

# IN THE BALANCE

Measuring Progress in Afghanistan

A Report of the CSIS Post-Conflict  
Reconstruction Project

**Codirectors**

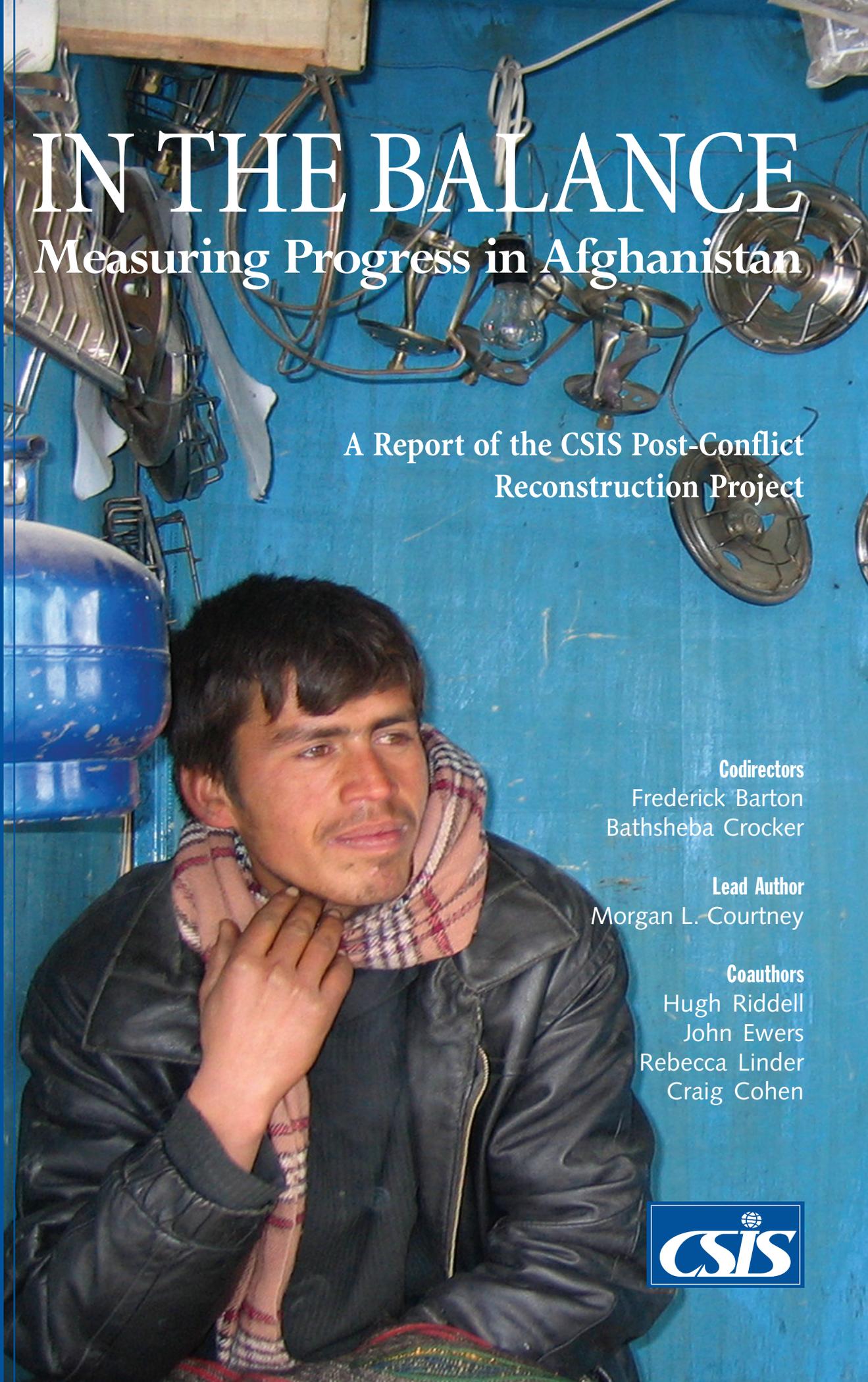
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# About CSIS

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The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) provides strategic insights and practical policy solutions to decisionmakers committed to advancing global security and prosperity. Founded in 1962 by David M. Abshire and Admiral Arleigh Burke, CSIS is a bipartisan, non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., with more than 220 employees. Former U.S. senator Sam Nunn became chairman of the CSIS Board of Trustees in 1999, and John J. Hamre has led CSIS as its president and chief executive officer since 2000.

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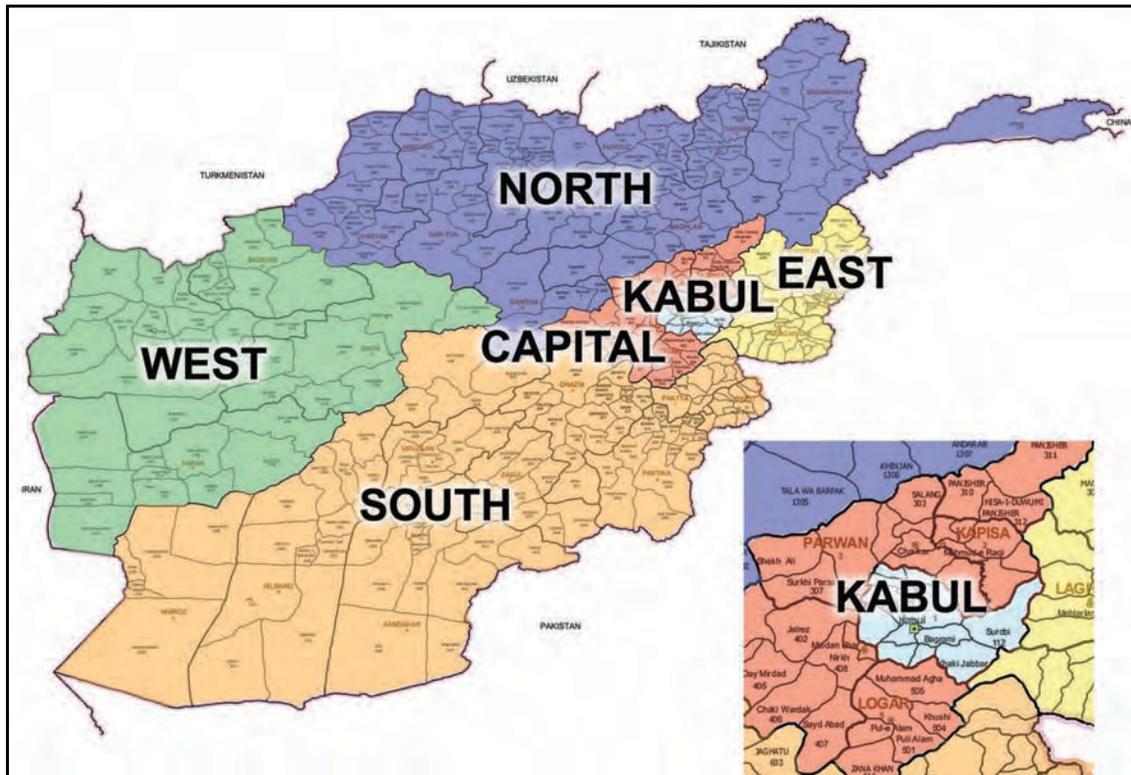
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## Afghanistan: A Regional Map



Source: Modified from original Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS) Administrative Divisions Map, May 2002, [http://www.aims.org.af/maps/national/political\\_divisions/political\\_divisions\\_32.pdf](http://www.aims.org.af/maps/national/political_divisions/political_divisions_32.pdf). Daikondi and Panjshir are now separate provinces but continue to be included in the same regions as the provinces from which they were created.

# Acknowledgments

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- the Ford Foundation;
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It is because of their help that the PCR Project has been able to promote new thinking on post-conflict reconstruction.

Finally, the report authors and project directors would like to recognize the hard work and long hours put in by the PCR Project staff. This report would not have been possible without their excellent work, and we are grateful for their dedication and enthusiasm.

The content and judgments made in this report are solely those of the authors and project directors.

# List of Abbreviations

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ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management Service
AMF	Afghan Military Forces
AMRC	Afghan Media Resource Center
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANBP	Afghanistan's New Beginnings Program
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Security Office
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASP	Afghan Stabilization Program
CFC–A	Coalition Forces Command–Afghanistan
DIAG	Disbanding Illegal Armed Groups
DDR	Disarmament/ Demobilization/ Reintegration
DHSA	Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
IMC	International Medical Corps
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network–UN
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force–NATO
NPPs	National Priority Programs
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
RDZ	Regional Development Zone
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USIP	U.S. Institute of Peace



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YOU CAN DESTROY SOMETHING EASILY,  
BUT TO REBUILD TAKES TIME.

**—Male shopkeeper, Kabul**

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# Executive Summary

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Afghanistan stands at a pivotal moment. Four years of steady reconstruction progress have begun to jump-start the country's ability to function, with the significant involvement of the international community. In the weeks following the September 2005 elections, the international community, and the U.S. government in particular, will face some difficult decisions: Should the military presence be drawn down? Should the international community sustain the same level of financial support?

*In the Balance: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan* is an effort to help international actors improve their understanding of and increase their effectiveness in Afghanistan and other post-conflict cases. With multiple billions of dollars in security and reconstruction funds spent and over 26,000 international troops on the ground, it is important for the international community to have measures of progress to determine whether reconstruction is progressing or backsliding relative to the goals of the effort. There have been some attempts to do this, but the measures have been mostly quantitative in nature, as qualitative data is hard to measure over time. Focusing exclusively on hard data, however, provides an incomplete picture: first, the quantitative data on which these measures depend are often unreliable and hard to come by; and, second, qualitative information is often more illustrative of the impact of efforts on people's lives.

With this in mind, the CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) Project attempted to bridge the gap between quantitative data and qualitative data by bringing together information from five sources, weighing them all equally to balance out potential biases. Information on Afghanistan's reconstruction was collected from "public" sources (governmental and nongovernmental organizations), international and Afghan news agencies, polls and surveys, and CSIS staff-led interviews and Afghan-conducted interviews with Afghans.<sup>1</sup>

Success in any reconstruction effort is determined by two factors: (1) meeting the immediate needs of the people, and (2) building long-term government and human capacity. CSIS developed a grid with four quadrants—Viable Zone, Risk Zone A, Risk Zone B, and Danger Zone—for mapping the collected data according to these two factors.<sup>2</sup> We separated the data according to five pillars of post-conflict reconstruction: Security, Governance and Participation, Justice and Accountability, Economic Opportunity, and Social Well-Being.<sup>3</sup>

1. A CSIS report on the Afghan-conducted interviews, entitled *Voices of a New Afghanistan*, was released in July 2005. The report is available online at [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/voa\\_report.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/voa_report.pdf).

2. See figure 3 in the "Methodology" section of this report for further discussion of the grid.

3. These pillars are based on the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction, as defined by the CSIS-AUSA Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction in their *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2002), <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/framework.pdf>.

The resulting graphs represent a visual snapshot of reconstruction progress based on more than 7,000 data points. This snapshot offers a baseline measure of the state of Afghanistan’s reconstruction today. A similar study in six months or one year using this method could serve as an index to more clearly show progress over time.

Based on our analysis, this comprehensive study of Afghanistan’s reconstruction progress reveals that:

**Despite significant advancements since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan has not yet reached the Viable Zone, and its fate remains “in the balance.”**

**Security** performs the best of the five pillars, falling into the Viable Zone. (See figure 1 for a graph of results by pillar.) The security situation has improved because of the international military presence, but crime remains a serious concern, and commanders continue to wield significant influence.

Figure 1. Overall Reconstruction by Pillar

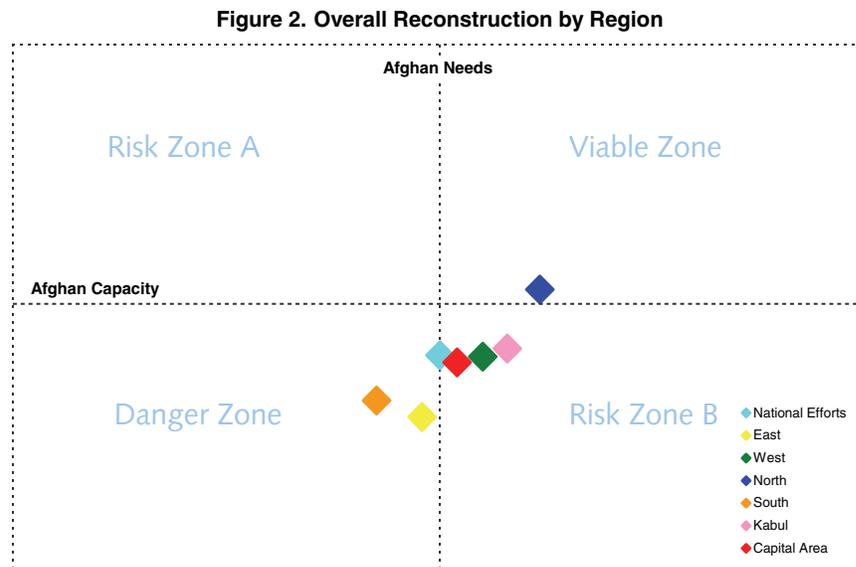


The results for **Governance and Participation** and **Social Well-being** reveal that a broad foundation for future success is being built, but too few needs have been met in Afghans’ day-to-day lives. President Hamid Karzai is a positive symbol of national unity and hope, but the Afghan government remains weak. Militia commanders and corruption continue to obstruct service delivery and Afghans’ democratic rights. Services have greatly improved, but they are difficult to access and quality remains mediocre.

**Economic Opportunity** and **Justice and Accountability** both fall in the Danger Zone, with Justice and Accountability performing the worst of any pillar. The formal justice system in Afghanistan remains unable to confront impunity, adjudicate land disputes, unravel criminal networks, or protect citizens’ rights. Economic growth has been significant but uneven. Commanders still maintain illicit sources of revenue, and job opportunities are lacking for most Afghans, including ex-combatants.

## Regional Summary

CSIS catalogued the data by region to be able to detect differences between provinces. (See the regional map on page iv.) The **North** is the only region that falls in the Viable Zone. This can largely be attributed to the perceived success of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts there more so than elsewhere and to support for national and provincial governance structures. **Kabul**, the **West**, and the **Capital Area** are all in Risk Zone B, signifying the building of long-term capacity but a shortcoming in immediate needs fulfillment. Infrastructure building is under way in these areas, but many continue to live in poverty, have unreliable power (if they have power at all), and lack clean drinking water. In the case of Kabul, its role as the hub of reconstruction activities has led to higher expectations there than in other areas for reconstruction benefits, and the migration of millions of people to the urban center is causing increased strain on services that are already stretched. The **South** and **East** are both in the Danger Zone; insecurity remains higher in those regions than elsewhere, and reconstruction activities have been slowed as a result. Central government presence and judicial institutions also remain relatively weak. (See figure 2 for a graph of results by region.)



