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Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy

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Summary

Afghanistan is a fragile state attempting, with substantial U.S. help and guidance, to stabilize 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 the U.S.-led military campaign.

The defeat of the Taliban enabled the United States and its coalition partners to send forces throughout Afghanistan to search for Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters and leaders that remain at large, including Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden. Since the fall of the Taliban, 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 participation in politics. At the same time, there is a lack of security in many parts of Afghanistan, particularly the southeast, which was the power base of the Taliban. Security concerns are widely believed to be slowing the pace of reconstruction, as is the high degree of autonomy exercised by regional governors of the various ethnically dominated localities.

On May 1, the United States and the Afghan government declared major U.S.-led combat to have ended and that U.S.-led forces would henceforth concentrate on stabilization. U.S. stabilization measures include training and extending the writ of the national government, building a new Afghan national army, supporting an international security force (ISAF), and setting up regional enclaves to create secure conditions for reconstruction. To help foster development, the United Nations and the Bush Administration have lifted most sanctions imposed on Afghanistan since the Soviet occupation. The United States gave Afghanistan a total of over \$815 million in aid during FY2002.

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. On December 5, 2001, major Afghan factions, meeting under U.N. auspices in Bonn, signed an agreement to form an interim government that ran Afghanistan until a traditional national assembly (“*loya jirga*”) was held June 11-19, 2002. The *loya jirga* delegates selected a new government to run Afghanistan for the next two years and approved Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, to continue as leader for that time, but the assembly adjourned without establishing a new parliament. Preparations are proceeding for another *loya jirga* to approve a new constitution (October 2003) and then national elections for the leadership and a parliament.

This paper will be updated as warranted by major developments.

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Afghanistan: Current Issues 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.¹ 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 the veil. 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

¹ For more information, see CRS Report RL31389, *Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate State*, by Richard Cronin; and CRS Report RL31759, *Reconstruction Assistance in Afghanistan: Goals, Priorities, and Issues for Congress*, by Rhoda Margesson.

that later became known as “mujahedin”² (Islamic fighters), and thereby keep Afghanistan pro-Soviet. Upon their invasion, the Soviets ousted Hafizullah Amin and installed its 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 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 former 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. 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.³

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

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

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 ethnic militias that had previously been allied with the Kabul government, including that of Uzbek militia 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 mujahedin regime 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. 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 faced daily shelling from another mujahedin commander, Pakistan-backed Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a radical Islamic fundamentalist who headed a faction of Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party) and who was nominally the Prime Minister. Four years (1992-1996) of civil war among the mujahedin followed, destroying much of Kabul and creating 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.)

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.

The Rise and Reign of The Taliban

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 and 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. The Taliban’s early successes encouraged further defections, and 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 pro-Iranian 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. It banned television, popular music, and dancing, and required males to wear beards. It prohibited women 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, although without success. 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 like Feminist Majority and the National Organization for Women (NOW) mobilized to stop the Clinton Administration from recognizing the Taliban government unless it altered its treatment of women. 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 consider one of its most extreme excesses, in March 2001 the Taliban ordered the destruction of two large Buddha statues, dating to the 7th century. The Taliban claimed it ordered the destruction of the statues, which it considered un-Islamic, after representatives of the United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) offered to fund preservation of the statues. Others believe the move was a reaction to U.N. sanctions imposed in December 2000 (see below). The destruction provoked widespread condemnation, even among other Islamic states, including Pakistan. Some international groups are looking at the possibility of rebuilding the statues, although at least one group has said doing so will be extremely difficult technically.

Mullah Muhammad Umar/Taliban Leaders. During the war against the Soviet Union, Taliban founder Mullah 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 54 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, having reportedly fled Qandahar city when the Taliban surrendered the city on December 9, 2001, is still at large.

Coalescence of the “Northern Alliance”

The rise of the Taliban movement caused other 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. The fighters in the west were generally loyal to the charismatic Ismail Khan, who regained the governorship of his former stronghold in Herat and surrounding provinces after the Taliban collapse of mid-November 2001.

General Dostam. 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 was best known for his break with Najibullah in early 1992, the key defection that paved the way for the overthrow of the Najibullah regime. He subsequently fought against Rabbani during his presidency in an effort to persuade him to yield power, but Dostam later joined 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 his 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, he, in concert with a Tajik commander Atta Mohammad and a Shiite Hazara commander Mohammad Mohaqqiq, recaptured 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. Clashes in July 2002 necessitated mediation by the U.N. personnel in Afghanistan (UNAMA, U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan).

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 and ultimately joined the anti-Taliban opposition. The Hazaras are prominent in central Afghanistan, particularly Bamiyan Province. The main Shiite Muslim party is Hizb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party, an alliance of eight Hazara tribe Shiite Muslim groups), which was part of Rabbani’s government for most of his rule during 1992-1996. Hizb-e-Wahdat has traditionally received some material support from Iran, whose population practices Shiism and has an affinity for the Hazaras.

