missions and identifying targets; it also evacuates casualties from counter-drug operations and assists an Afghan helicopter squadron to move Afghan counter-narcotics forces around the country. To help break up narcotics trafficking networks, the DEA presence in Afghanistan is has expanded from 13 agents in 2008 to over 80 by the start of 2011.

²³ UNDOC, http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Executive_Summary_2011_web.pdf

The Obama Administration has placed additional focus on the other sources of Taliban funding, including continued donations from wealthy residents of the Persian Gulf. It established a multinational task force to combat Taliban financing generally, not limited to narcotics, and U.S. officials are emphasizing with Persian Gulf counterparts the need for cooperation.

The Bush and Obama Administrations have exercised waiver provisions to required certifications of full Afghan cooperation needed to provide more than congressionally stipulated amounts of U.S. economic assistance to Afghanistan. A certification requirement (to provide amounts over \$300 million) was contained in the FY2008 appropriation (P.L. 110-161); in the FY2009 regular appropriation, P.L. 111-8 (\$200 million ceiling); and the FY2010 appropriation, P.L. 111-117, (\$200 million ceiling). The FY2009 supplemental (P.L. 111-32) withheld 10% of State Department narcotics funding (International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, INCLE) pending a report that Afghanistan is removing officials involved in narcotics trafficking or gross human rights violations. No specific counter-narcotics requirement was in the FY2011 appropriation (P.L. 112-10) although there are more general certification requirements that Afghanistan is taking steps to eliminate official corruption. No funds for Afghanistan have been held up on these grounds. Narcotics trafficking control was perhaps the one issue on which the Taliban regime satisfied much of the international community. However, cultivation flourished in provinces under Northern Alliance control, such as Badakhshan.

The U.S.-Led Military Effort: 2001-2008

To combat the insurgency, The United States is in partnership with 49 other countries and the Afghan government and security forces. There are about 91,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan as of late March 2012, down from 99,000 in mid-2011 (height of the U.S. presence). The reduction is in line with the “surge” drawdown discussed below. The vast majority operate under NATO/ISAF command, but about 9,000 remain part of the post-September 11 anti-terrorism mission Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Lieutenant General John Allen took over the command in Afghanistan on July 18, 2011, succeeding Gen. David Petraeus, who is now CIA Director. Serving under the top U.S. and NATO/ISAF commander is an “Intermediate Joint Command” focused primarily on day-to-day operations; it is headed since July 2011 by Lieutenant General Curtis Scaparrotti.

Prior to the U.S. surge in 2009, most U.S. forces were in eastern Afghanistan, leading Regional Command East (RC-E) of the NATO/ISAF operation. The most restive provinces in RC-E are Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Kunar, and Nuristan. Helmand, Qandahar, Uruzgan, Zabol, Nimruz, and Dai Kundi provinces constituted a “Regional Command South (RC-S),” a command formally transferred to NATO/ISAF responsibility on July 31, 2006. The growing U.S. troop strength in RC-S in 2009 and 2010—a product of the fact that most of the 2009-2010 U.S. “surge” was focused on the south—prompted a May 2010 NATO decision to bifurcate RC-S, with the United States leading at first leading a “southwest” subdivision for Helmand and Nimruz. U.S. commanders now lead both RC-S and RC-SW. About 4,000 U.S. forces are under German command in RC-North, headquartered in Konduz. Turkey commands ISAF forces in the capital, Kabul, and on October 7, 2011, Turkey agreed to continue in that role for another year. Afghan forces are in overall lead in the capital, however.

Perception of “Victory,” Followed by Setback and Deterioration

During 2001 to mid-2006, U.S. forces and Afghan troops fought relatively low levels of insurgent violence with focused combat operations against Taliban concentrations in the south and east. For

example, the United States and partner forces conducted “Operation Mountain Viper” (August 2003); “Operation Avalanche” (December 2003); “Operation Mountain Storm” (March-July 2004); “Operation Lightning Freedom” (December 2004-February 2005); and “Operation Pil” (Elephant, October 2005). By late 2005, U.S. and partner commanders appeared to believe that the combat, coupled with overall political and economic reconstruction, had virtually ended any insurgency. Anticipating further stabilization, NATO/ISAF assumed lead responsibility for security in all of Afghanistan during 2005-2006.

Contrary to U.S. expectations, violence increased significantly in mid-2006, particularly in the east and the south, where ethnic Pashtuns predominate. Reasons for the deterioration include popular unrest over Afghan government corruption; the absence of governance or security forces in many rural areas; the safe haven enjoyed by militants in Pakistan; the reticence of some NATO contributors to actively combat insurgents; a popular backlash against civilian casualties caused by military operations; and the slow pace of economic development.

NATO counter-offensives during 2006-2008, focused on the Pashtun-dominated areas, cleared key districts but did not prevent subsequent reinfiltration because Afghan governance was not established in cleared areas. NATO/ISAF also tried preemptive combat and increased development work, without durable success.

Despite the additional resources put into Afghanistan, throughout 2008, growing concern took hold within the Bush Administration. Pessimism was reflected in such statements as a September 2008 comment by then Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen that “I’m not sure we’re winning” in Afghanistan. Several major incidents supported that assessment, including (1) expanding Taliban operations in provinces where it had not previously been active, particularly Lowgar, Wardak, and Kapisa, close to Kabul; (2) high-profile attacks in Kabul, such as the January 14, 2008, attack on the Serena Hotel in Kabul and the July 7, 2008, suicide bombing at the Indian Embassy in Kabul, killing more than 50; (3) the April 27, 2008, assassination attempt on Karzai during a military parade celebrating the ouster of the Soviet Union; and (4) a June 12, 2008, Sarposa prison break in Qandahar, in which several hundred Taliban captives were freed.

Start of the Buildup

To try to arrest deterioration, the United States and its partners decided to increase force levels by partly fulfilling a mid-2008 request by General David McKiernan for 30,000 additional U.S. troops. The decision whether to fulfill the entire request was deferred to the next Administration. U.S. troop levels started 2006 at 30,000; climbed slightly to 32,000 by December 2008; and reached 39,000 by April 2009 (shortly after President Obama took office). Partner forces were increased significantly as well, by about 6,000 during this time, to a total of 39,000 at the end of 2009 (rough parity between U.S. and non-U.S. forces). Many of the U.S. forces deployed in 2008 and 2009 were Marines that deployed to Helmand, large parts of which had fallen out of coalition/Afghan control.

In September 2008, the U.S. military and NATO each began strategy reviews. The primary U.S. review was headed by Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, the Bush Administration’s senior adviser on Iraq and Afghanistan (who is in the Obama NSC with responsibility for Afghanistan). These reviews were briefed to the incoming Obama Administration.

Obama Administration Surge

The Obama Administration maintained that Afghanistan needed to be given a higher priority than it was during the Bush Administration, but that the U.S. mission in Afghanistan not be indefinite. The new Administration integrated the reviews under way at the end of the Bush Administration's into an overarching 60-day inter-agency "strategy review." It was chaired by South Asia expert Bruce Riedel and co-chaired by then SRAP Holbrooke and then-Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy.

Following its initial review, President Obama announced a "comprehensive" strategy on March 27, 2009.²⁴ In conjunction, he announced the deployment of an additional 21,000 U.S. forces. Despite approving most of General McKiernan's request for 30,000 additional forces, the Administration decided that U.S. military leadership in Afghanistan was insufficiently innovative. On May 11, 2009, then-Secretary of Defense Gates announced that General McKiernan would be replaced by General Stanley McChrystal, considered an innovative commander as head of U.S. Special Operations forces from 2003 to 2008. He assumed the command on June 15, 2009.

After assuming command on June 15, 2009, General McChrystal assessed the security situation and suggested a strategy in a report of August 30, 2009:²⁵

- That the goal of the U.S. military should be to protect the population rather than to focus on searching out and combating Taliban concentrations. Indicators of success such as ease of road travel, participation in local *shuras*, and normal life for families are more significant than counts of enemy fighters killed.
- That there is potential for "mission failure" unless a fully resourced, comprehensive counter-insurgency strategy is pursued and reverses Taliban momentum within 12-18 months. About 44,000 additional U.S. combat troops (beyond those approved by the Obama Administration strategy review in March 2009) would be needed to have the greatest chance for his strategy's success.

Review and December 1, 2009 Surge and Transition Announcement

The McChrystal assessment set off debate within the Administration and another policy review. Some senior U.S. officials, such as then-Secretary of Defense Gates, were concerned that adding many more U.S. forces could create among the Afghan people a sense of "occupation" that could prove counter-productive. The high-level review included at least nine high-level meetings, chaired by President Obama, and reportedly concluded on November 19, 2009. The President announced the following decisions in a speech at West Point military academy on December 1, 2009:²⁶

²⁴ "White Paper," http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf.

²⁵ Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan. "Commander's Initial Assessment." August 30, 2009, available at http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf?

²⁶ President Obama speech, op. cit. Testimony of Secretary Gates, Secretary Clinton, and Admiral Mullen before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. December 2, 2009.

- That 30,000 additional U.S. forces (a “surge”) would be sent (bringing U.S. levels close to 100,000) to “reverse the Taliban’s momentum” and strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan’s security forces and government.
- That there would be a transition, beginning in July 2011, to Afghan leadership of the stabilization effort and a corresponding beginning of a drawdown of U.S. force levels. The July 2011 “deadline” caused significant controversy, as discussed below.

McChrystal Replaced by Petraeus

On June 23, 2010, President Obama accepted the resignation of General McChrystal after summoning him to Washington, DC, to discuss the comments by him and his staff to a reporter for *Rolling Stone* magazine that disparaged several civilian figures involved in Afghanistan policy. He named General Petraeus as General McChrystal’s successor. In a June 23, 2010, statement, President Obama attributed the change purely to the *Rolling Stone* comments, and stated that Afghanistan policy would not change. General Petraeus was confirmed by the Senate on June 30, 2010, and assumed command on July 4, 2010.

July 2011 “Deadline” Becomes “Transition” By the End of 2014

The Obama Administration emphasis on transition to Afghan security leadership beginning in July 2011 was perhaps the most widely debated aspect of policy. The Administration explained the time frame as a means of indicating to the Afghan government that U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan is not open-ended and that the Afghan government must assume greater responsibility for the mission. However, the 2011 deadline was interpreted by some Administration critics—and by some Afghan and regional leaders—as laying the groundwork for a rapid winding down of U.S. involvement.²⁷ Perhaps to address perceived criticism of such a deadline in the upper ranks of the U.S. military, in an August 31, 2010, statement, the President asserted that the pace and scope of any drawdown would be subject to conditions on the ground.

The debate over the July 2011 drawdown abated substantially with an agreement between the United States and NATO partner forces to focus on allowing a longer time frame for transition to Afghan leadership. At the November 19-20, 2010, NATO summit in Lisbon, it was agreed that the transition to Afghan leadership would begin in 2011 and would be completed by the end of 2014.

²⁷ Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan. “Commander’s Initial Assessment.” August 30, 2009, available at http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf. White House. Remarks by the President In Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan. December 1, 2009; Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. “Differing Views of New Afghanistan Strategy.” *Washington Post*, December 26, 2009.

Table 3. Summary of Current U.S. Strategy and Implementation

The major outlines of Obama Administration strategy have taken shape as outlined below.

Goals: (1) to disrupt terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan to degrade their ability to launch international terrorist attacks; (2) promote a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan; (3) develop self-reliant Afghan security forces; and (4) involve the international community to achieve these objectives.

Strategy Definition: to employ the U.S. and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to build Afghan institutions and prepare them for a transition to full responsibility by the end of 2014. A U.S. drawdown began in July 2011 in concert with the start of a transition to Afghan security leadership in specified areas. The United States and Afghanistan are negotiating a long-term security partnership agreement that will outline the continuing U.S. commitment to Afghan stability subsequent to 2014.

Surge and then Drawdown: U.S. force levels reached a high of 99,000. A U.S. drawdown of 33,000 is to be completed by September 2012, with the remaining drawdown plan until 2014 to be determined at a NATO meeting in Chicago in May 2012. Transition to Afghan combat lead by mid-2013.

Afghan Governance: to develop Afghan institutions, particularly at the provincial and local levels, and reduce corruption.

Reintegration and Reconciliation: to support Afghan efforts to reach a settlement with insurgent leaders and provide financial and social incentives to persuade insurgents to lay down their arms.

Pakistan: to engage Pakistan and enlisting its increased cooperation against militant groups, such as the Haqqani network, that have a measure of safe haven in Pakistan.

International Dimension: to integrate Afghanistan into existing and new international diplomatic and economic structures, and to better coordinate all “stakeholders” in the Afghanistan issue (NATO, Afghanistan’s neighbors, other countries in Afghanistan’s region, the United Nations, and other donors). A major conference was held in Bonn on December 5, 2011, the 10th anniversary of the original Bonn Conference on Afghanistan.

Partner Participation: to encourage partner forces to remain in Afghanistan until the completion of the transition.

Economic Development: To build a self-sustaining economy that can withstand and, by 2025, compensate for the likely decrease in international donor aid that accompanies the transition and post-transition period.

Metrics: to measure progress along clear metrics. P.L. 111-32 (FY2009 supplemental appropriation) requires that the President submit to Congress, 90 days after enactment (by September 23, 2009), metrics by which to assess progress, and a report on that progress every 180 days thereafter. The Administration’s approximately 50 metrics²⁸ and reports are submitted regularly, the latest of which was issued in April 2011.

Surge Implementation and Results

The pace and scope of the transition to Afghan security leadership was intended to depend on assessments of how well U.S. policy is working. Prior to the surge, the Karzai government was estimated by to control about 30% of the country, while insurgents controlled 4% (13 out of 364 districts). Insurgents “influenced” or “operated in” another 30% (Afghan Interior Ministry estimates in August 2009). Tribes and local groups with varying degrees of loyalty to the central government control the remainder. Some outside groups report higher percentages of insurgent control or influence.²⁹ The Taliban had named “shadow governors” in 33 out of 34 of Afghanistan’s provinces, although many provinces in northern Afghanistan were assessed as having minimal Taliban presence.

²⁸ http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/16/evaluating_progress_in_afghanistan_pakistan.

²⁹ http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/12/world/asia/12afghan.html?_r=1.

In a White House progress report submitted to Congress on April 5, 2011, cited above, the Obama Administration claimed that “the momentum achieved by the Taliban in recent years has been arrested in much of the country and reversed in some key areas, although these gains remain fragile and reversible.”³⁰ In his June 22, 2011, speech—about six weeks after the killing of bin Laden in Pakistan—President Obama stated that the United States had achieved its core objectives of pressuring Al Qaeda, reversing Taliban momentum, and building capable Afghan forces.

On September 22, 2011, Secretary of Defense Panetta testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that “The insurgency has been turned back in much of the country, including its heartland in the south, and Afghan national security forces are increasingly strong and capable.” During a visit to Afghanistan in mid-December 2011, Secretary Panetta, at one stop during the trip, told U.S. forces: “We’re winning this very tough conflict here in Afghanistan.” Panetta did not repeat that phraseology in the rest of the trip, and other officials have refrained from language that optimistic, although the tone of all U.S. comments is that the Taliban has been severely weakened. On January 24, 2012, ISAF released a summary statement of its accomplishments in 2011, calling it a “remarkably successful year” that has caused insurgents to have “largely lost control of [the south] and [to] rely on IED’s as their primary method of attack.”³¹ After the turnover of the second phase of areas under transition (see below), to be completed by September 2012, Afghan forces will be in the lead in areas covering more than 50% of the population.

Less optimistic assessments of the surge are based on observations that the insurgents continue to be able to operate in normally quiet provinces, including cities in the first group to be transitioned, such as Herat. U.N. statistics released in October 2011, although counting all violent incidents, including attacks by ISAF on insurgents, showed violence increasing rather than slowing. Moreover, observers note an apparent increase in major attacks in Kabul, which is generally considered secure: on June 28, 2011, insurgents stormed the historic Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, prompting a several hour gun battle with Afghan authorities backed by NATO-led forces. On August 19, 2011, insurgents attacked the compound of the British Council in Kabul, on the anniversary of Afghanistan’s formal independence from Britain in 1919. The September 13, 2011, rocket and gunfire attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and ISAF headquarters prompted even more significant questions about U.S. and Afghan successes, although some U.S. officials used the attack as an indication that insurgent groups are altering their tactics in response to being largely defeated in their strongholds in eastern and southern Afghanistan (discussed below). And, as noted earlier, some U.S. commanders say that Afghan governance is lagging to the point where the Afghans may not be able to hold U.S./NATO gains on their own. Gains are also threatened by the continuing safe haven that insurgents enjoy in Pakistan.

Some worry that the gains in Qandahar are particularly fragile. The Qandahar stabilization effort suffered a significant setback on July 12, 2011, when a trusted aide killed President Karzai’s half-brother, Ahmad Wali Karzai, chair of the provincial council.³² The death shook confidence in the U.S.-led effort and could still provoke a power struggle with rivals to Karzai’s Popolzai tribe. Karzai named another brother, Shah Wali Karzai, as head of the Popolzai subsequently, although Shah Wali is said to lack the dynamism and effect of Ahmad Wali. Governor Tooryalai Wesa, a

³⁰ National Security Staff, “Overview of the Afghanistan and Pakistan Annual Review,” December 15, 2010.

³¹ Lawrence Bartlett, “NATO Hails 2011 Successes in Afghanistan.” Agence France Presse, January 24, 2012.

³² Partlow, Joshua. “U.S. Seeks to Bolster Kandahar Governor, Upend Power Balance.” *Washington Post*, April 29, 2010.

low key technocrat who has tried to balance the flow of U.S. and international funds to the various tribes and clans in the province, lacks Ahmad Wali Karzai's influence in the province. On the other hand, some say that Shah Wali and other alternative leadership in the province is easing some of the grudges and jealousies of Ahmad Wali's often arbitrary exercise of influence and result in a net increase in stability. Karzai's influence in Qandahar was further weakened on July 27, 2011, when the mayor of Qandahar city, Ghulam Haider Hamidi, was killed.

Transition and Drawdown

Despite doubts about the durability of progress to date, based on the progress achieved by the surge, a transition to Afghan leadership began, as planned, in July 2011, and is continuing. The results of the surge were considered sufficient to permit a drawdown in the surge forces, and for an intent to draw down further in preparation for the 2014 transition.

First Tranche of Transition

The first tranche of areas to be transitioned was announced by Karzai on March 22, 2011. In each area of transition, the process of completing the transition to Afghan responsibility is to take about 12-18 months, according to U.S. commanders. The first tranche was:

- Three provinces: Kabul (except Sarobi district, which is still restive), Panjshir, and Bamiyan. The latter two are considered highly stable. In Kabul, Afghan forces have already been in the lead for at least one year. The formal transition process began with Bamiyan on July 17.
- Four cities: Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Lashkar Gah, and Mehtarlam. The former two cities are widely considered stable. The latter two are in restive areas, Helmand and Laghman provinces, respectively, and the announcement of transition in these cities surprised many observers.

Unwinding of the Surge Announced June 22, 2011

As preparations got under way to transition the first tranche of areas to be transitioned, then top commander General Petraeus's recommendations about the size of the initial drawdown were submitted in mid-June 2011. According to his testimony during his confirmation hearings to be CIA Director, and that of Admiral Mullen on June 23, 2011, the U.S. military recommended a gradual drawdown in which the overwhelming majority of the surge forces would be in combat through the end of 2012. They also had wanted to redeploy some troops to RC-E, where there had not been as intensive an effort since 2010 as in RC-S or RC-SW. President Obama, asserting that key goals of the surge had been accomplished, announced his decision on June 22, 2011, as

- the drawdown of 10,000 U.S. forces by the end of 2011. That drawdown has been accomplished, and U.S. force levels in Afghanistan are about 91,000.
- the removal of another 23,000 forces (the remainder of the surge forces) by September 2012. The United States will have about 68,000 after this drawdown is completed.
- a decision on a drawdown plan for the remaining forces, from 2012 until the 2014 transition completion, to be decided at a NATO meeting in Chicago in May 2012.

Press reports say the President's drawdown decision was colored by the perception that the killing of Osama Bin Laden represented a key accomplishment of the core U.S. mission, and because of the financial needs to reduce the size of the U.S. budget deficit.

Transition Continues: Second Tranche

Subsequent to the drawdown announcement, ISAF and the Afghan government began planning the second of the seven tranches of areas to be transitioned to Afghan security lead. The second tranche was announced on November 27, 2011, as follows:

- Complete provinces: Balkh, Dai Kundi, Takhar, Samangan, Nimruz, and those areas of Kabul province not transitioned already (Sarobi district). Most of these provinces are considered relatively stable.
- Large/significant cities: Jalalabad (capital of Nangarhar), Gachcharan (capital of Ghowr), Shebergan (capital of Jowzjan), Faizabad (capital of Badakhshan), Midan Shahr (capital of Wardak), and Qali Now (capital of Badghis). Most of these cities are in relatively secure provinces, except for Wardak and Nangarhar.
- Districts of several other provinces in this and the preceding transition phase, including Nawa, Nad Ali, and Marjah of restive Helmand province; six districts of Badakhshan; Abkamari district of Badghis; all districts of Herat except for Shindand; three districts of Laghman; three districts of Nangarhar (outside Jalalabad city); all districts of Parwan except Shiwari and Siahgherd; all districts of Sar-i-Pol except Sayyad and the part of Behsud city that is in that province; and Jalrez and the center of Behsud city in Wardak province.

