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## **Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy**

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

## Summary

Afghanistan is a fragile state that appears to be gradually stabilizing after more than 22 years of warfare, including a U.S.-led war that brought the current government to power. Before the U.S. military campaign against the Taliban began on October 7, 2001, Afghanistan had been mired in conflict since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The Taliban ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until its collapse in December 2001 at the hands of a U.S.-led military campaign.

Since the defeat of the Taliban, Afghanistan no longer serves as a base of operations for Al Qaeda. Afghan citizens are enjoying new personal freedoms that were forbidden under the Taliban, about 2 million Afghan refugees have returned, and women have returned to schools, the workforce, and some participation in politics. At the same time, an ongoing insurgency by Taliban remnants, particularly in the Taliban's former power base in the southeast, has created a perception of insecurity and slowed reconstruction. Some Taliban fighters are said to be in Pakistan, from which they have entered Afghanistan to wage attacks on U.S. and Afghan forces and aid and reconstruction workers.

On May 1, 2003, the United States and the Afghan government declared major U.S.-led combat ended and asserted that U.S.-led forces would henceforth concentrate on stabilization. U.S. stabilization measures focus on strengthening the central government, which has been widely viewed as weak and unable to control many regional and factional leaders. The United States and other countries are building an Afghan National Army; deploying a multinational International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to patrol Kabul and other cities; setting up regional enclaves to create secure conditions for reconstruction (Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs), and disarming militia fighters. To foster reconstruction, the United States is giving Afghanistan a total of about \$1.6 billion for FY2004, most of which (\$1.2 billion) was provided in a supplemental appropriation passed and signed in early November 2003 (P.L. 108-106). The United Nations and the Bush Administration have lifted sanctions imposed on Afghanistan during Taliban rule.

Although with some difficulty, political reconstruction is following the route laid out by major Afghan factions and the international community during the U.S.-led war. A *loya jirga* (traditional Afghan assembly) adopted a new constitution on January 4, 2004, with some minor changes. Presidential and parliamentary elections are to be held by June 2004, although Afghan leaders now say the elections might have to be postponed for a few months to allow voter registration to proceed further.

This paper will be updated as warranted by major developments. See also CRS Report RL31759, *Reconstruction Assistance in Afghanistan: Goals, Priorities, and Issues for Congress*.

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

## Background to Recent Developments

Afghanistan became unstable in the 1970s as both its Communist Party and its Islamic movement grew in strength and became increasingly bitter opponents of each other.<sup>1</sup> The instability shattered the relative peace and progress that characterized the rule of King Mohammad Zahir Shah, who reigned during 1933 - 1973. Zahir Shah was the last King in Afghanistan's monarchy, which was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani. Prior to the founding of the monarchy, Afghanistan did not exist as a distinct political entity, but was a territory inhabited by tribes and tribal confederations often linked to neighboring nations. Zahir Shah was the only surviving son of King Mohammad Nadir Shah (1929-1933), whose rule followed that of King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929), after a brief rule in 1919 by a Tajik strongman named Bacha-i-Saqo. King Amanullah Khan launched attacks on British forces in Afghanistan 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 and who presided over a government in which all ethnic minorities participated.

Zahir Shah is remembered fondly by many older Afghans for promulgating a constitution in 1964 that established a national legislature and promoting freedoms for women, including freeing them from covering their face and hair. However, possibly believing that doing so would enable him to limit Soviet support for communist factions in Afghanistan, Zahir Shah also entered into a significant political and arms purchase relationship with the Soviet Union.

While undergoing medical treatment in Italy, Zahir Shah was overthrown by his cousin, Mohammad Daoud, a military leader. Daoud established a dictatorship characterized by strong state control over the economy. After taking power in 1978 by overthrowing Daoud, the communists, first under Nur Mohammad Taraki and then under Hafizullah Amin (leader of a rival communist faction who overthrew Taraki in 1979), attempted to impose radical socialist change on a traditional society. The communists tried to redistribute land and bring more women into government positions. These moves spurred recruitment for Islamic parties and their militias opposed to communist ideology. The Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979 to prevent a seizure of power by the Islamic-oriented militias

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see CRS Report RL31759, *Reconstruction Assistance in Afghanistan: Goals, Priorities, and Issues for Congress*.

that later became known as “mujahedin”<sup>2</sup> (Islamic fighters), and thereby keep Afghanistan pro-Soviet. Upon their invasion, the Soviets ousted Hafizullah Amin and installed their local ally, Babrak Karmal, as Afghan president.

After the Soviets occupied Afghanistan, the U.S.-backed *mujahedin* fought them effectively, and Soviet occupation forces were never able to pacify all areas of the country. The Soviets held major cities, but the outlying mountainous regions remained largely under *mujahedin* control. The *mujahedin* benefitted from U.S. weapons and assistance, provided through the Central Intelligence Agency, working closely with Pakistan’s Inter-Service Intelligence directorate (ISI). That weaponry included man-portable shoulder-fired anti-aircraft systems called “Stingers,” which proved highly effective against Soviet aircraft. The Islamic guerrillas also hid and stored weaponry in a large network of natural and manmade tunnels and caves throughout Afghanistan. The Soviet Union’s losses mounted, and Soviet domestic opinion shifted against the war. In 1986, perhaps in an effort to signal some flexibility on a possible political settlement, the Soviets replaced Babrak Karmal with the more pliable director of Afghan intelligence (Khad), Najibullah Ahmedzai (who went by the name Najibullah or, on some occasions, the abbreviated Najib).

On April 14, 1988, the Soviet Union, led by reformist leader Mikhail Gorbachev, agreed to a U.N.-brokered accord (the Geneva Accords) requiring it to withdraw. The Soviet Union completed the withdrawal on February 15, 1989, leaving in place a weak communist government facing a determined U.S. backed *mujahedin*. The United States closed its embassy in Kabul in January 1989, as the Soviet Union was completing its pullout. A warming of superpower relations moved the United States and Soviet Union to try for a political settlement to the internal conflict. From late 1989, the United States pressed the Soviet Union to agree to a mutual cutoff of military aid to the combatants. The failed August 1991 coup in the Soviet Union reduced Moscow’s capability for and interest in supporting communist regimes in the Third World, leading Moscow to agree with Washington on September 13, 1991, 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 of Afghanistan in 1989. Press reports and independent experts believe the covert aid program grew from about \$20 million per year in FY1980 to about \$300 million per year during fiscal years 1986 - 1990. Even before the 1991 U.S.-Soviet agreement on Afghanistan, the Soviet withdrawal had decreased the strategic and political value of Afghanistan and made the Administration and Congress less forthcoming with funding. For FY1991, Congress reportedly cut covert aid appropriations to the *mujahedin* from \$300 million the previous year to \$250 million, with half the aid withheld until the second half of the fiscal year. Although the intelligence authorization bill was not signed until late 1991, Congress abided by the aid figures contained in the bill.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The term refers to an Islamic guerrilla; literally “one who fights in the cause of Islam.”

<sup>3</sup> See “Country Fact Sheet: Afghanistan,” in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*. Volume 5, No. 23, June 6, 1994. Page 377.

### Afghanistan at a Glance

Population:	27.7 million (July 2002 est.)
Ethnic Groups:	Pashtun 44%; Tajik 25%; Uzbek 8%; Hazara 10%; others 13%
Religions:	Sunni Muslim 84%; Shiite Muslim 15%; other 1%
GDP Per Capita:	\$800/yr
External Debt:	\$5.5 billion (1996 est.)
Major Exports:	fruits, nuts, carpets, semi-precious gems
Major Imports:	food, petroleum, capital goods

**Source:** CIA World Factbook, 2002.

With Soviet backing withdrawn, on March 18, 1992, Afghan President Najibullah publicly agreed to step down once an interim government was formed. His announcement set off a wave of regime defections, primarily by Uzbek and Tajik militia commanders who were nominally his allies, including Uzbek commander Abdul Rashid Dostam (see below).

Joining with the defectors, prominent *mujahedin* commander Ahmad Shah Masud (of the Islamic Society, a largely Tajik party headed by Burhannudin Rabbani) sent his fighters into Kabul, paving the way for the installation of a regime led by the *mujahedin* on April 18, 1992. Masud, nicknamed “Lion of the Panjshir,” had earned a reputation as a brilliant strategist by successfully preventing the Soviets from occupying his power base in the Panjshir Valley of northeastern Afghanistan. After failing to flee, Najibullah, his brother, and a few aides remained at a U.N. facility in Kabul until the Taliban movement later seized control and hanged them.

The fall of Najibullah brought the *mujahedin* parties to power in Afghanistan but also exposed the serious differences among them. Islamic scholar Sibghatullah Mojadeddi became president for an initial two months (April and May 1992). Under an agreement among all the major *mujahedin* parties, Burhannudin Rabbani became President in June 1992, with the understanding that he would leave office in December 1994. His refusal to step down at the end of that time period — on the grounds that political authority would disintegrate in the absence of a clear successor — led many of the other parties to accuse him of monopolizing power. His government subsequently faced daily shelling from another *mujahedin* commander, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Hikmatyar headed a strongly fundamentalist faction of Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party) and reportedly received a large proportion of U.S. aid to the *mujahedin* during the war against the Soviet Union. He was nominally Prime Minister but never formally took office in the *mujahedin* regime of Rabbani. Four years (1992-1996) of civil war among the *mujahedin* destroyed much of Kabul and created popular support for the Taliban. (Hikmatyar was later ousted by the Taliban from his powerbase around Jalalabad despite sharing the Taliban’s ideology and Pashtun ethnicity, and he fled to Iran before returning to Afghanistan in early 2002. He is now allied with Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants.)

## The Rise and Fall of The Taliban <sup>4</sup>

The Taliban movement was formed in 1993-1994 by Afghan Islamic clerics and students, many of them former *mujahedin* who had become disillusioned with continued internal conflict among *mujahedin* parties and who moved into the western areas of Pakistan to study in Islamic seminaries (“madrassas”). They were mostly ultra-orthodox Sunni Muslims who practice a form of Islam, “Wahhabism,” similar to that practiced in Saudi Arabia. The Taliban was composed overwhelmingly of ethnic Pashtuns (Pathans) from rural areas of Afghanistan. Pashtuns constitute a plurality in Afghanistan, accounting for about 38% of Afghanistan’s population of about 26 million. Taliban members viewed the Rabbani government as corrupt, responsible for continued civil war and the deterioration of security in the major cities, and exclusive of the Pashtun majority. With the help of defections by sympathetic *mujahedin* fighters, the Taliban seized control of the southeastern city of Qandahar in November 1994, and continued to gather strength. By February 1995, it had reached the gates of Kabul, after which an 18-month stalemate around the capital ensued. In September 1995, the Taliban captured Herat province, on the border with Iran, and expelled the governor of the province, Ismail Khan. In September 1996, a string of Taliban victories east of Kabul led to the withdrawal of the Rabbani government to the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul with most of its heavy weapons; the Taliban took control of Kabul on September 27, 1996.

The Taliban lost much of its international support as its policies unfolded. It imposed strict adherence to Islamic customs in areas it controls, and used harsh punishments, including executions, on transgressors. The Taliban regime made extensive use of its Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice, a force of religious police officers that often used violence and physical punishments to enforce Islamic laws and customs, as well as a ban on television, popular music, and dancing. During Taliban rule, women were prohibited from attending school or working outside the home, except in health care.

Several U.N. Security Council resolutions, including 1193 (August 28, 1998) and 1214 (December 8, 1998), urged the Taliban to end discrimination against women. During a November 1997 visit to Pakistan, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright attacked Taliban policies as despicable and intolerable. U.S. women’s rights groups, including the Feminist Majority and the National Organization for Women (NOW), mobilized to stop the Clinton Administration from recognizing the Taliban government. On May 5, 1999, the Senate passed S.Res. 68, a resolution calling on the President not to recognize any Afghan government that discriminates against women.

In what most observers considered an extreme action, in March 2001 the Taliban ordered the destruction of two large Buddha statues, dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Many experts believe the move was a reaction to U.N. sanctions imposed in December 2000 (see below), and it provoked widespread condemnation of the Taliban, even among other Islamic states, including Pakistan. Some international

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<sup>4</sup> For an in-depth study of the Taliban and its rule, see Rashid, Ahmad. *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. Yale University Press, 2000.

groups are looking at the possibility of rebuilding the statues, although at least one group has said doing so will be extremely difficult technically.

**Taliban Leadership/Post-War Fate.** During the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Taliban founder Mullah (Afghan Sunni Muslim cleric) Muhammad Umar fought in the Hizb-e-Islam (Islamic Party) mujahedin party led by Yunis Khalis. During Taliban rule, Umar held the title of Head of State and Commander of the Faithful. He lost an eye during the anti-Soviet war, rarely appeared in public, and did not take an active role in the day-to-day affairs of governing. However, in times of crisis or to discuss pressing issues, he summoned Taliban leaders to meet with him in Qandahar. Considered a hardliner within the Taliban regime, Mullah Umar forged a close personal bond with bin Laden and was adamantly opposed to meeting U.S. demands to hand him over to face justice. Born in Uruzgan province, Umar is about 56 years old. His ten year old son, as well as his stepfather, reportedly died at the hands of U.S. airstrikes in early October 2001. Umar reportedly fled Qandahar city when the Taliban surrendered the city on December 9, 2001. He is still at large and reportedly continues to meet with Taliban insurgent commanders.

## **Deterioration of U.S. Relations With the Taliban**

The Clinton Administration diplomatically engaged the Taliban movement as it was gathering strength, but U.S. relations with the Taliban deteriorated sharply during the 5 years that the Taliban were in power in Kabul, to the point where the United States and the Taliban were largely adversaries well before the September 11, 2001 attacks. Despite the deterioration, Clinton Administration officials met periodically with Taliban officials to stress U.S. concerns and opposition to Taliban policies. At the same time, the United States withheld recognition of Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, formally recognizing no faction as the government. Because of the lack of broad international recognition of Taliban, the United Nations seated representatives of the former Rabbani government, not the Taliban. The State Department ordered the Afghan embassy in Washington, D.C., closed in August 1997 because of a power struggle within it between Rabbani and Taliban supporters.