**To avoid backsliding, a concentrated effort must continue in Afghanistan.** International engagement underpins Afghans' sense of public confidence, an essential element of progress. Although progress has been made in Afghanistan, priorities must now change to reflect the current situation. Success will depend on abiding by five principles that should guide the reconstruction effort:

1. International forces must guarantee Afghan security for the next decade.
2. International financial assistance must move more quickly into the hands of ordinary Afghans, such as through payment of salaries.

3. The Afghan government and international donors must look beyond Kabul for reliable partners in local government and civil society.
4. International assistance must focus on freeing Afghans from the burden of time-consuming survival strategies by providing economic efficiencies that will improve productivity.
5. Afghan leaders must convince fellow Afghans that working together as citizens of a shared community is the only viable path to safety and prosperity.

We recognize that the needs of Afghanistan go well beyond what any discrete set of recommendations can offer. The following are meant to highlight priority areas that could have a multiplier effect on Afghanistan's reconstruction. We do not suggest that these ideas are untested in Afghanistan, only that they have not yet been the priority areas of concern.

**BROAD RECOMMENDATION #1:** Target attention, resources, and military forces on key border crossings and adjacent regions in an effort to confront criminal networks, make regional and local governors more effective and accountable, and reduce the illicit trafficking of poppy.

**BROAD RECOMMENDATION #2:** Forge connections between Afghans by investing in communications, roads, and irrigation; eliminate barriers between Afghans by securing roads and investing in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

**BROAD RECOMMENDATION #3:** Improve the safety, health, literacy, and education of Afghans—particularly women and youth. Success will depend on strengthening the prospective Afghan middle class by identifying, training, and paying key agents of change.

Afghanistan has just completed its best three years in decades. Broad-scale fighting has stopped, a new constitution and popularly elected president are in place, millions of Afghans have returned home, and the country has rejoined the world. Yet, Afghanistan remains a tough, unpredictable nation that is just beginning its transition out of war and humanitarian disaster. An impoverished land, Afghanistan is dependent on the international community for security and financial support.

Because of the difficulty of the task, we should think in terms of a 10-year horizon. It will take that long to develop the security, public safety and order, and rule of law that lead to greater stability. To keep moving ahead, every effort should be made to engage the Afghan people. While the central government continues its development, assistance must find a way to avoid the “capacity gap” and initiate economic and social activities that reach Afghans directly.

Afghanistan has made progress, and its people are desirous of the next step.

# Introduction

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Four years after the launch of the reconstruction effort, Afghanistan has found itself at a crossroads. Significant international involvement has only just begun to improve the country's governmental capacity. Warlords, or "commanders" in local parlance, continue to play a destabilizing role in post-Taliban Afghanistan, even though many have been brought into government service. Taliban attacks persist, many refugees and internally displaced lack shelter, and only the early foundations of political, economic, and social infrastructure have been established.

Opportunities exist, however, to consolidate the gains made by Afghans and the international community over the past three years—increasing security, widening political space, bringing war criminals to justice, and improving the average Afghan's social and economic well-being. In September 2005, for instance, Afghans went to the polls to elect a legislative national assembly for the first time since the December 2001 overthrow of the Taliban. It is hoped that in the months following the elections, commanders will increasingly be sidelined and the newly elected representatives will be able to deliver on tangible programs of change.

The international community, and the U.S. government in particular, face a choice in the weeks following the parliamentary elections. Will the United States begin to draw down its military presence in Afghanistan? Will it sustain the same level of financial support to the Afghan government and its citizens?

The U.S. presence in both Afghanistan and Iraq is predicated on the ability to play a catalytic role in the countries' journeys toward peace, democracy, and a functioning economy. The United States has viewed failed states and war-torn societies as a threat to its national security interests since September 11. No better example than Afghanistan exists to show that ungoverned territory has proved dangerous to the people and interests of the industrialized world. Success in Afghanistan—just as in Iraq—must therefore be based on helping Afghans reach the point where they have a meaningful chance to sustain the progress that has been made over the past three years, with minimal international involvement.

Knowing when this point has arrived in any post-conflict environment is not easy, but it is essential and relies on a trusted way to measure progress in post-conflict interventions. The importance of accurate progress assessments has been emphasized in several reports, including those of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)/Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) bipartisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and a 2005 CSIS–U.S. Institute of Peace working group report (see below).

Furthermore, much of the debate in Washington today on Iraq has turned to how we can know if progress has truly been made. Claims of success or failure are perceived as merely political spin. A number of senators and representatives on both sides of the

aisle have called on the administration to offer a set of measurable benchmarks of progress for Iraq. They want to know what progress and success will look like, and how much is enough for the high-level U.S. commitment to end.<sup>1</sup>

Although Afghanistan has not garnered the same level of attention or resources as Iraq from the U.S. government, the same need exists to develop a trusted way of mea-



These girls are attending primary school in the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar.

suring progress for its reconstruction effort. Because Afghanistan has generally been viewed as a success story—at least in relation to Iraq—the absence of an effort to measure progress in a systematized way puts the United States at risk of a precipitous withdrawal, which could potentially plunge the country back into war and chaos. Systematic measuring would also help the international community to target

resources to priority areas, allowing for more effective programming and increasing the potential of reaching success more quickly.

*In the Balance: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan* is an attempt to address this gaping hole in the international community's post-conflict response. It serves a dual function. First, it offers a snapshot of Afghanistan today, providing an external check on claims of success or failure. Second, it seeks to advance thinking on how to measure progress in post-conflict interventions. Using the study's findings as a baseline assessment, a similar study of Afghanistan in six months' or one year's time could show progress more clearly.

*In the Balance* builds on the model developed by the CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) Project for Iraq, as set forth in *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq's Reconstruction*.<sup>2</sup> It also draws on the findings of a recent CSIS–U.S. Institute of Peace Working Group study on Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction.<sup>3</sup> *In the Balance* focuses on the tension that exists between meeting the immediate needs and interests of Afghans and building a foundation for the establishment of long-term capacity for the Afghan state and society. Delivering on both can help Afghanistan reach the tipping point at which progress is likely to continue with less external aid.

1. Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., “A New Compact for Iraq,” remarks at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., June 21, 2005.

2. Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq's Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, September 2004), [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409\\_progressperil.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409_progressperil.pdf).

3. Mike Dziedzic, Frederick Barton, and Craig Cohen, *Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction*, CSIS–USIP Special Report, forthcoming, 2005.

Accomplishing both is no guarantee of success, however: countries in transition like Afghanistan survive in too volatile an environment to follow a linear path of progress. But experience in scores of post-conflict states shows that unless international efforts are making headway with both meeting short-term needs *and* building long-term capacity, trouble is imminent. In these cases, international assistance could be better spent, and the possibility of stumbling upon a winning strategy remains slim.

Post-conflict reconstruction must be strategic. It must not, however, be ideological or utopian or build off the grandiose concept of “nation building” with its colonial antecedents. Rather, it must offer a pragmatic view that engages local people and encourages the expansion of their basic rights and freedoms. *In the Balance: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan* is an effort to help international actors improve their understanding of and increase their effectiveness in Afghanistan and other post-conflict cases.

# Afghanistan's Reconstruction in Context

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On October 7, 2001, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom, toppling the Taliban regime and ushering in the longest period of sustained peace in two decades. The U.S. invasion also brought about the latest attempt to stabilize and build a strong state in Afghanistan, following repeated attempts from both internal and external



Remnants of past Soviet military presence are scattered throughout the country.

actors throughout the twentieth century. Historically, such attempts provoked stiff opposition and ultimately failed, including the most recent attempt by the Soviet Union during the 1980s.

The Soviets viewed Afghanistan as an unstable client state threatened by a conservative Islamic movement, and in 1979 they moved some 40,000 troops over the northern border.<sup>1</sup> This proved too

few to ensure stability, and the number increased to around 118,000 by the early 1980s. The Soviets relied in part on an Afghan army it had trained, equipped, and financed. The Afghan army numbered around 80,000 in 1978, but by late 1985 was estimated to have shrunk to half its size due to attrition.<sup>2</sup>

The Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion was decentralized, intensely parochial, conservative, and religiously inspired. It reflected Afghan culture then, and it continues to shape the Afghan identity today.<sup>3</sup> Today's military structures, such as the Afghan Military Forces (AMF) that are now being demobilized,<sup>4</sup> took their shape during the

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1. The military deployment followed a gradual buildup of Soviet advisers in the government in Kabul and in the Afghan armed forces. Some estimate that about 350 Soviet advisers were present at the 1978 revolution that brought in the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

2. These estimates are from [www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org).

3. See, among many others, Frederick Halliday's "War and Revolution in Afghanistan," *New Left Review*, no. 119 (January–February), 1980: 20–41, and Olivier Roy's *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) for full discussions.

resistance years. The civil war that followed and the struggle with the Taliban consolidated these predominantly northern, Tajik structures.<sup>5</sup> The considerable power of the “commander” figure today is in part derived from the intensely local nature of the resistance, which allowed local leaders to rapidly mobilize small groups of men.<sup>6</sup>

Many Afghans came to respect the resistance fighters, or *mujahideen*, for their success in repelling the technologically advanced Soviets. For others, however, a stronger memory is the bitter civil war that ensued in the vacuum left by the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.<sup>7</sup> Once Najibullah’s puppet regime had collapsed in 1992, the capital city became the prize that different *mujahideen* factions, now bitterly divided along ethnic lines, fought over. Having survived the Soviets, Kabul was shelled by Afghan militias—63,000 houses in Kabul were destroyed during this period of the war.<sup>8</sup> Looting, abduction, murder, rape, and bombing campaigns became common.<sup>9</sup> Those who commanded these offensives remain key figures in Afghanistan’s current political landscape: Abdul Sayyaf has links with the Supreme Court and retains a militia; Abdul Rashid Dostum is President Karzai’s military chief of staff; Mohammed Qasim Fahim was until recently the minister of defense and a vice president; Karim Khalili is currently vice president and minister of commerce; Gulbuddin Hekmatyar remains a threat to stability and is a CIA-listed terrorist.<sup>10</sup> This explains why many Afghans fear that the fall of the Taliban will bring back the rise of the warlords and a return to the civil war.

The civil war dismantled state institutions, fueled the drug trade, and led to hyperinflation and a state of general lawlessness.<sup>11</sup> The powerful regional trading families, mostly from the Pashtun tribes living along the lucrative southern and eastern border region, were frustrated.<sup>12</sup> Their frustration coincided with the ongoing Pakistani interest in extending strategic depth into the Afghan hinterland, ever mindful of potential conflict with India.<sup>13</sup> The Pakistani-supported Taliban thus grew rapidly as a political

4. The Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) project is funded mainly by the Japanese government and is managed by the United Nations. The Demobilization and Disarmament strands were completed in June 2005. Reintegration continues through 2006.

5. The Tajiks constitute about 30 percent of the population in Afghanistan. The Tajiks of the Panjshir and Shomali regions were dominant figures in the Northern Alliance, under the charismatic resistance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud. After the fall of Kabul in 2001, Tajiks dominated some key ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Education.

6. See the International Crisis Group’s description in “Getting Disarmament Back on Track,” Asia Briefing no. 35, February 23, 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3290&l=1>.

7. The constitutional *loya jirga* in 2003 was the scene of virulent expressions of both perspectives. Also, the participants in the Bonn Conference in 2001 (convened to plan Afghanistan’s post-Taliban future) note in the text of the agreement “their appreciation to the Afghan mujahideen who, over the years, have defended . . . independence, territorial integrity,” etc.

8. World Bank, *Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection: An Initial Assessment*, Sector Report, vol. 1, March 7, 2005.

9. Human Rights Watch, “Blood-Stained Hands: Past Atrocities in Kabul and Afghanistan’s Legacy of Impunity,” July 2005, <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/afghanistan0605/>.

10. Ibid.

11. From the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and the World Bank, “A Guide to Government in Afghanistan,” 2004, p. 6

12. For fuller discussion on the Pakistani trucking mafia and Taliban links, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

and military movement and controlled Kabul by 1996. The Taliban never pacified the whole country, however, and were not interested in the rehabilitation of central or local government institutions, preferring to rule by *fatwa* largely from Kandahar, which its leader, Mullah Omar, allegedly never left. During this time, al Qaeda financed the state in return for safe harbor.<sup>14</sup>

Under the Taliban, justice was summary and unpredictable. In a statement in October 1999, the United Nations Security Council expressed “grave concern at the seriously deteriorating humanitarian situation and deplored the worsening human rights situation—including forced displacements of civilian populations, summary executions, abuse and arbitrary detention of civilians, violence against women and girls, and indiscriminate bombing.”<sup>15</sup> The regime lost what scant international recognition it had through a mixture of human rights violations, its oppressive treatment of women, and its destruction of two ancient Buddhist statues in Bamiyan in 2001.<sup>16</sup>

Nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations operated during the Taliban regime, providing vital humanitarian assistance to a nation ravaged by drought. It was the events of September 11, 2001, however, that convinced the international community that the regime had to change. Afghan society was set for revolution once again.

## The U.S. War and its Aftermath

The United States and its coalition partners accomplished its military goals in 78 days. By December 2001, Afghanistan’s major urban centers, including Kandahar, were in



Afghans in Konduz play buzkashi, a traditional game whose best players were often chosen to join local militias.

coalition hands. However, as U.S. attention remained focused on the hunt for remaining al Qaeda operatives and Osama bin Laden, General Mohammad Fahim led the Northern Alliance into Kabul in mid-November, allegedly against the request of Pakistan and the United States, establishing a strong military stance in the run-up to Decem-

ber’s political negotiations in Bonn.

13. See Rasul Rais, *War without Winners: Afghanistan’s Uncertain Transition after the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

14. General Tommy Franks, Commander in Chief of the United States Central Command, told the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 7, 2002, that “the harbor is gone.”

15. “Afghan and UN: A Historical Perspective,” <http://www.unama-afg.org/about/info.htm>.

16. The Buddhist statues in Bamiyan were a UNESCO world heritage site.

These negotiations launched a four-year, nationally driven, UN-monitored political transition known as the “Bonn Process.” The *loya jirga*, a traditional committee broadly representative of the country’s different tribes and ethnicities, was the mechanism whereby legitimacy would be conferred on an interim administration in advance of national elections. This initiated the fragile but positive process of democracy building that has since encouraged a blossoming of national and local institutions, a developing civil society, and an enthusiastic response to democratic principles among Afghans.

Bonn, however, did not help to resolve the fundamental question of who was to provide security throughout the country. The agreement called for an international force under NATO—the International Security Assistance Forces, or ISAF—to secure the capital, but not areas outside of Kabul.<sup>17</sup> Politics within NATO hindered ISAF expansion.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, militia groups overran most of the country. Some were under the government’s control—run by provincial or district governors, or by General Fahim in his position as minister of defense.<sup>19</sup> Establishing a national army and police in Afghanistan meant disbanding the militia, a transfer that most regional commanders did not see serving their interests.