Mission Changes with Drawdown: Faster Transition to Afghan Combat Lead

General Petraeus and Admiral Mullen, in their testimonies the following day, acknowledged that the President's decision represented an "aggressive" drawdown but both said that they could still carry out U.S. policy with it. In a press interview, then Secretary Gates indicated that U.S. strategy would progressively evolve to more of "overwatch" and counter-terrorism but that, for the near term, the current counter-insurgency approach could still be pursued in some areas of Afghanistan, particularly the still restive east.

After the drawdown began—and the first 10,000 U.S. forces were taken out by December 2011—some U.S. commanders, including top commander General Allen, revealed a slight mission change. According to their comments in November and December 2011, some U.S. mentoring and advisory forces would be sent to Afghanistan in 2012 in an effort to transfer more combat burden to the Afghan forces, and thereby allow more U.S. regular combat forces to withdraw than was previously forecast. Secretary of Defense Panetta gave additional weight to these statements with comments, as he proceeded to a NATO meeting in Brussels on February 2, 2011, that "hopefully, by the mid to latter part of 2013, we'll be able to make a transition from a combat role to a training, advise, and assist role." On March 15, 2012, during a press conference with visiting British Prime Minister David Cameron, President Obama affirmed this shift in emphasis, and the mid-2013 time frame for it. Despite the shift, no U.S. commander has given indications that the planned drawdown to a net total U.S. force of 68,000 by September 2012 would be accelerated,³³

³³ Shanker, Thom. "U.S. Shift May Push Afghans Into Lead Role." *New York Times*, December 14, 2011.

and Gen. Allen, in congressional testimony before the House and the Senate Armed Services Committees (March 20 and 22 respectively) said he would not make any recommendations on further drawdowns until after the surge recovery is complete in September 2012. An unknown factor in any such troop drawdown rate consideration is the effects of the errant U.S. Quran burnings and the March 11, 2012 alleged killing of 16 Afghans by a U.S. soldier—incidents that stoked Afghan anger and prompted Karzai to demand that U.S. forces scale back their patrol operations.

Still, contributing to a sense that the United States is looking to reduce the military commitment to Afghanistan, press reports in late February 2012 said that the Defense Department is considering downgrading the current U.S. military command, led by a four-star Army general, to a three-star Special Operations command, perhaps prior to the 2014 end of the transition period.

Legislatively Mandated Accelerated Drawdown?

In Congress, some have expressed support for efforts or plans to wind down the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan far more rapidly than those outlined by the Administration. That effort appears to have gained momentum in the aftermath of the death of Osama Bin Laden on May 1, 2011. In the 111th Congress, H.Con.Res. 248, a resolution introduced by Representative Kucinich to require removal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan not later than December 31, 2010, was defeated in the House by a vote of 65 to 356 on March 10, 2010. Other legislation, requiring the Administration to develop (by January 1, 2011) plans to wind down the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan failed 18-80, May 27, 2010) in a Senate vote during consideration of a FY2010 supplemental appropriation (H.R. 4899). On July 1, 2010, the House voted 162-260 to reject a plan in that bill to require the Administration to submit, by April 4, 2011, a plan and timetable to redeploy from Afghanistan. Earlier, in House consideration of a FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2647), a similar provision failed on June 25, 2009, by a vote of 138-278.

In the 112th Congress, on May 26, 2011, an amendment to the defense authorization bill (H.R. 1540) that would have required a plan to accelerate the transition to Afghan-lead security failed narrowly by a vote of 204-215. The bill, without the amendment, was passed by both chambers in December 2011. The amendment contained the main elements of the “Afghanistan Exit and Accountability Act” (H.R. 1735), which was introduced after the death of Bin Laden. A day earlier (May 25, 2011), an amendment that would require U.S. troops to withdraw and leave in place only U.S. counter-terrorism operations failed 123-294. Among other bills, H.R. 651 requires an agreement with Afghanistan under which U.S. forces redeploy from Afghanistan within one year of entry into that agreement, and H.Con.Res. 28, H.R. 780, and H.Con.Res. 248 require a withdrawal. The latter bill failed by a vote of 356 to 65 on March 10, 2011.

Beyond 2014: Long-Term Commitment/Strategic Partnership Agreement/Alternatives

President Obama and other senior U.S. officials have consistently sought to reassure the Afghans by saying that 2014 is not a date certain for a complete U.S. pullout, but rather for a transition to Afghan leadership. The top U.S. commander, General John Allen, made clear in interviews in late December 2011—and in his March 2012 congressional testimony mentioned above—that U.S.

forces (no numbers specified) would likely remain even after the 2014 transition, and possibly for several years thereafter. Many experts assess the likely numbers at about 20,000 troops, for overwatch and training the ANSF,³⁴ although proposals offered by experts range from about 10,000—30,000. The mission performed by the force, would resemble the concept of a counter-terrorism focused mission favored by Vice President Joseph Biden during the 2009 strategy debates. According to the concept, U.S. troops, many of which could be Special Operations forces, would advise the Afghan forces and conduct some combat against high value targets. U.S. commanders say that some of the most effective current U.S. operations consist of Special Operations forces tracking and killing selected key mid-level insurgent commanders, even though such operations were not intended to be the centerpiece of current U.S. strategy. Some of these operations reportedly involve Afghan commandos trained by U.S. Special Forces.

Many experts believe that this strategy would be sufficient to prevent a collapse of Afghan forces or the Afghan government, even if the Taliban remains as active as it is today. Others believe this strategy would likely lead to Taliban gains in the south and east, although likely not gains that would cause U.S. policy to be considered a failure. Critics of this approach express the view that Al Qaeda would regain a safe haven again in Afghanistan if there are insufficient numbers of U.S. forces there.³⁵

Strategic Partnership Agreement

U.S. troops that remain after 2014 would do so under the auspices of a strategic partnership agreement under negotiation. The negotiations are pursuant to President Obama's statement, at a May 12, 2010, press conference with visiting President Karzai, that the United States and Afghanistan would renew and expand an existing, five-year-old strategic partnership. Unlike the Iraq case, few major Afghan figures are calling for an outright end to U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan after 2014, although tensions in the partnership over various issues have increased over the past year, and particularly after the February-March 2012 Quran burning and Afghan civilian killings discussed below.

Negotiations began with the February 24-28, 2011, visit to Washington, DC, of Afghan Defense Minister Wardak and Interior Minister Khan and have defied repeated predictions of imminent conclusion, although Secretary of State Clinton said on March 21, 2012 that final agreement is likely before the late May 2012 NATO summit in Chicago. The reportedly agreed provisions of the pact will forbid "permanent" U.S. bases or for the use of Afghan facilities for use against neighboring countries, but would apparently allow long-term U.S. use of the facilities. The pact would also likely provide for continuing provision of arms to the Afghan security forces. One issue in the long-term relationship that might cause debate on the U.S. side is that the Afghans are said to have overly ambitious plans to buy major U.S. combat systems, such as F-16s, that the Afghans cannot likely sustain without significant long-term assistance.

The negotiations have continued to be plagued by disagreements over Afghan insistence on firm deadlines for Afghan institutions to assume control over detention centers and a halt to nighttime raids on insurgents. The detainee issue apparently was resolved on March 10, 2012 with a U.S. agreement to accelerate the transfer of imprisoned insurgents to Afghan control, to occur over six months. The United States reportedly will have a veto over which, if any, can be released, and 50

³⁴ General Allen interview with Scott Pelley, CBS *60 Minutes*. Broadcast October 15, 2011.

³⁵ Ibid.

non-Afghans will remain in U.S. custody. In early April 2012, it was reported that the two sides are close to agreement to give Afghans more control over night raids, including requiring an Afghan court warrant to hold any raid captives for more than 48 hours. The Afghan side also reportedly wants clarity on how many forces, and what missions they would perform, might remain after 2014—decisions U.S. leaders apparently have not made to date.

In October 2011, even with negotiations still stalled, Karzai called a *loya jirga* to endorse the concept of the pact but also conditions he seeks: more Afghan control over detentions and approval authority for U.S.-led night raids. A November 16-19, 2011, traditional *loya jirga* (the *jirga* was conducted not in accordance with the constitution and its views are therefore non-binding), consisting of about 2,030 delegates, gave Karzai the approvals he sought, both for the pact itself and his suggested conditions to it. It is not clear whether a finalized agreement would be submitted to the National Assembly for ratification.

The strategic partnership was first established on May 23, 2005, when Karzai and President Bush issued a “joint declaration”³⁶ providing for U.S. forces to have access to Afghan military facilities, in order to prosecute “the war against international terror and the struggle against violent extremism.” The joint statement did not give Karzai enhanced control over facilities used by U.S. forces, over U.S. operations, or over prisoners taken during operations. Some of the bases, both in and near Afghanistan, that support combat in Afghanistan, include those in **Table 7**. Karzai’s signing of the partnership had been blessed by 1,000 Afghan representatives on May 8, 2005, at a consultative *jirga* in Kabul. That *jirga* supported an indefinite presence of international forces to maintain security but urged Karzai to delay a firm decision to request such a presence. Karzai stated on March 22, 2011, that he would likely call another *loya jirga* to evaluate the renewed and expanded partnership, if it is agreed with the United States. A FY2009 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 111-32) and the FY2010, FY2011, and FY2012 National Defense Authorization Acts (P.L. 111-84, P.L. 111-383, and H.R. 1540, respectively) prohibit the U.S. establishment of permanent bases in Afghanistan.

No “SOFA” in Place Currently

U.S. forces currently operate in Afghanistan under “diplomatic notes” between the United States and the interim government of Afghanistan—primarily one that was exchanged in November 2002. That agreed note gives the United States legal jurisdiction over U.S. personnel serving in Afghanistan and states the Afghan government’s acknowledgment that U.S.-led military operations were “ongoing.” A draft SOFA—or technical agreement clarifying U.S./coalition authorities in Afghanistan—reportedly has been under discussion between the United States and Afghanistan since 2007, but is now likely to be incorporated into the strategic agreement above.

Threats to Long-Term U.S. Presence: Civilian Casualties and Quran-Mishandling Protests

As noted above, Afghan officials seek in any long-term pact to limit the U.S. ability to cause civilian casualties and to conduct certain operations that cause political backlash against the United States and the Afghan government. U.S. commanders agree, to a large extent, with the Afghan concerns, but seek to balance civilian casualties against the need to accomplish

³⁶ See <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/afghanistan/WH/20050523-2.pdf>.

operational objectives. The Afghan position has evolved out of several major incidents, including one near Herat on August 22, 2008, in which a NATO bomb killed up to 90 civilians, as well as an incident in September 2009 in Konduz in which Germany's contingent called in an airstrike on Taliban fighters who captured two fuel trucks; killing several civilians as well as Taliban fighters. However, ISAF-caused civilian casualties continue and usually lead to recriminations from President Karzai, including a veiled threat from Karzai in May 2011 that continued civilian casualties would cause Afghans to view international forces as occupiers. He made similar comments in June 2011, causing then-U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry to rebuke him indirectly but publicly.

If there is a decision to retain international forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014, the attitudes of the Afghan population might become a factor. The insurgent forces had always used the presence of foreign forces on Afghan soil as a rallying and recruiting point, but the vast bulk of Afghans have, in surveys, generally appreciated the need for foreign forces to secure Afghanistan. Yet, there are growing signs that the public welcome of foreign forces might be eroding. On April 1, 2011, crowds of Afghans in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif demonstrated against the March 2011 burning of a Quran by a Florida pastor. The demonstration turned violent, with protesters storming the U.N. compound in the city and killing 12, including 7 U.N. staff. Demonstrations in other Afghan cities followed, including anti-U.S. slogans and posters echoing the Taliban's anti-U.S., anti-Western rhetoric.

A wave of demonstrations and attacks followed reports that U.S. soldiers had mistakenly burned several Qurans on February 20, 2012, after removing them from Bagram Airfield detention center on suspicion that books were being used by insurgents to plot while in detention. During February 20-March 7, 2012, six U.S. personnel were killed by Afghan security personnel taking revenge for the action, and possibly inspired or directed by the Taliban. The reaction was less pronounced to the alleged killing of 16 Afghans by a U.S. soldier, Sgt. Robert Bates, who has been arrested and flown back to the United States for trial. A U.S.-Afghan investigation of the incident is under way.

The demonstrations and attacks raise questions as to whether the Afghan public has begun to see international forces as occupiers, and appeared to illustrate that a long-term presence of large numbers of international forces might be opposed broadly within Afghanistan.

Alternatives for the Post-Transition Period

As the end of the planned transition approaches in 2014, there is growing discussion of alternative strategies and policies that will stabilize Afghanistan after that time.

Make Concessions to the Taliban/De-Facto Partition

Some experts, such as former U.S. Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill and members of a working group sponsored by the Century Foundation (including former negotiator Lakhdar Brahimi and former high-ranking State Department official Thomas Pickering), believe that the United States and its partners have to work with Pakistan and other neighboring states to reach a political settlement, even if such a settlement might be favorable to the Taliban. These experts believe that the Afghan government will not be able to secure itself by 2014 and that the Taliban would make steady gains if U.S. troop levels fall to the 20,000 level widely envisioned.

Some proposals by these experts involve allowing the Taliban to control large parts of the south and east, where the insurgency is most active, and to work with the Northern Alliance to keep other parts of Afghanistan relatively peaceful. These plans are referred to by experts as partition or de-facto partition plans, although those terms are usually used by experts who believe these plans amount to a managed U.S. defeat.

Table 4. Operation Enduring Freedom Partner Forces

Operation Enduring Freedom continues as a separate combat track, led by the United States but joined by at least twelve partners. The caveat issue is less of a factor with OEF, since OEF is known as a combat-intensive mission conducted in large part by special forces contingents of contributing nations. The overwhelming majority of non-U.S. forces are under the NATO/ISAF mission. Prior to NATO assumption of command in October 2006, 19 coalition countries—primarily Britain, France, Canada, and Italy contributing approximately 4,000 combat troops to OEF-Afghanistan. Most were subsequently rebadged to ISAF. However, several foreign contingents, composed mainly of special operations forces, including forces from the UAE, are still part of OEF-Afghanistan. This includes about 500 British special forces, some German special forces, and other special forces units. In early 2010, U.S. Special Forces operating in Afghanistan were brought under direct command of the top U.S. command in Afghanistan.

Under OEF, Japan provided naval refueling capabilities in the Arabian sea, but the mission was suspended in October 2007 following a parliamentary change of majority there in July 2007. The mission was revived in January 2008 when the new government forced through parliament a bill to allow the mission to resume. It was renewed again, over substantial parliamentary opposition, in December 2008, but the opposition party won September 2009 elections in Japan and reportedly has decided on an alternative to continuing the refueling mission—by increasing its financial contributions to economic development in Afghanistan. That led to an October 2009 pledge by Japan—already the third largest individual country donor to Afghanistan, providing about \$1.9 billion in civilian reconstruction aid since the fall of the Taliban—to provide another \$5 billion over five years. It has been requested to be a major financial donor of an Afghan army expansion, and, in March 2009, it pledged to pay the costs of the Afghan National Police for six months.

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

Transition Pillar: Building Afghan Forces and Establishing Rule of Law

A key consideration of the U.S. and NATO transition to Afghan lead is the effectiveness of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), consisting primarily of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). The ANSF have expanded considerably since 2002, and Obama Administration strategy emphasizes improving it through partnering and more intense mentoring and training—about 90% of ANSF units are now partnered with international forces.. A NATO factsheet issued in advance of the February 3, 2012, NATO meeting in Brussels says the ANSF now takes the lead in 40% of all combat missions, and, by the end of 2012, it will have security lead over more than 50% of the Afghan population.

There are still widespread doubts about their ability to take the lead on security throughout the country. Some of the deficiency throughout the ANSF is due to illiteracy, which is estimated at about 90%. That prompted NTM-A to increasingly focus on providing literacy training, which is also seen as a large driver of recruits who want the literacy education. The October 2011 DOD report says there were 89,000 Afghan soldiers and police undergoing literacy training as of

September 2011. The NATO factsheet mentioned above says that 68% of the ANSF now have at least first grade literacy, up from only 14% in 2009.

Another concern is loyalty and ideology within the ANSF. Incidents of ANSF attacks on coalition personnel have increased since early 2011 and created increased tensions between the Afghans and their mentors. This complicates the transition in cases in which there is less interaction between Afghan forces and their U.S.-led mentors.

Current Size and Target Size

On January 21, 2010, the joint U.N.-Afghan “Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board” (JCMB) agreed that, by October 2011, the ANA would expand to 171,600 and the ANP to about 134,000, for a total ANSF of 305,600. Both forces reached that level by late September 2011 and continue to grow. They now total more than 319,000 (176,000 ANA and 143,000 ANP)—a figure close to their target size (set in August 2011) of 352,000 (195,000 ANA and 157,000 ANP). Centcom Commander James Mattis said on March 7, 2012 that the forces would reach that total probably by mid-May, well ahead of the November 2012 target date. This new target level is slightly smaller than a General Petraeus recommendation of 378,000, which was not adopted because of the concerns about the Afghan ability to sustain so large a force.

A final target size for the post-2014 period has not been set, according to DOD, and there is a debate under way as to whether the 352,000 target size should be reduced, because of the cost of maintaining a force that large. Some reports say that, in part because of the ongoing costs to donors to sustain the force, the target figure might be reduced to as low as 230,000. This is a figure that Defense Minister Wardak opposes as too low to accomplish the security mission. About 1,500 women serve in the ANSF, of which about 1,300 are police.

Training Overview

U.S. forces, along with partner countries and contractors, train the ANSF. In February 2010, the U.S.-run “Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan” (CSTC-A) that ran the training was subordinated to the broader NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan (NTM-A). NTM-A is commanded by U.S. Major General William Caldwell. CSTC-A’s mission was reoriented to building the capacity of the Afghan Defense and Interior Ministries, and to provide resources to the ANSF. The total number of required trainers (U.S. and partner) for these institutions is 4,750.

A core element of NATO’s training efforts are its mentoring teams—known as Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (POMLTs). The OMLTs and POMLTs are responsible for training and mentoring deployed ANSF units. OMLTs, which operate with the Afghan National Army (ANA), consist of 11-28 personnel from one or several countries. POMLTs, which teach and mentor the Afghan National Police (ANP), are composed of 15-20 personnel each. Of the approximately 150 OMLTs, 77 are comprised of U.S. trainers. U.S. trainers comprise 279 of the approximately 330 POMLTs. It is not known whether this structure will be preserved after the 2014 completion of the transition.

Working with NTM-A is a separate France-led 300-person European Gendarmerie Force (EGF) has been established to train Afghan forces in the provinces. The European Union is providing a 190-member “EUPOL” training effort, and 60 other experts to help train the ANP.

The Afghan National Army (ANA)

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

U.S. and allied officers say that the ANA is becoming a major force in stabilizing the country and a national symbol. It now has at least some presence in most of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, working with the PRTs, and it deployed outside Afghanistan to assist relief efforts for victims of the October 2005 Pakistan earthquake. ANA battalions, or “Kandaks,” are the main unit of the Afghan force.

The ANA is able to lead a growing percentage of all combat operations, but there is substantial skepticism within the U.S. defense establishment that it can assume full security responsibility by 2014, which is the target time frame announced by Karzai. U.S. military assessments say the force remains poorly led. It still suffers from at least a 20% desertion rate. Some accounts say that a typical ANA unit is only at about 50% of its authorized strength at any given time, and there are significant shortages in about 40% of equipment items. The high desertion rate complicates U.S.-led efforts to steadily grow the force. Some recruits take long trips to their home towns to remit funds to their families, and often then return to the ANA after a long absence. Others, according to U.S. observers, often refuse to serve far from their home towns. The FY2005 foreign aid appropriation (P.L. 108-447) required that ANA recruits be vetted for terrorism, human rights violations, and drug trafficking.

On the other hand, the ANA is assuming more responsibility without faltering outright. In August 2008, the ANA took over security of Kabul city from Italy, and it took formal control of Kabul Province in early 2009. The commando forces of the ANA, trained by U.S. Special Operations Forces, and numbering about 5,300, are considered well-trained and are taking the lead in some operations against high-value targets.

To assist its performance, the United States is attempting to better equip the ANA. Approximately \$2.7 billion worth of vehicles, weapons, equipment, and aircraft are being provided during August 2011-March 2012. General Caldwell stated in June 2011 that the United States is also helping the ANSF build up an indigenous weapons production capability. However, in line with U.S. efforts to cut costs for the ANSF, the Defense Department reportedly plans to shift in FY2013 from providing new equipment to maintaining existing equipment, including Russian-supplied helicopters.

The United States has built five ANA bases: Herat (Corps 207), Gardez (Corps 203), Qandahar (Corps 205), Mazar-e-Sharif (Corps 209), and Kabul (Division HQ, Corps 201, Air Corps). Coalition officers conduct heavy weapons training for a heavy brigade as part of the “Kabul Corps,” based in Pol-e-Charki, east of Kabul.

ANA Ethnic and Factional Considerations

At the time the United States first began establishing the ANA, Northern Alliance figures who were then in key security positions weighted recruitment for the national army toward its Tajik ethnic base. Many Pashtuns, in reaction, refused recruitment or left the ANA program. The naming of a Pashtun, Abdul Rahim Wardak, as Defense Minister in December 2004 reduced

desertions among Pashtuns (he remains in that position). U.S. officials in Afghanistan say this problem was further alleviated with better pay and more close involvement by U.S. forces, and that the force is ethnically integrated in each unit and representative. With about 41% Pashtuns, 34% Tajiks, 12% Hazaras, and 8% Uzbeks, the force is roughly in line with the broad demographics of the country, according to the April 2010 DOD report. However, U.S. commanders say that those Pashtuns who are in the force are disproportionately eastern Pashtuns (from the Ghilzai tribal confederations) rather than southern Pashtuns (mostly Durrani tribal confederations). Defense Minister Wardak said in February 2011 that a greater proportion of southern Pashtuns are being recruited to redress that imbalance somewhat, and the October 2011 DOD report says a re-evaluation in 2011 shows that there are more southern Pashtuns in the force than previously thought. The chief of staff was General Bismillah Khan, a Tajik who was a Northern Alliance commander, although as of June 2010 he is Interior Minister.