Well before the September 11, 2001, attacks, the Taliban's alliance with Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had become the Clinton Administration's overriding bilateral agenda item in U.S. policy toward Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> After the August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Clinton Administration placed progressively more pressure on the Taliban to extradite bin Laden, adding sanctions, some military action, reported covert intelligence operations, and the threat of further punishments to ongoing diplomatic efforts. Clinton Administration officials say that they did not take major action to oust the Taliban from power - either through direct U.S. military action or by providing

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization, see CRS Report RL31119, *Terrorism: Near Eastern Groups and State Sponsors, 2001, September 10, 2001*. See also CRS Report RS20411, *Afghanistan: Connections to Islamic Movements in Central and South Asia and Southern Russia*.

military aid to Taliban opponents in Afghanistan — because domestic U.S. support for those steps was lacking at that time.

- During an April 1998 visit to Afghanistan, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson asked the Taliban to hand bin Laden over to U.S. authorities, but he was rebuffed.
- On August 20, 1998, the United States fired cruise missiles at alleged bin Laden-controlled terrorist training camps in retaliation for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.
- On July 4, 1999, because of the Taliban's hosting of bin Laden, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13129, imposing a ban on U.S. trade with Taliban-controlled portions of Afghanistan and blocking Taliban assets in U.S. financial institutions. However, Afghanistan was not named a state sponsor of terrorism on the grounds that doing so would imply recognition of the Taliban.
- On October 15, 1999, with Russian support, the United States achieved adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267, a U.N. resolution sanctioning the Taliban regime. It banned flights outside Afghanistan by Ariana airlines, and directed U.N. member states to freeze Taliban assets.
- On December 19, 2000, the United States and Russia achieved U.N. Security Council adoption of Resolution 1333, a follow-on to Resolution 1267. The new provisions of 1333 were a worldwide prohibition against the provision of arms or military advice to the Taliban (directed against Pakistan); a reduction of Taliban diplomatic representation abroad; and a ban on foreign travel by senior Taliban officials. On July 30, 2001, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1363, providing for the stationing of monitors in Pakistan to ensure that no weapons or military advice was being provided to the Taliban. (In the aftermath of the Taliban's ouster from power, these provisions were narrowed to focus on Al Qaeda, and not the Taliban, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1390 of January 17, 2002.)

#### **Bush Administration Policy Prior to the September 11 Attacks.**

Bush Administration policy prior to the September 11 attacks did not much differ from Clinton Administration policy. The Bush Administration continued to apply pressure short of military action against the Taliban, while retaining some dialogue with the Taliban regime. In compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, in February 2001 the State Department ordered the closing of a Taliban representative office in New York. The Taliban complied with the directive, but its representative, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, continued to operate informally. In March 2001, Bush Administration officials received a Taliban envoy, Rahmatullah Hashemi, to discuss bilateral issues. Three U.S. diplomats visited Afghanistan in April 2001, although the purpose of the visit was described as limited to assessing humanitarian needs. The contacts did not yield progress on obtaining extradition of

bin Laden, and press reports in May 2002 said the Bush Administration was considering, prior to the September 11 attacks, plans to destabilize the Taliban.<sup>6</sup>

As did the executive branch, Congress became increasingly critical of the Taliban. A sense of the Senate resolution (S.Res. 275) that resolving the Afghan civil war should be a top U.S. priority passed that chamber by unanimous consent on September 24, 1996. A similar resolution, H.Con.Res. 218, passed the House on April 28, 1998. After the September 11 attacks, legislative proposals became significantly more adversarial, including one bill, H.R. 3088, stating that it should be the policy of the United States to remove the Taliban from power. That bill, as well as another bill (H.R. 2998, introduced October 2, 2001), established a “Radio Free Afghanistan” broadcasting service under RFE/RL. On February 12, 2002, the House passed the Senate version of H.R. 2998 providing \$17 million funding for the radio broadcasts for FY2002. President Bush signed it on March 11, 2002 (P.L. 107-148).

### **Coalescence of the “Northern Alliance”**

The rise of the Taliban movement, its imposition of puritanical Islamic rule, and its alliance with bin Laden not only alienated the United States but caused other Afghan power centers to make common cause with ousted President Rabbani and commander Ahmad Shah Masud. These opposition groups allied into a “Northern Alliance” shortly after Kabul fell to the Taliban in 1996. The Persian-speaking, mainly ethnic Tajik core of the Northern Alliance was located not only in the Panjshir Valley of the northeast but also in western Afghanistan near the Iranian border. Those in the west were led by Ismail Khan, who regained the governorship of his former stronghold in and around Herat after the Taliban collapse of November 2001.

**General Dostam/Mazar-e-Sharif.** One non-Tajik component of the Northern Alliance was the ethnic Uzbek militia force (the Junbush-Melli, or National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) of General Abdul Rashid Dostam. Uzbeks constitute about 6% of the population, compared with 25% that are Tajik. Dostam, best known for his 1992 break with Najibullah that led to Najibullah’s overthrow that year, subsequently fought against Rabbani during the latter’s presidency in an effort to persuade him to yield power. Dostam again aligned himself with Rabbani in the Northern Alliance after the Taliban took power in Kabul. Dostam once commanded about 25,000 troops, significant amounts of armor and combat aircraft, and even some Scud missiles, but infighting within his faction left him unable to hold off Taliban forces. The Taliban captured Dostam’s northern power base in August 1998, leaving him in control of only small areas of northern Afghanistan near the border with Uzbekistan.

During the U.S.-led war against the Taliban, Dostam, in concert with a Tajik commander Atta Mohammad and a Shiite Hazara commander Mohammad Mohaqqiq, recaptured the key northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif from the Taliban. There have been tensions among the three in governing the city and its environs since, often resulting in minor clashes, most recently in October 2003, in which both

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

sides reportedly used heavy weaponry such as tanks. The clashes, over issues such as revenues and areas of control, often have necessitated mediation by U.S. and U.N. personnel in Afghanistan (UNAMA, U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan). Under an agreement among the factions, Atta Mohammad has begun giving his heavy weapons to British forces in Mazar-e-Sharif, and Dostam has transferred some of his heavy weapons as well. However, observers in Mazar-e-Sharif have said that Dostam is surrendering his heavy weapons more slowly than agreed, and that the weapons he has handed in have been mostly non-operational. Dostam is said by observers to be concerned that he and his Uzbek constituents could be vulnerable if Dostam handed in all his best weaponry while rival factions remain armed or are able to call in nearby allies. Atta Mohammad, for example, is said to be close to Defense Minister/Northern Alliance military commander Mohammad Fahim.

**Hazara Shiites.** Shiite Muslim parties composed mainly of members of Hazara tribes were generally less active against the Soviet occupation than were the Sunni parties. The Shiites, who are prominent in central Afghanistan, particularly Bamiyan Province, were part of the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. The main Shiite Muslim party is Hizb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party, an alliance of eight Hazara tribe Shiite Muslim groups), which joined Rabbani's 1992-1996 government in exchange for a share of power. Along with Rabbani, Hizb-e-Wahdat was expelled from government when the Taliban took power in 1996. Hizb-e-Wahdat has traditionally received some material support from Iran, whose population practices Shiite Islam. Hizb-e-Wahdat forces occasionally retook Bamiyan city from the Taliban, but they did not hold it until the Taliban collapsed in November 2001.

**Sayyaf.** Another mujahedin party leader, Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf, heads a Pashtun-dominated faction called the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan. Sayyaf lived many years in and is politically close to Saudi Arabia, which shares his orthodox interpretation of Sunni Islam ("Wahhabism"). During the U.S.-backed war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Sayyaf's faction of *mujahedin*, along with those of Hikmatyar, were the principal recipients of U.S.-supplied weaponry. Both Sayyaf and Hikmatyar criticized the U.S.-led war against Saddam Hussein after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The Wahhabism of Sayyaf's movement was shared by the Taliban, which partly explains why many of Sayyaf's fighters originally defected to the Taliban movement when that movement was taking power. Despite the ideological similarity with the Taliban, Sayyaf allied with the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. Currently, Sayyaf is considered personally close to Rabbani and is reputedly maneuvering in concert with Rabbani to limit President Karzai's authority and for a future leadership role. Sayyaf and Rabbani are widely mentioned as a possible candidates in upcoming presidential elections.

## September 11 Attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom

The political rivalries among opposition groups hindered their ability to shake the Taliban's grip on power. In the few years prior to the October 2001 beginning of the U.S.-led war, the opposition steadily lost ground, even in areas outside Taliban's Pashtun ethnic base. By the time of the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, the Taliban controlled at least 75% of the country and almost all major provincial capitals. The Northern Alliance suffered a major setback on September 9, 2001, two days before the September 11 attacks, when Northern Alliance military

leader Ahmad Shah Masud was assassinated by suicide bombers allegedly linked to Al Qaeda. His successor was his intelligence chief, Marshal Muhammad Fahim, who is a veteran commander but who lacked the authority of Masud.

The United States decided to go to war against the Taliban regime when, immediately after the September 11 attacks, the Taliban refused a U.S. demand to extradite bin Laden, who the Administration accused of prime authorship of the attacks. The Bush Administration decided that a friendly regime in Kabul was needed to create the conditions under which U.S. forces could battle and search for Al Qaeda activists in Afghanistan. The U.S.-led war in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001 (Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF). The campaign consisted of U.S. airstrikes on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, coupled with targeting by U.S. special operations forces working in Afghanistan with the Northern Alliance and Pashtun anti-Taliban forces.

**Pashtuns/Karzai Join the Battle.** During OEF, Taliban control of the north collapsed first. Mazar-e-Sharif fell to Dostam on November 9, 2001, and Northern Alliance forces captured Kabul on November 12. The Taliban collapse in the north was followed by its loss of control of southern and eastern Afghanistan to pro-U.S. Pashtun forces, such as those of Hamid Karzai, who is now President. Karzai entered Afghanistan just after the September 11 attacks to organize Pashtun resistance to the Taliban, supported in that effort by U.S. special forces. He became central to U.S. efforts to oust the Taliban from Pashtun areas after another Pashtun leader, Abdul Haq, entered Afghanistan in October 2001 — without much coordination with or support from U.S. forces — but was captured and killed by the Taliban.

Karzai, who is about 49-year-old, is leader of the powerful Popolzai tribe of Pashtuns; he became tribal leader when his father was assassinated, allegedly by Taliban agents, in Quetta, Pakistan in 1999. Karzai had been deputy foreign minister in Rabbani's government, but, during 1995-96, Karzai supported the Taliban as a unified, Pashtun alternative to Rabbani. Karzai, who is from the town of Tarin Kowt, broke with the Taliban in 1997 when the Taliban began to carry out what Karzai and others considered to be abusive excesses in human rights and enforcement of Islamic practices. Karzai and his family, which includes several brothers, some of whom lived in the United States, had been active in attempting to broker a peaceful transition of power during 1997-2001. Prior to the September 11 attacks, he and his U.S.-based brother, Qayyum Karzai, had reached out to then Northern Alliance military leader Ahmad Shah Masud in a broader anti-Taliban alliance. He is viewed as a leader who seeks factional compromise rather than by intimidating his opponents with the use of armed force. Groups of other Pashtun commanders took control of cities and provinces in the east and south. One example was Ghul Agha Shirzai, who became governor of Qandahar province and environs until his dismissal by Karzai in August 2003 and replacement by the pro-Karzai Yusuf Pashtun.

Major U.S. combat operations continued after the fall of the Taliban. The United States and its Afghan allies conducted "Operation Anaconda" in the Shah-i-Kot Valley south of Gardez during March 2 - 19, 2002, to eliminate a pocket of as many as 800 Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. In late March 2003, about 1,000 U.S. troops launched a raid on suspected Taliban or Al Qaeda fighters in villages around

Qandahar. During a visit to Afghanistan on May 1, 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Afghan president Karzai said that major combat operations had ended.

## Post-War Stabilization Efforts<sup>7</sup>

The war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban paved the way for the success of a pre-existing U.N. effort to form a broad-based Afghan government. The transitional government appears stable at the national level, but major tensions still exist among factions of the national government and between the central government and leaders of Afghanistan's various regions. On the other hand, some argue that, in many respects, "center-periphery" tension has existed throughout Afghan history.

**Pre-September 11 U.N. Mediation.** For the 8 years prior to the U.S.-led war, the United States worked primarily through the United Nations to end the Afghan civil conflict. The United Nations was viewed as a credible mediator by all sides largely because of its role in ending the Soviet occupation. However, some observers criticized U.S. policy as being insufficiently engaged in Afghan mediation to bring about a settlement. After the fall of Najibullah in 1992, a succession of U.N. mediators — former Tunisian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mestiri (March 1994-July 1996); German diplomat Norbert Holl (July 1996-December 1997); Algeria's former Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi (August 1997-October 1999) and Spanish diplomat Fransesc Vendrell (October 1999- September 2001) — sought to arrange a ceasefire and a peaceful transition to a broad-based government. The proposals incorporated many ideas of former King Zahir Shah and others, calling for a government to be chosen through a traditional grand assembly of notable Afghans, the *loya jirga*. The U.N. efforts, at times, appeared to make progress, but ceasefires and other agreements between the warring factions always broke down. Brahimi suspended his activities in frustration in October 1999.

**The "Six Plus Two" and Geneva Contact Groups.** In coordination with direct U.N. mediation efforts, the "Six Plus Two" contact group began meeting in early 1997; the group consisted of the United States, Russia, and the six states bordering Afghanistan: Iran, China, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The group was created following informal meetings of some of the key outside parties, in which the United States and others agreed not to provide weapons to the warring factions. (In June 1996, the Administration formally imposed a ban on U.S. sales of arms to all factions in Afghanistan, a policy already that had been already in place less formally.<sup>8</sup>) In 2000, possibly because of the lack of progress, another contact group began meeting in Geneva. The "Geneva grouping" included Italy, Germany, Iran, and the United States. Another Afghan-related grouping multilateral mediating grouping consisted of some Islamic countries operating under the ad-hoc "Committee on Afghanistan" under the auspices of the Organization of

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<sup>7</sup> Some of the information in the following sections was gathered during a visit by CRS staff to Afghanistan in January 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Federal Register*, Volume 61, No. 125, June 27, 1996. Page 33313.

Islamic Conference (OIC). The countries in that group included Pakistan, Iran, Guinea, and Tunisia.