Hizb-e-Wahdat forces occasionally retook Bamiyan city from the Taliban but were unable to hold it, until the Taliban collapse of November 2001 in the U.S.-led war.

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 interpretation of Sunni Islam. This interpretation (“Wahhabism”) was also 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. Although he is a Pashtun, Sayyaf was allied with the Northern Alliance and placed his forces at Alliance disposal. Sayyaf is considered personally close to Rabbani and is reputedly maneuvering in concert with Rabbani for a future leadership role.

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 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 war, 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 that led to the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, when Northern Alliance military leader Ahmad Shah Masud was assassinated at his headquarters by suicide bombers allegedly linked to Al Qaeda. His successor was his intelligence chief, General Muhammad Fahim, who is a veteran commander but lacked the authority or charisma of Masud.

The United States decided to go to war against the Taliban regime when the Taliban, immediately after the September 11 attacks, refused a U.S. demand to extradite Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, strongly suspected by the Administration of authorizing the September 11 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). 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 other anti-Taliban forces. Taliban control of the north collapsed first, followed by its control of southern Afghanistan, which it progressively lost to pro-U.S. Pashtun forces, such as those of Hamid Karzai, who is now President. Karzai, the 47-year-old leader of the powerful Popalzai tribe of Pashtuns, had entered Afghanistan in October 2001 to organize Pashtun resistance to the Taliban, and he was supported in that effort by U.S. special forces. By the time the Taliban had been defeated, Northern Alliance forces controlled about 70% of Afghanistan, including Kabul, which they captured on November 12, 2001. Groups of Pashtun commanders took control of cities and provinces in the east and south. One example is Ghul Agha Shirzai, now the governor of Qandahar province and environs.

Despite the overwhelming defeat of the Taliban, small Taliban and Al Qaeda groups reportedly continue to operate throughout Afghanistan. The United States has

about 9,000 troops in and around Afghanistan, and coalition forces are contributing another 8,000, including those in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). 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 have ended. In early May 2003, outgoing commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Dan McNeil, said security is improving and that the United States might be able to begin drawing down its forces in Afghanistan in 2004.⁴

Nonetheless, a perception of insecurity remains, and small engagements continue to take place with armed groups conducting occasional rocket and small arms attacks on U.S., Afghan, international security force, and other targets. On June 7, 2003, a suicide bomber killed four German soldiers serving with ISAF.

Among the ongoing military missions, U.S. Special Operations Forces continue to hunt in Afghanistan and over the border into Pakistan for bin Laden. He escaped the U.S.-Afghan offensive against the Al Qaeda stronghold of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan in 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. U.S. forces are also continuing to try to locate and combat forces loyal to former mujahedin leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (see above). Hikmatyar has allied with and tried to rally Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants against U.S. forces and the Karzai government. 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" was analyzed in the section on "other terrorist groups" in the State Department's report on international terrorism for 2002, released April 30, 2003. However, the group is not formally designated as a "foreign terrorist organization."

War-Related Costs and Casualties. 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, the home province of Taliban head Mullah Umar, mistakenly killed about 40 civilians. As of June 2003, about 45 U.S. service persons have been killed in the Afghanistan theater of Operation Enduring Freedom, including from enemy fire, friendly fire, and non-hostile deaths (accidents). Of coalition forces, 4 Canadian and 1 Australian military 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.

⁴ Kraul, Chris. *Troops Could Leave Afghanistan in 2004*. Los Angeles Times, May 5, 2003.

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 \$1.1 billion to \$1.2 billion per month. About \$13 billion in incremental costs were incurred in FY2002.

Post-War Stabilization Efforts

The war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban paved the way for a pre-existing U.N. effort to form a broad-based Afghan government. The government appears stable at the national level, but major tensions still exist between the central government and the local governors of the various ethnic regions. In many respects, this “center-periphery” tension has existed throughout Afghan history.

Pre-September 11 United Nations 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, because the international body was viewed as a credible mediator by all sides. It was the forum used for 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); and Algeria’s former Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi (August 1997-October 1999) — sought to arrange a ceasefire, and ultimately a peaceful transition to a broad-based government. The proposed process for arranging a transition incorporated many ideas of former King Zahir Shah and other experts, in which a government was to be chosen through a traditional Afghan selection process - the holding of a *loya jirga*, a grand assembly of notable Afghans. These U.N. efforts, at times, appeared to make significant progress, but ceasefires and other agreements between the warring factions always broke down. Brahimi suspended his activities in frustration in October 1999. Another U.N. mediator, Spanish diplomat Fransesc Vendrell, was appointed.