Afghan Air Force

Equipment, maintenance, and logistical difficulties continue to plague the Afghan Air Force, and it remains mostly a support force for ground operations rather than a combat-oriented force. However, the Afghan Air Force has been able to make ANA units nearly self-sufficient in airlift. The force is a carryover from the Afghan Air Force that existed prior to the Soviet invasion, and is expanding gradually after its equipment was virtually eliminated in the 2001-2002 U.S. combat against the Taliban regime. It now has about over 5,240 personnel, including 400 pilots, of a target size of about 8,000 by 2016. It has about 86 aircraft including gunship, attack, and transport helicopters—of a planned fleet of 145 aircraft. Afghan pilots are based at Bagram air base. There are five female Afghan Air Force personnel; four arrived in the United States in July 2011 for training as military helicopter pilots.

Afghanistan also is seeking the return of 26 aircraft, including some MiG-2s that were flown to safety in Pakistan and Uzbekistan during the past conflicts in Afghanistan. U.S. plans do not include supply of fixed-wing combat aircraft such as F-16s, which Afghanistan wants, according to U.S. military officials. There is a concern that Afghanistan will not soon have the capability to sustain operations of an aircraft as sophisticated as the F-16. In 2010, Russia and Germany supplied MI-8 helicopters to the Afghan Air Force.

Afghan National Police (ANP)

U.S. and Afghan officials believe that building up a credible and capable national police force is at least as important to combating the insurgency as building the ANA. The DOD reports on Afghanistan, cited earlier, contains substantial detail on U.S.-led efforts to continue what it says are “significant strides [that] have been made in professionalizing the ANP.” Outside assessments are widely disparaging, asserting that there is rampant corruption to the point where citizens mistrust and fear the ANP. Among other criticisms are a desertion rate far higher than that of the ANA; substantial illiteracy; involvement in local factional or ethnic disputes because the ANP works in the communities its personnel come from; and widespread use of drugs. It is this view that has led to consideration of stepped up efforts to promote local security solutions such as those discussed above.

Bismillah Khan, the Interior Minister, was highly respected as ANA chief of staff and has taken steps to try to improve the ANP, including through unannounced visits to stations around the country. He has also instituted salary increases and objective standards for promotions and

assignments. Still, some Pashtuns might resent his Tajik ethnicity, and some criticized him for direct involvement in combating the September 13, 2011, attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and confusing the lines of authority and reducing the effect of the Afghan counterattack. His reform efforts build on those taken in March 2010, by then-Interior Minister Atmar when he signed a “strategic guidance” document for the ANP, which prioritizes eliminating corruption within the ANP and winning public confidence. About 1,300 ANP are women, demonstrating some commitment to gender integration of the force.

Other U.S. commanders credit a November 2009 raise in police salaries (nearly doubled to about \$240 per month for service in high combat areas)—and the streamlining and improvement of the payments system for the ANP—with reducing the solicitation of bribes by the ANP. The raise also stimulated an eightfold increase in the number of Afghans seeking to be recruited. Others note the success, thus far, of efforts to pay police directly (and avoid skimming by commanders) through cell phone-based banking relationships (E-Paisa, run by Roshan cell network).

The United States has worked to correct longstanding equipment deficiencies. According to General Caldwell in June 2011, the ANP is increasingly being provided with heavy weapons and now have about 5,000 armored vehicles countrywide. Still, most police units lack adequate ammunition and vehicles. In some cases, equipment requisitioned by their commanders is being sold and the funds pocketed by the police officers. These activities contributed to the failure of a 2006 “auxiliary police” effort that attempted to rapidly field large numbers of new ANP officers.

The U.S. police training effort was first led by State Department/INL, but DOD took over the lead in police training in April 2005. Some U.S. officials believe that the United States and its partners still have not centered on a clearly effective police training strategy. A number of programs, such as the auxiliary police program attempted during 2005 was discarded as ineffective, and replaced during 2007-2011 with a program called “*focused district development*.” In that program, a district police force was taken out and retrained, its duties temporarily performed by more highly trained police (Afghan National Civil Order Police, or ANCOP, which number about 9,400 nationwide), and then reinserted after the training is complete. However, the ANCOP officers are currently being used mostly to staff new checkpoints that are better securing the most restive districts.

Police training includes instruction in human rights principles and democratic policing concepts, and the State Department human rights report on Afghanistan, referenced above, says the government and outside observers are increasingly monitoring the police force to prevent abuses.

Supplements to the National Police: Afghan Local Police (ALP) and Other Local Forces

The failure of several police training efforts led to efforts, beginning in 2008, to develop local forces to protect their communities. Until mid-2008, U.S. military commanders opposed assisting local militias anywhere in Afghanistan for fear of creating rivals to the central government and of re-creating militias that commit abuses and administer arbitrary justice. However, the urgent security needs in Afghanistan caused reconsideration and, during his command, General Petraeus expanded local security experiments, based on successful experiences in Iraq and after designing mechanisms to reassure Karzai that any local security organs would be firmly under Afghan government (mainly Ministry of Interior) control. Among these initiatives are:

- *Afghan Local Police.* This is a program in which local security organs are formed from local recruits who want to defend their communities. The local units are under the control of district police chiefs and each fighter is vetted by a local shura as well as Afghan intelligence (Petraeus testimony, March 15 and 16, 2011). The initiative has recruited a total of about 11,000 ALP which now operate in 57 different districts in several different provinces, according to U.S. commanders on March 7, 2011. There are three ALP centers in Helmand province. A total of 100 districts have been approved for the program, each with about 300 fighters, which would bring the target size of the program to about 30,000. However, the ALP program, and associated and preceding such programs discussed below, were heavily criticized in a September 12, 2011, Human Rights Watch report citing wide-scale human rights abuses (killings, rapes, arbitrary detentions, and land grabs) committed by the recruits. The report triggered a U.S. military investigation which substantiated many of the report's findings, although not the most serious of the allegations.³⁷
- *Local Defense Initiative/Village Stability Operations.* A separate program, the Local Defense Initiative, began in February 2010 in Arghandab district of Qandahar Province. U.S. Special Forces organized about 25 villagers into a neighborhood watch group, which is armed. The program has been credited by U.S. commanders as bringing normal life back to the district. A different militia was allowed to operate in Konduz to help secure the northern approaches to that city. Problems arose when the militia began arbitrarily administering justice, fueling the concerns discussed above these local security approaches. This program apparently has evolved into a joint Afghan-U.S. Special Operations program called "Village Stability Operations," in which 12 person teams from these forces live in communities to help improve governance, security and development. The program is discussed in the October 2011 DOD "1230 report."
- *Afghan Provincial Protection Program.* The ALP initiative built on another program begun in 2008, termed the "Afghan Provincial Protection Program" (APPP, commonly called "AP3"), funded with DOD (CERP) funds. The APPP got under way in Wardak Province (Jalrez district) in early 2009 and 100 local security personnel "graduated" in May 2009. It was subsequently expanded to 1,200 personnel. U.S. commanders said no U.S. weapons were supplied to the militias, but the Afghan government provided weapons (Kalashnikov rifles) to the recruits, possibly using U.S. funds. Participants in the program are given \$200 per month. General Petraeus showcased Wardak in August 2010 as an example of the success of the APPP and similar efforts. The National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-84) called for a report on the program within 120 days of the October 28, 2009, enactment.
- *Afghan Public Protection Force.* A new force is being developed by the Ministry of Interior, in partnership with ISAF and U.S. Embassy Kabul. The Afghan Public Protection Force is intended to be a guard force of about 14,000 personnel which will help guard diplomatic and development sites. The force was developed to implement Karzai's demands in 2010 that private security

³⁷ Ernesto Londono. "U.S. Cites Local Afghan Police Abuses." *Washington Post*, December 16, 2011. The Human Rights Watch report is entitled "Just Don't Call It a Militia." <http://www.hrw.org>, September 12, 2011.

contractor forces be disbanded and their functions performed by official Afghan government forces by March 20, 2012. That deadline was extended because of the slow pace of standing up the new protection force, and some development organizations continue to use locally hired guard forces.

The local security experiments to date resemble but technically are not *arbokai*, which are private tribal militias. Some believe that the *arbokai* concept should be revived as a means of securing Afghanistan, as the *arbokai* did during the reign of Zahir Shah and in prior pre-Communist eras. Reports persist that some tribal groupings have formed *arbokai* without specific authorization.

The local security programs discussed above appear to reverse the 2002-2007 efforts to disarm local sources of armed force.

DDR. The main program, run by UNAMA, was called the “DDR” program—Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration—and it formally concluded on June 30, 2006. The program got off to a slow start because the Afghan Defense Ministry did not reduce the percentage of Tajiks in senior positions by a July 1, 2003, target date, dampening Pashtun recruitment. In September 2003, Karzai replaced 22 senior Tajiks in the Defense Ministry officials with Pashtuns, Uzbeks, and Hazaras, enabling DDR to proceed. The major donor for the program was Japan, which contributed about \$140 million. Figures for collected weapons are in and U.S. spending on the programs are in the U.S. aid tables later in the report.

The DDR program was initially expected to demobilize 100,000 fighters, although that figure was later reduced. (Figures for accomplishment of the DDR and DIAG programs are contained in **Table 6.**) Of those demobilized, 55,800 former fighters have exercised reintegration options provided by the program: starting small businesses, farming, and other options. U.N. officials say at least 25% of these found long-term, sustainable jobs. Some studies criticized the DDR program for failing to prevent a certain amount of rearmament of militiamen or stockpiling of weapons and for the rehiring of some militiamen.³⁸ Part of the DDR program was the collection and cantonment of militia weapons, but generally only poor-quality weapons were collected. As one example, Fahim, still the main military leader of the Northern Alliance faction, continues to turn heavy weapons over to U.N. and Afghan forces (including four Scud missiles), although the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) says that large quantities of weapons remain in the Panjshir Valley.

Despite the earlier demobilization, which affected many of the northern minorities, there are indications that some faction leaders may be seeking to revive disbanded militias. The minorities may fear increased Taliban influence as a result of the Karzai reconciliation efforts, and the minorities want to be sure they could combat any Taliban abuses that might result if the Taliban achieves a share of power.

DIAG. Since June 11, 2005, the disarmament effort has emphasized another program called “DIAG”—Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups. It is run by the Afghan Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, headed by Vice President Khalili. Under the DIAG, no payments are available to fighters, and the program depends on persuasion rather than use of force against the illegal groups. DIAG has not been as well funded as was DDR: it has received \$11 million in operating funds. As an incentive for compliance, Japan and other donors have made available

³⁸ For an analysis of the DDR program, see Christian Denny. *Disarmament, Demobilization and Rearmament?*, June 6, 2005, <http://www.jca.apc.org/~jann/Documents/Disarmament%20demobilization%20rearmament.pdf>.

\$35 million for development projects where illegal groups have disbanded. These incentives were intended to accomplish the disarmament of a pool of as many as 150,000 members of 1,800 different “illegal armed groups”: militiamen that were not part of recognized local forces (Afghan Military Forces, AMF) and were never on the rolls of the Defense Ministry. These goals were not met by the December 2007 target date in part because armed groups in the south say they need to remain armed against the Taliban, but UNAMA reports that 100 out of 140 districts planned for DIAG are now considered “DIAG compliant.” (U.N. Secretary General Report, March 9, 2011).

Rule of Law/Criminal Justice Sector

Many experts believe that an effective justice sector is vital to Afghan governance. Some of the criticisms and allegations of corruption at all levels of the Afghan bureaucracy have been discussed throughout this report. U.S. justice sector programs generally focus on promoting rule of law and building capacity of the judicial system, including police training and court construction. The rule of law issue is covered in detail in CRS Report R41484, *Afghanistan: U.S. Rule of Law and Justice Sector Assistance*, by Liana Sun Wyler and Kenneth Katzman.

ANSF Funding

Because the Afghan government has so few resources, the Afghan security sector is funded almost entirely through international donations. In 2011, NTM-A had a budget of \$10 billion, almost all of which is U.S. funded, including \$3 billion for infrastructure; \$3 billion for equipment; \$1 billion for training; and \$3 billion for “sustainment” (food and salaries for the Afghan forces, and related costs).

The United States, as noted in tables later in this paper, will spend about \$11.2 billion on the ANSF in FY2012. A reduction to \$5.75 billion is requested for FY2013. In March 2012, the United States reportedly discussed with allies a post-2014 ANSF budget of about \$4.1 billion, of which \$1.3 billion would come from non-U.S. donors, about \$500 million would be provided by the Afghan government, and about \$2.3 billion would be provided by the United States. The options under discussion to reduce the post-2014 size of the ANSF represent an effort to bring the costs of the force in line with this budgeting effort.³⁹

The time frame for Afghan financial self-sufficiency for its security is far in the future. As noted elsewhere, the Afghan government will take in less than \$2 billion in total revenue in 2011. In December 2009, Karzai asserted that the Afghan government could not likely fund its own security forces until 2024, and no Afghan or other official has shortened that time frame since.

Recent appropriations for the ANA and ANP are contained in the tables at the end of this report, which also contain breakdowns for Commanders Emergency Response Program funds, or CERP, which is used for projects that build goodwill and presumably reduce the threat to use forces. CERP has also been used for what could be considered development projects, a point of contention among some observers. As noted in the tables, as of FY2005, the security forces funding has been DOD funds, not State Department funds (Foreign Military Financing, FMF).

³⁹ Karen DeYoung. “U.S. Seeks More Money From Donors for Afghan Force.” *Washington Post*, March 28, 2012.

NATO Trust Fund for the ANA

In 2007 ISAF set up a trust fund for donor contributions to fund the transportation of equipment donated to and the training of the ANA; the mandate was expanded in 2009 to include sustainment costs. In November 2010 a further expansion was agreed on to support literacy training for the ANA. As of January 2012, national contributions and pledges to the ANA Trust Fund total about \$600 million. U.S. funding for the ANA is provided separately, not through this fund.

Law and Order Trust Fund for the ANP

There is also a separate “Law and Order Trust Fund” (LOTF) for Afghanistan, run by the U.N. Development Program, which is used to pay the salaries of the ANP and other police-related functions. From 2002-2010, donors contributed \$1.74 billion to the Fund, of which the United States contributed about \$620 million, according to the April 2011 DOD report (p. 41). Japan’s 2009 pledge to pay the expenses of the Afghan police for at least six months (about \$125 million for each six month period) is implemented through the LOTF.

Other Bilateral Donations

The October 2011 DOD report discusses other bilateral donations to the ANSF, both in funds and in arms and equipment donations. There is a “NATO Equipment Donation Program,” through which donor countries supply the ANSF with equipment. Since 2002, about \$2.9 billion in assistance to the ANSF has come from these sources. As an example, in October 2011, Croatia and Slovenia donated a total of over 20,000 AK-47 assault rifles to the ANP. Australia contributed \$40 million to relocate the ANA’s 205th Corps, and South Korea contributed \$30 million for medical and communications equipment.

There is also a NATO-Russia Council Helicopter Maintenance Trust Fund. Launched in March 2011, this fund provides maintenance and repair capacity to the Afghan Air Force helicopter fleet, much of which is Russian-made.

Policy Component: Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

U.S. and partner officials have generally praised the effectiveness of “Provincial Reconstruction Teams” (PRTs)—enclaves of U.S. or partner forces and civilian officials that provide safe havens for international aid workers to help with reconstruction and to extend the writ of the Kabul government—in accelerating reconstruction and assisting stabilization efforts. The PRTs, the concept for which was announced in December 2002, perform activities ranging from resolving local disputes to coordinating local reconstruction projects, although most U.S.-run PRTs and most PRTs in combat-heavy areas focus on counter-insurgency. Many of the additional U.S. civilian officials deployed to Afghanistan during 2009 and 2010 are based at PRTs, which have facilities, vehicles, and security. Some aid agencies say they have felt more secure since the PRT program began,⁴⁰ but several relief groups do not want to associate with military forces because doing so might taint their perceived neutrality. Others, such as Oxfam International, argue that the

⁴⁰ Kraul, Chris. “U.S. Aid Effort Wins Over Skeptics in Afghanistan.” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2003.

PRTs are delaying the time when the Afghan government has the skills and resources to secure and develop Afghanistan on its own. It is likely that the PRTs in Afghanistan will either be phased out or transitioned to purely civilian leadership and roles as the transition unfolds.

The list of PRTs in operation, including lead country, is shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** Virtually all the PRTs are now under the ISAF mission. Each PRT operated by the United States has U.S. forces; DOD civil affairs officers; representatives of USAID, State Department, and other agencies; and Afghan government (Interior Ministry) personnel. Most PRTs, including those run by partner forces, have personnel to train Afghan security forces. USAID officers assigned to the PRTs administer PRT reconstruction projects.

Karzai Criticism of PRTs

As far as use of PRTs to jump-start development, USAID observers say there is little Afghan input, either into development project decision making or as contractors for facility and other construction. That lack of input has fed criticism by Karzai, most recently at his February 6, 2011, speech at a security conference in Munich, that the PRTs should be abolished and all aid funds channeled through the Afghan government. USAID spending on PRT projects is in the table on USAID spending in Afghanistan at the end of this report.

To address the criticism, some donor countries have enhanced the civilian component of the PRTs and change their image from military institutions. There has been long been consideration to turn over the lead in the U.S.-run PRTs to civilians rather than military personnel, presumably State Department or USAID officials. That was first attempted in 2006 with the establishment of a civilian-led U.S.-run PRT in the Panjshir Valley. As noted, in March 2009, the Netherlands converted its PRT to civilian lead, although that alteration ceased after the assumption of U.S. and Australian PRT command in July 2010. As of November 2009, the “civilianization” of the PRT concept has evolved further with the decision to refer to PRTs as Interagency Provincial Affairs (IPA) offices or branches. In this new concept—a local parallel to the Senior Civilian Representatives now assigned to each regional command—State Department officers enjoy enhanced decision-making status at each PRT.

Cooperation With Allies/Preventing Early Allied Exits

Since the fall of the Taliban, the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan has been in cooperation with partners. Since 2006, the vast bulk of all U.S. troops in Afghanistan have served under the umbrella of the NATO-led “International Security Assistance Force” (ISAF). ISAF consists of all 26 NATO members states plus partner countries—a total of 50 countries including the United States. President Obama’s December 1, 2009, policy speech on Afghanistan was explicit in seeking new partner troop commitments, and pledges met or exceeded what some U.S. officials expected. However, as the transition to Afghan leadership began in July 2011, U.S. officials are attempting to prevent a “rush to the exits” in which partner forces pull out before their areas of responsibility are ready for transition. Rather, U.S. officials want partner drawdowns to occur at roughly the same rate and proportion as the U.S. drawdown occurs—thus far achieved.

Virtually all the European governments have long been under pressure from their publics and parliaments to end or reduce their military involvement in Afghanistan. Several key contingents had (1) already ended their combat missions (the Netherlands), (2) announced firm ends to those missions (Canada ended its combat mission in late July 2011, but will furnish 950 trainers for the

ANSF), or (3) set notional times to depart before the 2014 completion of the transition. Partner forces that continue to bear the brunt of combat in Afghanistan include Britain, Canada, Poland, France, Denmark, Romania, and Australia.

The drawdown schedule from 2012-2014 is to be decided at the May 2012 NATO summit meeting in Chicago, as stated above. There are no firm indications, to date, of which countries would maintain forces in Afghanistan beyond the 2014 transition. However, some experts believe that close U.S. allies will keep some forces in Afghanistan in order to show support for U.S. policy after 2014.

Other partner countries are planning their own near-term drawdowns, leading to the completion of their missions by the end of 2014, as follows:

- France has said it would cut about 1,000 forces by the end of 2012. However, in February 2012, following an incident in which an Afghan soldier killed four French soldiers, France announced it would wind down its mission in Afghanistan by the end of 2013, one year earlier than the 2014 transition date.
- Britain announced it would withdraw about 900 of its force by the end of 2012, and the remainder of the contingent would out by the end of 2014. However, in February 2012, Britain reaffirmed it would remain in Afghanistan at least through the end of 2014 transition completion.
- Italy and Germany have also indicated an intent to try to wind down their involvement in Afghanistan before the end of 2014.
- Denmark will withdraw 120 troops by the end of 2012, but will increase development aid and ANSF training contributions.
- Poland said in March 2012 that it would not withdraw force before the end of 2014.
- Belgium will remove 300 personnel from Kabul International Airport by the end of 2012.
- Turkey will redeploy 200-300 personnel from the Kabul sector by the end of 2013.

Australia may end its mission in Afghanistan before the 2014 completion of the transition, according to Prime Minister Julia Gillard in November 2011.

Table 5. Background on NATO/ISAF Formation and U.N. Mandate

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created by the Bonn Agreement and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001, a Chapter 7 resolution),⁴¹ initially limited to Kabul. In October 2003, after Germany agreed to contribute 450 military personnel to expand ISAF into the city of Konduz, ISAF contributors endorsed expanding its presence to several other cities, contingent on formal U.N. approval—which came on October 14, 2003, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1510. In August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF—previously the ISAF command rotated among donor forces including Turkey and Britain.