**Former King Zahir Shah and the *Loya Jirga* Processes.** During the period of Taliban rule, the United States also supported initiatives coming from Afghans inside Afghanistan and in exile, including the Karzai clan. During 1997, Afghans not linked to any of the warring factions began a new peace initiative called the Intra Afghan Dialogue. This grouping, consisting of former mujahedin commanders and clan leaders, held meetings during 1997 and 1998 in Bonn, Frankfurt, Istanbul, and Ankara. Another group, based on the participation of former King Zahir Shah, was centered in Rome (“Rome Grouping”), where the former King lived. A third grouping, calling itself the “Cyprus Process,” consisted of former Afghan officials and other Afghan exiles generally sympathetic to Iran, including a relative of Gulbuddin Hikmatyar.

**Post-September 11 Efforts and the Bonn Conference.** The September 11 attacks and the start of U.S. military action against the Taliban injected new urgency into the search for a government that might replace the Taliban. In late September 2001, Brahimi was brought back as the U.N. representative to help arrange an alternative government and hasten the demise of the Taliban. On November 14, 2001, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1378, calling for a “central” U.N. role in establishing a transitional administration and inviting member states to send peacekeeping forces to promote stability and secure the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In late November 2001, after Kabul had fallen, delegates of the major Afghan factions — most prominently the Northern Alliance and representatives of the former King — gathered in Bonn, Germany, at the invitation of the United Nations. The Taliban was not invited. On December 5, 2001, the factions signed an agreement to form a 30-member interim administration to govern until the holding in June 2002 of a *loya jirga*, to be opened by the former King. The *loya jirga* would then choose a new government to run Afghanistan until a new constitution is approved and national elections held (six months after approval of the constitution). According to Bonn, the government would operate under the constitution of 1964 until a new constitution is adopted. (The last *loya jirga* that was widely recognized as legitimate was held in 1964 to ratify a constitution. Communist leader Najibullah convened a *loya jirga* in 1987 largely to approve his policies; that gathering was widely viewed by Afghans as illegitimate.)

The Bonn agreement also provided for an international peace keeping force to maintain security, at least in Kabul. Northern Alliance forces were to withdraw from Kabul, according to Bonn, but some forces loyal to Defense Minister Fahim have remain garrisoned there. The Bonn agreement was endorsed by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1385 (December 6, 2001), and the international peacekeeping force was authorized by Security Council Resolution 1386, adopted December 20, 2001. (For text, see [<http://www.uno.de/frieden/afghanistan/talks/agreement.htm>], on the U.N. website.)

At the Bonn conference, Hamid Karzai was selected chairman of an interim administration, which governed from December 22, 2001 until the 2002 “emergency”

*loya jirga*. Karzai presided over a cabinet in which a slight majority (17 out of 30) of the positions were held by the Northern Alliance, with this block holding the key posts of Defense (Mohammad Fahim), Foreign Affairs (Dr. Abdullah Abdullah), and Interior (Yunus Qanuni). The three are ethnic Tajiks, with the exception of Dr. Abdullah, who is half Tajik and half Pashtun. This trio, all of whom are in their late 40s, were close aides to commander Masud and were generally pro-U.S.

**The 2002 “Emergency” Loya Jirga.** In preparation for the 2002 “emergency” *loya jirga*, the former King returned to Afghanistan on April 18, 2002. By the time of the meeting, 381 districts of Afghanistan had chosen the 1,550 delegates to it, of which about two hundred were women. At the *loya jirga*, which began June 11, 2002, the former King and Burhannudin Rabbani, possibly at U.S. urging, withdrew from leadership consideration and endorsed Karzai to continue as Afghanistan’s leader. On June 13, 2002, by an overwhelming margin, the *loya jirga* selected Karzai to lead Afghanistan until national elections to be held June 2004. On its last day (June 19, 2002), the assembly approved Karzai’s new cabinet, which included three vice presidents and several “presidential advisors,” in an effort to balance the ethnic and factional composition of the government and rein in regional strongmen. Northern Alliance military leader Marshal Fahim remained as Defense Minister and acquired the additional title of a vice president. The *loya jirga* adjourned without establishing a parliament, a task left to eventual national elections.

Other notable changes to the government endorsed by the *loya jirga* include the following:

- Ashraf Ghani became Finance Minister. Ghani is a Pashtun with ties to international financial institutions and is well respected in international financial circles. His ministry is widely considered Afghanistan’s most efficient.
- Habiba Sorabi replaced the somewhat outspoken Sima Samar as Minister of Women’s Affairs. (Samar now heads the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.)
- Hajji Abdul Qadir, a Pashtun who was also governor of Nangahar Province, switched portfolios to head the Ministry of Public Works and was appointed a vice president. However, Abdul Qadir was assassinated by unknown gunmen on July 6, 2002.
- The third vice president appointed was Karim Khalili, the leader of a faction of the Hazara Shiite party Hizb-e-Wahdat.
- Herat strongman Ismail Khan was given no formal post; he preferred to remain in his locality rather than take a central government position. His son, Mirwais Saddiq was retained in the new cabinet to head the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. (Saddiq was killed by forces opposed to his father in Herat on March 21, 2004; see below.)

- Dostam received no formal post, although he was deputy Defense Minister in the 2001-2002 interim administration. Dostam has said he prefers to remain in his northern stronghold rather than accept a Kabul posting. In May 2003, he was named an “adviser,” to Karzai for military affairs as part of Karzai’s efforts to rein in regional leaders.
- A national security council was formed as an advisory body to Karzai. The intention in establishing this council was to increase Kabul’s decision-making power and extend its influence. The national security adviser is Zalmay Rasool, who previously was an aide to ex-King Zahir Shah.

**New Constitution.** After the close of the 2002 emergency *loya jirga*, the Afghan government set to work on adopting a permanent constitution. A 35-member constitutional commission, appointed in October 2002, drafted a new constitution, which was presented to President Karzai in late March 2003. In the course of its work, the commission sought some public comment on ideas for the draft by holding town meetings and by sending 460,000 questionnaires to homes. The draft was publicly unveiled at a ceremony, attended by former King Zahir Shah, on November 3, 2003. The draft was debated by 502 delegates, selected in U.N.-run caucuses, at a “constitutional *loya jirga* (CLJ).” The CLJ was originally scheduled to be held in October 2003 but was postponed by security concerns and factional infighting, and began on December 13, 2003. The CLJ was chaired by former *mujahedin* party leader and Islamic scholar Sibghatullah Mojadeddi (see above for more on Mojadeddi). The CLJ ended on January 4, 2004 with approval of the constitution with only minor changes from the draft constitution. Most significantly, members of the Northern Alliance factions and their allies did not succeed in measurably limiting the power of the presidency in the final draft (see below).

Karzai’s critics at the CLJ, mainly Northern Alliance members, objected to the draft constitution’s establishment of a governmental structure with a strong elected presidency. The critics wanted to strengthen the powers of an elected parliament as a potential check on presidential power.<sup>9</sup> An early plan to set up a prime minister-ship was not included in the draft, because drafters believed that a prime minister might emerge as a rival to the presidency.<sup>10</sup> Northern Alliance supporters wanted a prime minister-ship in order to balance presidential power. However, some experts believe that setting up a strong presidency places undue weight on Karzai’s incumbency and on his self-restraint in the exercise of authority. At the CLJ, some additional powers were given to the parliament, such as veto power over senior official nominees, in an effort to set up the parliament as a check and balance on presidential power.

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<sup>9</sup> Information on the contents of the draft constitution are derived from a variety of November 3, 2003, wire service reports, including *Reuters* and *Associated Press*, which are based on an English translation of the draft provided to journalists by the Afghan government.

<sup>10</sup> Constable, Pamela. “Afghan Constitution Seeks Balance.” *Washington Post*, September 28, 2003.

## The new constitution

- sets up a two-chamber parliament, to be elected at the same time, if possible, as presidential elections.
- It gives the president the ability to appoint one-third of the seats for the upper chamber (Meshrano Jirga, House of Elders); another one third are selected by provincial councils, and a final one-third are selected by district councils. Of those appointed by the president, 50% are to be women, meaning that women get at least 16.5% of the total seats in the body (half of the president's one-third block of appointments).
- The lower house (Wolesi Jirga, House of People) — to consist of a maximum of 250 seats — is to be fully elected. Of those, at least 64 of those elected (2 per province x 32 provinces) “should” be women. That would give women about 25% of the seats in this body. However, because this body is purely elected, there is no guarantee women will hold 25% of these seats.
- The constitution prevents the president from disbanding the parliament and gives parliament the ability to impeach a president. The vice president runs on the same election ticket as the president and succeeds him in the event of the president's death. They serve a five-year term, and presidents are limited to two terms.
- The document allows political parties to be established as long as their charters “do not contradict the principles of Islam” and they do not have affiliations with other countries. The constitution designates former King Zahir Shah as ceremonial “father of the nation,” but gives him no formal role in governance. This designation cannot be passed on to his sons.
- The constitution does not impose Sharia (Islamic law), but it does attempt to satisfy Afghanistan's conservative clerics by stipulating that laws shall not contradict “the beliefs and provisions” of Islam. Some CLJ delegates wanted to strengthen the Islamic character in the finalized constitution.
- Protections for minorities are also written into the constitution, and Uzbeks and Turkmens received rights for their language to be official languages in their regions — provisions not contained in the draft. This represented an apparent victory for Afghanistan's minorities; the Pashtun leaders had wanted the final constitution to designate Pashto as the sole official language.
- The CLJ added stipulations in the final constitution that women are recognized as equal citizens.

Some CLJ delegates, including some female delegates (who were about 20% of the total delegates), said the draft constitution did not provide sufficient protections for human rights and women's rights and that it placed the freedoms of Afghans in the hands of judges educated in Islamic law, rather than civil law.<sup>11</sup>

**National Elections.** Now that the constitution has been adopted, U.S., Afghan, and international attention has turned to the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, scheduled for June 2004. In late July 2003, Karzai created a joint Afghan-U.N. committee (with U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA), to register voters. In mid-August 2003, the United Nations and Afghan government approved a \$7.6 million project to register about 10.5 million voters for the 2004 elections. The FY2004 supplemental conference report (H.Rept. 108-337) provides \$69 million for "elections and improved governance." International donors, including the United States, will be providing a total of over \$22 million in aid for Afghanistan to organize the elections.

As of mid-March 2004, only about 1.5 million (approximately 15%) have been registered, and only 20% of those registered are women. UNAMA officials in Kabul say the process has been slowed by security concerns, particularly in the southeast, but there are plans to open 4,200 additional registration centers by May 2004 to increase registration rates. Because of the slow pace of registration, U.N. officials say Afghanistan might not be able to hold free and fair elections, for either president or a parliament, by the June 2004 target date. Until recently U.S. and Afghan officials have said that, at the least, presidential elections should go forward on time, partly to avoid charges by Karzai's opponents that he seeks to monopolize power. Holding parliamentary elections, which are sought by Karzai's opponents as a necessary check on presidential authority, are considered more difficult than presidential elections because of the need to first establish political parties and define electoral districts. However, on March 17, 2004, after a meeting with visiting Secretary of State Powell, Karzai said the elections, presidential and parliamentary, will likely be delayed until August 2004.<sup>12</sup>

Karzai is expected to run in the presidential elections, but there are growing indications he will face at least one challenger. Press reports in early October 2003 said that the Northern Alliance faction is worried that it, and particularly the ethnic Tajik faction within the Alliance, is becoming eclipsed in Afghan politics. Some say that Tajik leaders might break with Karzai and support someone from their own faction, such as Defense Minister Fahim or former President Burhannudin Rabbani, for president. Other reports say that a leader of an orthodox Pashtun-based Islamic movement, Abdi Rab Rasul Sayyaf, also might run, or possibly combine political forces with Rabbani.

**Expanding Kabul's Capabilities/Controlling Regional Factions.** The Bush Administration says that the Kabul government is slowly expanding its

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<sup>11</sup> Bansal, Preeta and Felice D. Gaer. "Silenced Again in Kabul." *New York Times*, October 1, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Kessler, Glenn and Pamela Constable. Afghan Elections Face Delay. *Washington Post*, March 18, 2004.

authority and its capabilities. However, some regional leaders, such as Dostam and Ismail Khan, continue to exercise substantial power. In early November 2002, Karzai fired 15 provincial officials, partly in an attempt to establish the primacy of the central government. In further moves to reduce the power of the regional leaders, in August 2003 Karzai replaced three local governors, including Qandahar's Gul Agha Shirzai, and replaced them with Kabul loyalists perceived as capable administrators. He also stripped Ismail Khan of the title of commander of Afghanistan's western district, although Khan stays as governor of the western provinces. In February 2004, he appointed new governors in five northern provinces.

On the other hand, factional rivalries and tensions remain. The Minister of Aviation (Mirwais Saddiq), the son of Herat strongman Ismail Khan, was killed on March 21, 2004, by a factional rival of his father, in murky circumstances. Khan's forces subsequently attacked and arrested the forces of the rival commander, and the Kabul government sent 1,500 Afghan National Army (ANA, see below) soldiers to maintain stability in Herat. Other steps designed to weaken regional leaders such as Dostam and Khan are discussed below.

Since December 2003, Karzai has been bringing some moderate Taliban supporters into the new government in an effort to dissipate support for harder-line Taliban elements, although the move has caused concern in the Northern Alliance faction. In February 2004, as part of a move to reform Afghanistan's intelligence service (National Security Directorate) by reducing its ability to spy on Afghan citizens, Karzai replaced Afghanistan's intelligence chief, Muhammad Arif Sarwari. He had been head of intelligence for the Northern Alliance before the fall of the Taliban.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, U.S. intelligence is advising the National Security Directorate to help it build its capabilities to monitor threats to the new government, which might imply that curbing intelligence's domestic spying powers will be slow.<sup>14</sup>

Obtaining control over revenues has been a key U.S. and Kabul goal. In May 2003, Karzai threatened to resign if the regional governors did not remit some of their privately collected customs revenue to the central government. Twelve regional leaders did so, subsequently remitting nearly \$100 million to Kabul. Kabul raised internally about \$200 million of its \$600 million budget for 2003, the rest provided by international donors. The FY2004 supplemental conference report (P.L. 108-106) provides \$70 million to support the operations of the Afghan government. Karzai has sought to reassure international donors by establishing a transparent budget and planning process.