Perhaps the biggest challenge the Afghans faced was to rebuild a society in a time when trust was fragile. Author Pamela Constable captured the sentiment in June 2004:

Kabul was still an atavistic city of survivors and refugees, toughened by hardship and violence. People had spent years crouching in caves and waiting for the next bomb to shatter the windows. It was a place where each group of liberators had turned into oppressors, where children had learned to shove and kick and cheat and steal to eat, and where everyone had committed or endured shameful acts to survive. Removing the Taliban did not erase the habits or memories burned into a generation. This was a country with few heroes, only survivors, weighed down by boulders of vengeance and greed and tradition. Change would come slowly, if ever; trust would take a generation to rebuild.<sup>20</sup>

## State-building in Afghanistan Today

Although it was clear that the fall of the Taliban opened the space for political and economic transition, it was less clear what role the international community would play. The United Nations was deeply involved in Kosovo and East Timor, two comprehensive missions in which the organization was providing peacekeeping forces and serving as

17. The International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, currently deploys 8,000 troops under NATO command. In the past, ISAF has rotated among British, Canadian, German, Turkish, Italian, and French command and troops.

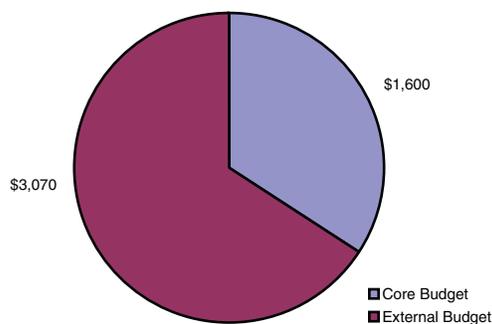
18. NATO only agreed to the expansion in October 2003. Provincial Reconstruction Teams became the mechanism for this process.

19. This is a widely reported issue. AREU and the World Bank in “A Guide to Government in Afghanistan” state: “The de facto states that exist in most areas outside Kabul are controlled by regional warlords and local commanders. Their makeup and operation vary from province to province, but they are built on power that is based on financial and military strength, as well as personal, factional and historical loyalties.”

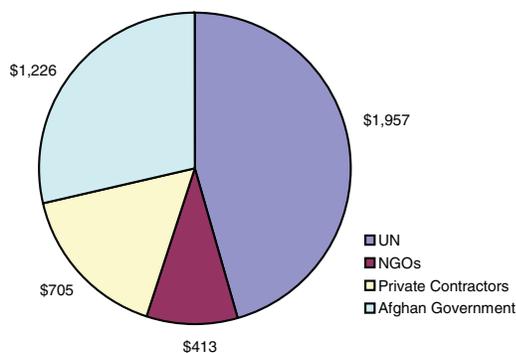
20. Pamela Constable, *Fragments of Grace: My Search for Meaning in the Strife of South Asia* (Dulles, Va.: Brassey’s, 2004), 219, 252.

the de facto government. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) to Afghanistan, argued to the Security Council on November 13, 2001, for a different approach: a “light footprint” role for the United Nations in Afghanistan. Despite Brahimi’s guiding principle, some other agencies of the UN family were already beginning to carve out major coordination and fund-raising roles for themselves that would require intensive deployments of international staff.

**Chart 1. Core and External Budget  
2002–2004** (millions of \$)



**Chart 2. Direct Recipients of Assistance  
2002–2004** (millions of \$)



Source: Ministry of Finance, Financial Report, 4th Quarter 1380–2nd Quarter 1383 (October 7, 2004).

By the beginning of 2002, the UN agencies had hurried to align “resources, people and actions behind a common nation-building strategy at the field level.”<sup>21</sup> This strategy was the National Development Framework, a comprehensive document written by Afghan technocrats within the Transitional Government of Afghanistan, mapping the country’s economic needs and direction. This document, rather than the “needs assessment” written by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for a January 2002 donor conference in Tokyo, became the coordinating document for all international and national actors in the country.

The argument that the Afghans had made, and one that figured in the SRSG’s comments to the Security Council, was that a transition needed to be locally led if it was to endure. Local leadership in turn meant that national state institutions had to be built, and participation by all regions and ethnic groups had to be considered. This reflected the Afghan anxiety that top-down approaches to state-building had in the past led to grassroots rebellion and would do so again, especially if mandated from the outside.

The “ownership” of the strategy meant that Afghans wanted to “own” the resources as well. The budget thus became political, stimulating a national debate over the way that assistance was delivered. The Afghan government “controls” 34 percent of the assistance money that was spent up until March 2004, meaning that those funds passed through government accounts (see chart 1). This serves as the “core budget,” which covers government salaries and operational expenses, as well as development activi-

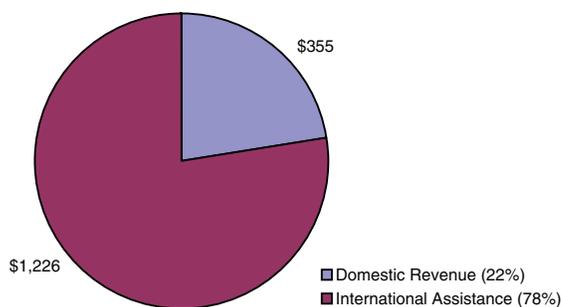
21. Mark Malloch-Brown, administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) at the time, speaking to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York, April 18, 2002.

ties.<sup>22</sup> The rest, or the “external budget,” goes directly from donors to UN agencies, NGOs, or private contractors (see chart 2).

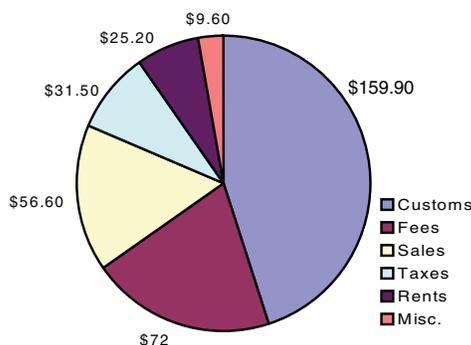
If the government is to be more than a symbol, it needs to be able to mobilize and account for the money it spends. To date, though, it has raised only about 22 percent of its own recurrent expenditure needs (see chart 3). This means that the Afghan government remains to a large extent a client of the international community. The Afghan people, in turn, have few of the rights or responsibilities of democratic citizens: they do not fund the treasury and thus are poorly represented. Until fiscal sustainability is secured—in other words, until the borders have been sealed and the duties levied there are remitted regularly—the government will not be truly accountable to its people.

There are signs that customs revenue is increasing as a direct result of political pressure (see chart 4). Duties on imported cars, tires, television sets, trucks, and fuel from Pakistan and Iran contribute the majority of the revenue. This means the border provinces of Herat, Kandahar, and Nangarhar have always been plum governorships as well as sources of instability whenever the government has tried to execute central authority. In fiscal year 2005, total customs revenues exceeded their budget target by 20 percent,<sup>23</sup> and the finance minister announced in June that customs revenue from Herat (where until recently Governor Ismail Khan would reportedly take anything up to \$1 million a day in taxes) increased by 38 percent to about \$68 million.<sup>24</sup>

**Chart 3. Sources of the Core Budget 2002–2004** (millions of \$)



**Chart 4. Sources of Domestic Revenue 2002–2004** (millions of \$)



Source: Ministry of Finance, Financial Report, 4th Quarter 1380–2nd Quarter 1383 (October 7, 2004).

International financial assistance is, and will remain, critical to development for many years to come in Afghanistan. This fact has meant that the “light footprint” of the United Nations’ rhetoric shields a heavier donor footprint behind the scenes. As of this writing, there are 44 donor bodies contributing in Afghanistan. As of October 2004, \$4.8 billion had been disbursed out of about \$10 billion committed, according to the

22. The Development Budget includes such programs as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, the Law and Order Trust Fund, the Afghan Stabilization Program, and the National Solidarity Program.

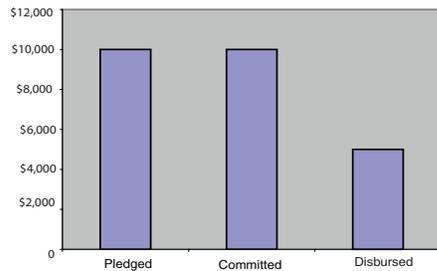
23. 4th Review under the Staff-Monitored Program, IMF, May 18, 2005.

24. Khalida Khursand, “Customs Revenue from Herat Increased this Year,” *Pajhwak Afghan News*, March 21, 2005.

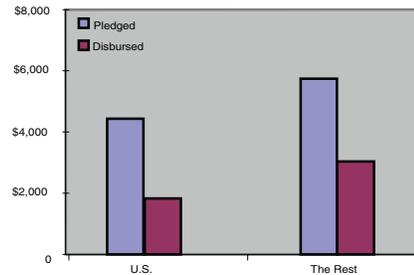
Afghan government. Charts 5 and 6 show the pledges versus the disbursements for all funding, and for U.S. funding in particular.

Given the volume of the assistance and the number of parties involved, coordination is critical to avoid inefficiencies. The government encourages donors to consult with the relevant partner ministries in one of the 12 coordinating committees, or “Consultative Groups.” The committees help the government to mobilize resources directly and the donors to ensure progress. Policy is thus mainstreamed into the budget formulation process.

**Chart 5. Donor Pledges and Disbursement to Date** (millions of \$)



**Chart 6. U.S. Pledges and Disbursement to Date** (millions of \$)



Source: Ministry of Finance, Financial Report, 4th Quarter 1380–2nd Quarter 1383 (October 7, 2004), from the Donor Assistance Database.

Some of the bilateral donors agreed to take leadership on particular issues. The United Kingdom, for instance, led the counternarcotics strategy, Germany led police training, Italy led reform of the justice sector, and Japan led disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). The United States is the lead nation for security sector reform, including the funding and training of the Afghan National Army. In theory, the system encourages lead nations to commit more resources and time to their issue; in practice, though, no such trend emerges. Italy has disbursed only \$78 million, less than non-lead countries such as Canada (\$182 million) and India (\$143 million).<sup>25</sup>

Our findings also show that there have been flaws in the international approach to the justice sector and to disarmament. Meanwhile, the cultivation of opium has increased since 2001 and has spread to nearly all the provinces. Stovepipes do not encourage crosscutting approaches; yet these issues are all crosscutting. Police training, soldier training, and disarmament are all part of security sector reform, but implementation is divided between three donors. Counternarcotics and police also fit together. The United States has begun to fund and manage operations in both counternarcotics and police training, implying a shift from the lead-nation approach.

## Conclusion

Donor coordination affects state-building efforts because it directly affects the capacity of the government. Most crucially, where donors bypass national government struc-

25. Ministry of Finance, Financial Report, 4th Quarter 1380–2nd Quarter 1383 (October 7, 2004).

tures, they sacrifice building government capacity for quick (albeit important) results. The history of Afghanistan reveals a pattern of state-builders who have ignored ordinary Afghans in their rush to reform.

The international community in Afghanistan today has the dual challenge of strengthening the central government and building more participatory approaches that allow Afghans a stake in their future. Our findings measure reconstruction progress in Afghanistan against this challenge.

# Methodology

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The methodology designed for *In the Balance: Measuring Afghanistan's Reconstruction* is intended to offer an impartial, baseline measure of Afghanistan's reconstruction as of the first half of 2005. It seeks to capture the best thinking and reporting on Afghanistan and to consider this in the context of local perceptions of progress. Using this baseline, a follow-up study in late 2005 or early 2006 would show clear trend lines of progress (or lack of progress) over time.

The assumption guiding this methodology is that the quality of decision-making in post-conflict environments falls along a bell curve. A small percentage is quite good—attuned to the strategic choices facing local actors, knowledgeable of the particular history, culture, and politics of the place, and experienced with political transitions, rebuilding fragile states, and war-torn societies. A small percentage is also dangerously bad—routinely falling into well-known and avoidable traps. The majority of decision-making, however, falls somewhere in between these two poles—in the middle of the bell curve.

The intent of our methodology is to capture the thinking that takes place “ahead of the curve” and to repackage this for everyone from top decision-makers down to program-level officers. As we wrote in our 2004 study of Iraq, “Post-conflict situations are notoriously difficult to evaluate, due to myriad factors that arise in the aftermath of violent conflicts, including continued hostilities, political upheaval, ethnic divisions, and mass exploitation.”<sup>1</sup> This “measure of progress” study for Afghanistan will serve as a tool to avoid poor decisions and to highlight good decisions in order to replicate success.

The rationale for measuring progress in post-conflict environments is clear. What is less clear is how to measure in a way that is trusted by those at home and abroad (by both the government and local populations). The CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project brings three unique elements to its methodology: we strive for an unbiased perspective; we incorporate local voices; and we measure not what is most easily quantifiable, but those elements that matter most.

**UNBIASED PERSPECTIVE.** In the absence of a trusted method to measure progress, claims of success or failure appear as little more than political spin. The U.S. government is routinely accused of offering optimistic assessments of progress, while the media are often criticized for focusing solely on the negative. Polling is viewed as overly responsive to the events of the day, while interviews and focus groups are seen as too limited in scale. The PCR Project has developed an integrated model that combines

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1. Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq's Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, September 2004), p. 7, [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409\\_progressperil.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409_progressperil.pdf).

“objective” data with local perceptions and that balances types of sources to overcome inherent biases.

**INCORPORATING LOCAL VOICES.** Because reconstruction ultimately depends on local ownership or “winning hearts and minds,” Afghan views of progress are essential to making accurate assessments. Too often, our sense of progress is based solely on “expert” opinion or media and public sources, which may misread locals’ interpretations of events on the ground. Our methodology seeks to measure reconstruction in terms of the impact international efforts have had on people’s everyday lives. We thus rely on official polling sources, our own interviews with Afghans during two field visits, and interviews with more than 1,600 Afghans throughout the country conducted by Afghan researchers.

**MEASURING WHAT MATTERS.** For the purposes of this report, CSIS has reworked the four pillars of the *CSIS/AUSA Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework*<sup>2</sup> to more closely fit the situation in Afghanistan, using the following five pillars: Security, Governance and Participation, Justice and Accountability, Economic Opportunity, and Social Well-being. These five pillars capture the essential facets of reconstruction in Afghanistan. They are not independent categories of analysis, but part of an integrated whole in which progress or lack of progress in any one category affects progress in the other four. CSIS designed indicators for each of these categories that address key levers of transformation in Afghanistan today. We evaluated information in these categories based on two criteria intended to capture the dual nature of reconstruction progress: whether the short-term needs and interests of Afghans were being met, and whether the long-term capacity of the Afghan state and society was being built. Furthermore, we evaluate progress on the basis of outcomes. Outcomes are the on-the-ground conditions that affect Afghans’ daily lives and Afghanistan’s future.

Our methodology has three major elements: (1) collecting and sorting data; (2) rating and graphing data points; and (3) analysis and conclusions.

## 1. Collecting and Sorting Data

### Collecting Data

*In the Balance* relies on three major sources of information: public sources, media sources, and Afghan voices. Afghan voices are culled from polling data, interviews conducted by CSIS staff in Afghanistan, and interviews conducted by Afghan researchers.<sup>3</sup> Each type of source received equal representation in the data, as this presents a more accurate picture of the reconstruction than any one source in isolation, and also minimizes any biases inherent in a single type of source.

2. See “The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework,” CSIS-AUSA, May 2002, <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/framework.pdf>.