NATO/ISAF's responsibilities broadened significantly in 2004 with NATO/ISAF's assumption of security responsibility for northern and western Afghanistan (Stage 1, Regional Command North, in 2004 and Stage 2, Regional Command West, in 2005, respectively). The transition process continued on July 31, 2006, with the formal handover of the security mission in southern Afghanistan to NATO/ISAF control. As part of this "Stage 3," a British/Canadian/Dutch-led "Regional Command South" (RC-S) was formed. Britain is the lead force in Helmand; Canada is lead in Qandahar, and the Netherlands was lead in Uruzgan until its departure in July 2010; the three rotated the command of RC-S. "Stage 4," the assumption of NATO/ISAF command of peacekeeping in 14 provinces of eastern Afghanistan (and thus all of Afghanistan), was completed on October 5, 2006. As part of the completion of the NATO/ISAF takeover, the United States put about half the U.S. troops then operating in Afghanistan under NATO/ISAF in "Regional Command East" (RC-E).

The ISAF mission was renewed (until October 13, 2012) by U.N. Security Council Resolution 2011 (October 12, 2011), which reiterated previous resolutions' support for the Operation Enduring Freedom mission. Tables at the end of this report list contributing forces, areas of operations, and their Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Major Contingent Developments During the U.S. "Surge"

U.S. partners note that they have repeatedly answered U.S. calls to support the mission. In concert with the beginning of the U.S. surge in early 2009, additional pledges came through at the April 3-4, 2009, NATO summit, and other force pledges were announced in conjunction with the January 28, 2010, conference on Afghanistan in London. Among major pledges (troops and major aid funds) that supported the U.S. surge:

- November 10, 2009: Ahead of President Obama's visit to Asia, Japan announced a pledge of \$5 billion over the next five years for Afghanistan civilian development, although it suspended its naval refueling mission. Japan has been covering about half of the \$250 million yearly salary costs of the ANP.
- July 2009: South Korea announced it would increase its aid contribution to Afghanistan by about \$20 million, in part to expand the hospital capabilities at Bagram Air Base. In July 2010, it returned about 150 engineers to Afghanistan for development missions, protected by 300 South Korean forces, to Parwan Province.⁴²

⁴¹ Its mandate was extended until October 13, 2006, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1623 (September 13, 2005); and until October 13, 2007, by Resolution 1707 (September 12, 2006).

⁴² Until December 2007, 200 South Korean forces at Bagram Air Base, mainly combat engineers, were part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF); they left in December 2007 in fulfillment of a decision by the South Korean government the previous year. However, many observers believe South Korea did not further extend its mission beyond that, possibly as part of an agreement in August 2007 under which Taliban militants released 21 kidnapped South Korean church group visitors. Two were killed during their captivity. The Taliban kidnappers did not get the demanded release of 23 Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government.

- December 2009-January 2010 (London conference): A total of about 9,000 forces were pledged (including retaining 2,000 sent for the August 2009 election who were due to rotate out). Several countries pledged police trainers.
- July 2010: Malaysia became a new contributor to the Afghanistan effort, furnishing 40 military medics.
- March 2011: Germany said it would add 300 forces to operate surveillance systems, although this decision was related to its refusal to participate in military action against Libya rather than to an Afghanistan-specific requirement.
- May 2011: Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian state to announce a troop contribution, pledging four noncombat troops to the mission.

National “Caveats” on Combat Operations

One of the most thorny issues has been the U.S. effort to persuade other NATO countries to adopt flexible rules of engagement that allow all contributing forces to perform combat missions. NATO and other partner forces have not, as they pledged at the NATO summit in April 2008, removed the so-called “national caveats” on their troops’ operations that Lieutenant General McChrystal says limits operational flexibility. For example, some nations refuse to conduct night-time combat. Others have refused to carry Afghan personnel on their helicopters. Others do not fight after snowfall. These caveats were troubling to NATO members with forces in heavy combat zones; such countries feel they are bearing the brunt of the fighting.

Security/Political Initiatives To Facilitate the Transition

Despite the assessments of progress, the U.S. view is that ending the conflict on favorable terms requires convincing insurgent leaders that a negotiated settlement should be pursued.

“Reintegration” and “Reconciliation” With Insurgents⁴³

Even before his term as top commander in Afghanistan, General Petraeus had said that the way conflicts like the one in Afghanistan end is through a political settlement. The issue of reintegrating insurgent fighters into society, and reconciling with insurgent leaders, is receiving increasing high-level attention. Both are Afghan-led processes but they have concerned some in the international community and Afghanistan because of the potential for compromises with insurgents that may produce backsliding on human rights. Most insurgents are highly conservative Islamists who agreed with the limitations in women’s rights that characterized Taliban rule. Many leaders of ethnic minorities are also skeptical of the effort because they fear that it might further Pashtun political strength within Afghanistan, and enhance the influence of Pakistan in Afghan politics. The United States and the Karzai government agree that any settlement requires that fighters and insurgent leaders agree, as an outcome,⁴⁴ to (1) cease

⁴³ This issue is discussed in substantial detail in CRS Report RS21922, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, by Kenneth Katzman

⁴⁴ The concept that this stipulations could be an “outcome” of negotiations was advanced by Secretary of State Clinton at the first annual Richard C. Holbrooke Memorial Address. February 18, 2011.

fighting, (2) accept the Afghan constitution, and (3) sever any ties to Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups.

Reintegration/"Peace Jirga"

Before the more recent emphasis on reconciliation, the concept of providing incentives to persuade insurgents to surrender and reenter their communities received most of the U.S. attention. The elements included in a reintegration plan drafted by the Afghan government and adopted by a "peace *loya jirga*" during June 2-4, 2010,⁴⁵ included providing surrendering fighters with jobs, amnesty, protection, and an opportunity to be part of the security architecture for their communities. Later in June 2010, President Karzai issued a decree to implement the plan, which involves outreach by Afghan local leaders to tribes and others who can convince insurgents to lay down their arms. The Afghan plan received formal international backing at the July 20, 2010, Kabul Conference. Britain, Japan, and several other countries, including the United States, have announced a total of about \$235 million in donations to a new fund to support the reintegration process, of which \$134 million has been received.⁴⁶ The U.S. contribution is to be about \$100 million (CERP funds), of which \$50 million was formally pledged in April 2011.⁴⁷

Despite the international funding for the effort, the Afghan-led reintegration process has moved forward slowly. As of April 2012, over 3,800 fighters have reintegrated, according to a U.N. Secretary General report on Afghanistan on March 5, 2012 (U.N. document A/66/728-S/2012/133), but they are still mostly from the north and west, although with perhaps some increasing participation from militants in the more violent south and east. Another 800 are awaiting participation in the process. Some accounts attribute the slow progress to delays by Afghan officials who say they are not ready to provide the promised protection and job training services to reintegrating fighters. In addition, short of formal reintegration, U.S. military meetings with tribal elders have, in some cases, persuaded Taliban and other insurgents in their areas to stop fighting. On the other hand, some observers say there have been cases in which reintegrated fighters have committed Taliban-style human rights abuses against women and others, suggesting that the reintegration process might have unintended consequences.

Previous efforts similarly met mixed success. A "Program for Strengthening Peace and Reconciliation" (referred to in Afghanistan by its Pashto acronym "PTS") operated during 2003-2008, headed by then *Meshrano Jirga* speaker Sibghatullah Mojadeddi and Vice President Karim Khalili, and overseen by Karzai's National Security Council. The program persuaded 9,000 Taliban figures and commanders to renounce violence and join the political process.

Reconciliation With Taliban Figures/Rabbani Assassination Setback

The separate but related Afghan-led initiative is to conduct negotiations with senior insurgent leaders. Many in the international community, including within the Obama Administration, initially withheld endorsement of reconciliation, fearing it might result in the incorporation into

⁴⁵ Afghanistan National Security Council. "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program." April 2010.

⁴⁶ United Nations. Report of the Secretary General: "The Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security." March 9, 2011.

⁴⁷ The National Defense Authorization Act for FY2010 (P.L. 111-84) authorized the use of CERP funds to win local support, to "reintegrate" Taliban fighters.

the Afghan political system of insurgent leaders who retain ties to Al Qaeda and commit severe human rights abuses. According to Afghan and U.S. officials, any settlement would require—as an outcome—that the Taliban drop at least some of its demands that (1) foreign troops leave Afghanistan; (2) a new “Islamic” constitution be adopted; and (3) Islamic law is imposed. However, those are viewed as opening positions; the Afghan government, for its part, may have softened its position on changes to the Afghan constitution as part of a settlement. Secretary Clinton said in India on July 20, 2011, that any settlement must not result in an undoing of “the progress that has been made [by women and ethnic minorities] in the past decade.”

Following the 2010 U.S. shift on the issue, the July 20, 2010, Kabul Conference endorsed establishment of an Afghan High Peace Council to build Afghan consensus on the issue. That Council was established on September 5, 2010, and its 70 members met for the first time under the leadership of Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani on October 10, 2010. Rabbani was appointed because of Karzai’s perception that he could bring along skeptical Northern Alliance/Tajik/other minority figures to support reconciliation. He earned substantial respect among all factions for his diligent work in this role; for example he led High Peace Council visits to Pakistan and other regional countries, and established provincial representative offices of the Council in at least 27 provinces. On the other hand, some of the nine women on the Council say their views have been routinely dismissed. In the wake of Rabbani’s September 20, 2011, assassination, no permanent replacement has been identified.

Rabbani’s assassination at his home by a turban-bomb-wielding insurgent set back the reconciliation process. Rabbani reportedly was lured to take the meeting when the assassin pretended to be delivering a key new message from Taliban leaders based in Pakistan. The Northern Alliance reacted to the assassination by asserting that this action affirms its assertions that the Taliban does not want reconciliation and that counting on its prospects is naïve. The unrest among the members of this faction contributed to Karzai’s decision to initially criticize Pakistan and its Afghan militant contacts as untrustworthy opponents unwilling to reconcile. An opportunity for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and others to pursue the issue was missed when Pakistan boycotted the December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference over a November 26, 2011, security incident in which U.S. forces killed 24 Pakistani border troops.

As Afghan anger at the Rabbani killing abated, U.S. officials continued the steps they had been pursuing earlier in 2011. U.S. officials had been discussing with Taliban interlocutors the opening of a Taliban political office in Qatar to facilitate talks. That idea was briefly disrupted by Afghan opposition to Qatar’s role; Afghanistan called its Ambassador to Qatar back for consultations in December 2011 when Afghanistan learned that Qatar was about to allow a Taliban office to open. That action suggested that Karzai wants a high degree of control over any settlement talks, and it came amid reports that U.S. officials had been meeting Taliban figures more frequently than was previously believed, that there had been some discussions with the Haqqani faction, and that the United States was considering a Taliban request for a “confidence-building measure” in the form of transferring captives from the Guantanamo detention facility to Afghan custody.⁴⁸ Such a transfer would require U.S. congressional notification. As part of its request for Taliban confidence building, the United States reportedly has demanded a public Taliban statement severing its ties to Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups, possibly as a prelude to a limited battlefield ceasefire.

⁴⁸ Missy Ryan, Warren Strobel, and Mark Hosenball. “Secret U.S., Taliban Talks Reach Turning Point.” *Reuters*, December 19, 2011.

Prospects appeared to brighten further in early 2012 as the Afghan side and the Pakistani government began to become more involved. In January 2012, Karzai dropped his objections to the Qatar office, and members of the High Peace Council confirmed on February 16, 2012 that the Afghan government was also involved in talks with some Taliban figures. On February 24, 2012, following a trilateral Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan summit, Pakistani leaders for the first time publicly encouraged Taliban leaders to negotiate a settlement to the conflict. Still, some U.S. officials say that all sides are not close to serious negotiations on the core issues of any political settlement. And, following the March 11, 2012 killing of Afghan civilians allegedly by a U.S. soldier, both the Taliban and the Hikmatyar faction (long in talks with the Kabul government) announced they were ending any talks.

The contacts discussed above came after a “false start,” in which one purported senior Taliban interlocutor was revealed as an imposter. Earlier, Mullah Bradar, who is close to Mullah Umar, was said by the Afghan side to have been engaged in talks with the Afghan government prior to his arrest by Pakistan in February 2010. Karzai reportedly believes that Pakistan arrested Bradar in order to be able to influence the course of any Afghan government-Taliban settlement. The Taliban as a movement was not invited to the June 2-4, 2010, consultative peace *jirga*, but some Taliban sympathizers reportedly were there.

Previous talks have taken place primarily in Saudi Arabia and UAE. Press reports said that Afghan officials, including Karzai’s brother, Qayyum, Arsala Rahmani, a former Taliban official now in parliament, and the former Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, who purportedly is in touch with Umar’s inner circle. These same Taliban representatives may be involved in the ongoing talks referred to above.

Removing Taliban Figures From U.N. Sanctions Lists. The consultative peace *jirga*, in its final declaration, supported Karzai’s call for the removal of the names of some Taliban figures from U.N. lists of terrorists, lists established pursuant to Resolution 1267 and Resolution 1333 (October 15, 1999, and December 19, 2000, both pre-September 11 sanctions against the Taliban and Al Qaeda) and Resolution 1390 (January 16, 2002). Press reports before the July 20, 2010, Kabul Conference said the Afghan government has submitted a list of 50 Taliban figures it wants taken off this list (which includes about 140 Taliban-related persons or entities) as a confidence-building measure. The Conference called on Afghanistan to engage with the U.N. Security Council to provide evidence to justify such de-listings, and U.N., U.S., and other international officials said they would support considering de-listings on a case-by-case basis. On January 26, 2010, Russia, previously a hold-out against such a process, dropped opposition to removing five Taliban-era figures from these sanctions lists, including Taliban-era foreign minister Wakil Mutawwakil, who ran in 2005 parliamentary elections. Also removed was Abdul Hakim Monib, who has served Karzai as governor of Uruzgan, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, who was Taliban representative in the United States, and three others. Mujahid now is one of three deputy chairs of the High Peace Council. “Mullah Rocketi,” not on the sanctions list, is a former Taliban commander who ran for president in the August 2009 elections.

On June 17, 2011, in concert with U.S. confirmations of talks with Taliban figures, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1988 and 1989. The resolutions drew a separation between the Taliban and Al Qaeda with regard to the sanctions. However, a decision on whether to remove the 50 Taliban figures from the list, as suggested by Afghanistan, was deferred. On July 21, 2011, 14 Taliban figures were removed from the “1267” sanctions list; among them were four members of the High Peace Council (including Arsala Rahmani, mentioned above).

Table 6. Major Security-Related Indicators

Force	Current Level
Total Foreign Forces in Afghanistan	About 131,000: About 91,000 U.S. and 40,000 non-U.S. partner forces. (U.S. total was: 25,000 in 2005; 16,000 in 2003; 5,000 in 2002. ISAF totals were: 12,000 in 2005; and 6,000 in 2003.) US. forces deployed at 88 bases in Afghanistan.
U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan	1,801 killed, of which 1,495 by hostile action. Additional 103 U.S. deaths in other OEF theaters. 150 U.S. killed from October 2001-January 2003. 500+ killed in 2010.
NATO/ISAF Sectors	RC-South: 35,000 (U.K. lead). RC-Southwest: 27,000 (U.S. lead); RC-East: 32,000 (U.S. lead); RC-North: 11,000 (German lead); RC-West: 6,000 (Italy lead) RC-Kabul: 5,000 (Turkey).
Afghan National Army (ANA)	About 180,000 as of April 2012, with 195,000 planned by November 2012. About 2,000 trained per month. 5,300 are commando forces, trained by U.S. Special Forces. ANA private paid about \$200 per month; generals about \$750 per month.
Afghan National Police (ANP)	About 145,000 as of April 2012, with goal of 157,000 by November 2012. 21,000 are Border Police; 3,800+ counter-narcotics police; 14,400 Civil Order Police (ANCOP).
ANSF Salaries	About \$800 million per year, paid by donor countries bilaterally or via trust funds
Number of Al Qaeda	"Less than 100 or so," according to General Petraeus in April 2011. Also, small numbers of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.
Number of Taliban fighters	Up to 25,000 (U.S. military and Afghan estimates in mid-2011), although General Allen believe numbers are much lower. Plus about 3,000 Haqqani faction and 1,000 Hikmatyar.
Reintegrations	Over 3,800 fighters reintegrated since 2010 with at about another 800 awaiting processing
Afghan casualties	United Nations said on February 4, 2012, that 3,000 civilians were killed in 2011, and 8% increase over 2011. The majority were killed by insurgent groups. See CRS Report R41084, <i>Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians</i> , by Susan G. Chesser.

Sources: CRS; testimony and public statements by DOD officials.

Regional Dimension

Most of Afghanistan's neighbors believed that the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan would stabilize the region, but Taliban and other Islamist militants have continued to challenge the Afghan government, have battled the government of Pakistan, and have conducted acts of terrorism against India. The transition to Afghan security leadership has led some regional powers to plan to secure their interests in Afghanistan in a post-NATO/ISAF Afghanistan.

As part of the transition plan, the Obama Administration is increasingly promoting Afghanistan's integration into regional security and economic organizations and patterns. The Administration is emphasizing development of a Central Asia-South Asia trading hub—part of a "New Silk Road" (NSR)—in an effort to keep Afghanistan stable and economically vibrant as donors wind down their involvement. As part of this effort, the Administration obtained pledges from Afghanistan's neighbors to these goals at a region-led international meeting in Istanbul on November 2, 2011, resulting in the "Istanbul Declaration." Similar commitments to Afghan sovereignty, stability, and cooperation were sought—and for the most part obtained—at the December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference on Afghanistan (the 10th anniversary of the Bonn Conference that formed the post-Taliban political and security architecture for Afghanistan). That meeting was attended by high-level representatives from 85 countries and 15 international organizations. Although the final declaration of the conference affirmed that vision, Pakistan decided not to send high-level

representation to the conference because of a November 26, 2011, security incident with the United States, reducing the conference's focus on regional integration.

Prior to the recent efforts, Afghanistan has been slowly integrated into regional security and economic organizations. In November 2005, Afghanistan joined the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and Afghanistan has observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security coordination body that includes Russia, China, and several Central Asian states. U.S. officials have sought to enlist both regional and greater international support for Afghanistan through the still-expanding 50-nation "International Contact Group," which held its latest meeting in Jeddah on March 3, 2011.

Several regional summit meeting series have been established involving Afghanistan, including

- Summit meetings between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey; and between Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The latest Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan meeting took place in Islamabad on Islamabad on February 16-17, 2012. The previous such meeting occurred in Tehran on June 25, 2011. The fifth of the Turkey-led meetings occurred on December 24, 2010, and resulted in a decision for joint military exercises in March 2011 between Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
- Turkey and UNAMA co-chair a "Regional Working Group" initiative, which organized the major meeting on Afghanistan in Istanbul on November 2, 2011.
- UNAMA also leads a "Kabul Silk Road" initiative, to promote regional cooperation on Afghanistan.
- Russia has put together two "quadrilateral summits," the latest of which was on August 18, 2010, among Pakistan, Russia, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, and focused on counter-narcotics and anti-smuggling.
- Another regional collaborative effort is the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which was launched in 2005. It held its fifth meeting in Tajikistan on March 26-27, 2012.

Table 7. Afghan and Regional Facilities Used for Operations in and Supply Lines to Afghanistan

Facility	Use
Bagram Air Base	50 miles north of Kabul, the operational hub of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and base for CJTF-82. At least 2,000 U.S. military personnel are based there. Handles many of the 150+ U.S. aircraft (including helicopters) in country. Hospital constructed, one of the first permanent structures there. FY2005 supplemental (P.L. 109-13) provided about \$52 million for various projects to upgrade facilities at Bagram, including a control tower and an operations center, and the FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provided \$20 million for military construction there. NATO also using the base and sharing operational costs. Bagram can be accessed directly by U.S. military flights following April 2010 agreement by Kazakhstan to allow overflights of U.S. lethal equipment.
Qandahar Air Field	Just outside Qandahar, the hub of military operations in the south. Turned over from U.S. to NATO/ISAF control in late 2006 in conjunction with NATO assumption of peacekeeping responsibilities. Enhanced (along with other facilities in the south) at cost of \$1.3 billion to accommodate influx of U.S. combat forces in the south.
Shindand Air Base	In Farah province, about 20 miles from Iran border. Used by U.S. forces and combat aircraft since October 2004, after the dismissal of Herat governor Ismail Khan, who controlled it.
Peter Ganci Base: Manas, Kyrgyzstan	Used by 1,200 U.S. military personnel as well as refueling and cargo aircraft for shipments into Afghanistan. Leadership of Kyrgyzstan changed in April 2005 in an uprising against President Askar Akayev and again in April 2010 against Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Previous Kyrgyz governments demanded the U.S. vacate the base but in both cases, (July 2006 and July 2009) agreement to use the base was extended in exchange for large increase in U.S. payments for its use (to \$60 million per year in the latter case). Interim government formed in April 2010 first threatened then retracted eviction of U.S. from the base. Defense Secretary Panetta visited in March 2012 to launch talks on extending U.S. use of the facility beyond 2014.
Incirlik Air Base, Turkey	About 2,100 U.S. military personnel there; U.S. aircraft supply U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. use repeatedly extended for one year intervals by Turkey.
Al Dhafra, UAE	Air base used by about 1,800 U.S. military personnel, to supply U.S. forces and related transport into Iraq and Afghanistan. Could see increasing use if Manas closes.
Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar	Largest air facility used by U.S. in region. About 5,000 U.S. personnel in Qatar. Houses central air operations coordination center for U.S. missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; also houses CENTCOM forward headquarters. Could see increased use if Manas closes.
Naval Support Facility, Bahrain	U.S. naval command headquarters for OEF anti-smuggling, anti-terrorism, and anti-proliferation naval search missions, and Iraq-related naval operations (oil platform protection) in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. About 5,100 U.S. military personnel there.
Karsi-Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan	Not used by U.S. since September 2005 following U.S.-Uzbek dispute over May 2005 Uzbek crackdown on unrest in Andijon. Once housed about 1,750 U.S. military personnel (900 Air Force, 400 Army, and 450 civilian) supplying Afghanistan. U.S. relations with Uzbekistan have improved since 2009, but there is still no U.S. use of the air base. Uzbekistan allowed German use of the base temporarily in March 2008. Some U.S. shipments began in February 2009 through Navoi airfield in central Uzbekistan, and U.S. signed agreement with Uzbekistan on April 4, 2009, allowing nonlethal supplies for the Afghanistan war. Goods are shipped to Latvia and Georgia, some transits Russia by rail, then to Uzbekistan.
Tajikistan	Some use of air bases and other facilities by coalition partners, including France, and emergency use by U.S. India also uses bases under separate agreement. New supply lines to Afghanistan established in February 2009 ("northern route") make some use of Tajikistan.
Pakistan	As discussed below, most U.S. supplies have flowed through Pakistan, but progressively increased use is being made through the Northern Distribution Network. Heavy equipment docks in Karachi and is escorted by security contractors to the Khyber Pass crossing.
Russia	Allows non-lethal equipment to transit Russia by rail. In March 2012, expressed willingness to allow use of an airfield to move goods to Afghanistan. Still does not allow lethal aid to transit.