The United States is providing advice to the new government. As part of a reported U.S. push to speed reconstruction in advance of the 2004 Afghan elections, the United States assigned 6 U.S. officials (fewer than the 20 that were planned) to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul (Afghan Reconstruction Group, ARG) to serve as advisors in various ministries in an effort to increase the efficiency of the Afghan

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<sup>13</sup> Gall, Carlotta. Afghan Leader Removes Chief of Intelligence. *New York Times*, February 5, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Kaufman, Marc. "U.S. Role Shifts as Afghanistan Founders." *Washington Post*, April 14, 2003.

bureaucracy.<sup>15</sup> However, some Administration officials believe the ARG is performing functions largely redundant with those of other U.S. Embassy officers and there is some discussion within the Administration of discontinuing the ARG's operations. Part of the U.S. acceleration plan included financially helping the Afghan government hire about 200 Afghans who have been living abroad and who require relatively high salaries. In addition, USAID tripled its staff in Kabul to speed reconstruction projects. The U.S. plan showcased some evidence of success with the completion of the Kabul-Qandahar roadway project on December 16, 2003.

Part of the U.S.-Afghan effort to promote political stability calls for building democratic traditions at the local level. The Afghan government's "National Solidarity Program" seeks to create local governing councils and empower these councils to make decisions about local reconstruction priorities. Elections to these local councils have been held in several provinces, and almost 40% of those elected to them have been women.<sup>16</sup>

Since the establishment of the interim government, several countries have reopened embassies in Kabul, including the United States. In late March 2002, a U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Robert Finn, was sworn in Kabul. Zalmay Khalilzad, formerly a White House envoy for Afghanistan, replaced him in December 2003. The U.S. Embassy is expanding its facilities to accommodate additional staff going to help accelerate the reconstruction process and it is improving its physical security capabilities. The conference report on the FY2004 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 108-106) provided \$44 million for improvements to the Embassy. The Afghan government has reopened the Afghan embassy in Washington; the ambassador is Seyed Jalal Tawwab, formerly a Karzai aide.

## **Post-War Security Operations and Force Capacity Building**

Despite the Taliban's overthrow, Taliban, Al Qaeda, and allied Islamic groups such as the Hikmatyar faction (Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin, HIG) continue to operate throughout Afghanistan. Much of the U.S. program for Afghanistan is intended to improve security throughout Afghanistan, considered a necessary pre-condition for reconstruction and development. The pillars of this effort are (1) military operations by U.S. and other coalition forces in Afghanistan; (2) the presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); (3) the formation of "provincial reconstruction teams; (4) the establishment and training of an Afghan National Army and a police force; and (5) the demobilization of local militias. These programs and policies are discussed in the following sections.

The United States (U.S. Central Command, CENTCOM) has about 11,000 troops in and around Afghanistan, and coalition forces are contributing another 2,000 to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Cable News Network reported on March 25, 2004, that an additional 2,000 U.S. Marines will soon deploy to Afghanistan as part

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<sup>15</sup> Rohde, David. U.S. Said to Plan Bigger Afghan Effort, Stepping Up Aid. *New York Times*, August 25, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Khalilzad, Zalmay (U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan). Democracy Bubbles Up. *Wall Street Journal*, March 25, 2004.

of a stepped up hunt for bin Laden and other Al Qaeda and pro-Al Qaeda elements (see below). Other countries are contributing not only to OEF but to ISAF and other initiatives, as discussed below. The current commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is Lt. Gen. David Barno, who is now based at a “Combined Forces Command (CFC)” headquarters near the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, relocating in late 2003 from Bagram air base north of Kabul. The U.S. military is improving its facilities, such as the one occupying part of Bagram Air base, to prepare for long-term involvement in Afghanistan, possibly eight years or more in duration, although U.S. commanders hope to reduce the U.S. troop presence as security improves.

**Anti-Taliban/Al-Qaeda/HIG Operations.** Beginning in August 2003, Taliban fighters showed increased signs of regrouping in the south and east, and stepped up rocket and small arms attacks on U.S., Afghan, international security force, and international relief and reconstruction workers. Some have committed terrorist attacks, a trend that began on September 5, 2002; that day, there was a car bombing in a crowded marketplace in Kabul, and an assassination attempt against President Karzai. Karzai was unhurt and the assailant, a member of the security detail, was killed by U.S. special forces who serve as Karzai’s protection unit. Afghan officials blamed Taliban/Al Qaeda remnants for both events. Employees of a private U.S. security contractor (Dyncorp) have taken over the Afghan leadership protection effort as of November 2002. Other urban terrorist attacks attributed to Taliban activists include the bombing of a marketplace in Qandahar on December 5, 2003, and two February 2004 suicide bombings against international peacekeeping troops in Kabul. On June 7, 2003, a suicide bomber killed four German soldiers serving with ISAF.

In the southeast, coalition OEF forces, including Afghan troops, have gone on the offensive against insurgents. The United States and Afghanistan launched “Operation Mountain Viper” on August 25, 2003; and U.S. commanders say hundreds of Taliban fighters, possibly including top aides to Mullah Umar, were killed in that sweep. About 2,000 U.S. troops participated in one of the largest anti-Taliban sweeps (“Operation Avalanche) conducted since the fall of the Taliban; that operation began December 8, 2003, and concluded on December 30, 2003. The U.S. military said 10 suspected Al Qaeda operatives were killed in the sweep.

Some commanders said the Taliban insurgency is “losing energy” and that fewer than 1,000 Taliban (and Al Qaeda) fighters remain in Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup> On March 7, 2004, U.S. forces, along with Afghan National Army soldiers, began “Operation Mountain Storm” against Taliban remnants in and around Uruzgan province, the home province of Mullah Umar. Gen. Barno, in February 2004, said that U.S. forces were now attempting to cultivate ongoing relations with the population in areas where Taliban and other insurgents operate to better conduct counter-insurgency missions.

U.S. Special Operations Forces continue to hunt in Afghanistan and possibly over the border into Pakistan for bin Laden. He reportedly escaped the U.S.-Afghan offensive against the Al Qaeda stronghold of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan in

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<sup>17</sup> NATO: Afghan Rebellion Fading. Dallas Morning News, February 11, 2004.

December 2001, but fresh reports of his possible location reportedly surfaced after the arrest on March 2, 2003, of top Al Qaeda planner Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. In early February 2004, Lt Gen. Barno and other commanders predicted success against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, including their defeat in Afghanistan in 2004. Implied in the prediction of success is that bin Laden would be captured. U.S. commanders in Afghanistan say they are planning a new offensive for the spring of 2004 against Al Qaeda (and Taliban and HIG) elements in Afghanistan, and as noted above, press reports in late March 2004 say an additional 2,000 Marines are deploying for that effort. The new deployment became public as Pakistani troops in Pakistan continued to battle about 300-500 suspected Al Qaeda and Taliban militants near the Afghan border, possibly including bin Laden's closest associate Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian radical Islamist.

Another target of OEF operations are the HIG forces that are allied with Al Qaeda and Taliban remnants. On February 19, 2003, the U.S. government formally designated Hikmatyar as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist," under the authority of Executive Order 13224. That order subjected named terrorists and terrorist-related institutions to financial and other U.S. sanctions. His group, Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), was analyzed in the section on "other terrorist groups" in the State Department's report on international terrorism for 2002, released April 30, 2003. The group is not formally designated as a "foreign terrorist organization."

**War-Related Costs and Casualties.** As of late March 2004, about 110 U.S. military personnel have been killed in Operation Enduring Freedom, including from enemy fire, friendly fire, and non-hostile deaths (accidents). About 10 of the U.S. personnel were killed during 2003. Of coalition forces, 4 Canadian and 1 Australian combat (not peacekeeping) personnel were killed in hostile circumstances. In addition, according to CENTCOM, there have been ten U.S. deaths in the Philippines theater of Operation Enduring Freedom (operations against the Al Qaeda-affiliated Abu Sayyaf organization), all of which resulted from a helicopter crash. No reliable Afghan casualty figures for the war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda have been announced, but estimates by researchers of Afghan civilian deaths generally cite figures of "several hundred" civilian deaths. On July 1, 2002, a U.S. airstrike on suspected Taliban leaders in Uruzgan Province mistakenly killed about 40 civilians. One accidental incident occurred on December 6, 2003, when nine Afghan children were accidentally killed in a U.S. strike.

Incremental costs of U.S. operations in Afghanistan appear to be relatively stable. The Defense Department comptroller Dov Zakheim said in early 2003 that the incremental costs of U.S. operations in Afghanistan are running about \$900 million to \$1 billion per month. About \$13 billion in incremental costs were incurred in FY2002. The FY2004 supplemental appropriation provided about \$11 billion for Operation Enduring Freedom for FY2004 (H.R. 3289, conference report H.Rept. 108-337, P.L. 108-106).

**International Security Force (ISAF)/NATO.** The Bonn Agreement, discussed above, created an international peacekeeping force, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF currently has nearly 6,400 troops from the following 26 nations: Albania (23), Austria (5), Azerbaijan (23), Belgium (155), Bulgaria (11), Canada (1,800, lead force in Kabul Multinational Brigade), Denmark

(49), Croatia (47), Estonia (6), Finland (46), France (503), Germany (2,300), Greece (123), Hungary (19), Ireland (7), Italy (270), Latvia (8), the Netherlands (572), New Zealand (4), Norway (21), Romania (32), Spain (70), Sweden (30), Switzerland (2), Turkey (112), the United Kingdom (130). Many of these nations are also contributing additional forces to Operation Enduring Freedom, which is U.S. led. (For numbers of international troops contributed to OEF, see CRS Report RL31152, *International Support for the U.S.-Led War on Terrorism*, which details each contribution, including types of forces, equipment, and facilities hosting.)

On August 11, 2003, NATO took command of the force, apparently putting to rest the difficulty of identifying a lead force or lead country to head ISAF each six-month period. NATO took over from Germany and the Netherlands; earlier leaders were Turkey (June 2002 - February 2003) and Britain (December 2001-June 2002). ISAF operates in conjunction with Afghan security forces in Kabul and coordinates with OEF forces as well. The core of ISAF is the Kabul Multinational Brigade (4,400 personnel), headed by Canada, which has three battle groups headed by Canada, Germany, and France. At the ISAF headquarters level, there are 600 personnel from 15 contributing nations.

NATO's assumption of command intensified discussions about whether ISAF should deploy to other major cities. The Afghan government and UNAMA (U.N. Assistance Mission for Afghanistan) have long favored expanding its mandate.<sup>18</sup> In early 2003, the Bush Administration had favored reliance on the alternative security efforts discussed below. However, in late 2002 the Administration said it would support ISAF expansion if enough troops could be contributed to it. In early October 2003, NATO endorsed a plan to expand its presence to several other cities, using 2,000-10,000 new troops, if contributed, and contingent on formal U.N. approval of that expansion. The NATO decision came several weeks after Germany agreed to contribute an additional 450 military personnel to expand ISAF into the city of Konduz. On October 14, 2003, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1510, formally authorizing ISAF to deploy outside Kabul. German troops, as part of ISAF, now patrol Konduz and have taken over the U.S.-led provincial reconstruction team (PRT) there. (The PRT concept is discussed below.)

During meetings of NATO in December 2003 and February 2004 senior U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, called on NATO to take a larger role in Afghanistan by taking over additional PRTs and maybe eventually taking over OEF. In an effort to address staffing and equipment shortages, in early December 2003, NATO announced new pledges for ISAF operations: about 12 helicopters from Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey; an infantry company from Norway's Telemark battalion, troops from the Czech Republic, intelligence officers from Italy, Romania, and other countries, and airport traffic controllers from Belgium and Iceland. At the NATO meeting in February 2004, NATO expressed an intent to take over at least five PRTs by mid-2004, mainly in the north. Britain, Italy, Turkey, and Norway reportedly agreed to take over one each, in addition to the Konduz PRT being taken over by Germany, and the Netherlands is reportedly considering taking

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<sup>18</sup> Driver, Anna. U.N. envoy Pushes for Troop Expansion in Afghanistan. *Reuters*, August 13, 2003.

over one as well.<sup>19</sup> France contributes to both OEF and ISAF but reportedly opposes taking over a PRT on the grounds that reconstruction work and military operations should not be intermingled. Spain's newly elected government has said it will pull Spanish forces out of Iraq in mid-2004, but it has said it might contribute additional forces to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

**Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).** Since major combat operations were declared concluded on May 1, 2002, the U.S. military has increasingly focused on fostering secure conditions for reconstruction. In mid-December 2002, the Defense Department introduced the concept of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to provide safe havens for international aid workers to help with reconstruction and to extend the writ of the Kabul government throughout Afghanistan by attaching to the PRTs Afghan government (Interior Ministry) personnel. Each U.S.-run PRT is composed of U.S. forces, Defense Department civil affairs officers, representatives of U.S. aid and other agencies, and allied personnel.

As discussed above, the passage of Resolution 1510 — and the turnover of some PRTs to U.S. allies and NATO/ISAF — have given momentum to the PRT concept. Germany's activities in Konduz are discussed above. Britain heads the Mazar-e-Sharif PRT, and New Zealand leads a PRT in Bamiyan. Ten U.S.-run PRTs, each with about 50-100 military personnel, are now in operation at Gardez, Ghazni, Herat, Bamiyan, Konduz, Parwan, Mazar-e-Sharif, Qandahar, Jalalabad, and Khost. In the next two months, additional teams are expected to be formed in Qalat and Asadabad. U.S. plans are to eventually establish 32 PRTs (one per province), as well as "satellite" PRTs, smaller offshoots of the major PRTs that would operate in nearby population centers. Current plans are for U.S. forces to run the PRTs primarily in the south and east, with an emphasis on counter-insurgency and anti-Al Qaeda intelligence missions, according to U.S. officers in Afghanistan.

Some aid agencies say they have felt more secure since the PRT program began, fostering reconstruction activity in areas of PRT operations.<sup>20</sup> However, other relief groups do not want to associate with any military force because doing so might taint their perceived neutrality. The FY2004 supplemental request asked that \$50 million be appropriated for "PRT projects;" that amount is provided in the conference report (H.Rept. 108-337, P.L. 108-106).

**Regional Development Zones.** In February 2004, Gen. Barno briefed journalists on an additional concept for "regional development zones" — areas of operations that might group several PRTs — in an effort to better gather intelligence on Taliban/Al Qaeda/HIG insurgents and promote reconstruction. According to Barno, a pilot regional development zone (RDZ) has been established in Qandahar, composed of a strong pro-Kabul governor working with U.S. troops and arriving national police and ANA forces. The RDZ's are expected to provide synergy with

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<sup>19</sup> Graham, Bradley. NATO to Expand Force in Afghanistan. *Washington Post*, February 7, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Kraul, Chris. "U.S. Aid Effort Wins Over Skeptics in Afghanistan." *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2003.