3. Interviews conducted by CSIS staff with public officials in Afghanistan or elsewhere register as public source information.

**PUBLIC SOURCES.** The CSIS project team collected public source information related to Afghanistan’s reconstruction from January 2004 until June 2005. We categorized as public source data all publicly available official and non-official information (excluding the media). Official sources included reports, press releases, and statements from U.S. government entities and UN agencies; non-official sources included NGOs and research institutions such as think tanks and academia. (See table 1 for a list of public sources.)

**Table 1. Public Sources**

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Afghan Women's Fund	International Crisis Group
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)	International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
American Forces Information Service	International Press Institute
American Forces Press Service	International Republican Institute
Amnesty International	Internews
Asia Foundation	Refugees International
Asian Development Bank	Reporters Without Borders
British Agencies Afghanistan Group	UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)
Brookings Institution	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
Clingendael Institute	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan Coalition Press Information Center	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
Center on International Cooperation, New York University	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR)	United Nations News Centre
Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Secretariat	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington, D.C.	U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP)
European Commission	U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium	U.S. Department of State
Human Rights Watch	U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
Institute for War and Peace Reporting	Women's Rights in Afghanistan Fund
International Committee of the Red Cross	World Bank Group

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**Table 2. Media Sources**


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Afghan News	International Herald Tribune
Afghan Press Monitor (Cheraagh)	Islaah
Agence France Presse	Kabul Weekly
Alertnet	Khaleej Times
Al Jazeera	London Times
Anis	Los Angeles Times
Arman-e-Milli	M2 Presswire
Associated Press	New York Times
Australian	Pajhwok Afghan News
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)	Pakistan Daily Times
Bloomberg	Pakistan Press International
Cable News Network (CNN)	PakTribune
Central Asia—Caucasus Analyst	Press Trust of India
Chicago Sun-Times	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
Chicago Tribune	Reuters
Christian Science Monitor	Scripps Howard News Service
Deutsche Press Agentur	Seattle Times
Dow Jones Newswires	Tech Central Station
Economist	Voice of America
Financial Times	Wall Street Journal
Foreign Affairs	Washington Post
Globalist	Washington Times
Globe and Mail	World Today
Independent	Xinhua News Agency

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**MEDIA SOURCES.** Our team of researchers monitored various media sources from January 2004 until June 2005. (See table 2 for a list of media sources.). We chose our sources on the basis of multiple criteria, valuing those outlets that had correspondents on the ground in Afghanistan as well as those that offered views that spanned the political spectrum.

**AFGHAN VOICES.** Afghan voices were culled from polling data, interviews conducted by CSIS staff in Afghanistan, and interviews conducted by Afghan researchers.

#### Polling data

Our data came from 16 public opinion polls conducted by 11 different organizations. These surveys captured aspects of Afghan public opinion from January 2004 through April 2005. (See table 3 for a list of polling sources.)

**Table 3. Polling Sources**

<b>Survey Dates</b>	<b>Polling Organization</b>	<b>Population Polled</b>	<b>Target Topic</b>
January–August 2004	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission	4,151 people and 2,000 focus group attendees in 32 provinces	Human rights, security
February–March 2004	Asia Foundation and Charney Research	804 people in 29 provinces	General, security, elections
Spring–Summer 2004	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit	110 people in Herat Province	Labor migration, urban and rural livelihood
February, August, September 2004	Amnesty International	At least 200 people in 4 provinces	Women, security
March–April 2004	International Republican Institute	2,378 people in 17 provinces	Security
July 2004	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit	390 households in 21 villages	Land, justice, poverty
August 2004	Institute for War and Peace Reporting	3,000 people in 21 provinces	Media, elections
September 2004	The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium	763 people in 6 provinces	Security
September 2004–February 2005	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit	997 people in 3 provinces	Labor migration, urban livelihood
September 2004–February 2005	Altai Consulting for United States Agency for International Development – Office of Transition Initiatives	1,507 people in 15 provinces	Media
October 2004	International Republican Institute	17,110 people in 26 provinces	Elections
November 2004	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate	6,598 farmers	Opium
February 2005	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate	225 heads of villages in 34 provinces	Opium, general

**Table 3. Polling Sources** *(continued)*

Survey Dates	Polling Organization	Population Polled	Target Topic
February 2005	International Crisis Group	60+ senior Afghan politicians interviewed in Kabul and several provinces	Governance
February–April 2005	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit	65 refugees living and working in Tehran, Iran	Refugees, economic opportunity
March 2005	i to i Research	510 people in Balkh province	General

#### Interviews conducted by CSIS project staff with Afghans

During our two visits to Afghanistan in February–March 2005 and April–May 2005, five members of the PCR project conducted 112 interviews with 662 Afghans in seven provinces, in both urban and rural areas.<sup>4</sup> Interviews were conducted one-on-one or in groups, for 30 minutes to an hour each.

#### Interviews conducted by Afghan researchers

CSIS project staff, in collaboration with Sayara Media and Communication, trained a team of 12 Afghan researchers to conduct interviews with Afghans from April 16 to April 28, 2005. The Afghan team conducted over 1,000 interviews with 1,609 Afghans in 20 of the country's 34 provinces.

Interviews were conducted in the city of Kabul<sup>5</sup> and in a mix of urban and rural areas in the following provinces:

- North: Baghlan, Balkh, Bamiyan, and Konduz;
- South: Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, and Paktia;
- East: Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar, and Nuristan,;
- West: Badghis and Herat;
- Capital Region (not including Kabul): Kapisa, Logar, Panjshir, Parwan, and Wardak.

Afghan researchers traveled to locations often considered too insecure or remote for internationals, gaining access to perspectives beyond the reach of many foreign assistance programs and international observers. Four of the 12 researchers and 606 of the 1,609 interviewees were women. Rather than present interviewees with a

4. The areas were Balkh, Ghazni, Kabul, Kapisa, Kandahar, Konduz, and Parwan.

5. Interviews in Kabul city were not included in the Capital Region.

fixed set of questions, our researchers were trained to engage their fellow Afghans in structured conversations and to elicit comments not typically shared with foreign interlocutors. In this way, the interviewees determined priorities and areas of importance.

### Sorting Data

More than 7,000 pieces of information were collected from our sources and categorized as data points. Data points included statistics, anecdotes, and events; they were chosen



An elder in Kapisa province discusses his impressions of the reconstruction effort.

because they provided particular insight into significant events or trends in Afghanistan’s reconstruction. The large majority of data points were descriptions of *outcomes*—conditions essential to the creation of long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> A small number of data points were either direct outputs of programming (for example, how many clinics or schools have been constructed) or inputs—the resources or activities used to produce outputs (for example, amounts of money spent, or the stated priorities of the Afghan government). Outputs and inputs stood in as proxies for outcomes only when data were insufficient.

Data points were sorted according to 20 indicators CSIS designed to help determine whether reconstruction progress is occurring in Afghanistan (see table 4). Each indicator is assigned to one of the five pillars of reconstruction.

**Table 4. Indicators**

Pillar	Indicators
Security	Commanders Insurgency Disarmament/Demobilization/Reintegration (DDR) Afghan National Army Afghan National Police International forces Crime
Governance and Participation	Central government Local governance Political freedoms and participation

6. Mike Dziedzic, Rick Barton, and Craig Cohen, *Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction*, CSIS-USIP Special Report, forthcoming 2005.

**Table 4. Indicators** *(continued)*

Pillar	Indicators
Justice and Accountability	Justice system Rights protection Impunity
Economic Opportunity	Jobs and cost of living Poppy and illicit activity Economic climate
Social Well-being	Infrastructure and communications Health care and nutrition Repatriation and shelter Education

The 20 indicators provide a comprehensive look at reconstruction in Afghanistan today. Much of the information can be categorized under more than one pillar. Every effort was made to be consistent in sorting data and avoiding duplication.

## 2. Rating and Graphing Data Points

### Rating Data

- Efforts to measure progress often ignore qualitative information because it is difficult to incorporate into quantitative measurements. Yet ignoring this information bypasses essential components of what actually constitutes progress. To evaluate qualitative information in a quantitative way, data were rated against two scales in relation to one another: whether immediate needs and interests of Afghans were being met, and
- whether Afghan capacity to provide for these needs and interests over the long term was being built.

Both scales, to some extent, are subjective measurements, although the ratings were based on a set of consistent criteria. The standardization of this process allows this methodology to be used as a baseline measure of future progress. Data points were rated by a team of 15 CSIS staff (past and present). Interview data were rated by CSIS staff and our 12 Afghan researchers. Ratings indicate Afghans' and CSIS's sense of what is necessary for a more peaceful, democratic, and prosperous future in both the short and long term.

CSIS staff and Afghans rated data points independently of one another and the group at large in order to avoid the “group think” that takes place when project teams discourage independent thinking because of internal pressure to forge consensus. “Group think” can prove dangerous when agreed-upon conclusions are wildly off the mark.

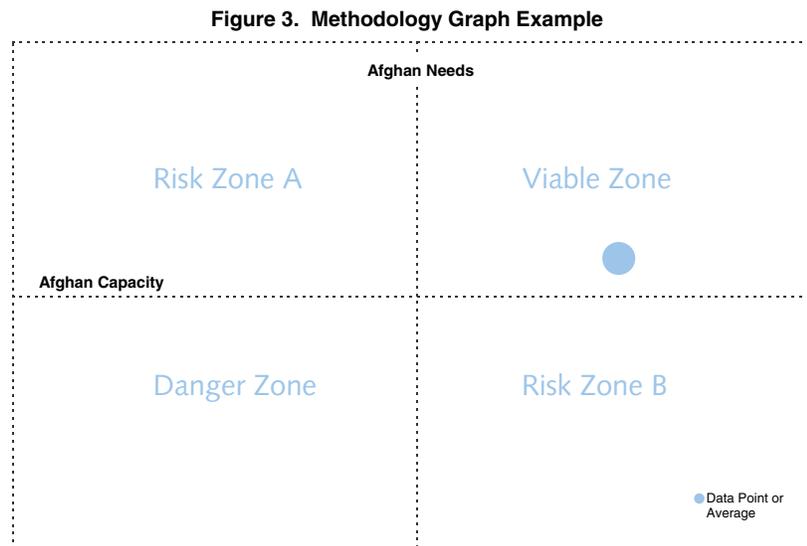
Our assumption, based on the “wisdom of crowds” theory, was that our collective findings would be superior to the conclusions of any of the individuals in the group.<sup>7</sup> These findings would thus lead to a more accurate portrayal of ground truth than reliance on only one opinion—no matter how knowledgeable.

The CSIS project team rated all of the data points culled from public sources, media sources, and polling of Afghans. The collective ratings for each data point were then averaged. In this way, no one person could skew results, as each point represents the mean of 15 different individuals. Further, the sheer number of points meant that no one point was overly influential.

Interviews were rated in two ways. CSIS staff and Afghan researchers gave interviews a rating for each of the five pillars. These five ratings represented an assessment of the interviewee’s perception of reconstruction progress. (For more information about the methods used by Afghan researchers to rate and map data points, please see *Voices of a New Afghanistan*.<sup>8</sup>) In addition, quotes from CSIS interviews were categorized as data points, rated by project staff, and averaged as described above.

### Graphing Data Points

Data were graphed on an  $x$ - $y$  grid (see figure 3). The  $x$  axis of the graphs represents whether long-term Afghan capacity is being built; the  $y$  axis represents whether short-term needs and interests are being met.



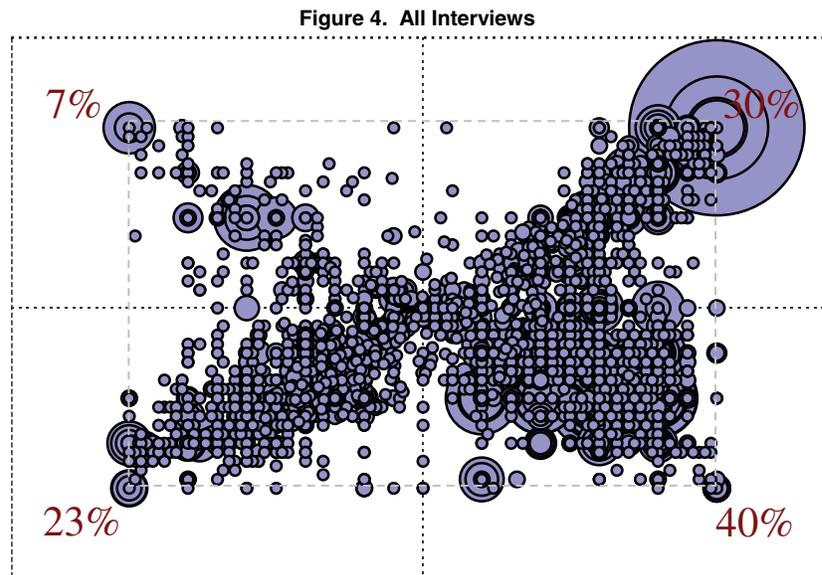
7. Notably, we believe that this process tends to capture the richness of the collective knowledge of groups, as described in James Surowiecki’s *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations* (New York: Doubleday, 2004). See Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq’s Reconstruction*, for a comprehensive discussion of this concept.

8. *Voices of a New Afghanistan*, CSIS, June 2005, [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/voa\\_report.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/voa_report.pdf).

The upper right quadrant, the “Viable Zone,” represents sustainable Afghan capacity as well as satisfaction of immediate needs and interests by Afghans and international partners. The lower left quadrant is the “Danger Zone,” representing a lack of sustainable capacity with few needs and interests being met. The upper left and lower right quadrants are “Risk Zones,” in which capacity and needs are not aligned. These quadrants point to either an overemphasis on satisfying short-term needs at the expense of the long-term development of the country (Risk Zone A), or an overly narrow focus on building long-term capacity while overlooking immediate needs and interests (Risk Zone B).

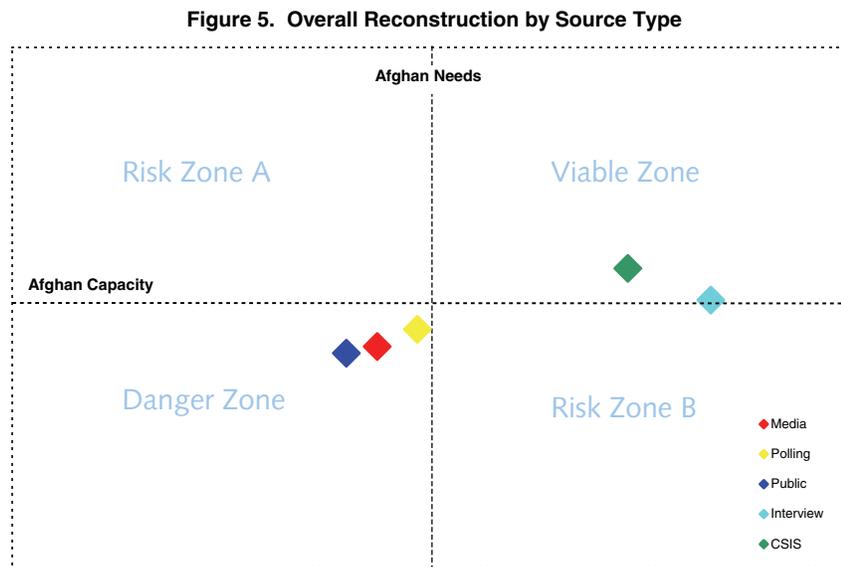
Points on the graphs may represent one or more data points. In instances when we thought it was important to illustrate density of points, bubbles were used to indicate a higher concentration of points.