Pakistan/Pakistan-Afghanistan Border⁴⁹

The Afghanistan neighbor that is considered most crucial to Afghanistan's future is Pakistan, and Pakistan's actions on the Afghanistan issue are of increasing concern to U.S. policymakers. Virtually all Obama Administration policy statements on Afghanistan emphasize the linkage between militant safe haven in Pakistan and the difficulty stabilizing Afghanistan. Pakistan is determined to retain influence over Afghanistan—a position heavily colored by fears of historic rival India. Pakistan appears insistent that Afghanistan, at the very least, not align with rival India, and, at best, provide Pakistan strategic depth against India. Pakistan says India is using its Embassy and four consulates in Afghanistan (Pakistan says India has nine consulates) to train and recruit anti-Pakistan insurgents, and is using its reconstruction funds to build influence there.

After the May 1, 2011, U.S. raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbotabad, Pakistan, U.S.-Pakistan relations deteriorated throughout 2011 and still have not fully recovered. U.S. concerns that Pakistan might be playing the role of adversary in Afghanistan sharpened significantly in the wake of the September 13, 2011, attack on U.S. Embassy Kabul, allegedly by the Haqqani network, which Pakistan sees as an ally in a post-settlement Afghanistan. U.S. officials, particularly then Joint Chiefs Chairman Mullen in September 22, 2011, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the network the “veritable arm” of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). Relations worsened further after a November 26, 2011, incident in which a U.S. airstrike killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in an incident still under investigation by the U.S. military. Pakistan responded by closing border crossings, suspending participation in the border coordination centers (see below), and boycotting the December 5 Bonn Conference. Suspicions were further inflamed on December 6, 2011, when a Pakistan-based group, Lashkar-i-Janghvi, claimed responsibility for two suicide bombings against Afghan Hazara Shiites celebrating a Shiite holiday, killing 80. Although U.S. officials say that military cooperation on Afghanistan has slowly resumed, Pakistan did not give SRAP Grossman a visa to visit Pakistan for reconciliation consultations in January 2012 and it has not reopened the border crossings.

The 2011 U.S.-Pakistan recriminations contrast with the first several years after the September 11, 2001, attacks, Pakistani cooperation against Al Qaeda had been considered by U.S. officials to be relatively consistent and effective. During 2001-2006, the Bush Administration praised then President Pervez Musharraf for Pakistani accomplishments against Al Qaeda, including the arrest of over 700 Al Qaeda figures since the September 11 attacks.⁵⁰ After the attacks, Pakistan provided the United States with access to Pakistani airspace, some ports, and some airfields for OEF. Others say Musharraf acted against Al Qaeda only when it threatened him directly; for example, after the December 2003 assassination attempts against him.

In April 2008, in an extension of the work of the Tripartite Commission (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and ISAF, in which military leaders of these entities meet on both sides of the border), the three countries agreed to set up five “border coordination centers” (BCCs) which include networks of radar nodes to give liaison officers a common view of the border area. These centers build on an

⁴⁹ For extensive analysis of U.S. policy toward Pakistan, and U.S. assistance to Pakistan in conjunction with its activities against Al Qaeda and the Taliban, see CRS Report RL33498, *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*, by K. Alan Kronstadt.

⁵⁰ Among those captured by Pakistan are top bin Laden aide Abu Zubaydah (captured April 2002); alleged September 11 plotter Ramzi bin Al Shibh (September 11, 2002); top Al Qaeda planner Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (March 2003); and a top planner, Abu Faraj al-Libbi (May 2005).

agreement in May 2007 to share intelligence on extremists' movements. Four have been established to date, including one near the Torkham Gate at the Khyber Pass, but all four are on the Afghan side of the border. The White House report released April 5, 2011, said that Pakistan had not fulfilled its pledge (May 2009) to establish one on the Pakistani side of the border.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

The U.S. mission in Afghanistan also depends on healthy, consistent, and operationally significant cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have tended to fluctuate. Many Afghans fondly remember Pakistan's role as the hub for U.S. backing of the mujahedin that forced the Soviet withdrawal in 1988-1989, but, later, most Afghan leaders came to resent Pakistan as the most public defender of the Taliban movement when it was in power. (Pakistan was one of only three countries to formally recognize it as the legitimate government; Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the others.)

After the end of the rule of military leader and President Pervez Musharraf in 2008, there was improvement in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. Karzai attended the September 9, 2008, inauguration of civilian President Asif Zardari. Zardari visited Kabul on January 9, 2009, where he and Karzai signed a joint declaration against terrorism that affects both countries. (A September 2010 meeting between them reaffirmed this declaration.) Afghan and Pakistani ministers jointly visited Washington, DC, during February 23-27, 2009, to participate in the first Obama Administration strategic review, and Karzai and Zardari conducted a joint visit to Washington, DC, in May 2009.

In the aftermath of Afghan recriminations against Pakistan for the presence of Bin Laden, Karzai had what were widely described as productive meetings in Islamabad during June 10-11, 2011, including the announcement of implementation of the new transit trade agreement discussed below. The summit paved the way for a U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan meeting on June 28, 2011, attended by SRAP Grossman, to discuss possible pathways to reconciliation in the Afghan conflict. However, the tripartite meeting was clouded somewhat by Afghan allegations that several hundred rockets had been fired into Afghanistan from Pakistan in prior days—allegations that have continued since. The September 2011 attacks on the U.S. Embassy and the killing of former President Rabbani worsened relations significantly (as discussed above in the section on reconciliation with the Taliban). Pakistan's worst fears about Indian influence in Afghanistan were inflamed when Karzai, on October 5, 2011, and perhaps as a reaction to the Haqqani attacks in Kabul, flew to India to sign a significant trade and security pact (see below). While the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship has not fully recovered—mirroring U.S.—Pakistan relations, Karzai and Zardari expressed broad agreement, including on the issue of Afghan reconciliation, at the February 16-17, 2012 Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan summit.

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

Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA)

Pakistan has also sought to control Afghanistan's trade, particularly with India, leading to U.S. efforts to persuade Pakistan to forge a "transit trade" agreement with Afghanistan. That effort bore success with the signature of a trade agreement between the two on July 18, 2010, allowing for an easier flow of Afghan products, which are mostly agricultural products that depend on rapid transit. On June 12, 2011, in the context of a Karzai visit to Islamabad, both countries began full implementation of the agreement. It is expected to greatly expand the \$2 billion in trade per year the two countries were doing prior to the agreement. The agreement represented a success for the Canada-sponsored "Dubai Process" of talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan on modernizing border crossings, new roads, and a comprehensive border management strategy to meet IMF benchmarks. A drawback to the agreement is that Afghan trucks, under the agreement, are not permitted to take back cargo from India after dropping off goods there.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan trade agreement came after earlier signs of growing cooperation, including Afghan agreement to send more Afghan graduate students to study in Pakistan, and a June 2010 Afghan agreement to send small numbers of ANA officers to undergo training in Pakistan.⁵¹ In early January 2011, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano visited Afghanistan and announced a future tripling (from 25 to 77) of the number of U.S. customs agents that will train Afghan border and customs officers.

Iran

Iran perceives its key national interests in Afghanistan as denying the United States a base from which to pressure or attack Iran. Secondly, Iran seeks to exert its traditional influence over western Afghanistan, which Iran borders and was once part of the Persian empire, to protect Afghanistan's Shiite and other Persian-speaking minorities. There are mixed views on how influential Iran is in Afghanistan; most experts appear to see Iran as a relatively marginal player, particularly compared to Pakistan.

The Obama Administration initially saw Iran as potentially helpful to its strategy for Afghanistan; the late SRAP Holbrooke was an advocate of cooperation with Iran on Afghanistan issues. Early in the Administration, Secretary of State Clinton made a point of announcing that Iran would be invited to the U.N.-led meeting on Afghanistan at the Hague on March 31, 2009. At the meeting, the late SRAP Holbrooke briefly met the Iranian leader of his delegation to the meeting, and handed him a letter on several outstanding human rights cases involving Iranian-Americans. At the meeting, Iran pledged cooperation on combating Afghan narcotics and in helping economic development in Afghanistan—both policies Iran is pursuing to a large degree.

Still, suggesting that the concept of cooperation with Iran on Afghanistan still resonates with some U.S. officials and outside experts, Iran's attendance of the October 18, 2010, International Contact Group meeting in Rome, including a briefing by then top commander in Afghanistan General Petraeus. Earlier, the United States and Iran took similar positions at a U.N. meeting in Geneva in February 2010 that discussed drug trafficking across the Afghan border. Iran did not attend the January 28, 2010, international meeting in London, but it did attend the July 28, 2010, international meeting in Kabul (both discussed above). As a member of the OIC, an Iranian

⁵¹ Partlow, Joshua. "Afghans Build Up Ties With Pakistan." *Washington Post*, July 21, 2010.

representative attended the March 3, 2011, Contact Group meeting at OIC headquarters in Jeddah. Iran attended the region-led international meeting in Istanbul on November 2, 2011, and the December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference.

Iran's Development Aid for Afghanistan

Iran's economic aid to Afghanistan supports international efforts to develop Afghanistan. Iran has pledged at least \$400 million in aid to Afghanistan, according to the Afghan government, much of which has been used to build roads and bridges in western Afghanistan. In cooperation with India, Iran has been building roads that would connect western Afghanistan to Iran's port of Chahbahar, and provide Afghan and other goods an easier outlet to the Persian Gulf. Iran also has provided credits to the Afghan private sector and helped develop power transmission lines in the provinces bordering Iran.

Iranian Assistance to Afghan Militants and to Pro-Iranian Groups and Regions

Even though Iran aids Afghanistan's development, it also is allegedly arming militants there. Iran may be arming groups in Afghanistan to try to pressure U.S. forces that use Afghanistan's Shindand air base,⁵² which Iran fears the United States might use to attack or conduct surveillance against Iran. Or, Iran's policy might be to gain broader leverage against the United States by demonstrating that Iran is in position to cause U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan.

The State Department report on international terrorism for 2010, released August 18, 2011, said the Qods Force of the Revolutionary Guard of Iran continues to provide training to the Taliban on small unit tactics, small arms, explosives, and indirect weapons fire, and that it ships arms to militants in Qandahar. This phrasing implies that Iran is arming Pashtun Taliban militants in the core of the combat zone in Afghanistan. Weapons provided, according to the State Department report, include mortars, 107mm rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, and plastic explosives. On March 9, 2011, NATO said it had seized 48 Iranian-made rockets in Nimruz Province, bound for Afghan militants; the 122mm rockets, have a range (13 miles) greater than those previously provided by Iran. On August 3, 2010, the Treasury Department, acting under Executive Order 13224, named two Qods Force officers as terrorism supporting entities (freezing assets in the United States, if any). They are Hossein Musavi, Commander of the Qods Force Ansar Corps, which is the key Qods unit involved in Afghanistan; and Hasan Mortezaei, who is a Qods officer responsible for providing funds and materiel to the Taliban, according to the Treasury Department.⁵³

Assistance to Ethnic and Religious Factions in Afghanistan

Others are puzzled by Iran's support of Taliban fighters who are Pashtun, because Iran has traditionally supported Persian-speaking non-Pashtun factions in Afghanistan, many of whom have been oppressed by the Pashtuns. Some of Iran's funding has been intended to support pro-Iranian groups in the west as well as Hazara Shiites in Kabul and in the Hazara heartland of Bamiyan, Ghazni, and Dai Kundi, in part by providing scholarships and funding for technical

⁵² Rashid, Ahmed. "Afghan Neighbors Show Signs of Aiding in Nation's Stability." *Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2004.

⁵³ Treasury Department. Fact Sheet: U.S. Treasury Department Targets Iran's Support for Terrorism. August 3, 2010.

institutes. Iran has used some of its funds to construct mosques in Herat, pro-Iranian theological seminaries in Shiite districts of Kabul, and Shiite institutions in Hazara-dominated areas. Iran also offers scholarships to Afghans to study in Iranian universities, and there are consistent allegations that Iran has funded Afghan provincial council and parliamentary candidates who are perceived as pro-Tehran.⁵⁴ These efforts have helped Iran retain close ties with Afghanistan's leading Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Mohammad Mohseni.

Bilateral Government-to-Government Relations

Iran's interest in a broad relationship with Karzai has not, to date, been affected by Iran's continued support for Taliban and other militants in Afghanistan. Karzai has, at times, called Iran a "friend" of Afghanistan; in March 2010 he met with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on two occasions, possibly to signal to the United States that he might realign with regional actors if the United States continues to criticize his leadership. One of the meetings was just after the departure of visiting Defense Secretary Gates. Previously, Karzai received Ahmadinejad in Kabul in August 2007, and he visited Tehran at the end of May 2009 as part of the tripartite diplomatic process between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. During a visit to the United States in May 2009, Karzai said he had told both the United States and Iran that Afghanistan must not become an arena for the broader competition and disputes between the United States and Iran.⁵⁵ The latest Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran summit meeting was held in Tehran during June 24-25, 2011. It came a few days after a visit to Afghanistan by Iran's Defense Minister, Ahmad Vahidi, to sign a bilateral border security agreement.

A controversy arose in late October 2010 when Karzai acknowledged accepting about \$2 million per year in cash payments from Iran, via his Chief of Staff Mohammad Daudzai. On the other hand, in December 2010, Iran suddenly ceased shipping fuel into Afghanistan, causing some spot dislocations in Afghanistan, including in Kabul. The move could have been related to reported shortages of gasoline inside Iran, which are a result of U.S. sanctions imposed on sales of gasoline to Iran in July 2010.

Many Afghans look fondly on Iran for helping them try to oust the Taliban regime when it was in power. Iran saw the Taliban regime, which ruled during 1996-2001, as a threat to its interests in Afghanistan, especially after Taliban forces captured Herat in September 1995. Iran subsequently drew even closer to the ethnic minority-dominated Northern Alliance than previously, providing its groups with fuel, funds, and ammunition.⁵⁶ In September 1998, Iranian and Taliban forces nearly came into direct conflict when Iran discovered that nine of its diplomats were killed in the course of the Taliban's offensive in northern Afghanistan. Iran massed forces at the border and threatened military action, but the crisis cooled without a major clash, possibly out of fear that Pakistan would intervene on behalf of the Taliban. Iran offered search and rescue assistance in Afghanistan during the U.S.-led war to topple the Taliban, and it also allowed U.S. humanitarian aid to the Afghan people to transit Iran. Iran helped construct Afghanistan's first post-Taliban government, in cooperation with the United States—at the December 2001 "Bonn Conference." In February 2002, Iran expelled Karzai-opponent Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, but it did not arrest him. At other times, Afghanistan and Iran have had disputes over Iran's efforts to expel Afghan

⁵⁴ King, Laura. "In Western Afghan City, Iran Makes Itself Felt." *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 2010.

⁵⁵ Comments by President Karzai at the Brookings Institution. May 5, 2009.

⁵⁶ Steele, Jonathon. "America Includes Iran in Talks on Ending War in Afghanistan." *Washington Times*, December 15, 1997.

refugees. About 1.2 million remain, mostly integrated into Iranian society, and a crisis erupted in May 2007 when Iran expelled about 50,000 into Afghanistan. About 300,000 Afghan refugees have returned from Iran since the Taliban fell.

India

The interests and activities of India in Afghanistan are almost the exact reverse of those of Pakistan. India's goals are to deny Pakistan "strategic depth" in Afghanistan, to deny Pakistan the ability to block India from trade and other connections to Central Asia and beyond; and to prevent militants in Afghanistan from attacking Indian targets in Afghanistan. India saw the Afghan Taliban's hosting of Al Qaeda during 1996-2001 as a major threat to India itself because of Al Qaeda's association with radical Islamic organizations in Pakistan, such as LET (Laskhar-e-Tayyiba, or Army of the Righteous), one of the groups that was formed in Pakistan to challenge India's control of part of the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir. Some of these groups have committed major acts of terrorism in India, including the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008 and in July 2011. Pakistan accuses India of using nine consulates in Afghanistan to spread Indian influence in Afghanistan. According to Afghan officials, India has four consulates (in the major cities of Qandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Herat) and no security presence in Afghanistan, to date.

Some believe India has been concerned that any negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan conflict will give Pakistan preponderant influence in Afghanistan, and India, which supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in the mid-1990s, has stepping up its contacts with those factions to discuss possible contingencies in the event of an Afghan settlement deal. Still, possibly at U.S. urging, in May 2011, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, during a visit to Afghanistan, publicly expressed India's support for the reconciliation process. He also announced during that visit a new India-Afghanistan "Strategic Partnership," which demonstrated India's support for U.S. efforts to better integrate Afghanistan into regional political, economic, and security structures. On October 5, 2011, shortly after the Rabbani assassination and Afghan recriminations against Pakistan, Karzai visited Delhi to sign the pact. The pact affirmed Pakistan's worst fears because it gives India, for the first time, a formal role as one of the guarantors of Afghan stability. In addition, the pact provides for expanded political and cultural ties. Indian experts noted that no Indian troops or security forces would necessarily deploy to Afghanistan as a consequence of the pact, although the pact would mean increased cooperation on counter-terrorism operations and possibly Indian training of the ANSF. The United States views India's role in Afghanistan as constructive, although U.S. officials have often cautioned against an Indian role in Afghan security so as not to inflame Pakistan's sentiments. The signature of the Afghan-Indian pact might represent a softening of that U.S. position in light of the U.S.-Pakistan rift discussed above. Tajikistan, which also supported the mostly Tajik Northern Alliance against the Taliban when it was in power, allows India to use one of its air bases.

Even had the strategic pact not been signed, it is unlikely Afghanistan will ever distance itself from India. Many of the families of Afghan leaders have lived in India at one time or another and, as noted above, Karzai studied there.

India's Development Activities in Afghanistan

India is the fifth-largest single country donor to Afghan reconstruction, funding projects worth over \$1.5 billion, with an additional \$500 million announced during the Singh visit to Kabul in

May 2011. Indian officials assert that all their projects are focused on civilian, not military, development and are in line with the development priorities set by the Afghan government. India, along with the Asian Development Bank, financed a \$300 million project, mentioned above, to bring electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan. It has also renovated the well-known Habibia High School in Kabul and committed to a \$67 million renovation of Darulaman Palace as the permanent house for Afghanistan's parliament. At a cost of about \$85 million, India financed the construction of a road to the Iranian border in remote Nimruz province, linking landlocked Afghanistan to Iran's Chahbahar port on the Arabian Sea. India currently constructing the 42 megawatt hydroelectric Selwa Dam in Herat Province at a cost of about \$77 million. This will increase electricity availability in the province. In December 2011, an Indian firm, the Steel Authority of India, Ltd. (SAIL) was declared winning bidder on the largest development blocs of the Hajji Gak iron ore project in Bamiyan Province. This led to assessments that India is also an economic beneficiary of international intervention in Afghanistan, without taking the risk of involving India militarily there.

India is also helping the IDLG with its efforts to build local governance organizations, and it provides 1,000 scholarships per year for Afghans to undergo higher education in India. Some Afghans want to enlist even more Indian assistance in training Afghan bureaucrats in accounting, forensic accounting, oversight, and other disciplines that will promote transparency in Afghan governance.

Russia, Central Asian States, and China

Some neighboring and nearby states take an active interest not only in Afghan stability, but in the U.S. military posture that supports U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The region to the north of Afghanistan is a growing factor in U.S. efforts to rely less on supply routes through Pakistan, particularly as U.S. relations with Pakistan have deteriorated and the border crossings (for U.S. equipment) from Pakistan to Afghanistan remained closed as of March 2012.

Russia/Northern Distribution Network

Russia wants to reemerge as a great power and to contain U.S. power in Central Asia, including Afghanistan. At the same time, by supporting the "Northern Distribution Network" supply route for NATO forces in Afghanistan, Russia supports U.S. and NATO efforts to combat militants in the region who have sometimes posed a threat to Russia itself. Its hosting of the "quadrilateral summits" mentioned above, could represent stepped up efforts by Russia to exert influence on the Afghanistan issue. Previously, Russia had kept a low profile in the country because it still feels humiliated by its withdrawal in 1989 and senses some Afghan resentment of the Soviet occupation. Since 2002, Russia has only been providing small amounts of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

In line with Russian official comments in June 2010 that more economic and social assistance is needed for Afghanistan, Russia is investing \$1 billion in Afghanistan to develop its electricity capacity and build out other infrastructure. Included in those investments are implementation of an agreement, reached during a Karzai visit to Moscow on January 22, 2011, for Russia to resume long dormant Soviet occupation-era projects such as expanding the Salang Tunnel connecting the Panjshir Valley to Kabul, hydroelectric facilities in Kabul and Baghlan provinces, a customs terminal, and a university in Kabul.