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.⁵) In 2000, possibly because of the lack of progress by the Six Plus Two, another contact group began meeting in Geneva, and with more frequency than the Six Plus Two. 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

⁵ *Federal Register*, Volume 61, No. 125, June 27, 1996. Page 33313.

on Afghanistan” under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The countries in that ad-hoc committee include Pakistan, Iran, Guinea, and Tunisia.

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. 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. 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, an effort that, it was hoped, would encourage defections within Taliban ranks and hasten its demise. 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.

Bonn Conference/Interim Government. Many of the hopes for a post-Taliban government at first appeared to center on the former King. A 2-day (October 25-26, 2001) meeting of more than 700 Afghan tribal elders in Peshawar, Pakistan (“Peshawar Grouping”) issued a concluding statement calling for the return of the former King. However, neither the King’s representatives nor those of the Northern Alliance attended the gathering, instead airing suspicions that the meeting was orchestrated by Pakistan for its own ends.

In late November 2001, after Kabul had fallen on November 12, 2001, 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 for the next two years until a new constitution is drafted and national elections held. The *loya jirga* also would establish a 111-member parliament. According to the Bonn agreement, the new government was to 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 the Bonn agreement, but forces under the command of Defense

Minister Fahim have remain garrisoned there. The Bonn conference's conclusions were 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 the U.N. website's related page at [<http://www.uno.de/frieden/afghanistan/talks/agreement.htm>].)

At the Bonn conference, Hamid Karzai was selected chairman of the interim administration, which governed as of December 22, 2001. 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 Ahmad Shah Masud and were considered generally well disposed toward the United States.

The Loya Jirga/Elections. In late January 2002, the 21 members of the commission, including two women, were chosen to prepare for the *loya jirga*. In preparation for the assembly, the former King returned to Afghanistan on April 18, 2002, and he conducted meetings with Afghan notables and local leaders. By the beginning of June, 381 districts of Afghanistan had chosen the 1,550 delegates to the *loya jirga*. About two hundred of the delegates were women.

At the *loya jirga*, which began June 11, 2002, the former King and Burhannudin Rabbani immediately 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.

In the cabinet endorsed by the 2002 *loya jirga*, Karzai moved Yunus Qanooni to head the Ministry of Education and serve as an adviser on security. He was replaced as Interior Minister by Taj Mohammad Wardak, a Pashtun, although he was eventually replaced by Ali Jalali. Abdullah and Fahim retained their positions, with Fahim acquiring the additional title of vice president.

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

- Ashraf Ghani replaced Hedayat Amin Arsala as Finance Minister (see below). 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 and effective bureau.
- Habiba Sorabi replaced the somewhat outspoken Sima Samar as Minister of Women's Affairs.

- 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. Hedayat Amin Arsala was appointed a Vice President to replace Qadir. Arsala, a former World Bank official, is a supporter of the former King and a relative of Pir Ahmad Gaylani, leader of a pro-King mujahedin faction during the anti-Soviet war.
- The third vice president appointed was Karim Khalili, the leader of a faction of the Hazara Shiite party Hizb-e-Wahdat.
- Herat leader Ismail Khan was given no formal post; he preferred to remain in his locality rather than take a position in the central government in Kabul. His son, Mir Wais Saddiq was retained in the new cabinet to head the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.
- General Dostam was given no formal post, although he served as deputy Defense Minister in the first interim administration. Dostam said in early August 2002 that he prefers to remain in his northern stronghold rather than accept a post that would bring him to Kabul. However, in May 2003, he was appointed 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 is to increase Kabul's decisionmaking power and extend central government influence. The national security adviser is Zalmay Rasool.

The *loya jirga* adjourned without establishing the new parliament; a group of experts remained in Kabul to continue working on the parliament. The experts have reportedly decided to recommend formation of a 93-member national assembly, with no party affiliations represented, to be elected during the June 2004 national elections.

New Constitution. A 35-member constitutional commission, appointed in October 2002, has drafted a new constitution, which was presented to Karzai in late March 2003 and is to be unveiled publicly on September 1, 2003. It is to be formally discussed and presumably adopted at a "constitutional *loya jirga*" in October 2003. According to some reports, the draft constitution sets up a governmental structure with a powerful presidency, a relatively weaker prime ministership, and a parliament, all elected roughly at four-year intervals.⁶ If those reports are true, they would suggest that the drafters of the constitution favor a strong central government. If the constitution were to instead set up a powerful parliament, that might suggest that the balance of power would shift more to the regions and the regional governors who would be in a position to achieve election to parliament of their supporters.

⁶ Pitman, Todd. Afghanistan's Future Being Written in New Constitution. Associated Press, April 3, 2003.