PRTs in their areas, and one intention of the concept is to devolve security decision-making to U.S. commanders in the regions, rather than at U.S. headquarters in Kabul.

**Afghan National Army (ANA).** U.S. Special Operations Forces, in partnership with French and British officers, are training the new Afghan National Army (ANA). U.S. officers in Afghanistan say the ANA is beginning to become a major force in stabilizing the country. About 7,000 Afghan recruits are in the ANA as of March 2004. In December 2002, the recruits first began training at the battalion level, and it deployed to eastern Afghanistan to fight alongside U.S. and coalition forces. They performed well, by all accounts, and were welcomed by the local population as a symbol of a unified future for Afghanistan. In late July 2003, the ANA launched its first combat operation on its own, a sweep (“Operation Warrior Sweep”) in southeastern Afghanistan against insurgents. Heavy weapons training, conducted by Mongolian and other coalition officers, has begun for a heavy brigade as part of a “Kabul Corps,” based in Pol-e-Charki, just east of Kabul. The ANA has established a presence outside Mazar-e-Sharif, working with the U.K.-led PRT there and assisted by embedded U.S. trainers. As noted above, it is conducting combat alongside U.S. forces in the south and it deployed to Herat in March 2004 to help quell factional unrest there.

Afghan officials say the desired size of the army is 70,000, a level that will likely not be reached for several more years, at the current rate of U.S.-led training. The Department of Defense envisions training about 10,000 Afghan troops by the time of the planned 2004 elections, according to U.S. military officials. \$287 million was provided in the FY2004 supplemental appropriation (conference report on H.R. 3289, H.Rept. 108-337, P.L. 108-106) to accelerate this training. On the other hand, U.S. officers leading the training say they lack enough funds to build the ANA at a more rapid pace.<sup>21</sup> Thus far, weaponry for the national army has come primarily from Defense Ministry weapons stocks, with the concurrence of Defense Minister Fahim who controls those stocks, and from international donors, primarily from the former East bloc.<sup>22</sup> The United States has provided some trucks and other equipment as excess defense articles (EDA), and plans to provide some additional U.S. arms and/or defense services to the ANA, according to statements by U.S. officials.

There has been some concern that Vice President/Defense Minister General Fahim opposes the formation of a national army as a potential threat to his power base. However, after visits and discussions with U.S. officials, he now reportedly accepts that army and has been cooperating in its development. There had been reports, at the time the United States first began establishing the new army, that Fahim was weighting recruitment for the national army toward his Tajik ethnic base. Many Pashtuns, in reaction, refused recruitment or left the national army program. U.S. officials in Afghanistan say this problem has been alleviated recently with somewhat better pay and more involvement by U.S. special forces, as well as the

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<sup>21</sup> Cash Crisis Hits Afghan Army: Yank. *New York Daily News*, March 15, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Report to Congress Consistent With the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002, July 22, 2003.

appointment of additional Pashtuns in senior Defense Ministry positions.<sup>23</sup> U.S. officers in Afghanistan add that some recruits take long trips to their home towns to remit funds to their families, and often then return to the ANA after a long absence. Fully trained recruits are paid about \$70 per month. However, some press accounts say that recruits continue to leave because the new army is still riven with factionalism and because the pay is low.<sup>24</sup>

An Afghan Air Force remains, although it has virtually no aircraft to fly. It has about 400 pilots, as well as 28 helicopters and a few cargo aircraft. It is a carryover from the Afghan Air Force that existed prior to the Soviet invasion. Pilots are based at Bagram Airfield. U.S. officers in Afghanistan say they hope to eventually provide some additional equipment to the Afghan Air Force.

**National Guard.** In early 2004, because of the slow pace of expanding the ANA, the Bush Administration reportedly formulated a plan to build up a “national guard” to supplement the ANA.<sup>25</sup> The national guard apparently will consist primarily of regional militia forces; it would report to Operation Enduring Freedom (U.S. command structure). This plan might appear to conflict with the Administration’s plan to build up the Kabul government and weaken regional militias, although the Administration reportedly believes this plan could better bring militia forces under central control.

**Police.** The United States and Germany are training a national police force. Several hundred police recruits are going through training, led by U.S. contractors, and have deployed to cities outside Kabul. Some national police have begun to dismantle factional checkpoints in some major cities, according to U.S. officers in Afghanistan. Part of the training consists of courses in human rights principles and democratic policing concepts.

**Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR).** At the same time, Japan and the United Nations (UNAMA), in concert with the Afghan government (Defense Ministry) are leading an international effort to demobilize up to 100,000 private militiamen by channeling them into alternate employment. Reducing the number and size of private militias around Afghanistan is expected to undercut the military strength of the regional governors relative to the central government. However, the DDR program got off to a slow start because the Afghan Defense Ministry did not enact mandated reforms (primarily reduction of the number of Tajiks in senior positions) by the targeted July 1, 2003, date. Many (non-Tajik) local militias said they would not disarm as long as the Defense Ministry was monopolized by Tajiks/Northern Alliance personnel. The “reforms” began in September 2003 when Karzai approved the replacement of 22 senior Tajik officials in the Defense Ministry by officials of Pashtuns, Uzbek, and Hazara ethnicity.

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<sup>23</sup> Gall, Carlotta. In a Remote Corner, an Afghan Army Evolves From Fantasy to Slightly Ragged Reality. *New York Times*, January 25, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Watson, Paul. *Losing Its Few Good Men*. Los Angeles Times, November 27, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Dempsey, Judy. US Planning for Stopgap Afghan National Guard. *London Financial Times*, February 12, 2004.

However, there is some concern that the loyalty of lower ranking Ministry officials has not completely transferred. In October 2003, the disarmament program began in Konduz, with militiamen beginning to hand in their weapons. A total of about 2,000 militiamen nationwide have been disarmed, including some in Kabul, and it is hoped that 30,000 will have been disarmed by the time of national elections.

A related program is the surrender and cantonment of heavy weapons possessed by major factions. As noted above, the U.K.-led PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif has collected some heavy weapons (tanks, artillery) from Dostam and Atta in northern Afghanistan; these weapons are now guarded at two sites by U.K. forces and the ANA. Defense Minister/Northern Alliance commander Fahim has surrendered some Northern Alliance heavy weapons for use by the ANA. Afghan commanders say that, as of March 11, 2004, when additional heavy weapons were handed over in Kabul, about one-quarter of all heavy weapons in Kabul had been taken off the streets and placed in cantonment sites guarded by the ANA in Kabul. Fahim has also handed in some Scud missiles to U.S./ANA control.

The FY2004 supplemental requests asked \$60 million for DDR operations. However, \$30 million was provided in the conference report (H.Rept. 108-337, P.L. 108-106) because it is expected that Japan might contribute additional funds to this program.

A related U.S. concern, again centered on Marshal Fahim, is that Fahim has not withdrawn his Northern Alliance (mostly Tajik) forces from Kabul. U.S. officials have said they are trying to persuade Fahim to pull the forces he controls out of Kabul, as required in the Bonn agreement, with the ultimate goal to incorporate these forces into one unified national army. At the same time, Fahim and Northern Alliance forces appear to be available for use by Karzai; in August 2002, prior to the formation of the Afghan National Army, Karzai threatened to send Afghan central government forces to combat a rebellious local leader in Paktia province, Padsha Khan Zadran, but no fighting ensued. Zadran was arrested in Pakistan on December 7, 2003 and extradited to Afghanistan.

## Regional Context <sup>26</sup>

Even before September 11, several of Afghanistan's neighbors were becoming alarmed about threats to their own security interests emanating from Afghanistan. All of these governments endorsed the Bonn agreement, but some experts believe that the neighboring governments are attempting, to varying degrees, to manipulate Afghanistan's factions and its political structure to their advantage. On December 23, 2002, Afghanistan and its six neighbors signed a non-interference pledge (Kabul Declaration).

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<sup>26</sup> For further information, see CRS Report RS20411, *Afghanistan: Connections to Islamic Movements in Central and South Asia and Southern Russia*. December 7, 1999, by Kenneth Katzman.

## Pakistan<sup>27</sup>

Pakistan ended its support for the Taliban in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Pakistan initially saw the Taliban movement as an instrument with which to fulfill its goals in Afghanistan: an Afghan central government strong enough to prevent fragmentation of Afghanistan while at the same time sufficiently friendly and pliable to provide Pakistan strategic depth against rival India. In the wake of the Soviet pullout in 1989, Pakistan was troubled by continued political infighting in Afghanistan that was enabling drug trafficking to flourish and to which Afghan refugees did not want to return. Pakistan saw Afghanistan as essential to opening up trade relations and energy routes with the Muslim states of the former Soviet Union.

Pakistan was the most public defender of the Taliban movement and was one of only three countries (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the others) to formally recognize it as the legitimate government. Prior to the September 11 attacks, General Pervez Musharraf, who took power in an October 1999 coup, resisted U.S. pressure to forcefully intercede with the Taliban leadership to achieve bin Laden's extradition. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, of December 19, 2000, was partly an effort by the United States and Russia to compel Pakistan to cease military advice and aid to the Taliban. Pakistan did not completely cease military assistance, but it abided by some provisions of the resolution, for example by ordering the Taliban to cut the staff at its embassy in Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> Just prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks, Pakistan had said it would cooperate with a follow-on U.N. Security Council Resolution (1363 of July 30, 2001) that provided for U.N. border monitors to ensure that no neighboring state was providing military equipment or advice to the Taliban.

Pakistan's pre-September 11 steps toward cooperation with the United States reflected increasing wariness that the Taliban movement was radicalizing existing Islamic movements inside Pakistan. Pakistan also feared that its position on the Taliban was propelling the United States into a closer relationship with Pakistan's arch-rival, India. These considerations, coupled with U.S. offers of economic benefit, prompted Pakistan to cooperate with the U.S. response to the September 11 attacks. Pakistan provided the United States with requested access to Pakistani airspace, ports, airfields. Pakistan also has arrested over 500 Al Qaeda fighters and turned them over to the United States. Pakistani authorities helped the United States track and capture top bin Laden aide Abu Zubaydah in early April 2002, alleged September 11 plotter Ramzi bin Al Shihb (captured September 11, 2002), and top Al Qaeda planner Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (March 2, 2003). Following failed assassination attempts in December 2003 against Musharraf, Pakistani forces accelerated efforts to find Al Qaeda forces along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, in some cases threatening tribal elements in these areas who are suspected of harboring the militants. In March 2004, Pakistani forces began a major battle with

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<sup>27</sup> For further discussion, see Rashid, Ahmed. "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism." *Foreign Affairs*, November - December 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Constable, Pamela. "New Sanctions Strain Taliban-Pakistan Ties." *Washington Post*, January 19, 2001.

about 300-400 suspected Al Qaeda fighters in the Waziristan area, reportedly with some support from U.S. intelligence and other indirect support. On the other hand, U.S. and Afghan officials continue to accuse Pakistan of allowing Taliban fighters and activists to meet and group in Pakistani cities and they call on Pakistan to track down and arrest Taliban members as vigorously as it tracks members of Al Qaeda.

At the same time, Pakistan has sought to protect its interests by fashioning a strong Pashtun-based component for a post-Taliban government. Pakistan was wary that a post-Taliban government dominated by the Northern Alliance would be backed by India. Some Afghan officials are concerned about the implications for the Afghan government of the election gains of some pro-Taliban parties in Pakistan's October 2002 parliamentary elections; those parties did well in districts that border Afghanistan. Pakistan wants the new 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).

As of October 2002, about 1.75 million Afghan refugees have returned from Pakistan since the Taliban fell. About 300,000 Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan.

## Iran

Iran perceives its key national interests in Afghanistan as exerting its traditional influence over western Afghanistan, which Iran borders and was once part of the Persian empire, and to protect Afghanistan's Shiite minority. Iranian firms are also profiting from reconstruction work in western Afghanistan.

When Taliban forces ousted Ismail Khan from Herat (the western province that borders Iran) in September 1995, Iran saw the Taliban as a threat to its interests in Afghanistan. After that time, Iran drew even closer to the Northern Alliance than previously, providing its groups with fuel, funds, and ammunition,<sup>29</sup> and hosting fighters loyal to Khan, who was captured by the Taliban in 1998 but escaped and fled to Iran in March 2000. 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 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 because Iran lacked confidence in its military capabilities.

The United States and Iran have long had common positions on Afghanistan, despite deep U.S.-Iran differences on other issues. U.S. officials have acknowledged working with Tehran, under the auspices of the Six Plus Two contact group and Geneva group. Iran has confirmed that it offered search and rescue assistance in Afghanistan during the war, and it also allowed U.S. humanitarian aid to the Afghan people to transit Iran. On the other hand, some Iranian leaders were harshly critical

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<sup>29</sup> Steele, Jonathon, "America Includes Iran In Talks On Ending War In Afghanistan." *Washington Times*, December 15, 1997. A14.

of U.S. military action against the Taliban as part of what these Iranian figures said is a U.S. war on Islam and Muslims.

Amid reports Iran seeks to exert influence over the new government by arming pro-Iranian Afghan factions, in early January 2002 President Bush warned Iran against meddling in Afghanistan. The President listed Iran as part of an “axis of evil” in his January 29, 2002 State of the Union message, partly because of Iran’s actions in Afghanistan. Since then, the Bush Administration has continued to accuse Iran of trying to build influence over the interim government and of failing to attempt to locate or arrest Al Qaeda fighters who have fled to Iran from Afghanistan. Partly in response to the U.S. criticism, in February 2002 Iran expelled Karzai-opponent Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, although it did not arrest him and allowed him to return to Afghanistan. For his part, Karzai has said that Iran is an important neighbor of Afghanistan and visited Iran in late February 2002, pledging to build ties with the Islamic republic. Saudi Arabia said in early August 2002 that Iran had turned over to Saudi Arabia several Al Qaeda fighters located and arrested in Iran.

As of October 2002, about 275,000 Afghan refugees have returned from Iran since the Taliban fell. About 1.2 million remain, many of which are integrated into Iranian society.