During the 1990s, after its 1989 withdrawal and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban with some military equipment and technical assistance in order to blunt Islamic militancy emanating from Afghanistan.⁵⁷ Although Russia supported the U.S. effort against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan out of fear of Islamic (mainly Chechen) radicals, Russia continues to seek to reduce the U.S. military presence in Central Asia. Russian fears of Islamic activism emanating from Afghanistan may have ebbed since 2002 when Russia killed a Chechen of Arab origin known as “Hattab” (full name is Ibn al-Khattab), who led a militant pro-Al Qaeda Chechen faction. The Taliban government was the only one in the world to recognize Chechnya’s independence, and some Chechen fighters fighting alongside Taliban/Al Qaeda forces have been captured or killed.

Northern Distribution Network and Other Aid to Afghan Security

Russian cooperation is crucial to the U.S. effort in Afghanistan. In February 2009, Russia paved the way for the expansion of the Northern Distribution Network by allowing the resumption of shipment of non-lethal equipment into Afghanistan through Russia (following a suspension in 2008 caused by differences over the Russia-Georgia conflict). There are discussions with Russia over possibly allowing some lethal equipment to transit as well. About half of all ground cargo for U.S. forces in Afghanistan now flow through the Northern Distribution Network, and the United States is emphasizing developing this network further as relations with Pakistan have deteriorated in 2011.

Russia has also responded to NATO requests to provide helicopters and spare parts to the Afghan forces (which still make heavy use of Russian-made Hind helicopters) as well as fuel. In April 2011, there was agreement to establish a “Helicopter Maintenance Trust Fund.” Russia has also delivered 24 helicopters to Afghan forces, financed by the United States. Russia reportedly has pledged to train Afghan security forces.

In November 2010, in its most significant intervention in Afghanistan since its occupation, Russian officers reportedly joined U.S. and Afghan forces attempting to interdict narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan. However, the move prompted a complaint by President Karzai because he was not consulted about the inclusion of the Russians.

Central Asian States

These states are crucial to the U.S. transition in Afghanistan, as discussed in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report released December 19, 2011, entitled “Central Asia and the Transition in Afghanistan.” As shown in **Table 7**, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan are pivotal actors in U.S. efforts to expand the Northern Distribution Network supply route as an alternative to reliance on routes through Pakistan. These states are also becoming crucial to the New Silk Road (NSR) strategy that seeks to help Afghanistan become a trade crossroads between South and Central Asia—a strategy that could net Kabul substantial customs duties and other economic benefits. The possible revival of a long-standing plan to establish Afghanistan as a transit hub for Central Asian natural gas (*TAPI* pipeline) is discussed later in this report under “Development in Key Sectors.” Turkmenistan is key to this natural gas project but, perhaps to avoid offending Pakistan or other actors, it takes a position of “positive neutrality” on

⁵⁷ Risen, James. “Russians Are Back in Afghanistan, Aiding Rebels.” *New York Times*, July 27, 1998.

Afghanistan and does not allow its territory to be part of the Northern Distribution Network. No U.S. forces have been based in Turkmenistan.

On security cooperation, Tajikistan allows access primarily to French combat aircraft, and Kazakhstan has allowed use of facilities in case of emergency. In May 2011, Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian state to pledge forces to Afghanistan (four non-combat troops). Earlier, in April 2010, Kazakhstan agreed to allow U.S. over flights of lethal military equipment to Afghanistan, allowing the United States to use polar routes to fly materiel directly from the United States to Bagram Airfield.

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

Uzbekistan, a sponsor of Afghan faction leader Abdul Rashid Dostam, an ethnic Uzbek, allowed use of Karshi-Khanabad air base by OEF forces from October 2001 until a rift emerged in May 2005 over Uzbekistan's crackdown against riots in Andijon. Uzbekistan's March 2008 agreement with Germany for it to use Karshi-Khanabad air base temporarily, for the first time since the rift with the United States, suggested potential for U.S.-Uzbek cooperation on Afghanistan and other issues to be rebuilt. Renewed U.S. discussions with Uzbekistan apparently bore some fruit with the Uzbek decision in February 2009 to allow the use of Navoi airfield for shipment of U.S./NATO goods into Afghanistan. As a rift with Pakistan widened in September 2011, the United States launched new overtures to Uzbekistan, including a call from President Obama to Uzbek President Islam Karimov congratulating him on 20 years of independence from Russia/Soviet Union. Subsequently, the Administration opened formal negotiations with Uzbekistan to enlist its cooperation with further expansion of the Northern Distribution Network.

An increasing amount of trade is flowing from Afghanistan to and through the Central Asian states. As noted below, railway lines are being built to Uzbekistan. The Panj bridge, built largely with U.S. funds, has become a major thoroughfare for goods to move between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Kazakhstan is funding a \$50 million program to develop Afghan professionals.

Central Asian Activities During Taliban Rule

During Taliban rule, Russian and Central Asian leaders grew increasingly alarmed that radical Islamic movements were receiving safe haven in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan, in particular, has long asserted that the group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), allegedly responsible for four simultaneous February 1999 bombings in Tashkent that nearly killed President Islam Karimov, is linked to Al Qaeda.⁵⁸ One of its leaders, Juma Namangani, reportedly was killed while commanding Taliban/Al Qaeda forces in Konduz in November 2001. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not directly border Afghanistan, but IMU guerrillas transited Kyrgyzstan during incursions into Uzbekistan in the late 1990s.

⁵⁸ The IMU was named a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department in September 2000.

Of the Central Asian states that border Afghanistan, only Turkmenistan chose to seek close relations with the Taliban leadership when it was in power, possibly viewing engagement as a more effective means of preventing spillover of radical Islamic activity from Afghanistan. It saw Taliban control as facilitating construction of the natural gas pipeline, discussed above, that was under consideration during Taliban rule. The September 11 events stoked Turkmenistan's fears of the Taliban and its Al Qaeda guests and the country publicly supported the U.S.-led war.

China⁵⁹

China's involvement in Afghanistan policy appears to be growing, primarily to secure access to Afghan minerals and resources but perhaps also to help its ally, Pakistan, avoid encirclement by India. Like Pakistan, China has been a rival of India. China also is concerned about the potential for Islamic militancy in Afghanistan to inflame Islamist sentiment among China's Uighur community in China. A major organizer of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China has a small border with a sparsely inhabited sliver of Afghanistan known as the "Wakhan Corridor," and it is building border access routes and supply depots to facilitate China's access to Afghanistan through the corridor. Chinese delegations continue to assess the potential for new investments in such sectors as mining and energy,⁶⁰ and the cornerstone is the development of the Aynak copper mine south of Kabul. For more information, see the sections below on the Afghan economy: mining sector. In late 2009, China allocated an additional \$75 million in economic aid to Afghanistan, adding to the \$130 million it has provided during 2002-2009. On March 20, 2010, ahead of a visit to China by Karzai, China called for more international support for Afghanistan. During the visit, China stressed that its investments in Afghanistan would continue.

China has not taken any direct role in securing Afghanistan. Having established significant strategic and economic interests in post-Taliban Afghanistan, there were indications in 2009 that China was considering contributing some People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces, possibly in a non-combat role, to help secure Afghanistan. A communiqué from the Obama visit to China in November 2009 implied a possible larger role for China to help stabilize Afghanistan. However, no such Chinese mission has been announced.

In December 2000, sensing China's increasing concern about Taliban policies, a Chinese official delegation met with Mullah Umar. However, China did not enthusiastically support U.S. military action against the Taliban, possibly because China was wary of a U.S. military buildup nearby.

Persian Gulf States: Saudi Arabia and UAE

The Gulf states are considered a key part of the effort to stabilize Afghanistan. As noted, the late Ambassador Holbrooke focused substantial U.S. attention—and formed a multilateral task force—to try to curb continuing Gulf resident donations to the Taliban in Afghanistan. He maintained that these donations are a larger source of Taliban funding than is the narcotics trade. The Gulf states have also been a source of development funds and for influence with some Afghan clerics and factions.

⁵⁹ For more information, see CRS Report RL33001, *U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Shirley A. Kan.

⁶⁰ CRS conversations with Chinese officials in Beijing. August 2007.

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

Saudi Arabia has played a role as a go-between for negotiations between the Karzai government and "moderate" Taliban figures. This role was recognized at the London conference on January 28, 2010, in which President Karzai stated in his opening speech that he sees a role for Saudi Arabia in helping stabilize Afghanistan. As noted, some reports say that a political settlement might involve Mullah Umar going into exile in Saudi Arabia. This may explain why Karzai has preferred to hold any talks with the Taliban in Saudi Arabia rather than Qatar.

According to U.S. officials, Saudi Arabia cooperated extensively, if not publicly, with OEF. It broke diplomatic relations with the Taliban in late September 2001 and quietly permitted the United States to use a Saudi base for command of U.S. air operations over Afghanistan, but it did not permit U.S. airstrikes from it.

UAE Involvement

The United Arab Emirates, the third country that recognized the Taliban regime, is emerging as another major donor to Afghanistan. It contributes about 300 troops to OEF and ISAF security missions in southern Afghanistan, including Helmand province. Some are military medical personnel who run small clinics and health programs for Afghans in the provinces where they operate.

The UAE has donated at least \$135 million to Afghanistan since 2002, according to the Afghan Finance Ministry. Projects funded include housing in Qandahar, roads in Kabul, a hospital in Zabol province, and a university in Khost. At the same time, the UAE property market has been an outlet for investment by Afghan leaders who may have acquired their funds through soft loans from the scandal-plagued Kabul Bank or through corruption connected to donor contracts or other businesses.

Qatar

Until 2011, Qatar was not regarded as a significant player on the Afghanistan issue. It had not recognized the Taliban regime when it was in power, and was said to have little influence with Taliban figures interested in reconciliation. However, since late 2011, Qatar has increased its profile as host of a nascent Taliban political office discussed above. The United States views Qatar as less influenced by Pakistan than is Saudi Arabia, and this might explain why the United States has pushed for Qatar to be the accepted host of a Taliban political office.

Keys to Afghanistan's Post-War Future: U.S. and International Aid and Economic Development

Experts have long believed that accelerating economic development would do more to improve the security situation than other policy components, and that economic development is widely considered pivotal to Afghanistan's ability to shape its future after the bulk of international forces depart and donors presumably wind down their financial as well as military involvement. Donor aid currently accounts for more than 95% of Afghanistan's GDP, and replacements for donated funds of that magnitude are hard to identify. The crucial role of economic factors in the success of the transition and in post-2014 Afghanistan is discussed in an Administration report released in December 2011, called the "U.S. Economic Strategy for Afghanistan."⁶¹

Adding to the complexity of strategy development is the analysis that some economic sectors in Afghanistan are have been developed largely with private investment, including by wealthy or well-connected Afghans who have founded companies. Therefore, it is often difficult to determine the effects on Afghanistan's economy of aid, as compared to the effects of investment, trade, and other variables. As noted above, as part of the U.S. strategy, in July 2011 Secretary of State Clinton and other U.S. officials began to articulate a post-transition vision of greater Afghan economic integration in the region and its role in a "New Silk Road" trading system which would presumably accelerate Afghan private sector growth and customs revenue receipts.

Hindering Afghanistan is that its economy and society are still fragile after decades of warfare that left about 2 million dead, 700,000 widows and orphans, and about 1 million Afghan children who were born and raised in refugee camps outside Afghanistan. More than 3.5 million Afghan refugees have since returned, although a comparable number remain outside Afghanistan. The U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) supervises Afghan repatriation and Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. As discussed, the literacy rate is very low and Afghanistan has a small, although growing, pool of skilled labor, middle managers, accountants, and information professionals.

There are debates over virtually all aspects of international aid to Afghanistan, including amounts, mechanisms for providing it, the lack of coordination among donors, and how aid is distributed within Afghanistan. For example, some of the more stable provinces, such as Bamiyan and Balkh, complain that most of the U.S. and international aid—an estimated 80%—is flowing mostly to the restive provinces in an effort to quiet them, and ignoring the needs of poor Afghans in peaceful areas. Later in this report are tables showing U.S. appropriations of assistance to Afghanistan, and **Table 14** lists U.S. spending on all sectors for FY2001-FY2010.

U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan

During the 1990s, the United States became the largest single provider of assistance to the Afghan people. During Taliban rule, no U.S. aid went directly to that government; monies were provided

⁶¹ The report, produced by the National Security Staff, was released December 2, 2011. It was mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2011 (Section 1535 of P.L. 111-383).

through relief organizations. Between 1985 and 1994, the United States had a cross-border aid program for Afghanistan, implemented by USAID personnel based in Pakistan. Citing the difficulty of administering this program, there was no USAID mission for Afghanistan from the end of FY1994 until the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan in late 2001.

For all of FY2002-FY2011, the United States provided about \$67.4 billion in assistance, including military “train and equip” for the ANA and ANP (which is about \$39.5 billion of these funds). The figures in the tables, which include aid costs for FY2012 and the request for FY2013, do not include costs for U.S. combat operations. Those costs amount to/are expected to amount to about: \$90 billion in FY2010; \$104 billion for FY2011; \$93 billion for FY2012, and \$79 billion for FY2013. For further information on combat costs, see CRS Report RL33110, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, by Amy Belasco.

Aid Oversight

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

On May 30, 2008, Major General Arnold Fields (Marine, ret.) was named to the position. His office has filed several reports on Afghan reconstruction, which include discussions of SIGAR staffing levels and activities, as well as several specific project audits. However, he acknowledged that criticisms in a July 2010 “peer review” of SIGAR operations by the Inspectors General of several U.S. agencies were valid, attributing many of the shortcomings to slow pace of fully funding his office.⁶² One recent SIGAR report noted deficiencies in the ability of the Afghan government’s Central Audits Office to monitor how funds are used. Another (January 2011) assesses the degree of coordination in U.S. programs to help women and girls. Some Members of Congress criticized the SIGAR for ineffective oversight and called for his replacement; General Fields (ret) announced his resignation in January 2011. His deputy, Herb Richardson, replaced him on an acting basis as of February 2011, but in August 2011, Richardson announced his departure, leaving the permanent top position at SIGAR again in transition. The acting deputy, Steve Trent, is acting SIGAR as of September 2011.

Aid Authorization: Afghanistan Freedom Support Act

A key post-Taliban aid authorization bill, S. 2712, the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act (AFSA) of 2002 (P.L. 107-327, December 4, 2002), as amended, authorized about \$3.7 billion in U.S. civilian aid for FY2003-FY2006. The law, whose authority has now expired, was intended to create a central source for allocating funds; that aid strategy was not implemented. However, some of the humanitarian, counter-narcotics, and governance assistance targets authorized by the act were met or exceeded by appropriations. No Enterprise Funds authorized by the act have been appropriated. The act authorized the following:

⁶² http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/peer_review/Section5.pdf.

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

A subsequent law (P.L. 108-458, December 17, 2004), implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, contained "The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act Amendments of 2004." The subtitle mandated the appointment of a U.S. coordinator of policy on Afghanistan and requires additional Administration reports to Congress.

Afghan Freedom Support Act Reauthorization

In the 110th Congress, H.R. 2446, passed by the House on June 6, 2007 (406-10), would have reauthorized AFSA through FY2010. A version (S. 3531), with fewer provisions than the House bill. It was not taken up by the full Senate, possibly over concerns that it might limit Administration flexibility in allocating aid. H.R. 2446 would have authorized about \$1.7 billion in U.S. economic aid and \$320 in military aid (including drawdowns of equipment) per fiscal year. It also would have authorized a pilot program of crop substitution to encourage legitimate alternatives to poppy cultivation; and a cut off of U.S. aid to any Afghan province in which the Administration reports that the leadership of the province is complicit in narcotics trafficking. AFSA reauthorization was not reintroduced in the 111th Congress.

Direct Support to the Afghan Government

Because of the paucity of funds taken in by the Afghan government—about \$1.7 billion in 2011—a GAO study issued September 2011 found that during 2006-2010, about 90 of total Afghan government expenditures (operating budget and development budget) was provided by international donors. Of that amount, the United States provide 62% and other donors provided 28% of total expenditures.⁶³ Donor funds covered 57% of the Afghan government operating budget, which is about \$2.2 billion. Afghan officials stated in material circulated at the December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference that it will need at least \$10 billion in donated funds per year from 2014 (the end of the security transition) until 2025. Some U.S. funds are provided both directly and through a U.N.-run multi-donor Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) account, run by the World Bank. As of early 2011, 31 donors had contributed \$4.1 billion to the ARTF, with \$2.1

⁶³ Government Accountability Office. "Afghanistan's Donor Dependence." September 20, 2011.

billion for Afghan salaries and over \$1.2 billion for priority investments. (DOD “1230 report,” April 2011, p. 86.) Donors, including the United States, resumed contributing to the ARTF in November 2011, when the IMF restored its credit program for Afghanistan, which had been suspended for more than a year because of the Kabul Bank scandal.

Currently, the United States disburses more than 40% of its donated aid funds through the Afghan government. The Kabul Conference (July 20, 2010) communiqué endorsed a goal of increasing that to about 50% and for 80% of all funds to align with Afghan government priorities.

National Solidarity Program

Through the ARTF, the United States supports an Afghan government program that promotes local decision making on development—the “National Solidarity Program” (NSP). The program provides block grants of about \$60,000 per project to local councils to implement their priority projects, most of which are water projects. The Afghan implementer is the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. As discussed in a SIGAR report of March 2011, it is widely hailed as a highly successful, Afghan-run program, although the report says its contributions to improving local governance are unclear. Still, it is being implemented in almost every district of Afghanistan, and it employs over 800 Afghans. Donors have provided the program with \$600 million through March 2011, of which U.S. funding (through October 2010) has been \$528 million (DOD “1230 report,” April 2011, p. 86).

U.S. funds for the program are drawn from a broad category of ESF for “good governance.” P.L. 111-32, the FY2009 supplemental discussed above, earmarks \$70 million to defray a large part of a shortfall in that program. The FY2010 consolidated appropriation (P.L. 111-117) earmarked another \$175 million in ESF for the program. A total of almost \$800 million in good governance funds are requested for FY2012, meaning that the NSP funding provided by the U.S. will likely meet prior years’ levels, if the funds are appropriated. The FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-84) authorizes the use of some CERP funds, controlled by the U.S. military, to supplement the funding for the NSP. However, this authorization, if implemented, incurred opposition from some international NGOs who are opposed to combining military action with development work.

Table 8. Major Reporting Requirements

Several provisions require Administration reports on numerous aspects of U.S. strategy, assistance, and related issues.

- P.L. 108-458, The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act Amendments required, through the end of FY2010, an overarching annual report on U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Other reporting requirements expired, including required reports (1) on long-term U.S. strategy and progress of reconstruction; (2) on how U.S. assistance is being used; (3) on U.S. efforts to persuade other countries to participate in Afghan peacekeeping; and (4) a joint State and DOD report on U.S. counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan.
- P.L. 110-181 (Section 1230), FY2008 Defense Authorization Act requires a quarterly DOD report on the security situation in Afghanistan; the first was submitted in June 2008. It was required by that law through FY2011. Section 1231 required a report on the Afghan National Security Forces through the end of FY2010. Both reports have been extended until the end of FY2014 by the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1540, P.L. 112-81).
- Section 1229 of the same law requires the quarterly report of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).
- P.L. 111-8 (Omnibus Appropriation, explanatory statement) required a State Department report on the use of funds to address the needs of Afghan women and girls (submitted by September 30, 2009).
- P.L. 111-32, FY2009 Supplemental Appropriation (Section 1116), required a White House report, by the time of the FY2011 budget submission, on whether Afghanistan and Pakistan are cooperating with U.S. policy sufficiently to warrant a continuation of Administration policy toward both countries, as well as efforts by these governments to curb corruption, their efforts to develop a counter-insurgency strategy, the level of political consensus in the two countries to confront security challenges, and U.S. government efforts to achieve these objectives. The report was released with a date of September 30, 2010.
- The same law (Section 1117) required a report, by September 23, 2009, on metrics to be used to assess progress on Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy. A progress report measured against those metrics is to be submitted by March 30, 2010, and every six months thereafter, until the end of FY2011.
- Section 1228 of the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-84) required a report, within 120 days, on the Afghan Provincial Protection Program and other local security initiatives. Section 1235 authorized a DOD-funded study of U.S. force levels needed for eastern and southern Afghanistan, and Section 1226 required a Comptroller General report on the U.S. “campaign plan” for the Afghanistan (and Iraq) effort.

Sustaining Aid Beyond the Transition

U.S. and Afghan policymakers are concerned that international assistance will wane after the end of the transition in 2014. As shown in **Table 10**, non-U.S. donors, including such institutions as the EU and the Asian Development Bank, have provided over \$29 billion in assistance to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban. When combined with U.S. aid, this by far exceeds the \$27.5 billion for reconstruction identified by the IMF as required for 2002-2010. Major pledges have been made primarily at donor conferences such as Tokyo (2002), Berlin (April 2004), Kabul (April 2005), London (February 2006), Paris (June 2008), and London (January 2010).