Figure 4 shows the results of our CSIS and Afghan interview results across all sectors; the size of the circles signifies frequency of responses, while the percentages represent the percentage of all respondents falling into a particular quadrant.<sup>9</sup>



After data collection, we examined the distribution of data by source type to reveal the biases inherent in any one type of source. We found that public sources were only marginally more negative than media sources, and that polling was slightly more positive than either public or media sources. Averages for all three, however, fell in the Danger Zone (see figure 5), indicating that those sources believed that neither short-term nor long-term needs were being met. Interviews were by far the most positive and fell in the Viable Zone.

9. For a full report of our interview results and methodology, see *Voices of a New Afghanistan*.



### 3. Analysis and Conclusions

In the final stage of the project, CSIS staff analyzed results and drew conclusions and recommendations based in part on the graphical results of the data. We looked at two factors when interpreting the graphs: the *average* and the *data spread*.

- The average point permitted comparison between different pillars and indicators, and allowed an assessment of overall reconstruction progress. The average is an effective way to track progress over time.
- Data-spread graphs highlighted the range of data, showing the diversity in any one pillar, indicator, or region. These graphs allowed us to isolate particular data clusters and to identify consistent themes falling in specific sections of the graph, as well as to see the percentage of data in each quadrant. Often, disparate data within a pillar graph would point to differences between indicators.

After identifying the dominant characteristic of the graphs for each pillar, we went back to the data to identify trends and themes, as well as successes and current and potential trouble spots. Further, we were able to evaluate data across pillars in terms of setting (urban or rural), region, and gender, and whether the data was security-relevant. These methods allowed us to see the graphs as nuanced visual representations of the reconstruction effort.

The graphs drove the analysis of the most pressing issues in Afghanistan. We drew upon the analysis to develop findings specific to each pillar and indicator. The findings are discussed in detail in the following chapters.

The recommendations in the final chapter are based on many components: the results of our methodology; field visits to the region; analysis of numerous studies of Afghanistan's present and future; the advice and expertise of other reconstruction and

**Table 5. Resource Organizations**

Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission	International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) –NATO
Afghan Media Resource Center (AMRC)	Internews
Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS)	Kroll Security International Limited
Afghanistan New Beginnings Program	Mercy Corps
Afghanistan NGO Security Office (ANSO)	Middle East Institute
Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)	Ministry of Health, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Afghans for Afghans	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR)	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Aid Afghanistan	NEDA Telecommunications
Aina	Office of Administrative Affairs, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
American Institute of Afghan Studies	Office of the Special Representative of the European Union for Afghanistan
Asia Foundation	Provincial Reconstruction Team, Bamiyan
CARE International	Provincial Reconstruction Team, Ghazni
Center on International Cooperation, New York University	Provincial Reconstruction Team, Konduz
Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan	Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty
Department of Defense	RAND Corporation
Department of State	Sayara Media and Communication
Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA)	U.S. Institute of Peace
Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington, D.C.	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
First MicroFinance Bank	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
Foundation for Culture and Civil Society	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Government Accountability Office	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Help the Afghan Children	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
Hoover Institute, Stanford University	U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
International Crisis Group	World Bank
International Foundation for Election Systems	
International Medical Corps (IMC)	
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	
International Republican Institute	

Afghanistan experts; and broad-ranging interviews and consultations with a wide swath of people, including Afghan government officials and staff, UN and U.S. government staff, bilateral donors, U.S. and NATO military officers, international and local NGOs, reconstruction contractors, and Afghans from all walks of life (see table 5). The recommendations take a crosscutting approach to the challenges highlighted under each pillar.

# Security

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The security situation in Afghanistan has improved because of the international military presence, but crime remains a serious concern, and commanders continue to wield significant influence.<sup>1</sup>

- Most Afghans welcome the presence of international forces.
- The Afghan National Army (ANA) is a symbol of national unity and pride.
- Commanders still rule local areas, often through the Afghan National Police (ANP).
- Crime—not the Taliban or al Qaeda—is the chief security concern of Afghans.

The United States has made security a reconstruction priority since the fall of the Taliban. The bulk of the United States' expenditures in Afghanistan have been for its own military operations, including the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), training and equipping the Afghan National Army, and counternarcotics activities.

Although the U.S. contribution to security reform has delivered some early results—such as the perceived effectiveness of the ANA—striking the balance between short- and long-term considerations remains difficult. For example, in several cases, the Afghan government and its international partners decided to co-opt local commanders into official government posts in order to weaken potential anti-government factions. This tactic, however, has also weakened the government's legitimacy in the eyes of many Afghans, who simply see the same commanders who have wrought havoc on their lives now officially recognized members of Afghanistan's government. Security gains from such measures may prove illusory.

Criminality, particularly that linked to commanders and their militias, is corroding long-term government capacity. Rebuilding an effective police force has proved challenging: the effort is poorly funded compared to ANA reform, and police are often seen as tools of commanders now holding official positions. Indeed, Afghans are more concerned about crime than about the Taliban or Al Qaeda.

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Security is based on stable rule of law, but what law? The law imposed by guns? — Bamiyan

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1. By “commander” we mean to capture those with significant military influence over local areas or significant regions. This can mean anyone from mid- and lower-level commanders of militia troops, either in the Afghan Military Forces or in the “unofficial” forces, to provincial governors acting through the means of a militia. For a comprehensive review of the historical meaning of commanders in the Afghan context, see the International Crisis Group, *Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan*, ICG Asia Report no. 65, September 30, 2003.

Meanwhile, insurgent violence is rising again, with over 400 Taliban-related deaths in the first half of 2005.<sup>2</sup> This suggests the international community still has a crucial role to play in providing security. But if the objective is long-term security, the short-term tactics are critical, and several of the short-term maneuvers used by the Afghan government and the international community actually may be counterproductive in terms of long-term goals. Moreover, our analysis suggests that aligning the tactics used in the security sector of post-conflict reconstruction with those used in the governance sector is a precondition for getting either right.

## Security Indicators

Table 6 lists various aspects, or indicators, of security in the current Afghan situation, each of which is discussed below. Figure 6 shows the state of security, in terms of long-term development and the satisfaction of short-term needs, by region. Figure 7 presents the interview data on security. Figure 8 graphs the state of each security indicator.

**Table 6. Security Indicators**

Indicator	Details
International forces	U.S. and coalition forces, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), NATO
Afghan National Army	Target numbers, deployments, pay, symbolism
Afghan National Police	Targets, deployments, corruption
Crime	Child kidnapping, murder, robbery, looting
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, targets, achievements to date, illegal militias
Commanders	Warlords and minor commanders, effect on governance
Insurgency	Attacks on NGOs, Taliban, effect on elections

2. Andrew North, "What Now for the Taleban," BBC News, World Edition, July 3, 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4072830.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4072830.stm).

Figure 6. Security by Region

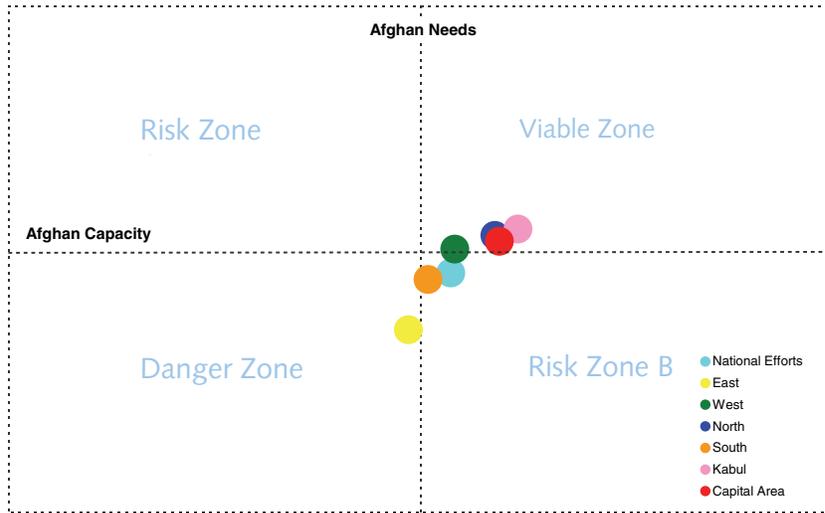
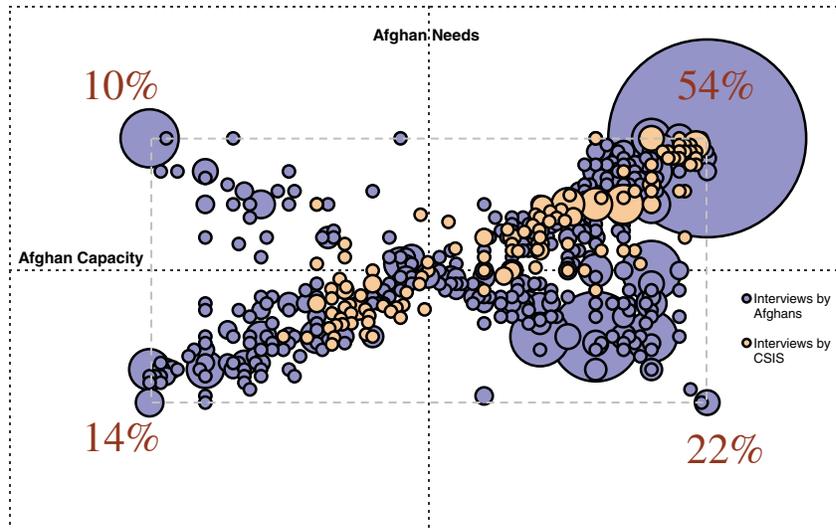
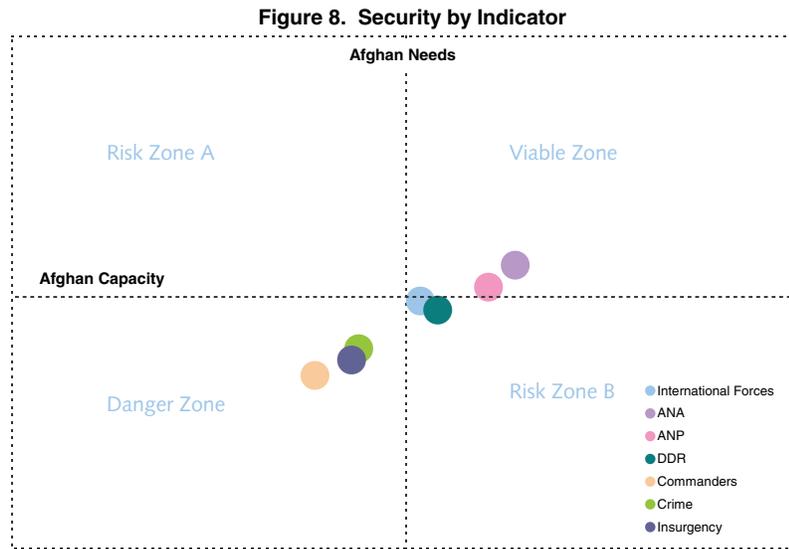


Figure 7. Security Interviews





## International Forces

Most Afghans welcome the international forces, seeing them as guarantors of security across Afghanistan. Our findings indicate that Afghans feel more secure and are optimistic about Afghan security forces as a direct result of the international presence (see figure 9). With a collective memory of 23 years of conflict, any signs promising increased security in Afghanistan should be expected to produce a significant degree of optimism. The positive results that fall in the Viable Zone, as in figure 7 and figure 8, are a function of increasing international troop numbers, PRT expansion, growing PRT operational success, and the return of Afghans from abroad as a response to perceived stability. A small amount of data nevertheless falls in the Danger Zone, reflecting the sensitive nature of the foreign troop presence.

The United States currently deploys about 18,000 troops throughout Afghanistan,<sup>3</sup> and has spent approximately \$53.8 billion on security alone.<sup>4</sup> The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), now under NATO command, patrols and secures Kabul. NATO currently deploys 8,300 total forces that are essential to providing rapid response to combat insurgent activity. These forces have succeeded in giving the nascent government the space to grow without fear of being toppled by insurgents despite continuing Taliban activity.

A security pact between the United States and Afghanistan ensures an ongoing strategic relationship under which permanent U.S. military bases are to be established in Afghanistan. Our interviews with Afghans reveal resistance to this plan; for some, it is too reminiscent of Soviet occupation. At the same time, most Afghans accept the idea

3. United States Department of Defense, "FY 2005 Supplemental Request for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation Unified Assistance," February 2005, 5.

4. Amy Belasco, "The Cost of Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Enhanced Security," Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., March 14, 2005.

that international forces will remain in the country until indigenous security forces have the ability to take over security operations.

Our findings also highlight the unpredictability of the security environment. The anti-American demonstrations that followed reports of Koran desecration at the U.S. prison facility at Guantanamo Bay reflect Afghan sensitivity to the presence of foreign troops. The conduct of international forces—in particular their treatment of Afghan civilians and detainees—is a potential flashpoint. It is unclear to what extent negative incidents drive recruitment into insurgent forces, but it is certain that the methods used by international security forces will remain the subject of intense scrutiny.

The PRTs introduced in 2002, and now almost two dozen strong, spearhead the international commitment to provide security throughout the country and have the potential to bring immediate and long-term improvements.<sup>5</sup> Our data suggest that the PRTs operate best in a supporting role, bolstering ongoing indigenous security sector reforms and providing security for Afghan and NGO reconstruction activities. PRTs are not cost-effective reconstruction contractors. However, when they provide leverage for the Afghan government in carrying out delicate political appointments and removals (such as the firing of a corrupt chief of police in Gardez), implementing DDR, or deploying the ANA, then they yield important returns—including forging strong relationships with the communities in which they operate. Even in this support role, however, PRTs are most effective when they are a visible and credible military force.