## Russia

A number of considerations might explain why Russia supported the U.S. effort against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, including tacitly supporting — or at least not opposing — the use of bases in Central Asia to conduct the war. Russia’s main objective in Afghanistan has been to prevent the further strengthening of Islamic or nationalist movements in the Central Asian states or Islamic enclaves in Russia itself, including Chechnya. Russia’s fear became acute following an August 1999 incursion into Russia’s Dagestan region by Islamic guerrillas from neighboring Chechnya. Some reports link at least one faction of the guerrillas to Al Qaeda.<sup>30</sup> This faction was led by a Chechen of Arab origin who is referred to by the name “Hattab” (full name is Ibn al-Khattab), although there are some reports Russia may have killed him in Chechnya in 2002. In January 2000, the Taliban became the only government in the world to recognize Chechnya’s independence, and some Chechen fighters fighting alongside Taliban/Al Qaeda forces have been captured or killed during OEF.

The U.S. and Russian positions on the Taliban became coincident well before the September 11 attacks.<sup>31</sup> Even before the U.S.-led war, Russia was supporting the Northern Alliance with some military equipment and technical assistance.<sup>32</sup> U.S.-Russian cooperation led to the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267 and

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<sup>30</sup> Whittell, Giles. “Bin Laden Link To Dagestan Rebel Fightback.” *London Times*, September 6, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Constable, Pamela. “Russia, U.S. Converge on Warnings to Taliban.” *Washington Post*, June 4, 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Risen, James. “Russians Are Back in Afghanistan, Aiding Rebels.” *New York Times*, July 27, 1998.

1233 (see section on “Harboring of Al Qaeda, below). On the other hand, the United States has not blindly supported Russia’s apparent attempts to place a large share of the blame for the rebellion in Chechnya on the Taliban or Al Qaeda.

### **Central Asian States<sup>33</sup>**

During Taliban rule, leaders in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan grew increasingly alarmed that Central Asian radical Islamic movements were receiving safe haven in Afghanistan. In 1996, several of these states banded together with Russia and China into a regional grouping called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to discuss the threat emanating from Afghanistan’s Taliban regime. The organization groups China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Of the Central Asian states that border Afghanistan, two of them — Uzbekistan and Tajikistan — had seen themselves as particularly vulnerable to militants harbored by the Taliban. Uzbekistan saw its ally, Abdul Rashid Dostam, the Uzbek commander in northern Afghanistan, lose most of his influence in 1998. Prior to the U.S. war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda, Uzbek officials had said that more active support from Uzbekistan would not necessarily have enabled Dostam to overturn Taliban control of the north.<sup>34</sup>

Uzbekistan 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.<sup>35</sup> One of its leaders, Juma Namangani, reportedly was killed while commanding Taliban/Al Qaeda forces in the battle for Mazar-e-Sharif in November 2001. Uzbekistan was highly supportive of the United States in the wake of the September 11 attacks and placed military facilities at U.S. disposal for use in the combat against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. About 1,000 U.S. troops from the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, as well as U.S. aircraft, have been based at the Khanabad/Karsi air base there. Following the fall of the Taliban, in December 2001 Uzbekistan reopened the Soviet-built “Friendship Bridge” over the Amu Darya river in order to facilitate the flow of aid into Uzbekistan. Uzbek officials in Tashkent told CRS in May 2002 that the defeat of the Taliban has made them less anxious about the domestic threat from the IMU, and press reports say the IMU has been severely weakened by its war defeats and Namangani’s death.

Tajikistan feared that its buffer with Afghanistan would disappear if the Taliban defeated the Northern Alliance, whose territorial base borders Tajikistan. Some of the IMU members based in Afghanistan, including Namangani, fought alongside the Islamic opposition United Tajik Opposition (UTO) during the 1994-1997 civil war in that country. Tajikistan, heavily influenced by Russia, whose 25,000 troops guard the border with Afghanistan, initially sent mixed signals on the question of whether

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<sup>33</sup> For further information, see CRS Report RL30294, *Central Asia’s Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests*. December 7, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> CRS conversations with Uzbek government officials in Tashkent. April 1999.

<sup>35</sup> The IMU was named a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department in September 2000.

it would give the United States the use of military facilities in Tajikistan. However, on September 26, 2001, Moscow officially endorsed the use by the United States of three air bases in Tajikistan, paving the way for Tajikistan to open facilities for U.S. use, which it did formally offer in early November 2001. In July 2003, Afghanistan and Tajikistan agreed that some Russian officers would train some Afghan military officers in Tajikistan.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not directly border Afghanistan. However, IMU guerrillas have transited Kyrgyzstan during past incursions into Uzbekistan.<sup>36</sup> Kazakhstan had begun to diplomatically engage the Taliban over the year prior to the September 11 attacks, but it publicly supported the U.S. war effort against the Taliban. In early December 2001, Kyrgyzstan offered to host U.S. warplanes, and U.S. and French aircraft, including U.S. Marine F-18 strike aircraft, have been using part of the international airport at Manas (Peter J. Ganci base) as a base for combat flights in Afghanistan.<sup>37</sup> Kyrgyzstan said in March 2002 that there is no time limit on the U.S. use of military facilities there; French aircraft withdrew in September 2002 as the war wound down. Kazakhstan signed an agreement with the United States in July 2002 to allow coalition aircraft to use Kazakhstan's airports in case of an emergency or short term need related to the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

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. Turkmenistan's leader, Saparmurad Niyazov, saw Taliban control as facilitating construction of a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan, which would help Turkmenistan bring its large gas reserves to world markets. However, the September 11 events stoked Turkmenistan's fears of the Taliban and its Al Qaeda guests and the country publicly supported the U.S.-led war. No Operation Enduring Freedom forces were based in Turkmenistan.

## China

China has a small border with a sliver of Afghanistan known as the "Wakhan corridor" (see map) and had become increasingly concerned about the potential for Al Qaeda to promote Islamic fundamentalism among Muslims (Uighurs) in northwestern China. A number of Uighurs fought in Taliban and Al Qaeda ranks in the U.S.-led war, according to U.S. military officials. China expressed its concern through active membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as noted above. In December 2000, sensing China's increasing concern about Taliban policies, a Chinese official delegation met with Mullah Umar.

Although it has long been concerned about the threat from the Taliban and bin Laden, China did not, at first, enthusiastically support U.S. military action against the Taliban. Many experts believe this is because China, as a result of strategic

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<sup>36</sup> *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999*, pp. 14, 92.

<sup>37</sup> Some information based on CRS visit to the Manas facility in Kyrgyzstan, May 2002.

considerations, was wary of a U.S. military buildup on its doorstep. China is an ally with Pakistan, in part to balance out India, which China sees as a rival. Pakistan's cooperation with the United States appears to have allayed China's opposition to U.S. military action, and President Bush has praised China's cooperation with the anti-terrorism effort in his meetings with senior leaders of China.

## **Saudi Arabia**

During the Soviet occupation, Saudi Arabia channeled hundreds of millions of dollars to the Afghan resistance, primarily the Islamic fundamentalist militias of Hikmatyar and Sayyaf. Saudi Arabia, which itself practices the strict Wahhabi brand of Islam practiced by the Taliban, was one of three countries to formally recognize the Taliban government. (The others are Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.) The Taliban initially served Saudi Arabia as a potential counter to Iran, with which Saudi Arabia has been at odds since Iran's 1979 revolution. However, Iranian-Saudi relations improved dramatically beginning in 1997, and balancing Iranian power ebbed as a factor in Saudi policy toward Afghanistan.

Drawing on its intelligence ties to Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet war, Saudi Arabia worked with Taliban leaders to persuade them to suppress anti-Saudi activities by Al Qaeda. Saudi Arabia apparently believed that Al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan drew Saudi Islamic radicals away from Saudi Arabia itself and thereby reduced their opportunity to destabilize the Saudi regime. 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. Other reports, however, say that Saudi Arabia refused an offer from Sudan in 1996 to extradite bin Laden to his homeland on the grounds that he could become a rallying point for opposition to the regime. In March 2000 and again in May 2000, the Saudi-based Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) sponsored indirect peace talks in Saudi Arabia between the warring factions.

According to U.S. officials, Saudi Arabia generally cooperated with the U.S. war effort. Along with the UAE, Saudi Arabia broke diplomatic relations with the Taliban in late September 2001. It 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. aircraft to launch strikes in Afghanistan from Saudi bases. The Saudi position has generally been to allow the United States the use of its facilities as long as doing so is not publicly requested or highly publicized.

## **Other U.S. Policy Concerns and Initiatives**

U.S. policy objectives in Afghanistan have long gone beyond establishing political stability and combating terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan, although in the 3 years prior to the September 11 attacks, U.S. goals had largely narrowed to ending the presence of the Al Qaeda leadership and infrastructure there. Ending discrimination against women and girls, the eradication of narcotics production, and alleviating severe humanitarian difficulties, and promoting long-term economic development, have been long-standing U.S. goals, pursued with varying degrees of

intensity. The United States pursued some of these goals and provided high levels of assistance to Afghanistan, even during the Taliban years. The Bush Administration believes it can make substantially more progress on these issues than was made during the Taliban's rule.

## Human Rights/Islam/Treatment of Women

Virtually all observers agree that Afghans are freer than they were under the Taliban, although the Karzai is relatively new and many want to evaluate its human rights practices over a longer period of time. Since the Karzai government took office, there have been some reports of reprisals and other abuses based on ethnicity in certain parts of Afghanistan, particularly against Pashtuns living in largely Tajik and Uzbek northern Afghanistan. In one of the first major evaluations of human rights since the ousting of the Taliban, Human Rights Watch issued a report on July 29, 2003, saying that militiamen loyal to various local leaders and other powerful figures are silencing critics and intimidating the population.<sup>38</sup>

Some observers say that the new government is reimposing some Islamic restrictions that characterized Taliban rule, including the code of criminal punishments stipulated in Islamic law.<sup>39</sup> Some have blamed the increased restrictions on chief justice Fazl Hadi Shinwari, a religious conservative who was appointed by former president/Northern Alliance political leader Rabbani in the brief interim period (late November - early December 2001) just after the Taliban fled Kabul but before Karzai took office. On January 21, 2003, Shinwari ordered shut down cable television in Kabul on the grounds it was un-Islamic, and called for an end to co-education. Although U.S. officials are privately critical of Shinwari, the U.S. government has generally refrained from advising the new government on these issues, lest the United States be accused of undue interference in Kabul's affairs. Although the government is taking on a more Islamic character than was perhaps expected, progressive political parties, among others, have been allowed to organize and meet without interference, according to the State Department's human rights report for 2002.

In an indication that Afghans and the Afghan government are aware of international scrutiny on human rights issues, in late April 2003 the Afghan Interior Ministry inaugurated a human rights department to help curb abuses of individual rights by Afghan police. An Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission also has been formed to monitor government performance; it is headed by former Women's Affairs minister Sima Samar. The conference report on a FY2004 supplemental appropriation, H.R. 3289 (H.Rept. 108-337. P.L. 108-106), appropriates \$5 million to fund the Commission in FY2004. This is the amount authorized, for each fiscal year 2003-2006, for that purpose, in the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-327).

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<sup>38</sup> Witt, April. Report Claims Afghanistan Rife With Abuse, Fear. *Washington Post*, July 29, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Shea, Nina. "Sharia in Kabul?" *The National Review*, October 28, 2002.

The United States is trying to institutionalize Afghan attention to international standards of human rights practices. The United States, in concert with Italy, is working on judicial reform and criminal justice system reform. According to a July 22, 2003 Administration report to Congress on Afghan political reconstruction, U.S. assistance is aimed, in part, at the “development of a criminal justice system that meets internationally accepted human rights standards...”

**Status of Women.** The new government is widely considered far less repressive of women than was the Taliban, although the treatment of women varies considerably by region. Afghanistan remains a conservative society, and many Afghans frown on women exercising substantial political and economic rights, limiting women’s willingness and ability to participate in the full range of political and economic activities. The July 2003 Human Rights Watch report discussed above observed that women are often subject to physical and psychological harm that has limited their ability to participate in civil society and politics.<sup>40</sup> The most notable development in post-Taliban Afghanistan has been the establishment of a Ministry of Women’s Affairs, now headed by Habiba Sorabi, which is dedicated to improving women’s rights. According to Sorabi, her ministry has tried to get more Afghan women involved in business ventures and it has invited Afghan religious scholars to hear interpretations of the Quran that favor active participation of women in national and economic affairs. Two women, including Sorabi, hold senior positions in the new government.

Afghan women are playing an active role in political and economic reconstruction. As noted previously, 90, or about 20%, of the delegates to the CLJ were women and several women were highly vocal at the meeting, criticizing specific *mujahedin* commanders as responsible for Afghanistan’s problems. As noted previously, the new constitution reserves for women at least 25% of the seats in the upper house of parliament, and recognizes men and women as equal citizens. Women are performing some jobs, such as construction work, that were rarely held by women even before the Taliban came to power in 1996,<sup>41</sup> and some women are joining the new police force. Girls returned to school March 23, 2002, for the first time since the Taliban took power in 1996, and most female teachers have resumed their teaching jobs. Still, according to Sorabi, attitudes prevail in some rural areas against girls attending school, and only about 35% of all Afghan girls do attend. Under the new government, the wearing of the full body covering called the *burqa* is no longer obligatory, although many women continue to wear it by tradition.

Although the treatment of Afghan women has improved since the Taliban were removed from power, the Administration and Congress have taken an interest in the treatment of women under the post-Taliban government. After the Karzai government took office, the United States and the new Afghan government set up a U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council to coordinate the allocation of resources so as to improve the future of Afghan women. It is chaired on the U.S. side by

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<sup>40</sup> Witt, April. “Report Claims Afghanistan Rife With Abuse, Fear.” *Washington Post*, July 29, 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Amanpour, Christiane. Cable News Network special report on Afghanistan. Broadcast November 2, 2003.

Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, and on the Afghan side by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Women's Affairs. On November 27, 2001 as the Taliban was collapsing, the House unanimously adopted S. 1573, the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act, which had earlier passed the Senate. The law (signed December 12, 2001) calls for the use of unspecified amounts of supplemental funding (appropriated by P.L. 107-38, which gave the Office of the President \$40 billion to respond to the September 11, 2001 attacks, and which was subsequently distributed throughout the government to fund various programs)<sup>42</sup> to fund educational and health programs for Afghan women and children. The Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-327) authorizes \$15 million per year, for FY2003-2006, for the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs. The FY2004 supplemental (P.L. 108-106) appropriated \$60 million for programs to assist Afghan women and girls. That legislation contains a section expressing the sense of Congress that the United States seek (in Afghanistan and Iraq) to promote high level participation of women in legislative bodies and ministries and ensure their rights in new institutions. The section also calls on the Administration to seek to ensure women's access to credit, property, and other economic opportunities.