The December 5, 2011, Bonn Conference was not, according to U.S. officials, intended as a “pledging conference.” However, in advance of that conference the World Bank released a report warning that an abrupt aid cutoff could lead to fiscal implosion, loss of control over the security sector, the collapse of political authority, and the possibility of civil war. At the Bonn Conference, Afghan officials stated that Afghanistan would be dependent on about \$10 billion per year of international economic aid until 2025. Identifying sources of this long-term assistance will be the focus of an international conference on Afghanistan in Tokyo in July 2012.

Among multilateral lending institutions, the World Bank is expected to be key to sustaining Afghanistan long term. In May 2002, the World Bank reopened its office in Afghanistan after 20 years. Its projects have been concentrated in the telecommunications and road and sewage

sectors. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also been playing a major role in Afghanistan, including in financing railway construction. Another of its projects in Afghanistan was funding the paving of a road from Qandahar to the border with Pakistan, and as noted above, it is contributing to a project to bring electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan. On the eve of the London conference on January 28, 2010, the IMF and World Bank announced \$1.6 billion in Afghanistan debt relief.

Development in Key Sectors

Efforts to build the legitimate economy are showing some results, by accounts of senior U.S. officials. Some sectors, discussed below, are being developed primarily (although not exclusively) with private investment funding. There has been substantial new construction, particularly in Kabul, including luxury hotels; a \$25 million Coca Cola bottling factory (opened in September 2006); apartment and office buildings; and marriage halls and other structures. The bottling factory is located near the Bagrami office park (another private initiative), which includes several other factories. The Serena luxury hotel was built by the Agha Khan foundation, a major investor in Afghanistan. On the other hand, press reports in March 2012 say that uncertainty about the post-2014 political and security situation is causing some Afghan businessmen to relocate outside the country, or to develop external components of their business in case the situation in Afghanistan deteriorates.

An arm of DOD, called the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, formerly headed by Deputy Under Secretary Paul Brinkley, facilitated some of the investment. The Task Force has seen many of its personnel depart because of a provision of the FY2011 Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-383) that required the Task Force be folded into State/USAID-led assistance structures by the end of FY2011; that transition has occurred. Others say that private investment could be healthier if not for the influence exercised over it by various faction leaders and Karzai relatives. The following are some key sectors and what has been accomplished with U.S. and international donor funds, as well as with private investment.

Education

Despite the success in enrolling Afghan children in school since the Taliban era (see statistics above), setbacks have occurred because of Taliban attacks on schools, causing some to close. In addition, Afghanistan's university system is said to be woefully underfunded, in part because Afghans are entitled to free higher education (to the B.A. level) by the Constitution, which means that demand for the higher education far outstrips Afghan resources. The shortfall is impeding the development of a large enough pool of skilled workers for the Afghan government. Afghanistan requires about \$35 million to operate its universities and institutes for one year; USAID has requested \$20 million to help fund those activities for FY2012.⁶⁴

Health

The health care sector, as noted by Afghan observers, has made considerable gains in reducing infant mortality and giving about 65% of the population at least some access to health

⁶⁴ Boak, Josh. "Afghan Universities Struggling for Funding." *Washington Post*, February 13, 2011.

professionals. In addition to U.S. assistance to develop the health sector's capacity, Egypt operates a 65-person field hospital at Bagram Air Base that instructs Afghan physicians. Jordan operates a similar facility in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Roads

Road building is considered a U.S. priority and has been USAID's largest project category there, taking up about 25% of USAID spending since the fall of the Taliban. Roads are considered key to enabling Afghan farmers to bring legitimate produce to market in a timely fashion, and former commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan General Eikenberry (later Ambassador) said "where the roads end, the Taliban begin." The major road, the Ring Road, is nearly all repaved, and the 150 miles in the northwest remaining to be repaved is being funded by a \$350 million Asian Development Bank donation. Among other major projects completed are a road from Qandahar to Tarin Kowt, (Uruzgan province) built by U.S. military personnel, inaugurated in 2005; and a road linking the Panjshir Valley to Kabul. In several of the most restive provinces, U.S. funds (sometimes CERP funds) are being used to build roads that link up farming communities to the market for their products. Other key priorities are completing a Khost-Gardez road, under way currently, but slowed by security concerns, and a Salang Bypass Road through Bamiyan province.

The Afghan government has committed to developing an East-West road across Afghanistan, from Herat to Kabul. However, funding for that project has not been identified to date.

Bridges

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

Railways

Afghanistan is beginning to develop functioning railways—a sector it lacked as a legacy of security policy during the late 19th century that saw railroads as facilitating invasion of Afghanistan. Rail is considered increasing crucial to Afghanistan's ability to develop its mineral wealth because it is the means by which minerals can be exported to neighboring countries. Three railway projects are under way. One, from Mazar-i-Sharif to Hairaton, on the border with Uzbekistan, was completed in March 2011 with \$165 million from the Asian Development Bank. It has become operational as of early 2012. With funding from Japan and China, other rail lines will extend from Iran to Herat Province, and from the Tajikistan border down to Konduz. The Afghan government wants India to build a railway as part of its iron mining project discussed below. The various segments are eventually to link up and parallel the Ring Road that circles Afghanistan. The railway will integrate Afghanistan to the former Soviet railway system in Central Asia, increasing Afghanistan's economic integration in the region.

Electricity

At least 10% of USAID funds for Afghanistan have been spent on power projects, although that percentage is rising in 2010 and 2011. The Afghanistan Compact states that the goal is for electricity to reach 65% of households in urban areas and 25% in rural areas by 2010, a goal that has not been met. However, severe power shortages in Kabul, caused in part by the swelling of Kabul's population to about 3 million, up from half a million when the Taliban was in power, are fewer now than two years ago. Power to the capital has grown due to the Afghan government's agreements with several Central Asian neighbors to import electricity, as well as construction of new substations. Many shops in Kabul are now lit up at night, as observed by numerous visitors over the past few years, including CRS. On the other hand, there has been some criticism of a 105 Megawatt power generating plants built by USAID at Tarakhil, in north Kabul at a cost of about \$300 million because of the high costs of fuel, the questionable need for the plant given alternative plants built recently, and the possible inability of the Afghan authorities to maintain them. As noted above, in January 2011, Russia pledged to resume work on some long dormant hydroelectric projects in Afghanistan that were suspended when Soviet troops withdrew in 1989.

Kajaki Dam and Qandahar Power Initiative

A major USAID and DOD focus is on power projects in southern Afghanistan. The key long-term project is to expand the capacity of the Kajaki Dam, located in Helmand Province. Currently, two turbines are operating—one was always working, and the second was repaired by USAID contractors. This has doubled electricity production in the south and caused small factories and other businesses to come to flourish. USAID plans to further expand capacity of the dam by installing a third turbine (which there is a berth for but which never had a turbine installed.) In an operation involving 4,000 NATO troops (Operation Ogap Tsuka), components of the third turbine were successfully delivered to the dam in September 2008. It was expected to be operational in mid-late 2009 but technical and security problems, such as inability to secure and build roads leading to the dam, have delayed the project. A \$266 million USAID contract was let to Black and Veatch in December 2010 to complete the installation, and it tried to eliminate the security bottleneck in mid-2011 by hiring a private security firm to protect the dam, but there still is no public estimate as to when the third turbine will be completed. During 2004-January 2012, USAID has spent \$72 million on the dam, and it intends to spend \$85 million more. Additional funds, such as that for the Black and Veatch contract, have been spent by DOD.

In the interim, and to the consternation of some who want long-term, sustainable solutions for Afghanistan rather than short-term palliatives, the U.S. military and USAID began in February 2011 to implement a plan ("Qandahar Power Initiative") to focus on smaller substations and generator projects that can bring more electricity to Qandahar and other places in the south quickly. The initiative has been pursued in order to facilitate the U.S.-military led counter-insurgency strategy in Qandahar, even though the initiative may not produce sustainable gains over the longer term. Some of the power provided by additional diesel generators is being used to supply the Qandahar Industrial Park. For this and other power projects, the Administration requested legislative authority for an "Infrastructure Fund" to be funded by DOD. That authority was provided in the FY2011 DOD authorization bill (P.L. 111-383). Actual funding is depicted in the FY2011 and FY2012 aid tables below. President Karzai said in a CNN interview on June 26, 2011, that the Afghan government favored emphasizing the longer-term Kajaki Dam project rather than the interim generator project.

Solar Power

There is also an apparent increasing emphasis on providing electricity to individual homes and villages through small solar power installations. A contractor to USAID, IRG, is providing small solar powered-electricity generators to homes in several districts of Afghanistan, alleviating the need to connect such homes to the national power grid. However, there are technical drawbacks, including weather-related inconsistency of power supply and the difficulty of powering appliances that require substantial power. The U.S. broadcasting service to Afghanistan, Radio Azadi, run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, has given out 20,000 solar-powered radios throughout Afghanistan, according to RFE/RL in December 2010.

Agriculture

With about 80% of Afghans living in rural areas, the agriculture sector has always been key to Afghanistan's economy and stability. The late Ambassador Holbrooke, including in his January 2010 strategy document, outlined U.S. policy to boost Afghanistan's agriculture sector not only to reduce drug production but also as an engine of economic growth. Prior to the turmoil that engulfed Afghanistan in the late 1970s, Afghanistan was a major exporter of agricultural products.

USAID has spent about 15% of its Afghanistan funds on agriculture (and "alternative livelihoods" to poppy cultivation), and this has helped Afghanistan double its legitimate agricultural output over the past five years. One emerging "success story" is growing Afghan exports of high-quality pomegranate juice called Anar. Other countries are promoting not only pomegranates but also saffron rice and other crops that draw buyers outside Afghanistan. Another emerging success story is Afghanistan's November 2010 start of exports of raisins to Britain.⁶⁵ Wheat production was robust in 2009 because of healthy prices for that crop, and Afghanistan is again self-sufficient in wheat production. According to an April 2011 DOD report, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has about 110 personnel in Afghanistan on long-term and priority projects; there are also at least 25 agriculture experts from USAID in Afghanistan. Their efforts include providing new funds to buy seeds and agricultural equipment, and to encourage agribusiness. In addition, the National Guard from several states is deploying nine (as of March 2011) "Agribusiness Development Teams" in several provinces to help Afghan farmers with water management, soil enhancement, crop cultivation, and improving the development and marketing of their goods.

U.S. strategy has addressed not only crop choice but also trying to construct the entirety of the infrastructure needed for a healthy legitimate agriculture sector, including road building, security of the routes to agriculture markets, refrigeration, storage, transit through Pakistan and other transportation of produce, building legitimate sources of financing, and other aspects of the industry. U.S. officials in Kabul say that Pakistan's restrictions on trade between Afghanistan and India had prevented a rapid expansion of Afghan pomegranate exports to that market, but the transit trade agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, discussed above, is expected to alleviate some of these bottlenecks. Dubai is another customer for Afghan pomegranate exports.

⁶⁵ Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. "New Hope for Afghan Raisin Farmers." *New York Times*, October 9, 2010.

There is a vibrant timber industry in the northeast provinces. However, the exports are illegal. Deforestation has been outlawed because of the potential for soil erosion and other economic and environmental effects.

In terms of specific programming, USAID has a \$150 million program for the relatively safe areas of Afghanistan to continue to develop licit crops. The Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West (IDEA-NEW) program is planned to run through FY2014. In southern and eastern areas of the country where counterinsurgency operations are ongoing, USAID's \$474 million Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA-Plus) program ran through FY2011 and includes initiatives coordinated with U.S. counterinsurgency operations in Helmand and Qandahar provinces. The program provides vouchers for wheat seed, fertilizer, and tools, in addition to supporting cash for work programs and small grants to local cooperatives.

Telecommunications

Several Afghan telecommunications firms have been formed. With startup funds from the Agha Khan Foundation (the Agha Khan is leader of the Isma'ili community, which is prevalent in northern Afghanistan), the highly successful Roshan cellphone company was founded. Another Afghan cellphone firm is Afghan Wireless. The most significant post-Taliban media network is Tolo Television, owned by Moby Media. U.S. funds are being used to supplement the private investment; a \$4 million U.S. grant, in partnership with the Asia Consultancy Group, is being used to construct communication towers in Bamiyan and Ghor provinces. The Afghan government says it plans to link all major cities by fiber optic cable by the end of 2011.

Airlines

The 52-year-old national airline, Ariana, is said to be in significant financial trouble due to corruption that has affected its safety ratings and left it unable to service a heavy debt load. However, there are new privately run airlines, such as Safi Air (run by the Safi Group, which has built a modern mall in Kabul), and Kam Air. Another, Pamir, was ordered closed in 2010 due to safety concerns.

Mining and Gems

Afghanistan's mining sector has been largely dormant since the Soviet invasion. Some Afghan leaders complain that not enough has been done to revive such potentially lucrative industries as minerals mining, such as of copper and lapis lazuli (a stone used in jewelry). The issue became more urgent in June 2010 when a DOD development team announced, based on surveys, that Afghanistan may have untapped minerals worth over \$1 trillion.⁶⁶ Then top commander in Afghanistan General Petraeus, in an interview with NBC News on August 15, 2010, said the amount could be in the "trillions." Although copper and iron are the largest categories by value, there are believed to also be significant reserves of such minerals as lithium in western Afghanistan—lithium is crucial to the new batteries being used to power electric automobiles.

⁶⁶ Risen, James. "U.S. Identifies Mineral Riches in Afghanistan." *New York Times*, June 14, 2010.

Aynak Copper Field. There is substantial activity in this sector, which the Afghan government estimates will generate \$1.4 billion in annual government revenue by 2016, and \$2.2 billion per year by 2020. A major project, signed in November 2007, is with China Metallurgical Group for the company to invest \$3.0 billion to develop Afghanistan's Aynak copper field in Lowgar Province. The agreement, viewed as generous to the point where it might not be commercially profitable for China Metallurgical Group, includes construction of two coal-fired electric power plants (one of which will supply more electricity to Kabul city); a segment of railway (discussed above); and a road from the project to Kabul. Work on the mine reportedly has been slowed by various factors, including the need to clear mines in the area and to excavate ancient artifacts that the Afghan government seeks to preserve. Actual digging at the mine is expected to begin in mid-2012. U.S. forces do not directly protect the project, but U.S. forces have set up small bases on some of the roads leading to the mine project to provide general stability there.

Hajji Gak Iron Ore Project. In September 2011 seven bids were submitted for another large mining project, the Hajji Gak iron ore mine (which may contain 60 billion tons of iron ore) in Bamiyan Province. The bids—from Chinese, Indian, and other firms—were evaluated and, in late 2011, the Steel Authority for India Ltd. (SAIL) was awarded the largest share of the project.

On December 14, 2010, with involvement of the DOD Task Force for Business and Stability Operations, 10 outside investors announced \$50 million in investment in a gold mine in Baghlan Province. There is another gold mine operating in neighboring Takhar Province.

On December 7, 2011, the Ministry of Mines began accepting bids to develop copper and gold deposits in large parts of the north, northeast, west, and central Afghanistan.

Oil, Gas, and Related Pipelines

Afghanistan has no hydrocarbons energy export industry and a small refining sector that provides some of Afghanistan's needs for gasoline or other fuels. Almost all of Afghanistan's fuel comes from neighboring states. As noted, Afghanistan has had virtually no operational hydrocarbon energy sector. However, Afghanistan's prospects in this sector appeared to brighten by the announcement in March 2006 of an estimated 3.6 billion barrels of oil and 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves. Experts believe these amounts, if proved, could make Afghanistan relatively self-sufficient in energy and able to export energy to its neighbors. In a major development, on December 15, 2010, the Afghan government let a six-month contract to a local firm, Ghazanfar Neft Gas, to collect and market crude oil from the Angot field in northern Afghanistan (part of a field that may contain 80 million barrels of oil), initially producing at the low rate of 800 barrels per day. However, the sector is expected to expand to more fields in the Amu Darya basin (northern Afghanistan), and a tender will be offered to develop a larger oil field in Balkh Province (Kasha Kari bloc), estimated to hold 1.8 billion barrels of oil.

USAID has funded test projects to develop gas resources in northern Afghanistan. Building on that aid, there is increasing optimism that private investors will fund at least 25% of a \$300 million needed investment for a 200 megawatt gas-fired thermal plant in northern Afghanistan. The plant would be part of a plan to link Afghanistan's natural gas field in Shehbergan to the population center in Mazar-e-Sharif.

TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) Gas Pipeline Project. Another major energy project remains under consideration. During 1996-1998, the Clinton Administration supported proposed natural gas and oil pipelines through western Afghanistan as an incentive for the

warring factions to cooperate. A consortium led by Los Angeles-based Unocal Corporation proposed a \$7.5 billion Central Asia Gas Pipeline that would originate in southern Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan to Pakistan, with possible extensions into India.⁶⁷ The deterioration in U.S.-Taliban relations after 1998 suspended hopes for the pipeline projects, but prospects for the project improved in the post-Taliban period. In a summit meeting in late May 2002 between the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the three countries agreed to revive the project. Sponsors held an inaugural meeting on July 9, 2002, in Turkmenistan, signing a series of preliminary agreements. On December 12, 2010, in the Turkmenistan capital Ashkabad, the relevant leaders reaffirmed their intent to complete the project. Disagreements remain over the proportion of gas supplied to the line by individual countries, and over pricing, but Afghan officials say the Asian Development Bank has agreed to finance the project, removing what had been a major hurdle. U.S. officials view this project as a superior alternative to a proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India, transiting Pakistan.

Trade Promotion/Reconstruction Opportunity Zones

The key to U.S. economic strategy, as exemplified by the New Silk Road strategy, is to encourage Afghanistan's trade relationships. The United States is doing so by promoting regional economic integration, discussed above, as well as through bilateral economic agreements with Afghanistan. A key to the strategy was accomplished in 2011 when Afghanistan and Pakistan finalized provisions to implement their 2010 transit trade agreement. To facilitate Afghanistan's ability to increase trade, USAID is funding a five year project (\$63 million total during 2010-2014) to simplify the customs clearance process. This includes new import procedures that have reduced the time needed for imports to clear customs by 45%. On December 13, 2004, the 148 countries of the World Trade Organization voted to start membership talks with Afghanistan.

Earlier, in September 2004, the United States and Afghanistan signed a bilateral trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA), and most of Afghanistan's exports are eligible for duty free treatment under the enhanced Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. The Administration economic strategy report of December 2011 says the Administration is reaching out to Afghan exporters and U.S. importers of Afghan products to make increased use of the GSP program. The TIFA is seen as a prelude to a broader and more complex bilateral free trade agreement, but negotiations on an FTA have not yet begun.

Another initiative supported by the United States is the establishment of joint Afghan-Pakistani "Reconstruction Opportunity Zones" (ROZs) which would be modeled after "Qualified Industrial Zones" run by Israel and Jordan in which goods produced in the zones receive duty free treatment for import into the United States. Bills in the 110th Congress, S. 2776 and H.R. 6387, would have authorized the President to proclaim duty-free treatment for imports from ROZs to be designated by the President. In the 111th Congress, a version of these bills was introduced (S. 496 and H.R. 1318). President Obama specifically endorsed passage of these bills in his March 2009 strategy announcement. H.R. 1318 was incorporated into H.R. 1886, a Pakistan aid appropriation that is a component of the new U.S. strategy for the region, and the bill was passed by the House on June

⁶⁷ Other participants in the Unocal consortium include Delta of Saudi Arabia, Hyundai of South Korea, Crescent Steel of Pakistan, Itochu Corporation and INPEX of Japan, and the government of Turkmenistan. Some accounts say Russia's Gazprom would probably receive a stake in the project. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow), October 30, 1997, p. 3.

11, 2009, and then appended to H.R. 2410. However, another version of the Pakistan aid bill, S. 1707, did not authorize ROZs; it was passed and became law (P.L. 111-73).

Table 9. Comparative Social and Economic Statistics

Population	28 million +. Kabul population is 3 million, up from 500,000 in Taliban era.
Ethnicities/Religions	Pashtun 42%; Tajik 27%; Uzbek 9%; Hazara 9%; Aimak 4%; Turkmen 3%; Baluch 2%.
Size of Religious Minorities	Religions: Sunni (Hanafi school) 80%; Shiite (Hazaras, Qizilbash, and Isma'ilis) 19%; other 1% Christians-estimated 500-8,000 persons; Sikh and Hindu-3,000 persons; Bahai's-400 (declared blasphemous in May 2007); Jews-1 person; Buddhist- small numbers, mostly foreigners. No Christian or Jewish schools. One church.
Literacy Rate	28% of population over 15 years of age. 43% of males; 12.6% of females.
GDP, and GDP Growth and Unemployment Rates	\$29.8 billion purchasing power parity (PPP). 109 th in the world. Per capita: \$1,000 purchasing power parity. 212 th in the world. Growth: about 9% for 2010 and 8% expected for 2011. GDP was about \$10 billion (PPP) during last year of Taliban rule. Unemployment rate is about 40%.
Children in School/Schools Built since 2002	7.1 million, of which 40% are girls. Up from 900,000 boys in school during Taliban era. 4,000 schools built (all donors) and 140,000 teachers hired since Taliban era. 17 universities, up from 2 in 2002. 75,000 Afghans in universities in Afghanistan (35% female); 5,000 when Taliban was in power.
Afghans With Access to Health Coverage	65% with basic health services access-compared to 8% during Taliban era. Infant mortality down 22% since Taliban to 135 per 1,000 live births. 680 clinics built .
Roads Built	About 2,500 miles paved post-Taliban, including repaving of "Ring Road" (78% complete) that circles the country. Kabul-Qandahar drive reduced to 6 hours.
Judges/Courts	Over 1,000 judges (incl. 200 women) trained since fall of Taliban.
Banks Operating	17, including branches in some rural areas, but about 90% of the population still use <i>hawalas</i> (informal money transfer services). No banks existed during Taliban era. Some limited credit card use. Some Afghan police now paid by cell phone (E-Paisa).
Access to Electricity	15%-20% of the population. Much of its electricity imported from neighboring states.
Government Revenues (excl. donor funds)	About \$1.7 billion in 2010; more than double the \$720 million 2007. Total Afghan budget is about \$4.5 billion (including development funds)—shortfall covered by foreign donors, including through Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.
Financial Reserves/Debt	About \$4.4 billion, up from \$180 million in 2002. Includes amounts due Central Bank. \$8 billion bilateral debt, plus \$500 million multilateral. U.S. forgave \$108 million in debt in 2004, and \$1.6 billion forgiven by other creditors in March 2010.
Foreign/Private Investment	About \$500 million to \$1 billion per year. Four Afghan airlines: Ariana (national) plus at least two privately owned: Safi and Kam. Turkish Air and India Air fly to Kabul.
Mining/Minerals	Vast untapped minerals affirmed by U.S. experts (June 2010). Chinese firm mining copper in Lowgar Province, and contracts to mine iron ore and produce oil in in various stages of consideration and implementation.
Legal Exports/ Agriculture	80% of the population is involved in agriculture. Self-sufficiency in wheat production as of May 2009 (first time in 30 years). Exports: \$400 million+ (2011): fruits, raisins, melons, pomegranate juice (Anar), nuts, carpets, lapis lazuli gems, marble tile, timber products (Kunar, Nuristan provinces). July 2010 Afghanistan-Pakistan trade agreement.
Imports	Imports: \$3.4 billion (2009): food, energy, capital goods, textiles, autos. Top five trading partners (in descending order): Pakistan, Russia, Iran, India, United States.
Oil Proven Reserves	3.6 billion barrels of oil, 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. Current oil production negligible, but USAID funding project to revive oil and gas facilities in the north.
Cellphones/Tourism	About 6.5 million cellphone subscribers, up from negligible amounts during Taliban era. Tourism: National park opened in Bamiyan June 2009. Increasing tourist visits.