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**Because of ISAF, security is good. The U.S. military is the best. — Kabul**

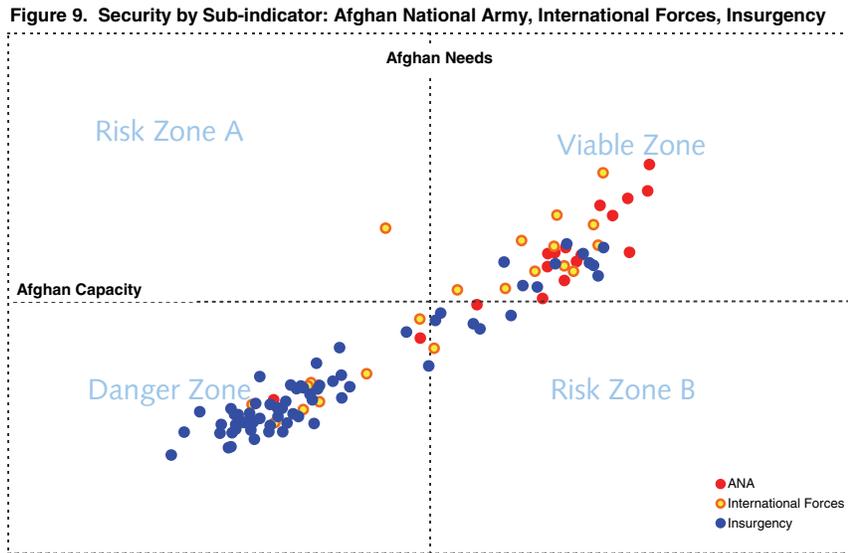
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The PRTs' effectiveness has improved as they have increasingly recognized their coordinating role in the provinces. The Afghan government is optimistic that PRTs, and thus security, can be integrated into a broader governance strategy. With its international partners, the government is beginning to implement the Afghan Stabilization Program,<sup>6</sup> or ASP, which allocates special funds and security capabilities to provincial governors. Within this framework, the United States is developing a pilot Regional Development Zone (RDZ) in Kandahar province, whereby tactical PRTs will be deployed to secure vulnerable sites such as courthouses, customs houses, banks, and governors' offices. RDZs cover larger geographical areas and have explicit mandates to coordinate multisectoral local and international efforts in their regions.<sup>7</sup>

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5. The PRT concept was intended to create a security umbrella for reconstruction outside of Kabul. Some NGOs have accused the PRTs of blurring the military/civilian lines, endangering NGO safety. Others recognize that they facilitate their work in otherwise inaccessible areas. The United States was the first to deploy them; Germany, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom also established PRTs in the north and west regions. There are now 21 PRTs in operation, of which 11 are U.S.-run. Each has about 50–100 military personnel. The U.S.-run PRTs are in Gardez, Ghazni, Parwan, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Khost, Qalat, Asadabad, Tarin Kowt, Lashkar Gah, and Sharana. From Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, June 15, 2005.

6. ASP is one of six national priority programs (NPPs) along with the National Solidarity Program and the National Emergency Employment Program. NPPs are intended to coordinate assistance. For more information, see "The Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan: National Priority Program (NPPs): An Overview," July 2004, [http://www.af/resources/gov\\_conf/Provincial%20Seminar/English/NPPs%20An%20Overview%20June%202004%20-%20English%20Version.pdf](http://www.af/resources/gov_conf/Provincial%20Seminar/English/NPPs%20An%20Overview%20June%202004%20-%20English%20Version.pdf).



PRTs are also a springboard for classic counterinsurgency operations. U.S. commanders directed the deployment of small U.S. units (40 soldiers) to live in remote Afghan villages, thereby increasing rapid response capacity, improving intelligence, and reducing the insurgents' competitive advantage in unpredictability and flexibility. This raises questions for some Afghans and internationals alike, however, about whether military units deployed to collect intelligence as a primary function can also gain the trust of local populations necessary to foster local ownership and development.

### The Afghan National Army

The Afghan National Army (ANA) is a symbol of national unity and pride. The ANA is the best performing indicator in Security, both in terms of building long-term capacity and in meeting short-term needs. The largest portion of our data on the ANA falls in the Viable Zone, reflecting substantial U.S. assistance, a notably positive trend in capabilities, and optimism among Afghans that the ANA will meet or surpass expectations. Equally important, the ANA is a strong symbol of national unity. Both the soldiers and civilian command are thought to be representative of all of Afghanistan's ethnicities, meaning that it is Afghanistan's first truly national army in more than 25 years.<sup>8</sup>

The United States has taken the lead in training and equipping the ANA; in fiscal year 2005 it is to contribute \$1.3 billion alone to this task.<sup>9</sup> Further, between 300 and 600 U.S. troops are currently embedded with Afghan forces and about 1,400 U.S.

7. Kathleen T. Rhem, "Provincial Teams Securing, Rebuilding Afghanistan," American Forces Press Service, February 18, 2004, [http://www.defense.gov/news/Feb2004/n02182004\\_200402181.html](http://www.defense.gov/news/Feb2004/n02182004_200402181.html).

8. For a fuller discussion of the historical importance and role of the Afghan National Army, see Gilles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan 1979 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

9. Belasco, "The Cost of Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Enhanced Security."

troops are training them. The U.S. military pays the salaries of the ANA directly.<sup>10</sup> ANA salaries range from \$75 to \$180 a month—significantly more than other civil servants are paid—and as of May 2005 there were over 23,000 fully trained ANA troops.<sup>11</sup> This is a dramatic increase since the beginning of 2004, when desertions were high.<sup>12</sup>

It remains to be seen whether the ANA can meet the Bonn agreement goal of 70,000 troops by the end of 2007 and can take over the mission of combating the insurgency, protecting the borders, and dealing with large internal security crises. The ANA's ability to conduct security operations is improving, but its competence remains relatively untested. In March 2004, the ANA deployed 1,500 troops to Herat to “ensure security, prevent regional clashes and show the presence of the central government in Herat province.”<sup>13</sup> The resulting replacement of Ismail Khan as regional governor was peaceful. In April 2004, the ANA deployed 600 troops to Faryab province when General Dostum, a powerful regional commander, moved his militia to Maimana. Both situations provided evidence of a willing and effective force that could stabilize unrest.



Afghan National Army soldiers in Kandahar, trained and equipped by U.S. forces in southern Afghanistan.

The data about the ANA that fall within the Danger Zone, although minimal, point to challenges in recruiting and retention, establishing a truly multiethnic force, and funding the force in the future. In its 2005 budget, the Afghan government allocated the ANA \$126 million for wages and salaries and \$704 million for non-wage investment. This represents about a fifth of the Afghan government's operating and development budgets, respectively.<sup>14</sup> Due to the increasing size of the force and a wage scale higher than other parts of the civil service, the fiscal strain of the ANA is likely to increase as it is increasingly absorbed into the operating budget.<sup>15</sup>

10. Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, May 19 2005.

11. Salary information from interviews with defense officials. Troop training levels from Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, June 15 2005.

12. In 2004, [www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org) reported a desertion rate of 10 percent for 2004.

13. Amin Tarzi, “Afghanistan Report,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, March 25, 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/reports/afghan-report/2004/03/12-250304.asp>.

14. Afghan Ministry of Finance figures, <http://www.af/mof/budget/1384/index.html>.

15. International Monetary Fund, “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan—Fourth Review Under the Staff-Monitored Program,” May 18, 2005, [http://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2005/051805.htm#P32\\_13321](http://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2005/051805.htm#P32_13321).

## The Afghan National Police

Corruption is a significant obstacle to the success of the Afghan National Police. While some Afghans believe the police are both professional and competent in securing urban areas, the predominant view is that corruption in the ANP is a serious problem. Nearly 40 percent of our data on police from media, official, and Afghan sources fall in the Danger Zone, a far higher proportion than for the ANA.

Germany is the “lead nation” for training the police force,<sup>16</sup> but training is behind schedule, with only 20,000 police trained out of a target of 62,000.<sup>17</sup> To speed the process, the United States began training police in 2003. As of 2005, the four-week police training course did not include weapons, driver, or literacy training. This has helped get more police officers on the street, but their training is less comprehensive than that of the ANA.

The relationship between provincial commanders, their demilitarized militiamen, and the new police forces is unclear. Unlike ANA soldiers, ANP officers work in their

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I would walk the streets at night, but I still don't feel safe with these militias. — Kandahar

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hometowns, which, combined with the cursory vetting of recruits, has created the impression that the ANP has merely “re-hatted” demobilized militiamen who remain under the control of local commanders. This impression is reinforced by the fact that some police chiefs appointed by provincial governors are known to be former commanders.

Legitimacy is also undermined by the tendency of local ANP forces to be ethnically homogeneous, creating friction between police and civilians in heterogeneous areas like the North.<sup>18</sup>

The new Interdiction Unit of the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan successfully integrates criminal justice, counternarcotics, and border management. Opium seizures are becoming regular and well-publicized. The operations focus on traffickers rather than farmers, so they are widely supported among Afghans.

## Crime

Our interviews with Afghans revealed that crime is their chief security concern. This indicator scores badly in terms of both meeting short-term needs and building long-term capacity. The ANP provides little protection against rising crime, which is itself a product of the high poverty rates in Afghanistan. The government estimates unemployment at 30 percent; 70 percent of the country is estimated to survive on less than \$2 a day.<sup>19</sup> DDR programs that lack a viable reintegration component have left tens of

16. See the discussion of “lead nation” structure on page 14.

17. The target was 50,000 regular police and 12,000 border police fully trained as of June 2004. The Century Foundation: Afghanistan Watch; see Afghan Government/International Agency Report, *Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward*, March 17, 2004, <http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf>.

18. CSIS Interviews with senior military officials and Afghan internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kandahar. For more information, see Amnesty International, *Afghanistan Police Reconstruction Essential for the Protection of Human Rights*, March 12, 2003.

19. World Bank staff estimates. See Afghan Government/International Agency Report, *Securing Afghanistan's Future*.

thousands of former militia with no long-term job prospects.<sup>20</sup> Urban areas are particularly susceptible to crime, a reflection of rapid urbanization compounded by refugee return.<sup>21</sup>

Afghans are concerned that the central government is powerless to stop the hijackings, murders, thefts and robberies, and child kidnappings that are said to have increased in recent years. This situation prompted thousands to take to the streets in March 2005 and call for the resignation of the governor of Kandahar.<sup>22</sup> According to local media reports, one child is kidnapped per week on average in Kandahar, although the actual number of kidnappings may be higher, as many parents do not report the disappearance of their children. Many agencies do not trust the police to pursue an honest and thorough investigation, and the justice system is so weak that even if criminals are identified and apprehended, there is little confidence that they will be brought to justice.

Our data show that efforts to provide security have had little positive effect on reducing crime and that Afghans are dissatisfied with progress in this area. Many Afghans interviewed by CSIS reported concerns about sending their children to school or walking around after dark, a clear erosion of the freedom of movement that Afghans were beginning to enjoy after the fall of the Taliban.

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Security is much better than in the past because so many commanders have disarmed.  
— Laghman

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## Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

Data in this indicator point to some significant advances, especially in the cantonment of heavy weaponry, but also reveal the presence of illegal militias.

The first stage of formal DDR is now complete. Since October 2003, almost 63,000<sup>23</sup> of the estimated 70,000 “legal” militia members<sup>24</sup> have been disarmed, and 95 percent of the heavy weapons in the country have been collected.<sup>25</sup> However, the program’s mandate extended only to disarming militias under the umbrella of the Afghan Military Forces. This is problematic because of the remaining 10,000 (Afghan government estimate) to 100,000 armed “unofficial” militias.<sup>26</sup> A new program by the Afghan government, together with the United Nations, to disarm these “illegal militias” is

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20. Interview with a United Nations official, Kabul, February 2005.

21. The Afghan government estimates that the population of Kabul was about 400,000 in the 1970s and is now around 2.8 million. Total urban population is likely to double by 2015. See Afghan Government/International Agency Report, *Securing Afghanistan’s Future*.

22. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, “Child Kidnapping Alarming in the South,” March 10, 2005.

23. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, press briefing, July 7, 2005.

24. Classified as Afghan Military Forces (AMF) or militias under the umbrella of the Ministry of Defense.

25. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, “Afghanistan: Containment of Heavy Weapons Stalled in Panjshir,” January 10, 2005.

26. International Crisis Group, “Getting Disarmament Back on Track,” February 23, 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3290&l=1>.

beginning to produce results.<sup>27</sup> However, until this process is complete, many Afghans will continue to live in communities where the rule of the gun trumps the rule of law.<sup>28</sup>

Demobilization of all recognized regiments has been a healthy and important transition from Afghanistan's past because it symbolizes the establishment of a critical balance of ethnic representation at the Ministry of Defense. This in turn facilitates the integration of Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group and the ethnic base of the Taliban, into the multiethnic national army—a cornerstone of governance and security sector reform.

Our interviews suggest that Afghans are highly aware of the DDR process. Some touted its successes, but others lamented evident shortcomings. Many Afghans say more effective DDR implementation should be a priority.

Effective reintegration of former combatants into employment and communities is the surest way to give young men a stake in society and thereby consolidate the gains



Some reintegrated former soldiers are being given the basic equipment to start up impromptu gas stations.

achieved in disarmament and demobilization. However, given the Afghan government's estimates of 30 percent unemployment, and with little major investment in industry,<sup>29</sup> employment prospects for former combatants remain poor. Most DDR program participants rely on agricultural packages and vocational training in the short term; longer-term opportunities are scarce.<sup>30</sup> In the provinces, some commanders now in official positions absorb their demobilized militiamen into police forces or highway patrols, thereby undermining Afghans' confidence in both police and DDR.<sup>31</sup>

27. The Disbanding Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) program, initiated in June 2005.

28. As of this writing, roughly 245 commanders have disarmed through the DIAG program, 105 of whom planned to run for office in the September 2005 parliamentary elections. See United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Progress on Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups," July 12, 2005.

29. Untapped industries that the government considers potential generators of employment include tourism, multimodal transport, natural gas extraction, precious stones mining (including iron and gold), textiles manufacturing, and horticultural processing. From *Securing Afghanistan's Future* and discussions with the United Nations Development Program, Partnerships for Private Sector Development team.

30. Assistance packages offered include a voucher redeemable in part in career counseling and partly in cash (dependent on participation in the program). Livestock and agricultural implements are also offered, with vocational training and advice on business start up. International Crisis Group, *Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme*, February 23, 2005.

31. Reported in two sources: Christian Dennys, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Rearmament," Japan Afghan NGO Network, June 6, 2005; and International Crisis Group, "Getting Disarmament Back on Track," February 23, 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3290&l=1>.

## Commanders

**Afghans fear intimidation by commanders more than the violence of insurgents.** Our data relating to this indicator highlight the unwillingness, or inability, of both the Afghan and U.S. governments to challenge commanders, and the negative impact this has had on the security situation in the country. Over 80 percent of our data relating to this indicator fall in the Danger Zone. We interpret this as a serious failure of security sector policy.

A number of known commanders have been installed in official government positions. Reports of these individuals' abuses of power and obstruction of legitimate government interests have intensified resentment among ordinary Afghans. In fact, a poll in 2003 indicated that 65 percent of Afghans believed that commanders were the main source of insecurity in Afghanistan.<sup>32</sup>

The report data cite civil unrest, factional fighting, and crimes by commanders, including robbery and expropriation of land, as the greatest concerns.

Commanders also allegedly facilitate the drug trade to finance their private militias. Some commanders maintain a tight hold on their areas, requiring NGOs to request permission directly or through official proxies before they are allowed to work in an area, which impedes the influence of the central government. The damaging impact of commanders is common to all regions and is particularly harmful in areas where two commanders are competing for authority.

Intended solutions have only complicated the problem. The U.S. military's employment of commanders to fight Taliban and al Qaeda elements has armed and financed "friendly" militias.<sup>33</sup> DDR has brought a number of commanders into the police. Most problematically, President Karzai has dealt with troublesome governors—including former commanders—by moving them around, sometimes into cabinet positions, rather than removing them from power.