According to the State Department's June 2003 report on U.S. efforts to promote democracy abroad ("Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: the U.S. Record 2002-2003"), the United States sponsored several programs during 2002 and 2003 to help Afghan women. The U.S. Embassy Kabul sponsored female activists to visit the United States in preparation for the June 2002 *loya jirga*. The Administration also funded a \$2.575 million program to establish ten women's centers in Kabul and surrounding cities. Another program, valued at \$250,000, provides Afghan women with legal training.

## Counternarcotics

The December 5, 2001 Bonn agreement mentions the need for a post-Taliban Afghanistan government to prevent Afghanistan's re-emergence as a haven for drug cultivation. However, U.S. officials in Afghanistan say they are increasingly nervous that Afghanistan could emerge as a "narco-state," and that about half of Afghanistan's GDP is generated by narcotics trafficking. Several reports and observers say that narcotics trafficking is funding Taliban insurgents and their allies in Afghanistan, although the traffickers do not appear to have formed cartels or strong organizations. Present estimates for cultivation in all of 2003 say the opium crop was close to 4,000 metric tons, returning Afghanistan to its position as leading producer of opium crop.<sup>43</sup> A U.N. report, issued August 8, 2003, said that about 500,000 Afghans are involved in Afghanistan's narcotics production and trafficking

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<sup>42</sup> For more information on how the appropriated funds were distributed and used, see CRS Report RL31173, *Combating Terrorism: First Emergency Supplemental Appropriations-Distribution of Funds to Departments and Agencies*.

<sup>43</sup> Tohid, Owais. Bumper Year for Afghan Poppies. *Christian Science Monitor*, July 24, 2003.

chain,<sup>44</sup> and a subsequent U.N. study (U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime), released in October 2003 (Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2003) said that the income of Afghan drug traffickers would be about \$1.3 billion for 2003. In January 2002, the Karzai government banned poppy cultivation, although it has had difficulty enforcing the ban due to resource limitations and opposition from Afghan farmers who see few alternatives. Afghan government officials say that narcotics cultivation will diminish when there is a vibrant alternate economy that provides good paying jobs to Afghans.

Some Administration officials and Members of Congress are calling on the U.S. military to play a greater role in attacking traffickers and their installations, a mission the U.S. military reportedly is reluctant to perform on the grounds that it would expand the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan.<sup>45</sup> As of now, Britain is taking the lead among coalition partners in working to reduce narcotics production and trafficking, and it has recently begun raiding some drug processing labs.

In January 2004, as it had in January 2003, the Bush Administration again determined that Afghanistan was a major drug transit or illicit drug producing country. However, the Administration did not include Afghanistan in the list of countries that had “failed demonstrably to make substantial efforts” during the past 12 months to adhere to international counter-narcotics agreements and take certain counter-narcotics measures set forth in U.S. law. Therefore, no sanctions against Afghanistan were triggered. (This is equivalent to the listing by the United States, as Afghanistan has been listed every year since 1987, as a state that is uncooperative with U.S. efforts to eliminate drug trafficking or has failed to take sufficient steps on its own to curb trafficking.)

Substantial counter-narcotics funds are provided by the FY2004 supplemental appropriation. According to the conference report (H.Rept. 108-337, P.L. 108-106), \$170 million is provided for assistance to Afghanistan’s counter-narcotics effort, of which \$160 million is to help equip Afghan counter-narcotics police. Another \$73 million is for Department of Defense counter-narcotics activities in Afghanistan.

Narcotics trafficking control was perhaps the one issue on which the Taliban satisfied much of the international community. The Taliban, for the most part, enforced a July 2000 ban on poppy cultivation; in February 2001, the U.N. International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) said that surveys showed a dramatic drop in cultivation in the areas surveyed.<sup>46</sup> The Northern Alliance did not issue a similar ban in areas it controlled. In FY2001, the United States contributed \$1.5 million to a UNDCP crop substitution program.

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<sup>44</sup> Seper, Jerry. Afghanistan Leads Again in Heroin Production. *Washington Times*, August 12, 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Zoroya, Greg. Military Urged to Hit Afghan Drug Traffic. *USA Today*, February 12, 2004.

<sup>46</sup> Crossette, Barbara. “Taliban Seem to Be Making Good on Opium Ban, U.N. Says.” *New York Times*, February 7, 2001.

## Retrieval of U.S. Stingers

Beginning in late 1985 and following an internal debate, the Reagan Administration provided “hundreds” of man-portable “Stinger” anti-aircraft missiles to the mujahedin for use against Soviet combat helicopters and aircraft. Prior to the U.S.-led war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, common estimates among experts suggested that 200-300 Stingers remained at large in Afghanistan out of about 1,000 provided during the war against the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup> The Stinger issue resurfaced in conjunction with the U.S. war effort, when U.S. pilots reported that the Taliban fired some Stingers at U.S. aircraft during the war, but they recorded no hits. Any Stingers that survived the anti-Taliban war were controlled by Afghans now allied to the United States and presumably posed less of a threat. However, there are continued concerns that remaining Stingers could be sold to terrorists for use against civilian airliners and the United States has tried to retrieve those remaining. In February 2002, the Afghan government found and returned to the United States “dozens” of Stingers.<sup>48</sup> Estimates in the press say about 50-70 Stingers remain unaccounted for.

In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States had tried to retrieve the at-large Stingers.<sup>49</sup> Iran bought 16 of the missiles in 1987 and fired one against U.S. helicopters; some reportedly were transferred to Lebanese Hizballah, according to press reports in January 2002. India claimed that it was a Stinger, supplied to Islamic rebels in Kashmir probably by sympathizers in Afghanistan, that shot down an Indian helicopter over Kashmir in May 1999.<sup>50</sup> It was not the Stinger but Soviet-made SA-7 “Strella” man portable launchers that were fired, allegedly by Al Qaeda, against a U.S. military aircraft in Saudi Arabia in June 2002 and against an Israeli passenger aircraft in Kenya on November 30, 2002. Both firings missed their targets. SA-7s have been discovered in Afghanistan by U.S.-led forces, most recently in December 2002.

The practical difficulties of retrieving the weapons had caused this issue to fade from the U.S. agenda for Afghanistan during the 1990s. In 1992, 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 Stinger buy-back effort. On March 7, 1994, the *Washington Post* reported that the CIA had recovered only a fraction of the at-large Stingers. Many observers speculate that the CIA program retrieved perhaps 50 or 100 of them.

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<sup>47</sup> Saleem, Farrukh. “Where Are the Missing Stinger Missiles? Pakistan,” *Friday Times*, August 17-23, 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Fullerton, John. “Afghan Authorities Hand in Stinger Missiles to U.S.” *Reuters*, February 4, 2002.

<sup>49</sup> Gertz, Bill. “Stinger Bite Feared in CIA.” *Washington Times*, October 9, 2000.

<sup>50</sup> “U.S.-Made Stinger Missiles — Mobile and Lethal.” *Reuters*, May 28, 1999.

## Land Mine Eradication

Land mines laid during the Soviet occupation constitute one of the principal dangers to the Afghan people. The United Nations estimates that 5 -7 million mines remain scattered throughout the country, although some estimates by outside organizations are significantly lower. An estimated 400,000 Afghans have been killed or wounded by land mines. U.N. teams have succeeded in destroying one million mines and are now focusing on de-mining priority-use, residential and commercial property, including land surrounding Kabul. As shown in the U.S. aid table for FY1999-FY2002, the United States Humanitarian Demining Program was providing about \$3 million per year for Afghanistan demining activities, and the amount has escalated to about \$7 million in the post-Taliban period. Most of the funds go to the HALO Trust, a British organization, and the U.N. Mine Action Program for Afghanistan.

## Providing Resources to the Afghan Government

Since the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan has faced major humanitarian difficulties, some of which deteriorated further under Taliban rule. In addition to 3.6 million Afghan refugees at the start of the U.S.-led war,<sup>51</sup> another 500,000 Afghans were displaced internally even before U.S. military action began, according to Secretary General Annan's April 19, 2001, report on Afghanistan. Many of the displaced persons had fled the effects of a major drought that affected the 85% of the population that directly depends on agriculture. The conflicts in Afghanistan, including the war against the Soviet Union, left about 2 million dead, 700,000 widows and orphans and about one million Afghan children who were born and raised in refugee camps outside Afghanistan. However, over 2 million Afghan refugees have returned since January 2002.

A variety of U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) serve as the vehicles for international assistance to Afghanistan. The U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) supervises Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and Afghan repatriation.

**U.S. Assistance.** The United States had become the largest single provider of assistance to the Afghan people, even before the crisis triggered by the September 11, 2001 attacks. In 1985, the United States began a cross-border aid program for Afghanistan, through which aid was distributed in Afghanistan, via U.S. aid workers in Pakistan. However, citing budgetary constraints and the difficulty of administering a cross-border program, there was no USAID mission for Afghanistan after the end of FY1994, and U.S. aid has been provided through various channels, mostly U.N. agencies and NGO's.

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<sup>51</sup> About 1.5 million Afghan refugees were in Iran; 2 million in Pakistan; 20,000 in Russia; 17,000 in India, and 9,000 in the Central Asian states.

Primarily because of a drought and the widely publicized suffering of the Afghan people, U.S. aid to the Afghan people in FY2001 greatly exceeded that provided in FY2000 or FY1999, but no U.S. assistance went directly to the Taliban government. **Table 1** breaks down FY1999-FY2002 aid by program. For a history of U.S. aid to Afghanistan prior to 1999 (FY1978-FY1998), see **Table 3**.

**Post-Taliban.** On October 4, 2001, in an effort to demonstrate that the United States had an interest in the welfare of the Afghan people and not just the defeat of the Taliban, President Bush announced that humanitarian aid to the Afghan people would total about \$320 million for FY2002. After the fall of the Taliban, at a donors' conference in Tokyo during January 20-21, 2002, the United States pledged \$296 million in reconstruction aid for Afghanistan for FY2002. The amounts provided for FY2002 are listed in the table; the figures include both humanitarian and reconstruction aid, totaling over \$815 million for FY2002, which includes Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds devoted to the establishment and training of the Afghan National Army.

The conference report on the FY2002 foreign aid appropriations (H.Rept. 107-345, P.L. 107-115) contained a sense of Congress provision that the United States should contribute substantial humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, although no dollar figures were mentioned. The conference report on an FY2002 supplemental appropriations (H.R. 4775, H.Rept. 107-480, P.L. 107-206) recommended \$134 million in additional aid to Afghanistan. (For more information, including on aid to help Afghan civilian victims of U.S. airstrikes, see CRS Report RL31406, *Supplemental Appropriation for FY2002: Combatting Terrorism and Other Issues*, by Amy Belasco and Larry Nowels.)

**Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002.** An authorization bill, S. 2712, the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002, was passed by the Senate on November 14 and by the House on November 15, and signed on December 4, 2002 (P.L. 107-327). It authorizes the following:

- \$60 million in total counter-narcotics assistance (\$15 million per year for FY2003-FY2006);
- \$30 million in assistance for political development, including national, regional, and local elections (\$10 million per year for FY2003-FY2005);
- \$80 million total to benefit women and for Afghan human rights oversight (\$15 million per year for FY2003-FY2006 for the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs, and \$5 million per year for FY2003-2006 to the National 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;
- \$300 million in draw-downs of defense articles and services for Afghanistan and regional militaries; and
- \$1 billion (\$500 million per year for FY2003-FY2004) to expand ISAF if such an expansion takes place.

The total authorization, for all categories for all years, is \$3.47 billion.

**FY2003.** The Administration provided about \$820 million in assistance to Afghanistan in FY2003, close to the pledge announced on March 17, 2003, at a donors forum for Afghanistan, held in Brussels. As part of the FY2003 program, the United States spent \$100 million on road reconstruction, as part of an international pledge of \$180 million, primarily for the Kabul-Qandahar road. **Table 2** covers FY2003 aid as appropriated. The FY2003 foreign aid appropriations, contained in P.L. 108-7, an omnibus appropriations, stipulated that at least \$295 million in aid be provided to Afghanistan. Earmarks in that law, as well as in the FY2003 supplemental appropriations (H.R. 1559, P.L. 108-11 ), are included in the table.

**FY2004.** The Administration is providing about \$1.6 billion for Afghanistan in FY2004, in both regular (H.R. 2763, P.L. 108-199) and supplemental appropriations (P.L. 108-106). Table 3 below contains a chart of FY2004 assistance to Afghanistan.<sup>52</sup> As noted, most of the FY2004 were provided in a supplemental appropriation, requested to help accelerate reconstruction and expand the capabilities and effectiveness of the Kabul government. The purposes and results of some of the aid provided in that supplemental are discussed under the issue categories analyzed in the previous sections of this paper.

The FY2004 supplemental request also asked that the \$300 million limit on military drawdowns from DOD stocks enacted in the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-327) be increased to \$600 million. The FY2004 supplemental conference report increased that level to \$450 million.

**FY2005.** On February 2, 2004, the Administration sent to Congress its proposed budget for FY2005. The \$929 million request for Afghanistan asks for funding in the following categories:

- \$ 22 million for child survival and health programs
- \$150 million in development assistance
- \$ 225 million in security assistance (ESF)
- \$400 million in FMF for the Afghan National Army
- \$800,00 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds to train Afghan officers in democratic values
- \$90 million for police and judicial training and counter-narcotics
- \$17.45 million for non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, de-mining, and related programs
- \$24 million for peacekeeping

**Additional Forms of U.S. Assistance.** In addition to providing U.S. foreign assistance, the U.S. Treasury Department (Office of Foreign Assets Control, OFAC) has unblocked over \$145 million in assets of Afghan government-owned banking entities that were frozen under U.S. sanctions imposed on the Taliban in 1999 (see below). These funds have been used by the new government for currency stabilization, not for recurring costs of the interim government. Most of the funds consisted of gold that will be held in Afghanistan's name in the United States to back

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<sup>52</sup> Much of this section was taken from CRS Report RL31811, *Appropriations for FY2004: Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs*.

up Afghanistan's currency. Together with its allies, over \$350 million in frozen funds have been released to the new government. In January 2002, the United States agreed to provide \$50 million in credit for U.S. investment in Afghanistan, provided by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). On March 7, 2003, OPIC pledged an additional \$50 million, bringing the total line of credit to \$100 million. The United States also has successfully pressed the International Air Transport Association to pay Afghanistan \$20 million in overflight fees that were withheld because of U.N. sanctions on the Taliban. In April 2002, OFAC unblocked \$17 million in privately-owned Afghan assets.