Expanding Central Government Capabilities. The Bush Administration says that the Kabul government is slowly expanding its authority and its capabilities. However, the regional governors 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, although many remain at their jobs. That same month, police in Kabul suppressed student riots at Kabul University; they were protesting poor dormitory facilities. In May 2003, Karzai threatened to resign if the regional governors did not remit some of their privately collected tax revenue to the central government. Twelve regional leaders signed a pledge to do so, and observers say that Ismail Khan subsequently remitted \$20 million to Kabul. Kabul is expected to raise \$200 million of its \$600 million budget for 2003, the rest to be provided by international donors. Obtaining control over tax flows is key if Kabul is to accomplish that goal. Karzai has sought to reassure international donors by establishing a transparent budget and planning process. On October 13, 2002, international donors applauded Afghanistan's budgetary and reconstruction plans.

The national airline, Ariana, also has resumed operations. On March 23, 2002, schools reopened following the Persian/Afghan new year (Nowruz). Girls returned to the schools for the first time since the Taliban came to power, and a total of 3 million children have returned to school since the fall of the Taliban. U.S. intelligence is advising the Afghan National Security Directorate to help it build its capabilities to monitor threats to the new government.⁷

Since the establishment of the interim government, several countries have reopened embassies in Kabul, including the United States. In conjunction with the formation of the interim administration, NSC official Zalmay Khalilzad was appointed a special envoy to Afghanistan in December 2001 and has made several extended visits there. In late March 2002, a U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Robert Finn, was sworn in Kabul. The new Afghan government has reopened the Afghan embassy in Washington and a new ambassador, U.S.-educated and U.S.-based energy entrepreneur Ishaq Shahryar, has taken office. He previously was an adviser to former King Zahir Shah.

Ensuring Security

Much of the U.S. program for Afghanistan is intended to ensure security throughout Afghanistan, considered a necessary pre-condition for reconstruction and development. The pillars of this effort are (1) operations by U.S. and other coalition forces in Afghanistan, discussed above; (2) the presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); (3) the formation of "provincial reconstruction teams; and (4) the establishment and training of an Afghan National Army. Fears of terrorism and instability have been present since the fall of the Taliban, but these concerns increased significantly 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

⁷ Kaufman, Marc. U.S. role Shifts as Afghanistan Founders. *Washington Post*, April 14, 2003.

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. A section of the House version of the FY2004 foreign aid authorization bill (H.R. 1950) calls on the Bush Administration to step up U.S. efforts to ensure security in Afghanistan.

International Security Force (ISAF). The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), created by the Bonn agreement, has reached its agreed strength of about 4,900. It was headed until December 20, 2002, by Turkey, which replaced Britain as the lead force following the *loya jirga*. Germany and the Netherlands assumed command as of February 2003. NATO is expected to take over command of the force, perhaps for the duration of ISAF's existence, in August 2003. Placing ISAF under a NATO leadership could relieve the previous difficulties in recruiting governments to volunteer to head the force. The force is operating in conjunction with Afghan security forces in Kabul and is coordinating, to an extent, with U.S. military forces in and immediately around Afghanistan.

As of June 2003, ISAF has forces from 20 countries, with approximate force donations as noted: Austria (71 troops), Bulgaria (32), Denmark (36), Finland (31), France (520), Germany (1,200), Greece (163), Italy (403), the Netherlands (226), New Zealand (8), Romania (155), Spain (349), Sweden (38), Turkey (1,322), the United Kingdom (426), Norway, Canada, Poland, Macedonia, and Albania.

Because of several threats to Afghanistan's internal security since the interim government was constituted, Afghan officials want ISAF to be expanded and deploy to other major cities. The Bush Administration continues to favor its alternative plan to build an Afghan national army rather than expand ISAF, but the Administration has expressed support for an expansion if enough troops are contributed to it. The Bush Administration also reportedly sees the provincial reconstruction teams, discussed below, as a response to the limitations of ISAF. No countries have thus far pledged enough additional troops that would allow for the expansion of ISAF beyond Kabul.

Afghan National Army. U.S. Special Operations Forces, with some participation from French and British forces, are training the new national army. The first 4,500 Afghan recruits have completed training as of late May 2003. In early December 2002, the recruits began training as a battalion, according to the Defense Department, and 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. 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 9,000 Afghan troops by the end of 2004, according to U.S. military officials.⁸ Training has begun for a heavy brigade as part of a "Kabul Corps" to be based just east of Kabul. Thus far, weaponry for the national army has come primarily from Defense Ministry weapons stocks, with the concurrence of

⁸ Briefing Slides Prepared by the National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, for J-5 of the Department of Defense Joint Staff. June 2002.

Defense Minister Fahim who controls those stocks. The United States plans to provide some additional U.S. arms and/or defense services to the national army, according to statements by U.S. officials. In November 2002, at U.S. urging, Albania sent surplus light weaponry to the national army.