This tactic has been unavoidable in some cases where ignoring commanders' substantial popularity would be political suicide for President Karzai. Our findings, however, reveal that the most damage to President Karzai's ratings and Afghanistan's governance overall is being caused by the accommodation of lesser commanders. The efforts of international and Afghan security forces to neutralize the effects of less influential commanders have been insufficient. Although some commanders have willingly demobilized (in some cases to participate in the parliamentary elections), others are not enticed by DDR incentives.

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**We are happy with our commander, but we do not like many other commanders who have not disarmed. — Balkh**

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32. International Republican Institute, "Afghans Most Concerned About Security," Media Release, July 27, 2004.

33. CSIS interview with military official, February 2005.

## Insurgency<sup>34</sup>

Afghans are confident that the Taliban will not regain power while international forces are present. Our interviews reveal very little support for the Taliban and much more support for U.S. military efforts to prevent them from returning. Nevertheless, Taliban-related unrest continues, particularly in southern and eastern Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup> Afghan confidence reflects the fact that U.S. and Afghan troops have had the upper hand in these clashes. But our data are weighted toward the Danger Zone (see figure 9), reflecting the severity of this insurgent activity (particularly since the spring thaw)<sup>36</sup> and the negative impact it has had on reconstruction.

Insurgent tactics include attacks on government and non-government convoys, death threats<sup>37</sup> to national staff working for international NGOs or the government, hostage takings, and clashes with coalition forces. Attempted kidnappings and bombings periodically restrict international workers to Kabul. Just as worrisome, there have been three suicide bomb attacks since May 2005, one of which killed 19 people in a Kandahar mosque. The persistence of such attacks could mark a new stage in the insurgency. Regardless, the violence raises questions as to whether the amnesty toward moderate Taliban has in fact weakened the movement or has further inflamed it.<sup>38</sup>

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**We don't let our kids go out, because we are scared that they will be kidnapped and their organs will be stolen. —Kandahar**

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The insurgency has obstructed many non-PRT reconstruction projects in the southern and eastern regions of the country. NGOs simply cannot operate because their personnel are threatened, kidnapped, or killed. Since 2001, 51 aid workers have been killed by the Taliban.<sup>39</sup> A number of NGOs have withdrawn,<sup>40</sup> effectively weakening the government's ability to operate in those areas. This is because NGOs are the government's main implementation partner, providing health care, nutrition, educational needs, community infrastructure planning, and reconstruction. A reconstruction vacuum, in turn, increases the dependency of local populations on their local commander or tribal chief.

Insurgent violence during the presidential and parliamentary elections was lower than expected.<sup>41</sup> Recent captures of insurgents, however, have revealed that a close rela-

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34. This indicator includes violence motivated by a wish to defeat the recognized government and its supporters.

35. According to Andrew North of the BBC, 450 people—mostly militants, but including 30 U.S. troops—were killed in Taliban-related deaths from April to June 2005.

36. It is difficult to mobilize a resistance or an insurgency during the winter months, when snow makes movement difficult.

37. So-called night letters are delivered by the anti-government groups at night.

38. President Karzai has offered amnesty to “moderate” Taliban. However, there is confusion among Afghans over who is eligible; 50 to 100 senior Taliban are not. U.S. forces released 81 detained Taliban in January 2005.

39. Michael O'Hanlon and Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, “Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Taliban Afghanistan,” Brookings Institution, June 30, 2005, <http://www.brookings.edu/afghanistanindex>.

40. For example, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), a French health NGO, pulled out of Afghanistan in 2004 due to insecurity.

tionship between Pakistan and the Taliban continues. While Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan on the government level are improving<sup>42</sup> and President Karzai has publicly thanked the Musharraf government for its anti-terror efforts, Pakistanis have been implicated in a number of destabilizing activities. On June 21, 2005, three Pakistanis were captured and detained for plotting to kill the former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad. In addition, many Afghans harbor resentment toward Pakistan because of Pakistan's mistreatment of refugees and often blame Pakistan, justifiably or not, for the instability along Afghanistan's eastern and southern borders.

## Conclusion

U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan have reduced concerns about major civil unrest and threats to the Kabul regime. Some progress has been made in demobilizing militias and creating a new professional army, but these gains appear fragile and have not tackled the large remaining issues of informal militias and the continuing power of commanders throughout the country. Dealing with persistent instability is more than a matter of getting guns off the streets and getting trained police on them. It depends on understanding the connections between instability and issues such as poor-governance, narcotics, crime, and commanders. Although causal relationships among these issues are unclear, each clearly plays a role in corroding the state's ability and authority to serve the Afghan people. Unless they are addressed together, in a more integrated fashion, Afghanistan's security will remain threatened.

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41. Twelve election workers were killed between May and August 2004, according to Brookings' Afghanistan Index. Troop numbers rose in the month before the September 2005 parliamentary elections; the U.S. troop level increased by several hundred, and NATO contributed 3,000 more peacekeepers. Great Britain also contributed 5,000 more troops to aid with counterterrorist operations along the Pakistan border.

42. Particularly in the economic field. Pakistan and Afghanistan hold regular meetings to discuss trade issues; these meetings have allowed a degree of trust to reemerge between the two governments. For more on this, see the Web site of the Bishkek Conference for Afghanistan's Regional Economic Cooperation: Central Asia, Iran, and Pakistan, at <http://arec.undp.kg/en/>.

# Governance and Participation

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**President Karzai is a positive symbol of national unity and hope, but the Afghan government remains weak. Commanders and corruption continue to obstruct Afghans' democratic rights.**

- Afghans support the central government, despite its weak ability to deliver services.
- Regional officials are overwhelmingly corrupt and unresponsive to Afghan needs.
- Afghans have rallied around the electoral process, but technical, financial, cultural, and security-related obstacles continue to hinder full participation.

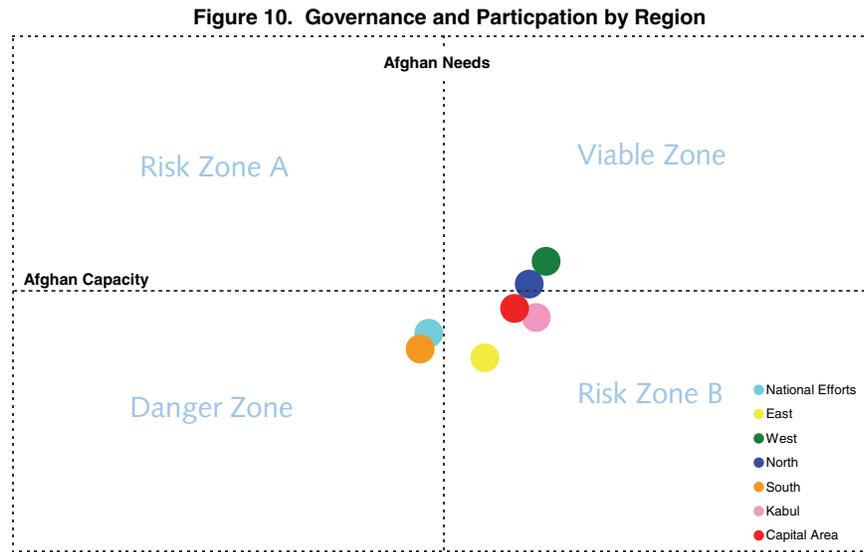
The passage of a constitution in January 2004 and the holding of peaceful, democratic elections in October of that year were milestones on Afghanistan's path toward a functioning, open government. The constitution has also been hailed as an important if imperfect success, enshrining majority rule while protecting minority rights.

President Karzai stands at the center of Afghanistan's transformation to a rules-based society. He has the support of both the international community and the Afghan people. He is a unifying figure in a historically divided country, seen as embodying the new democratic system and capable of charting the path forward. Afghanistan has thus made a strong start in laying a foundation for open and representative government. The nascent institutions serve as important symbols of progress at a time when the government must find the political space to increase its capacity and extend vital services to the provinces.

Our findings, however, show that despite Afghan confidence, the government remains extremely weak. Afghans are confronted daily with visible manifestations of the state's weakness: corruption, a broken infrastructure, predatory commanders and armed militias, a thriving illicit economy, and interference by international actors. Some of those Afghans who harbor optimism about their national government may do so because it remains somewhat distant from their daily lives, where they are much more likely to engage with local government officials, commanders, or tribal leaders.

The national government must improve conditions for Afghans soon or else lose credibility. Many Afghans we interviewed were expecting to see visible signs of progress in their village or community after the parliamentary elections in September 2005. If those results do not materialize, Afghans may lose faith in the government.

Commanders and corrupt officials pose major problems to Afghanistan's progress across all sectors we reviewed, particularly governance. Many important figures from the Afghan Military Forces that entered Kabul in December 2001 were brought in to join national and local government to ensure short-term security. The result, however, has been a compromised disarmament program, political interference in the civil service, factional fighting, and criminal networks embedded in national governance structures.



Afghans recognize the logic of the trade-off, but they also argue that effective government and an integrated national reconstruction will be crippled unless the problem of corrupt local rule is squarely addressed. The regional graph (figure 10) illustrates differences in the quality of governance. Although all of the regions show positive potential for long-term governance capacity, they vary significantly in how well Afghans’ shorter-term needs are being met. The West, for example, was by far the best performer on needs fulfillment, which suggests that Afghans in that area receive more social services and have more immediate positive connections with their regional government. The only other region that falls in the Viable Zone in terms of needs fulfillment is the North. Still, even though local governance institutions in the North appear to meet immediate needs more effectively than elsewhere in the country (with the exception of the West), we did hear complaints from Afghans in this region about ineffective central government initiatives. Kabul, meanwhile, has performed slightly lower on needs fulfillment than the North and West, which may reflect its population’s proximity to governmental institutions and the accompanying higher expectations about what needs should be met, and when.

**Table 7. Governance and Participation Indicators**

Indicator	Details
Central government	President Karzai, the constitution, executive branch, implementation capacity, corruption
Local governance	Provincial governors, policing and corruption, customs revenue
Political freedoms and participation	Presidential elections, parliamentary elections, freedom of the press and of movement, civil society development

Figure 11. Governance and Participation by Indicator

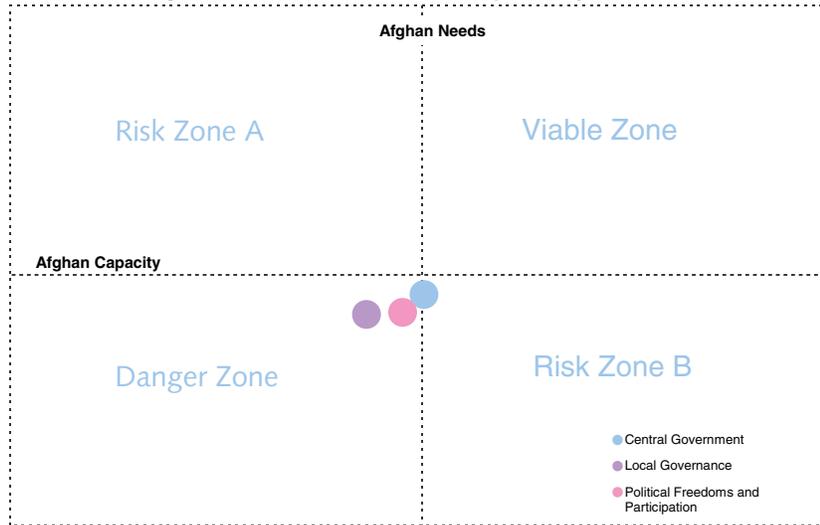
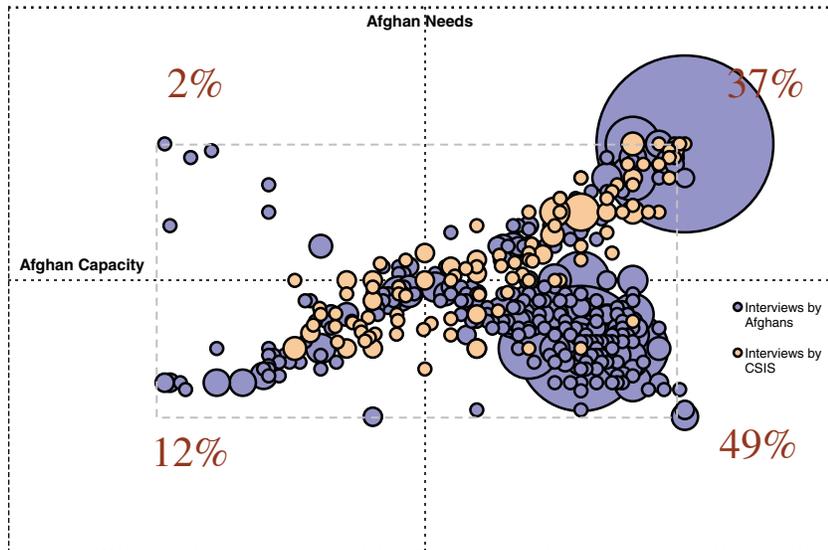


Figure 12. Governance and Participation Interviews



## The Central Government

Afghans support the central government, despite its inability to deliver services. Afghans regard their national government favorably. In recent polls, 62 percent of those surveyed thought President Karzai’s performance was either good or excellent, while 57 percent thought the work of the interim administration was good or excellent.<sup>1</sup> Similar majorities expressed optimism that the country was “headed in the right direction.”

While it is too early to say whether or for how long this trend will continue, our findings suggest a number of positive developments. Data collected from the media reveal that Afghans are reassured by what they see as the predictability of government activity. The stable, new currency and the issuance of new coins both signify broader stability. The annual formulation and execution of the national budget, although not an easy process politically, is likewise viewed by Afghans as a positive sign of government capacity, even though the budget is funded mostly by donors (see table 8). Such factors place central government data squarely in the Viable Zone, contributing to a sense of short-term stability and establishing a platform for long-term governance capacity.