**World Bank.** In May 2002, the World Bank reopened its office in Afghanistan after twenty years and, on March 12, 2003, it announced a \$108 million loan to Afghanistan, the first since 1979. In August 2003, the World Bank agreed to lend Afghanistan an additional \$30 million to rehabilitate the telecommunications system, and \$30 million for road and drainage rehabilitation in Kabul.

**International Reconstruction Pledges.** Common estimates of reconstruction needs run up to about \$10 billion. At the Tokyo donors' conference, mentioned above, the following international reconstruction pledges were announced: European Union - \$495 million in 2002; Japan - \$500 million over the next 30 months; Germany - \$362 million over the next 4 years; Saudi Arabia - \$220 million over the next 3 years; Iran - \$560 million over the next 5 years; Pakistan - \$100 million over the next 5 years; India - a \$100 million line of credit; South Korea - \$45 million over 30 months; and United Kingdom - \$86 million in 2002. Total pledges in Tokyo for reconstruction amounted to \$2 billion for 2002 and \$4.5 billion over the next 5 years. Of the amounts pledged for 2002, about \$2 billion was spent or received. In March 2003, the EU announced a \$410 million donation for 2003-2004. This is in addition to its contribution, noted above, for 2002.

On March 31, 2004, international donors will meet in Berlin to confer on additional aid to Afghanistan. Including the U.S. commitment of \$1.2 billion planned for U.S. FY2005, donors are expected to pledge about \$9 billion at the conference.<sup>53</sup> Afghan Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani says Afghanistan needs \$27.5 billion for reconstruction over the next seven years.

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<sup>53</sup> Afghanistan's Top Donors To Pledge Nine Billion Dollars - Report. *Agence France Presse*, March 11, 2004.

**Table 1. U.S. Aid to Afghanistan in FY1999-FY2002**  
(\$ in millions)

	<b>FY1999</b>	<b>FY2000</b>	<b>FY2001</b>	<b>FY2002 (final)</b>
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)	\$131.0 (300,000 metric tons under P.L.480, Title II, and 416(b))	\$198.12 (for food commodities)
State/Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) via UNHCR and ICRC	\$16.95 for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and to assist their repatriation	\$14.03 for the same purposes	\$22.03 for similar purposes	\$136.54 (to U.N. agencies)
State Department/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	\$7.0 to various NGO's to aid Afghans inside Afghanistan	\$6.68 for drought relief and health, water, and sanitation programs	\$18.934 for similar programs	\$113.36 (to various U.N. agencies and NGO's)
State Department/HDP (Humanitarian Demining Program)	\$2.615	\$3.0	\$2.8	\$7.0 to Halo Trust/other demining
Aid to Afghan Refugees in Pakistan (through various NGO's)	\$5.44 (2.789 for health, training - Afghan females in Pakistan	\$6.169, of which \$3.82 went to similar purposes	\$5.31 for similar purposes	
Counter-Narcotics			\$1.50	\$63.0
USAID/ Office of Transition Initiatives			\$0.45 (Afghan women in Pakistan)	\$24.35 for broadcasting/ media
Dept. of Defense				\$50.9 ( 2.4 million rations)
Foreign Military Financing				\$57.0 (for Afghan national army)
Anti-Terrorism				\$36.4
Economic Support Funds (E.S.F)				\$105.2
Peacekeeping				\$24.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$76.6</b>	<b>\$113.2</b>	<b>\$182.6</b>	<b>\$815.9</b>

**Table 2. U.S. Aid to Afghanistan, FY2003**  
(\$ in millions, same acronyms as above table)  
(As appropriated)

From the FY2003 foreign aid appropriations (P.L. 108-7)	
Child Survival Programs	\$50
Development Assistance	\$40.5
Transition Initiatives	\$10
International Disaster Assistance	\$85
ESF	\$50
Non-Proliferation, Demining, Anti-Terrorism (NADR)	\$5
Migration and Refugee Assistance	\$50
Total from this law:	\$290.5
From the FY2003 supplemental (P.L. 108-11)	
ESF	\$167 (\$100 million for Kabul-Qandahar road; \$10 million for provincial reconstruction teams; and \$57 million for operational support to Afghan government)
FMF	\$335 (\$165 million to reimburse DOD for monies already spent to train Afghan national army; \$170 in new FMF to train Afghan national army)
Security for AID work	\$24.5 (Almost all for work in Afghanistan)
Total from this law:	\$526.5 (approx.)
Total for FY2003:	\$817

**Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY2004**  
(\$ in millions, same acronyms as previous tables)

From the FY2004 Supplemental (P.L. 108-106)	
Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR program)	\$30
Support to Afghan government	\$70
Elections/governance	\$69
Roads	\$181
Schools/Education	\$95
Health Services/Clinics	\$49
Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)	\$58
Private Sector/Power Generation	\$95
Water Projects	\$23
Police Training/Rule of Law	\$170
Afghan National Army (training/equipment)	\$287
Anti-Terrorism/Afghan Leadership Protection	\$35
<b>Total from this law:</b>	<b>\$1,164</b>
From the FY2004 regular appropriation (P.L. 108-199)	
Development/Health	\$171
Disaster Relief	\$35
Refugee Relief	\$72
Economic Aid/ESF	\$75  (includes earmarks of \$2 million for reforestation; \$2 million for the Afghan Judicial Reform Commission; \$5 million for Afghan women; and \$2 million for aid to communities and victims of U.S. military operations)
Military Assistance	\$50
<b>Total from this law:</b>	<b>\$403</b>
<b>Total for FY2004</b>	<b>\$1,565</b>

**Table 4. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan, FY1978-1998**

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*	49.9
1998	—	—	3.6	—	49.14**	52.74

**Source:** U.S. Department of State.

\* Includes \$3 million for demining and \$1.2 million for counternarcotics.

\*\* 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.

## Lifting of U.S. and International Sanctions

Shoring up a post-Taliban government of Afghanistan with financial and other assistance has required waivers of restrictions or the permanent modification of U.S. and U.N. sanctions previously imposed on Afghanistan. Most of the sanctions discussed below have now been lifted.

- On May 2, 1980, Afghanistan was deleted from the list of designated beneficiary countries under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), denying Afghanistan's exports duty free treatment, by Executive Order 12204 (45 F.R. 20740). This was done under the authority of Section 504 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended [P.L. 93-618; 19 U.S.C. 2464]. *On January 10, 2003, the President signed a proclamation making Afghanistan a beneficiary of GSP, eliminating U.S. tariffs on 5,700 Afghan products.*
- On June 3, 1980, as part of the sanctions against the Soviet Union for the invasion of Afghanistan, the United States imposed controls on exports to Afghanistan of agricultural products, oil and gas exploration and production equipment, and phosphates. This was implemented at 15 CFR Part 373 et seq (45 F.R. 37415) 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]. On April 24, 1981, these sanctions were modified to terminate controls on U.S. exports to Afghanistan of agricultural products and phosphates.
- 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 October 7, 1992, President George H.W. Bush issued Presidential Determination 93-3 that Afghanistan is no longer a Marxist-Leninist country. The designation as such a country had prohibited Afghanistan from receiving Export-Import Bank guarantees, insurance, or credits for purchases under Sec. 8 of the 1986 Export-Import Bank Act, which amended Section 2(b)(2) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945 (P.L. 79-173, 12 U.S.C. 635). However, President George H.W. Bush's determination was not implemented before he left office.
- President George H.W. Bush's October 7, 1992 determination (93-3) also found that assistance to Afghanistan under Section 620D of the Foreign Assistance Act is in the national interest of the United States because of the change of regime in Afghanistan. The presidential determination, had it been implemented in regulations, would have waived restrictions on assistance to Afghanistan provided for in the Act, as amended [P.L. 87-195; 22 U.S.C. 2374]; as added by Section 505 of the International Development

Cooperation Act of 1979 [P.L. 96-53]. These provisions prohibit foreign assistance to Afghanistan until it apologizes for the death of U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Adolph Dubs, who was kidnapped in Kabul in 1979 and killed when Afghan police stormed the hideout where he was held, unless the President determines that such assistance is in the national interest because of changed circumstances in Afghanistan. *The restrictions on U.S. aid to the government of Afghanistan have been lifted in light of the change of government there.*

- Section 552 of the Foreign Assistance Appropriations for FY1986 [P.L. 99-190] authorized the President to deny any U.S. credits or most-favored-nation (MFN) tariff status for Afghanistan. Under that law, on February 18, 1986, the height of the Soviet occupation, President Reagan had issued Presidential Proclamation 5437, suspending (MFN) tariff status for Afghanistan (51 F.R. 4287). *On May 3, 2002, President Bush restored normal trade treatment to the products of Afghanistan.*
- On March 31, 1993, President Clinton, on national interest grounds, waived restrictions provided for in Section 481 (h) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended [P.L. 87-195]; as amended and restated by Section 2005(a) of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 [P.L. 99-570]. The waiver was renewed in 1994. Mandatory sanctions include 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 country exports to the United States; and curtailment of air transportation with the United States. *On February 25, 2002, President Bush waived restrictions on FY2002 aid to Afghanistan under this Act.*
- On June 14, 1996, Afghanistan was formally added to the list of countries prohibited from receiving exports or licenses for exports of U.S. defense articles and services. This amended the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (22 CFR Part 121 et seq.) under the authority of Section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended (P.L. 90-629; 22 U.S.C. 2778) by adding Afghanistan at Section 126.1 of 22 CFR Part 126. *On July 2, 2002, the State Department amended U.S. regulations (22 CFR Part 126) to allow arms sales to the new Afghan government.*
- In a ruling largely redundant with the one above, on May 15, 1997, the State Department designated Afghanistan 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. The designation, made primarily because of Taliban's harboring of bin Laden, makes Afghanistan ineligible to receive U.S. exports of items on the U.S. Munitions List. The designation was

repeated every year since 1997. *Afghanistan was deleted from the list of non-cooperative states when the list was reissued on May 15, 2002, thereby eliminating this sanction on Afghanistan.*

- On July 4, 1999, the President declared a national emergency with respect to Taliban because of its hosting of bin Laden, and issued Executive Order 13129 that imposed sanctions. The sanctions include the blocking of Taliban assets and property in the United States, and a ban on U.S. trade with Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan. On August 10, 1999, the Administration determined that Ariana Afghan Airlines was a Taliban entity. That determination triggered a blocking of Ariana assets (about \$500,000) in the United States and a ban on U.S. citizens' flying on the airline. *On January 29, 2002, the State Department issued a determination that the Taliban controls no territory within Afghanistan, thus essentially ending this trade ban. On July 2, 2002, President Bush formally revoked this executive order.*
- On October 15, 1999, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1267; on December 19, 2000, it adopted U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, imposed a number of new sanctions against the Taliban. For the provisions of these sanctions, see the section on the harboring of bin Laden. *As noted, these sanctions were narrowed to penalize only Al Qaeda by virtue of the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1390 of January 17, 2002.*

## Promoting Long-Term Economic Development

In an effort to find a long-term solution to Afghanistan's acute humanitarian problems, the United States has, when feasible, tried to promote major development projects as a means of improving Afghan living standards and political stability over the long term. During 1996-98, the Administration supported proposed natural gas and oil pipelines through western Afghanistan as an incentive for the warring factions to cooperate. One proposal by a consortium led by Los Angeles-based Unocal Corporation<sup>54</sup> was for a Central Asia Oil Pipeline (CAOP) that would originate at the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan border and extend through the western region of Afghanistan to Pakistan. A \$2.5 billion Central Asia Gas Pipeline (CentGas) would originate in southern Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan to Pakistan, with possible extensions into India.

The deterioration in U.S.-Taliban relations after 1998 largely ended hopes for the pipeline projects while the Taliban was in power. Immediately after the August 20, 1998 U.S. strikes on bin Laden's bases in Afghanistan, Unocal suspended all its Afghan pipeline-related activities, including a U.S.-based training program for

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<sup>54</sup> 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. *Moscow Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 30, 1997. Page 3.

Afghans who were expected to work on the project. With few prospects of improved U.S. relations with Taliban, Unocal withdrew from its consortium in December 1998. Saudi Delta Oil was made interim project leader, although Delta lacked the financing and technology to make the consortium viable. The rival consortium led by Bidas of Argentina reportedly continued to try to win approval for its proposal to undertake the project.

Prospects for the project have improved in the post-Taliban period. In a summit meeting in late May 2002 between the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the three countries agreed to revive the gas pipeline project. Sponsors of the project held an inaugural meeting on July 9, 2002 in Turkmenistan, signing a series of preliminary agreements. However, financing for the project is unclear.

**Table 5: Major Factions in Afghanistan**

Party/Commander	Leader	Ideology/ Ethnicity	Power Base
Taliban	Mullah (Islamic cleric) Muhammad Umar	ultra-orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small opposition groups, mostly in the south and east. No official presence in government.
Islamic Society (dominant party in the “Northern Alliance”)	Burhannudin Rabbani (political leader), Muhammad Fahim (Vice President/Defense Minister)	moderate Islamic, mostly Tajik	Much of northern and western Afghanistan, including Kabul.
Ismail Khan (part of Islamic Society/Northern Alliance)	Ismail Khan	Tajik	Herat Province and environs; Khan’s son in cabinet.
Eastern Shura (loosely allied with Northern Alliance)	No clear leader, after death of Abdul Qadir; son succeeded him as Jalalabad governor	moderate Islamic, Pashtun	Jalalabad and environs; Qadir was vice president.
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (part of Northern Alliance)	Abdul Rashid Dostam	secular, Uzbek	Mazar-e-Sharif and environs; Dostam was deputy defense minister in interim government.
Hizb-e-Wahdat (part of Northern Alliance)	Karim Khalili (a Vice President)	Shiite, Hazara tribes	Bamiyan province.
Pashtun Leaders	Various leaders; Afghan government headed by Hamid Karzai. Yusuf Pashtun is governor of Qandahar province	mostly conservative Islamic, Pashtun	Southern Afghanistan, including Qandahar.
Hizb-e-Islam Gulbuddin (HIG)	Mujahedin party leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar	orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small opposition groups around Jalalabad and in the southeast. Allied with Taliban/Al Qaeda
Al Qaeda	Osama bin Laden	radical Islamic, mostly Arab	Possible terrorist cells in east and southeast
Islamic Union	Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf	orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Sayyaf politically allied with Rabbani