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 say this problem has been alleviated recently with somewhat better pay and more involvement by U.S. special forces.⁹ Fully trained recruits are paid about \$70 per month.

At the same time, Japan and the United Nations are leading the international effort to demobilize private militiamen by channeling them into alternate employment. Reducing the number and size of private militias around Afghanistan would have the effect of undercutting the military strength of the regional governors relative to the central government. As a possible sign that Kabul's authority is growing, in August 2002, Karzai threatened to send Afghan central government forces to combat a rebellious local leader in Paktia province, Padsha Khan Zadran, but no fighting ensued.

A related U.S. concern 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 the national army.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams. As the frequency and intensity of combat has decreased since early 2002, the U.S. military has increasingly focused its operations on ensuring political stability and fostering secure conditions for reconstruction. In mid-December 2002, the Defense Department said it would work to create secure conditions for aid workers by forming eight "Provincial Reconstruction Teams" (PRTs) composed of U.S. forces, Defense Department civil affairs officers, representatives of U.S. aid and other agencies, and allied personnel. Thus far, Italy has volunteered personnel to work with the teams.

The objective of the PRTs is to provide safe havens for international aid workers to help with reconstruction and to extend the writ of the Kabul government throughout Afghanistan. Three PRTs, each with about 60 U.S. military personnel, have begun operations at Gardez, Bamiyan, and Konduz. By the end of 2003, teams are expected to be formed in Mazar Sharif, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat, and Parwan. The PRT program is expected to spend about \$38 million per year for operations and reconstruction costs. Karzai visited Britain in early June 2003 to discuss mutual

⁹ Gall, Carlotta. In a Remote Corner, an Afghan Army Evolves From Fantasy to Slightly Ragged Reality. *New York Times*, January 25, 2003.

issues, and Britain announced it would sent 60-70 of its troops to establish the planned PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The creation of the PRTs appeared intended, in part, to deflect criticism that the United States is paying insufficient attention to reconstruction and as an alternative to expanding ISAF (see below). Press reports say that aid agencies have felt more secure since the PRT program began, fostering reconstruction activity in areas of PRT operations,¹⁰ although some relief workers dispute that assessment and say they still feel too insecure to expand their work in certain parts of Afghanistan.

Regional Context ¹¹

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).

Pakistan¹²

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, the government of 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

¹⁰ Kraul, Chris. U.S. Aid Effort Wins Over Skeptics in Afghanistan. *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2003.

¹¹ 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.

¹² For further discussion, see Rashid, Ahmed. "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism." *Foreign Affairs*, November - December 1999.

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.¹³ 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 modest 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. pressure as well as 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 arrested hundreds of Al Qaeda fighters fleeing Afghanistan and turned them over to the United States and deployed substantial forces to the Afghan border to capture Al Qaeda fighters attempting to flee into Pakistan. 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 Shibh (captured September 11, 2002), and top Al Qaeda planner Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (March 2, 2003). Pakistani forces reportedly are helping to track Al Qaeda forces along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

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, which is backed by India, and it is. 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. Taliban or pro-Taliban elements in Pakistan apparently prompted a brief border clash between Afghan and Pakistani forces in mid-April 2003; tensions were subsequently reduced after a visit to the region by White House envoy Khalilzad and a Karzai visit to Pakistan on April 22, 2003.

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's key national interests in Afghanistan are to exert influence over western Afghanistan, which Iran borders and was once part of the Persian empire, and to protect Afghanistan's Shiite minority. After 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

¹³ Constable, Pamela. New Sanctions Strain Taliban-Pakistan Ties. *Washington Post*, January 19, 2001.

closer to the Northern Alliance than previously, providing its groups with fuel, funds, and ammunition,¹⁴ 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 of U.S. military action against the Taliban.

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 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

¹⁴ Steele, Jonathon, "America Includes Iran In Talks On Ending War In Afghanistan." *Washington Times*, December 15, 1997. A14.

guerrillas to Al Qaeda.¹⁵ 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 integrated into Taliban/Al Qaeda forces were captured or killed during Operation Enduring Freedom.

The U.S. and Russian positions on Afghanistan became coincident well before the September 11 attacks.¹⁶ Even before the U.S.-led war, Russia was supporting the Northern Alliance with some military equipment and technical assistance.¹⁷ U.S.-Russian cooperation led to the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267 and 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 and Al Qaeda. Some outside experts believe that Russia exaggerated the threat emanating from Afghanistan in an effort to persuade the Central Asian states to rebuild closer defense ties to Moscow and to justify its actions in Chechnya.

Central Asian States¹⁸

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.¹⁹

Uzbekistan has long asserted that the group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), allegedly responsible for four simultaneous February 1999 bombings in

¹⁵ Whittell, Giles. “Bin Laden Link To Dagestan Rebel Fightback.” *London Times*, September 6, 1999.