Sources: CIA, *The World Factbook*; various press and U.S. government official testimony.

Table 10. Major Non-U.S. Donors to Afghanistan 2002-2011

(\$ in millions)

Japan	3,150
European Union	2,880
Asian Development Bank	2,270
Britain	2,220
World Bank	2,140
Germany	2,130
India	1,515
Canada	1,255
Netherlands	775
Norway	745
Australia	645
Italy	645
Sweden	635
United Nations	445
Denmark	435
Iran	400
France	320
Spain	220
Turkey	210
Finland	160
Russia	150
Saudi Arabia	140
China	140
UAE	135
Switzerland	120
South Korea	115
Czech Republic	105
Total	\$24,900
(includes donors of under \$100 million, not listed)	(of which \$19,700 disbursed—about 80%)

Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Finance: Development Cooperation Report, 2010.

Note: Table includes donors of over \$100 million only.

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

(\$ in millions)

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

Source: Department of State.

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

Table 12. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1999-FY2001

(\$ in millions)

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

Source: CRS.

Table 13. Post-Taliban U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan

(appropriations/allocations in \$ millions)

Fiscal Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2002-2012 Total	2013 Req
Economic Support Fund (ESF)	117	239.3	894.8	1,280	473.4	1,210.7	1,399.5	2,048	3,346	1,967.5	1,936.8	14,913.8	1,849.3
Development Assistance (DA)	18.3	42.5	153.1	169.6	185	166.8	149.4	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	885.4	0.0
Global Health/Child Survival (GHCS)	7.5	49.7	33.4	38.0	41.5	100.8	63.1	58.2	92.3	69.9	0.0	554.4	0.0
Refugee Accounts: MRA/ERMA	160	61.5	63.3	47.1	36	53.8	44.3	77	81.5	65.0	0.0	690.0	0.0
Food Aid	206	74.5	99	96.7	108.3	69.5	220	77	27.4	112.5	0.0	1,091.4	0.0
Int'l Disaster Asst (IDA)	197	85.8	11.2	4.2	0	0	17	27	29.6	66.6	5	443.5	0.0
INCLE (Int'l Narcotics & Law Enforcement)	60	0.0	220.0	709.3	232.7	251.7	307.6	484	589.0	400.0	324	3,578.3	600
NADR (Nonprolif, Anti-Terror, De-mining)	44	34.7	66.9	38.2	18.2	36.6	26.6	48.6	57.7	69.3	65	505.6	54.3
Int'l Mil Ed & Training (IMET)	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.6	2.0	12.2	1.5
Foreign Military Financing (FMF)	57	191	413.7	396.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,058.5	0.0
Other	32	23.1	36.3	18.1	0.2	0.1	23.1	9.9	3.3	0.2	0.0	146.3	0.0
DOD—Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)	0.0	0.0	0.0	995	1,908	7,406.4	2,750	5,607	9,163	11,619.3	11,200	50,648.5	5,749.2
DOD—CERP	0.0	0.0	40.0	136	215	209	488.3	550.7	1,000.0	470.0	400.0	3,509.0	400.0
DOD—Afghan Infrastructure Fund	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	400.0	400.0	800.0	400

Fiscal Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2002-2012 Total	2013 Req
DOD—Business Task Force	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	150.0	150.0	300.0	179
DOD—Counternarcotics	0.0	0.0	71.8	224.5	108.1	291.0	192.8	235.1	392.3	376.5	392.6	2,284.7	0.0
DOD—Other	7.5	165	285	540	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	997.5	0.0
DEA Counternarcotics	0.6	2.9	3.7	16.8	23.7	20.4	40.6	18.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	127.5	0.0
Total U.S. Assistance	908	970	2,393	4,711	3,351	9,818	5,724	9,243.5	14,784	15,768	14,875	82,547	9,233

Sources: SIGAR Report to Congress, January 30, 2012; Department of State annual budget presentation documents; and CRS calculations.

Notes: Prepared by Curt Tarnoff, Specialist in Foreign Assistance, February 17, 2012. Does not include Inspector General oversight or State/USAID operational expenses which are calculated by the SIGAR at roughly \$5.1 billion since 2002. Refugee accounts include Migration and Refugee Assistance and U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance. Food aid includes P.L.480 Title II, Food for Education, Food for Progress, 416b Food Aid, Emerson Trust, and USAID CCC. Other 150 function category includes USAID Other, Office of Transition Initiatives, Treasury Technical Assistance, and Peacekeeping accounts.

Table I4. Total Obligations for Major Programs: FY2001-FY2010

(\$ in millions. Source: USAID and CRS calculations)

Security Related Programs (mostly DOD funds)	
Afghan National Security Forces (incl. FMF, and DOD ANSFF)	40506
Commander Emergency Response Program (CERP)	3039
Karzai Protection (NADR funds)	440
Counter-Narcotics (INCLE, DOD, DEA)	5227
Other, incl de-mining operations (Halo Trust, other contractors)	146
International Military Education and Training Funds (IMET)	9.8
Other DOD: AFSA defense article drawdown (540), Infrastructure Fund (400), Business Task Force (150)	1547
Humanitarian-Related Programs	
Food Aid (USDA and USAID: P.L. 480 Title I and II; Food for Progress, 416(b), Food for Education)	994
Migration and Refugee aid (including emergency)	690
Debt Relief for Afghan government	11
Disaster Relief (IDA)	406
USAID Development Funding: Economic Support Funds (ESF) and Development Assistance (DA)	Total: 15,900+
Afghan government budget support	423
Democracy (Including election support)	1775
Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (for National Solidarity Program, etc)	1909
	(about 500 for NSP)
Rule of Law and Human Rights (incl. some INCLE funds)	935
Roads	2280
Power/Electricity	1453
Education	782
Health Sector	932
Water	88
Agriculture	1192
PRT projects (development and local governance)	1692
Private Sector Development/Econ. Growth (incl cash-for-work)	1406
Alternative Development/Livelihoods	1186
Embassy Operations, Construction, Aid Oversight	3,721
Other Aid:	

Child Survival and Health	556
Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)	26
Treasury Technical Assistance	3.5
USAID (other)	31
Total (including minor amounts not included in table)	73,255

Table 15. NATO/ISAF Contributing Nations

(as of October 18, 2011)

NATO Countries		Non-NATO Partners	
Belgium	520	Albania	286
Bulgaria	597	Armenia	126
Canada	529*	Austria	3
Czech Republic	623	Australia	1550
Denmark	750	Azerbaijan	94
Estonia	159	Bosnia-Herzegovina	55
France	3932	Croatia	317
Germany	5000	Finland	156
Greece	153	Georgia	937
Hungary	415	Ireland	7
Iceland	4	Jordan	0
Italy	3952	Macedonia	163
Latvia	174	Malaysia	46
Lithuania	236	Mongolia	114
Luxemburg	11	Montenegro	39
Netherlands	183	New Zealand	188
Norway	429	Singapore	39
Poland	2580	South Korea	350
Portugal	140	Sweden	500
Romania	1873	Ukraine	23
Slovakia	309	United Arab Emirates	35
Slovenia	77	Tonga	55
Spain	1526		
Turkey	1840		
United Kingdom	9500		
United States	90000		
Total Listed ISAF: 130,638			

Source: <http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/Placemats/16%20August%202011%20Placemat.pdf>

Note: As noted elsewhere in this report, U.S. force totals in Afghanistan (including those not under NATO/ISAF) are approximately 98,000. In addition, the NATO/ISAF site states that troop numbers in this table

are based on broad contribution and do not necessarily reflect the exact numbers on the ground at any one time. Kazakhstan announced in May 2011 that it would send 4 non-combat officers to join ISAF. *ISAF figures now reflect Canada combat troop pullout in July-August 2011; numbers listed are to train the ANSF. Numbers in the table for the United States may not reflect the start of a U.S. drawdown in July 2011.

Table 16. Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Location (City)		Province/Command
U.S.-Lead (all under ISAF banner)		
1. Gardez		Paktia Province (RC-East, E)
2. Ghazni		Ghazni (RC-E). with Poland.
3. Jalalabad		Nangarhar (RC-E)
4. Khost		Khost (RC-E)
5. Qalat		Zabol (RC-South, S). with Romania.
6. Asadabad		Kunar (RC-E)
7. Sharana		Paktika (RC-E). with Poland.
8. Mehtarlam		Laghman (RC-E)
9. Jabal o-Saraj		Panjshir Province (RC-E), State Department lead
10. Qala Gush		Nuristan (RC-E)
11. Farah		Farah (RC-SW)
Partner Lead (most under ISAF banner)		
PRT Location	Province	Lead Force/Other forces
12. Qandahar	Qandahar (RC-S)	Canada (seat of RC-S)
13. Lashkar Gah	Helmand (RC-S)	Britain. with Denmark and Estonia
14. Tarin Kowt	Uruzgan (RC-S)	Australia (and U.S.) (Replaced Netherlands in August 2010)
15. Herat	Herat (RC-W)	Italy (seat of RC-W)
16. Qalah-ye Now	Badghis (RC-W)	Spain
17. Mazar-e-Sharif	Balkh (RC-N)	Sweden
18. Konduz	Konduz (RC-N)	Germany (seat of RC-N)
29. Faizabad	Badakhshan (RC-N)	Germany. with Denmark, Czech Rep.
20. Meymaneh	Faryab (RC-N)	Norway. with Sweden.
21. Chaghcharan	Ghowr (RC-W)	Lithuania. with Denmark, U.S., Iceland
22. Pol-e-Khomri	Baghlan (RC-N)	Hungary
23. Bamiyan	Bamiyan (RC-E)	New Zealand (not NATO/ISAF).
24. Maidan Shahr	Wardak (RC-C)	Turkey
25. Pul-i-Alam	Lowgar (RC-E)	Czech Republic
26. Shebergan	Jowzjan (RC-N)	Turkey
27. Charikar	Parwan (RC-E)	South Korea (Bagram, in Parwan Province, is the base of RC-E)

Note: RC = Regional Command.

Table 17. Major Factions/Leaders in Afghanistan

Party/ Leader	Leader	Ideology/ Ethnicity	Regional Base
Taliban	Mullah (Islamic cleric) Muhammad Umar (still at large possibly in Afghanistan. Umar, born in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan province, is about 65 years old.	Ultra-orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Throughout south and east. Small numbers elsewhere.
Haqqani Network	Jalaludin Haqqani. Allied with Taliban and Al Qaeda. Said to be supported, or at least tolerated, by Pakistani ISI.	Same as above	Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Kabul
Islamic Society (leader of “Northern Alliance”)	Yunus Qanooni (speaker of lower house)/Muhammad Fahim/Dr. Abdullah Abdullah (Foreign Minister 2001-2006). Ismail Khan, a so-called “warlord,” heads faction of the grouping in Herat area. Former party head, Burhanuddin Rabbani, assassinated by Taliban in September 2011.	Moderate Islamic, mostly Tajik	Much of northern and western Afghanistan, including Kabul
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan	Abdul Rashid Dostam. Was Karzai rival in October 2004 presidential election, then his top “security adviser.” As of October 2011, reportedly has joined new opposition movement called “Truth and Justice Party.”	Secular, left-leaning, Uzbek	Jowzjan, Balkh, Faryab, Sar-i-Pol, and Samangan provinces.
Hizb-e-Wahdat	Composed of Shiite Hazara tribes from central Afghanistan. Former members Karim Khalili is vice president, but Mohammad Mohaqiq is Karzai rival. Generally pro-Iranian. Was part of Rabbani 1992-1996 government, and fought unsuccessfully with Taliban over Bamiyan. Still revered by Hazaras is the former leader of the group, Abdul Ali Mazari, who was captured and killed by the Taliban in March 1995.	Shiite, Hazara tribes	Bamiyan, Ghazni, Dai Kundi province
Pashtun tribal/regional leaders	Various regional governors and local leaders in the east and south; central government led by Hamid Karzai.	Moderate Islamic, Pashtun	Dominant in the south and east
Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin (HIG)	<i>Mujahedin</i> party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Was part of Soviet-era U.S.-backed “Afghan Interim Government” based in Peshawar, Pakistan. Was nominal “prime minister” in 1992-1996 mujahedin government but never actually took office. Lost power base around Jalalabad to the Taliban in 1994, and fled to Iran before being expelled in 2002. Still active in operations east of Kabul, but open to ending militant activity. Leader of a rival Hizb-e-Islam faction, Yunus Khalis, the mentor of Mullah Umar, died July 2006.	Orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small groups in Nangarhar, Nuristan, and Kunar provinces
Islamic Union	Abd-I-Rab Rasul Sayyaf. Islamic conservative, leads a pro-Karzai faction in parliament. Lived many years in and politically close to Saudi Arabia, which shares his “Wahhabi” ideology. During anti-Soviet war, Sayyaf’s faction, with Hikmatyar, was a principal recipient of U.S. weaponry. Criticized the U.S.-led war against Saddam Hussein after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.	orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Paghman (west of Kabul)

Source: CRS.

Residual Issues from Past Conflicts

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

Stinger Retrieval

Beginning in late 1985 following internal debate, the Reagan Administration provided about 2,000 man-portable "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles to the *mujahedin* for use against Soviet aircraft. Prior to the ouster of the Taliban, common estimates suggested that 200-300 Stingers remained at large, although more recent estimates put the number below 100.⁶⁸ The Stinger issue resurfaced in conjunction with 2001 U.S. war effort, when U.S. pilots reported that the Taliban fired some Stingers at U.S. aircraft. No hits were reported. The danger of these weapons has become apparent on several past occasions. Iran bought 16 of the missiles in 1987 and fired one against U.S. helicopters in the Persian Gulf. India claimed that it was a Stinger supplied to Islamic rebels in Kashmir by sympathizers in Afghanistan, that shot down an Indian helicopter over Kashmir in May 1999.⁶⁹ Soviet-made SA-7 "Strella" man-portable launchers, which allegedly have been used in the past by Al Qaeda, including against an Israeli passenger jet in Kenya on November 30, 2002, were discovered in Afghanistan by U.S. forces in December 2002.

In 1992, after the fall of the Russian-backed government of Najibullah, the United States reportedly spent about \$10 million to buy the Stingers back, at a premium, from individual *mujahedin* commanders. The *New York Times* reported on July 24, 1993, that the buy back effort failed because the United States was competing with other buyers, including Iran and North Korea, and that the CIA would spend about \$55 million in FY1994 in a renewed effort. On March 7, 1994, the *Washington Post* reported that the CIA had recovered only about 50 or 100 at-large Stingers. In February 2002, the Afghan government found and turned over to the United States "dozens" of Stingers.⁷⁰ In January 2005, Afghan intelligence began buying Stingers back, at a reported cost of \$150,000 each.⁷¹ Any Stingers that remain in Afghanistan likely pose little threat, in part because of deteriorating components. No recent uses are reported.

Mine Eradication

Land mines laid during the Soviet occupation constitute one of the principal dangers to the Afghan people. The United Nations estimates that 5 million to 7 million mines remain scattered throughout the country, although some estimates are lower. U.N. teams have destroyed one million mines and are now focusing on de-mining priority-use, residential and commercial property, including lands around Kabul. Amounts contributed by the United States to the de-mining effort are shown in the tables above. Most of the funds have gone to HALO Trust, a British organization, and the U.N. Mine Action Program for Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Compact adopted in London in February 2006 states that by 2010, the goal should be to reduce the land area of Afghanistan contaminated by mines by 70%.

⁶⁸ Saleem, Farrukh. "Where Are the Missing Stinger Missiles? Pakistan," *Friday Times*. August 17-23, 2001.

⁶⁹ "U.S.-Made Stinger Missiles—Mobile and Lethal." *Reuters*, May 28, 1999.

⁷⁰ Fullerton, John. "Afghan Authorities Hand in Stinger Missiles to U.S." *Reuters*, February 4, 2002.

⁷¹ "Afghanistan Report," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. February 4, 2005.

Appendix. U.S. and International Sanctions Lifted

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

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

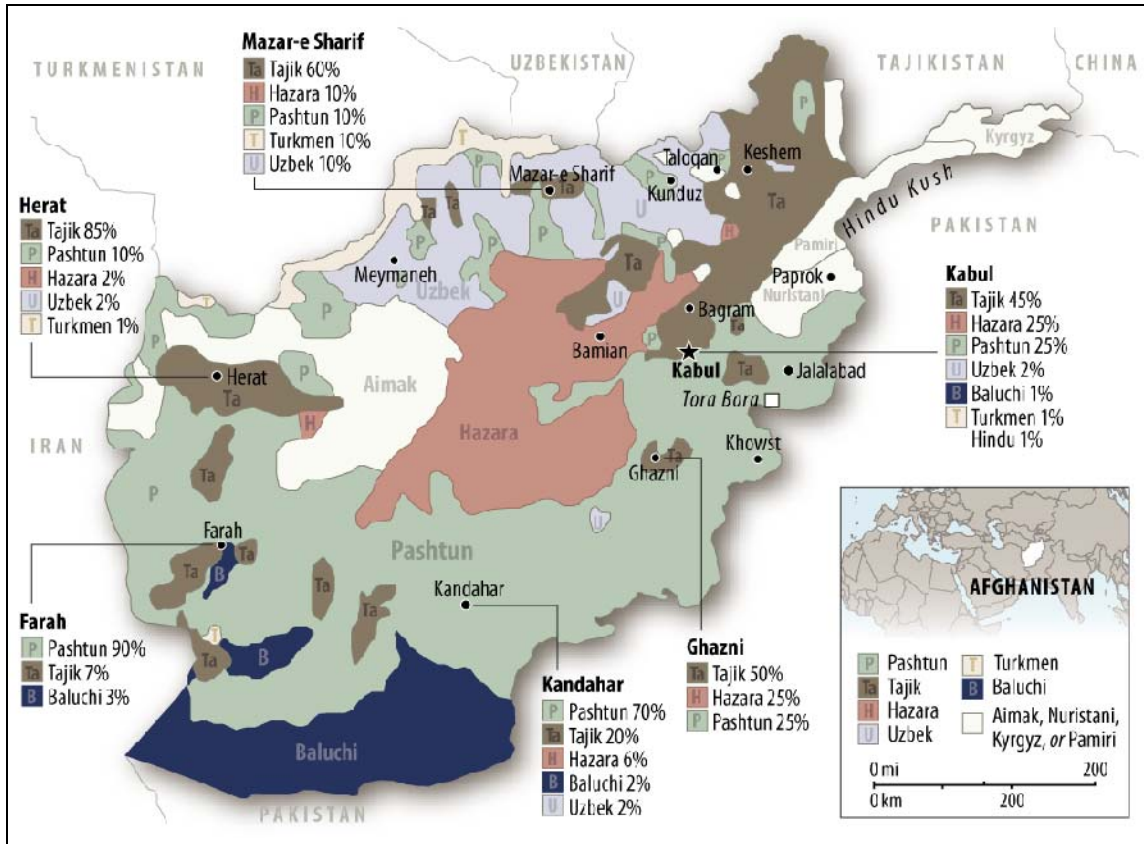
- curtailment of air transportation with the United States. Waivers were also granted in 1994 and, after the fall of the Taliban, by President Bush.
- On May 3, 2002, President Bush restored normal trade treatment to the products of Afghanistan, reversing the February 18, 1986, proclamation by President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

Figure A-I. Map of Afghanistan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

Figure A-2. Map of Afghan Ethnicities



Source: 2003 National Geographic Society. <http://www.afghan-network.net/maps/Afghanistan-Map.pdf>. Adapted by Amber Wilhelm, CRS Graphics.

Notes: This map is intended to be illustrative of the approximate demographic distribution by region of Afghanistan. CRS has no way to confirm exact population distributions.

Author Contact Information

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