¹⁶ Constable, Pamela. “Russia, U.S. Converge on Warnings to Taliban.” *Washington Post*, June 4, 2000.

¹⁷ Risen, James. “Russians Are Back in Afghanistan, Aiding Rebels.” *New York Times*, July 27, 1998.

¹⁸ For further information, see CRS Report RL30294. *Central Asia’s Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests*. December 7, 1999.

¹⁹ CRS conversations with Uzbek government officials in Tashkent. April 1999.

Tashkent that nearly killed President Islam Karimov, is linked to Al Qaeda.²⁰ 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 10th 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 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.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not directly border Afghanistan. However, IMU guerrillas have transited Kyrgyzstan during past incursions into Uzbekistan.²¹ 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.²² 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, possibly viewing engagement as a more effective means of preventing spillover of radical Islamic activity from Afghanistan. Turkmenistan's leadership also saw Taliban control as bringing the peace and stability that would permit construction of a natural gas pipeline from

²⁰ The IMU was named a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department in September 2000.

²¹ *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999*, pp. 14, 92.

²² Some information based on CRS visit to the Manas facility in Kyrgyzstan, May 2002.

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 politically supported the U.S. anti-terrorism effort. There are no indications the United States requested basing rights 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. 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 at the Taliban's invitation.

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 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, and particularly to hardline Sunni Muslim fundamentalist resistance leaders. 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.

Instead, 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, now that there is a pro-U.S. government in Kabul.

Overview 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 attacks. Despite the deterioration, Clinton Administration officials including Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth met periodically with Taliban officials. At the same time, the United States withheld recognition of Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, formally recognizing no faction as the government. Based on the lack of broad international recognition of Taliban, the United Nations seated representatives of the former Rabbani government, not the Taliban. The United States closed its embassy in Kabul in January 1989, just after the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan, and 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.

Although press reports in May 2002 said the Bush Administration was considering, prior to the September 11 attacks, a plan to give military aid to the Northern Alliance, the Bush Administration continued the previous Administration's policy of maintaining a dialogue with the Taliban. 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 State Department officers visited Afghanistan in April 2001, the first U.S. visit since the August 1998 bombings of the Al Qaeda camps, although the purpose of the visit was described as assessing the humanitarian needs and not furthering U.S.-Taliban relations.

As did the executive branch, Congress became highly critical of the Taliban well before the September 11 attacks. 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 September 11, legislative proposals became significantly more adversarial toward the Taliban. One bill, H.R. 3088, stated that it should be the policy of the United States to remove the Taliban from power and authorized a drawdown of up to \$300 million worth of U.S. military supplies and services for the anti-Taliban opposition. The 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 the bill into law on March 11, 2002 (P.L. 107-148).

Bin Laden and the Taliban. Even before the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Taliban’s refusal to yield Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden to the United States (or a U.S. ally) for trial — and its protection of radical Islamic movements more broadly — had become the overriding bilateral agenda item in U.S. policy toward Afghanistan.²³ Particularly after the August 7, 1998 Al Qaeda bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the United States had been placing 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.

- During his April 1998 visit, Ambassador 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

²³ 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*.

U.S. trade with Taliban-controlled portions of Afghanistan and blocking Taliban assets in U.S. financial institutions. The Taliban was not designated as a terrorist group, nor was Afghanistan named a state sponsor of terrorism. (President George W. Bush revoked Executive Order 13129 on the grounds that the Taliban government has been dismantled.)

- On October 15, 1999, with Russian support, the United States achieved adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267, the first U.N. resolution sanctioning the Taliban regime. The resolution banned flights outside Afghanistan by Ariana airlines, and directed U.N. member states to freeze Taliban assets.
- On December 19, 2000, again by combining diplomatic forces with Russia, the United States achieved adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, a follow-on to Resolution 1267. The major additional provisions of the Resolution included: (1) a worldwide prohibition against the provision of arms or military advice to the Taliban and a requirement (directed against Pakistan) that all countries withdraw any military advisers that are helping the Taliban; (2) a call for all countries to reduce the size of or close Taliban representative missions in their countries; (3) a requirement that all countries freeze any bin Laden/Al Qaeda assets that could be identified; (4) a prohibition on any supply to areas under Taliban control of the chemical acetic anhydride, which is used to produce heroin; and (5) a ban on foreign travel by all Taliban officials at or above the rank of Deputy Minister, except in humanitarian circumstances. On July 30, 2001, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1363, providing for the stationing of monitors in Pakistan to ensure that no weapons or military advice was being provided by 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.)

Promoting Human Rights/Equitable Treatment of Women

Virtually all observers agree that Afghans are freer than they were under the Taliban, although the interim administration is relatively young and many want to evaluate its human rights practices over a longer period of time. The groups that have assumed power from the Taliban are widely considered far less repressive of women than was the Taliban, although some of the factions now part of the ruling coalition, including the Northern Alliance, have been accused of significant human rights abuses in the past. Since the interim administration 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. Some Afghans say that the Taliban brought order and peace to the areas it captured by disarming independent militiamen and that, to some extent, lawlessness is worse than it was during Taliban rule. U.S. officials believe that law and order will improve as the central government extends its writ throughout the

country and as economic reconstruction expands. To address some concerns about its performance, in late April 2003 the Afghan government inaugurated a human rights department to help curb abuses of individual rights by Afghan police.

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.²⁴ Some have blamed the increased restrictions on chief justice Fazl Hadi Shinwari, a religious conservative. 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. 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.

Under the new government, women in Kabul are said to be reverting to the less restrictive behavior practiced before the Taliban fled. The burqa is no longer obligatory, although many women continue to wear it by tradition or because of fear or uncertainty of the new government's attitudes on the issue. Two women hold positions in the new government, and many women are returning to the jobs they held before the Taliban came to power. As noted above, girls returned to school March 23, 2002, for the first time since the Taliban took over, and many female teachers have resumed their teaching jobs.

Although the treatment of Afghan women does not receive as much press coverage as the issue did when the Taliban was in power, the Administration and Congress have taken an interest in the treatment of women under the post-Taliban government. On November 27, 2001, 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 supplemental funding (appropriated by P.L. 107-38) to fund educational and health programs for Afghan women and children. After the new 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 Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, and on the Afghan side by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Women's Affairs.

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, and the Bush Administration is focusing some U.S. resources on counter-narcotics. Britain is taking the lead among coalition partners in working with the new government to reduce narcotics production and trafficking. In January 2002, the Karzai government banned poppy cultivation, although it has had difficulty

²⁴ Shea, Nina. "Sharia in Kabul?" *The National Review*, October 28, 2002.

enforcing the ban due to resource limitations and opposition from Afghan farmers who see few alternatives. The U.N. Drug Control Program estimated in August 2002 that 3,000 tons of opium crop would be produced in Afghanistan in 2002, restoring Afghanistan to its previous place as the world's top opium producer.²⁵ That estimate was largely realized.

On January 31, 2003, the Bush Administration 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.)

Narcotics trafficking control was perhaps the one issue on which the Taliban apparently satisfied much of the international community. The Taliban, for the most part, enforced its July 2000 ban on poppy cultivation; in February 2001, U.N. International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) officials said that surveys showed a dramatic drop in poppy cultivation in the areas surveyed.²⁶ The Northern Alliance did not issue a similar ban in areas it controlled. In April 2001, the United States began funding a UNDCP crop substitution program, contributing \$1.5 million to that program in FY2001.

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.²⁷ In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States had tried to retrieve the at-large Stingers.²⁸ The United States feared that the missiles could fall into the hands of terrorist groups for possible use against civilian airliners. 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

²⁵ Armitage, Tom. "U.N. Sees Afghan Opium Cultivation Soaring in 2002." *Reuters*, February 28, 2002.

²⁶ Crossette, Barbara. "Taliban Seem to Be Making Good on Opium Ban, U.N. Says." *New York Times*, February 7, 2001.

²⁷ Saleem, Farrukh. "Where Are the Missing Stinger Missiles? Pakistan," *Friday Times*. August 17-23, 2001.

²⁸ Gertz, Bill. "Stinger Bite Feared in CIA." *Washington Times*, October 9, 2000.

sympathizers in Afghanistan, that shot down an Indian helicopter over Kashmir in May 1999.²⁹ 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. 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 Stingers. According to Defense Intelligence Agency testimony in 1996,³⁰ an unspecified number of man-portable surface-to-air missiles (Stingers) remain in Afghanistan.³¹

The Stinger issue resurfaced in conjunction with the U.S. war effort. 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 are likely controlled by Afghans now allied to the United States and would presumably pose less of a threat. In early February 2002, the interim government collected and returned to the United States “dozens” of Stingers and said it would continue to try to find and return additional Stingers.³²

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.

²⁹ “U.S.-Made Stinger Missiles — Mobile and Lethal.” *Reuters*, May 28, 1999.

³⁰ John Moore, before the House International Relations Committee. May 9, 1996.

³¹ Common estimates in a variety of press reports suggest that 200-300 Stingers may remain at large in Afghanistan.

³² Fullerton, John. “Afghan Authorities Hand in Stinger Missiles to U.S.” *Reuters*, February 4, 2002.

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,³³ 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, have reportedly 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, about 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.

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 (FY1978-FY1998), see **Table 3**.

Post-Taliban. On October 4, 2001, in an effort to demonstrate that the United States has 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 an Afghan national army.

³³ 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.

The conference report on the FY2002 foreign aid appropriations (H.Rept. 107-354, 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, P.L. 107-480) 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.)

FY2003 Plans. The Administration says it plans to spend about \$820 million for Afghan programs in FY2003, a figure announced on March 17, 2003, at a donors forum for Afghanistan, held in Brussels. As part of the FY2003 plan, on September 12, 2002, the Administration pledged Afghanistan \$80 million for road reconstruction, as part of an international pledge of \$180 million. **Table 2** covers FY2003 aid as appropriated. The FY2003 foreign aid appropriations, contained in P.L. 108-7, an omnibus appropriations, stipulates 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 **Table 2**.

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 \$60 million in total counter-narcotics assistance (\$15 million per year for FY2003-FY2006); \$1.7 billion in humanitarian and development aid (\$425 million per year for FY2003-FY2006); \$300 million for an Enterprise Fund; \$30 million for the loya jirga and related political development issues (\$10 million per year for FY2003-FY2005); \$80 million to benefit women (\$20 million per year for FY2003-FY2006); \$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.

FY2004 Plans. The Administration has requested substantial funds for FY2004. The total request, according to specific categories in the congressional presentation, is about \$550 million. The categories are as follows: \$150 million in FMF (for the Afghan national army); \$150 million for DA; \$150 million in ESF; \$21 million for child survival programs; \$40 million for counter-narcotics; \$20 million for peacekeeping; \$19 million for Anti-terrorism and de-mining; and \$600,000 for International Military Education and Training Funds (IMET).

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 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. 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.

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 to be spent in 2002 and \$4.5 billion over the next 5 years. Of the amounts pledged for 2002, about \$1.9 billion has been spent, received, or about to be received, as of January 2003.

Table 1. U.S. Aid to Afghanistan in FY1999-FY2003
(\$ in millions)

	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002 (final)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA) and USAID Food For Peace (FFP), via World Food Program(WFP)	\$42.0 worth of wheat (100,000 metric tons under "416(b)" program.	\$68.875 for 165,000 metric tons. (60,000 tons for May 2000 drought relief)	\$131.0 (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
Totals	\$76.6	\$113.2	\$182.6	\$815.9

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 FY1978-1998
(\$ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Devel. Assist.	Econ. Supp. (ESF)	P.L. 480 (Title I and II)	Military	Other (Incl. regional refugee aid)	Total
1978	4.989	—	5.742	0.269	0.789	11.789
1979	3.074	—	7.195	—	0.347	10.616
1980	—	(Soviet invasion - December 1979)			—	—
1981	—	—	—	—	—	—
1982	—	—	—	—	—	—
1983	—	—	—	—	—	—
1984	—	—	—	—	—	—
1985	3.369	—	—	—	—	3.369
1986	—	—	8.9	—	—	8.9
1987	17.8	12.1	2.6	—	—	32.5
1988	22.5	22.5	29.9	—	—	74.9
1989	22.5	22.5	32.6	—	—	77.6
1990	35.0	35.0	18.1	—	—	88.1
1991	30.0	30.0	20.1	—	—	80.1
1992	25.0	25.0	31.4	—	—	81.4
1993	10.0	10.0	18.0	—	30.2	68.2
1994	3.4	2.0	9.0	—	27.9	42.3
1995	1.8	—	12.4	—	31.6	45.8
1996	—	—	16.1	—	26.4	42.5
1997	—	—	18.0	—	31.9*	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 Corporation³⁴ 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

³⁴ 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 4: Major Factions in Afghanistan

Party/Commander	Leader	Ideology/ Ethnicity	Areas of Control
Taliban	Mullah (Islamic cleric) Muhammad Umar	ultra-orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small groups hiding throughout Afghanistan. No presence in government.
Northern Alliance/Islamic Society (dominant party in the Northern Alliance)	Burhannudin Rabbani (political leader), Muhammad Fahim (military leader)	conservative Islamic, mostly Tajik	Most of northern and western Afghanistan, including Kabul. Fahim is Vice President and Defense Minister. Dr. Abdullah is Foreign Minister. Rabbani holds no official position.
Forces of Ismail Khan (part of Northern Alliance)	Ismail Khan	Tajik	Herat Province and environs; Khan's son in cabinet.
Eastern Shura (loosely allied with Northern Alliance)	No clear leader, following death of Abdul Qadir; Qadir's son appointed Jalalabad governor after Qadir's death	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 Sharif and environs; Dostam was deputy defense minister in interim government.
Hizb-e-Wahdat (part of Northern Alliance)	Karim Khalili	Shiite, Hazara tribes	Bamiyan province. Khalili is a vice president.
Pashtun Commanders	Ghul Agha Shirzai, and other tribal leaders	mostly orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Southern Afghanistan, including Qandahar.

Map of Afghanistan



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (1/03 M.Chin)