**Table 8. Projected Medium-term Fiscal Framework, 2004/05–2010/11**  
(in millions of \$ and as percentage of FY total)

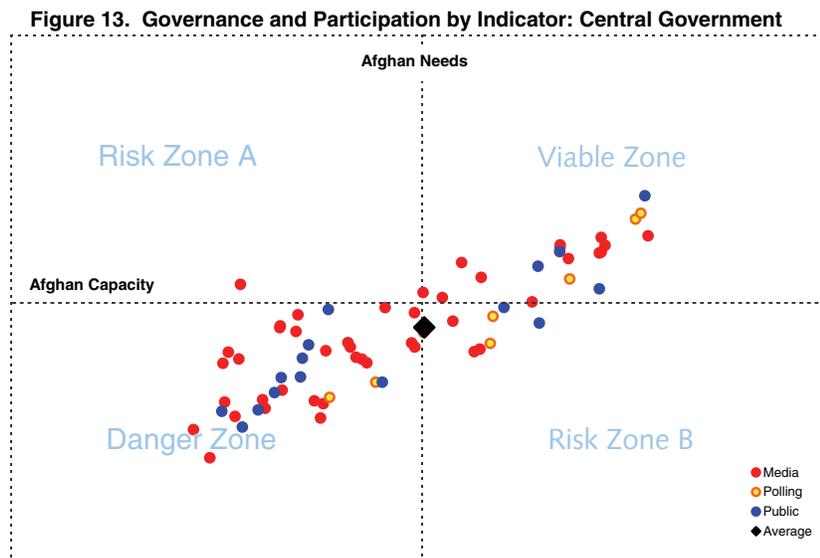
	Fiscal Year 04/05	Fiscal Year 05/06	Fiscal Year 06/07	Fiscal Year 07/08– 09/10	Fiscal Year 09/10– 10/11	Fiscal Year 04/05– 10/11
Domestic Revenues	300 (6%)	400 (10%)	500 (12%)	1,298 (14%)	1,779 (18%)	4,278 (13%)
External Financing	4,369 (94%)	3,684 (90%)	3,803 (88%)	7,860 (86%)	7,889 (82%)	27,605 (87%)
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>4,369</b>	<b>4,084</b>	<b>4,303</b>	<b>9,159</b>	<b>9,668</b>	<b>31,882</b>

Source: Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan official document: "Securing/Afghanistan's Future," March 17, 2004.

Nevertheless, more than half of our data with respect to the central government indicate serious flaws in the country's long-term governance structure. Nearly 70 percent of the data in this indicator fall below the tipping point in terms of meeting Afghans' immediate needs (see figure 13). The government is largely incapable of delivering services or enforcing laws. Customs are the primary source of the limited domestic revenue being generated. In 2004–2005, fully half of the estimated \$300 million in government revenues was collected from the provinces as customs revenues.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, many of Afghanistan's best and brightest reside outside of the country. The result is a short supply of qualified Afghans to fill government positions and insufficient funds to finance salaries for those who have returned. International organizations compete for skilled labor by offering much higher pay, and operate parallel structures with the potential to further undermine the central government's authority.

1. Asia Foundation, "Majority of Afghans Say Country Heading in Right Direction, Despite Security, Economic Concerns," July 13, 2004, [http://www.asiafoundation.org/Locations/afghanistan\\_survey.html](http://www.asiafoundation.org/Locations/afghanistan_survey.html).

2. International Monetary Fund, "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan—Fourth Review Under the Staff-Monitored Program Concluding Statement of the IMF Mission," May 18, 2005, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2005/051805.htm>.



Our interviews with Afghans as well as media sources and official statements warn that corruption is poisoning the government’s ability to deliver on its promises. Reports in the media suggest that Afghans perceive corruption as endemic in the capital’s ministries. This perception has been fuelled by a few high-profile cases that have come to light, in particular the September 2003 land-grab scandal in which the Ministry of Defense evicted homeowners in Kabul to access valuable property for development by a range of other high-level ministers<sup>3</sup>. Our interviews show that Afghans distrust all levels of the civil service, from local officials to central government ministers.

President Karzai’s willingness to speak publicly and frequently on corruption, his demands that his ministers reveal their financial holdings, and the conviction in 2005 of two government officials on corruption charges are the only bright spots in an otherwise grim picture of government corruption.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the pattern of installing well-known commanders in government positions, while possibly stabilizing in the short term, threatens the credibility of the central government and frustrates Afghans. Co-opting actors such as Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ismail Khan within government institutions has removed them from regional power bases.<sup>5</sup> However, our data from media sources and interviews with Afghans indicate significant resentment and cynicism among the Afghan public about the continuing—and formalized—role some commanders still play. Some Afghans

3. According to the UN special rapporteur, the land grab evicted about 30 families from land that belonged to the Defense Ministry. Some of the families had been living on the land for up to 25 years. The houses were bulldozed. All of the ministers implicated were part of the Northern Alliance and included General Fahim (then vice president and defense minister) and Yunis Qanooni (then education minister and now leader of the political opposition).

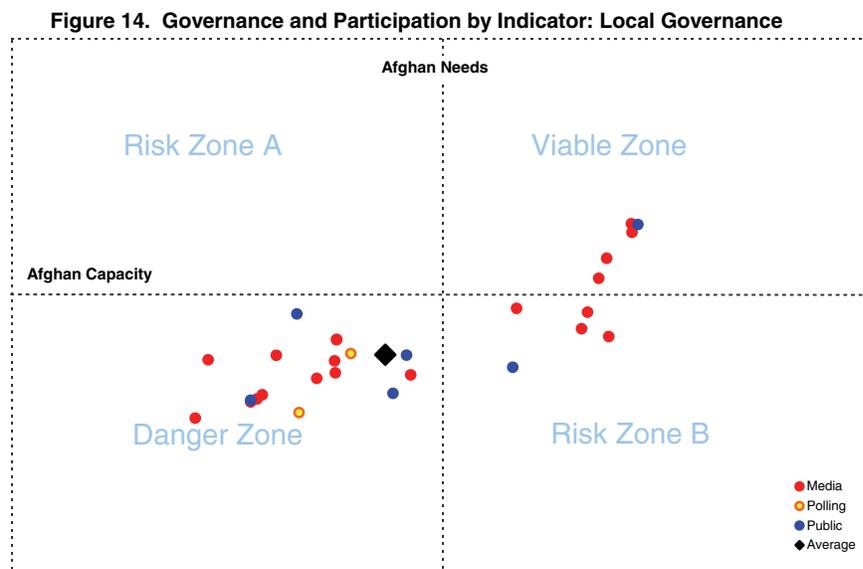
4. Ron Synovitz, “Karzai Explains Kabul’s Economic Goals During U.S. Visit,” Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, May 26, 2005, <http://light.afgha.com/article.php?sid=49207>.

5. It is unclear to what extent either is still involved in their home region.

understand that the accommodation of these people in the government is a temporary solution, but no one believes this approach will be a viable long-term strategy.

## Local Governance

Regional officials are overwhelmingly corrupt and unresponsive to Afghan needs. The Kabul government remains a remote concept in much of the country, but local government—or the lack of it—informs the picture that most Afghans have of governance. Over 60 percent of the data points with respect to regional governance fall in the Danger Zone (see figure 14), suggesting that neither immediate needs nor long-term capacity needs are being met.



Our findings suggest that the poor performance of regional governance is explained by corruption, continuing criminality, and the unsuitability of provincial governors for administrative work. As with the indicator for the central government, many of these data points relate directly to the lack of security.

Based on off-the-record discussions with high-level public officials, it appears that many provincial governors have close connections with militia or lead private militia themselves that are not part of regular armed forces. The majority of these provincial governors came to power in the vacuum created by the fall of the Taliban in November 2001. Although each provincial governor now holds a formal letter of appointment, many simply took or re-took the provincial governor's office by force and have retained that de facto power.<sup>6</sup>

Even in those cases where provincial governors are not also militia commanders, many have come from, and retain networks within, militia-affiliated political groups such as Jamiat-i Islami, Junbish-i Milli, Hizb-i Islami, and Shura-i Nazar.<sup>7</sup> Some of these factions have formally disarmed as part of the DDR program or because their

leaders, such as Abdul Rashid Dostum of Junbish-i Milli or Yunis Qanooni of Shura-i Nazar, entered the political process.<sup>8</sup> Others may retain “illegal” militias or have only partially disarmed, while others still, like Shura-i-Nazar, refuse to disarm. Whatever the status of DDR, such affiliations are unlikely to produce rule-based and representative governance in the provinces.

Provincial governors with militia connections have routinely hired former colleagues as police chiefs and district governors in an attempt to strengthen their positions. This has led to demilitarized militiamen being re-hatted as local police or highway patrols. These police or patrols have been known to finance their operations by offering security to bilateral donors for transit and project implementation.<sup>9</sup>

Off-the-record discussions with high-level public officials indicate that many provincial governors are profiting from the trafficking of drugs through their provinces.

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**People trust the government but haven't received any assistance.**  
— Parwan

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Provincial governors may exact bribes to facilitate transit or cross-border traffic, or they may tax producers directly. Both are long-standing practices of provincial rulers,<sup>10</sup> and failure to remit collected revenue to central coffers is another key factor behind Kabul's weakness. In May 2003, President Karzai convened a meeting of the 12 provincial

governors who controlled significant customs revenue and urged them to sign a decree that no provincial governor could have links with militia or retain titles other than that of governor. The governors were also told that action would be taken if customs revenues were not remitted to Kabul.

Among those present at the meeting were the governors of Herat and Kandahar, the two most important customs-yielding provinces. It is estimated that Ismail Khan, the provincial governor of Herat province, took in between \$50 million and \$200 million from trade annually, monies that were supposed to go to the central government.<sup>11</sup> After he was summoned to Kabul to serve as minister of energy and water, the customs remittances from Herat province increased by 38 percent.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that similar

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6. Examples include Atta Mohammed, long-time military rival of Dostum in Balkh; Gul Agha Sherzai, who ran Kandahar as a personal fiefdom even before the Taliban took it from him, and who returned with a private army in 2002; Din Mohammed, who comes from a long line of warlords in the region, but who is pitched against another strong family in the region; and Asadullah Khalid, former governor of Ghazni and current governor of Kandahar, who allegedly retains a private militia disguised as highway police.

7. These are four of the old resistance movements that formed in the wake of increasing Soviet involvement and that fought one another for Kabul during the civil war.

8. The political parties law provides the framework for legal registration in accordance with the constitution. It prohibits parties whose charters do not accord with Islam and those that retain links with military or quasi-military organizations.

9. International Crisis Group, “Getting Disarmament Back on Track,” February 23, 2005, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref\\_id=3290](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref_id=3290).

10. International Monetary Fund, “Rebuilding a Macroeconomic Framework for Reconstruction and Growth,” September 5, 2003.

11. Julien Bousac, “Afghanistan: Emirate of Herat,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 2003, <http://mondediplo.com/2003/12/08Bousac>.

12. “Custom revenues from Herat increases this year,” *Pajhwak Afghan News*, March 21, 2005, <http://www.afghannews.net/index.php?action=show&type=news&id=2243>.

replacements of provincial governors could yield similar returns to the central government.

Governors, even if they are not corrupt, lack administrative and managerial skills. About half the country's governors have no higher education, and some are illiterate.<sup>13</sup> Afghans have rising expectations for their leadership, and are increasingly willing to demonstrate to force change. As an example, March 7, 2005 saw two major rallies, one in Kandahar and the other in Mazar-e Sharif, both demanding the resignation of the provincial governor.<sup>14</sup>

The United States is supporting President Karzai's strategy of removing inefficient or corrupt governors from their posts. Twelve new appointments have been made since the start of 2005. The tactic has not been well used, though. On June 23, 2005, President Karzai transferred two unpopular and inept governors to key provinces. The former governor of Kabul, Sayed Hoseyn Anwari, and the former governor of Kandahar, Gul Agha Sherzai—both considered to be corrupt and inefficient<sup>15</sup>—were appointed to positions in Herat and Nangarhar, respectively, that put them in charge of critical border provinces controlling the lucrative trade with Iran and Pakistan.

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**I thought voting was good. I'm choosing my future. — Kabul**

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Our findings suggest overwhelming support among Afghans for a strategy of permanently removing inept provincial governors from power. Zalmay Khalilzad, the former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, has criticized the government for not heeding his advice to solve administrative capacity problems instead of rotating governors.<sup>16</sup> However, removing powerful and, in some cases, popular governors from power remains a real challenge.

On a more hopeful note, some of the data within this indicator reveal that governance institutions at the village level have strong potential to improve. The National Solidarity Program, the government's project to encourage villages to take the lead on coordinating infrastructure delivery at the local level, appears to be popular among Afghans and has attracted praise from the international community. The program makes available central government block grants that go directly to community councils. The councils facilitate discussions among the members of the community about how the money should be spent to rehabilitate local infrastructure. Block grants can have a more immediate effect than traditional top-down reconstruction efforts; furthermore, community decision-making bodies are a platform for accountable governance and have the potential to create a demand for better

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**We hope the parliamentary elections reduce the number of warlords and their influence. — Kandahar**

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13. The constitution requires that cabinet ministers have higher education.

14. Amin Tarzi, "Afghan Demonstrations Test Warlords-Turned-Administrators," Radio Free Afghanistan, March 9, 2005, <http://www.azadiradio.org/en/specialreports/2005/03/F47A925B-CD9C-49F4-A17C-279E252A8FE4.ASP>.

15. Based on information from off-the-record discussions, and Victoria Burnett, "Kabul reshuffles inept provincial governors and eyes overhaul of interior ministry," *Financial Times*, June 25, 2005, 9.

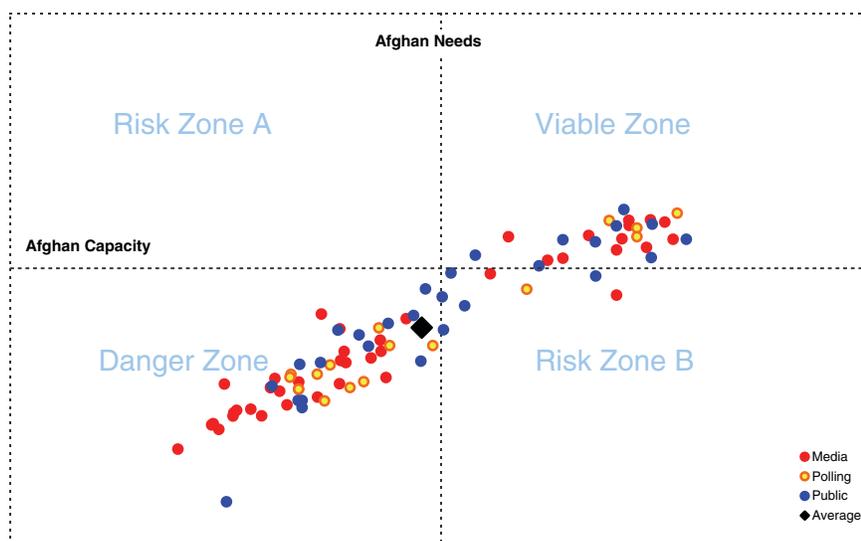
16. Burnett, "Kabul reshuffles inept provincial governors."

municipal governance.<sup>17</sup> This approach could provide solid proof of reconstruction, demonstrate a lack of dependence on local commanders for infrastructure and employment, and enhance government visibility without crowding out citizens' voices.

## Political Freedoms and Participation

Afghans have rallied around elections, but technical, financial, cultural, and security-related obstacles continue to hinder full participation. Only one third of our data related to this indicator fell in the Viable Zone (see figure 15), reflecting technical, political, cultural, and security constraints on the preparation of the election process. Intense media coverage of the elections contributed to some negative speculation.

Figure 15. Governance and Participation by Indicator:  
Political Freedoms and Participation



On October 9, 2004, more than eight million registered Afghans elected Hamid Karzai as the president of Afghanistan by an absolute majority. Approximately 4,900 polling centers with 22,000 polling stations were operational in all districts of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. In addition, 2,800 polling stations were set up in Iran and Pakistan to accommodate out-of-country voting.

Following this success, more than 6,000 Afghans registered as candidates for the lower house and the provincial council elections held in September 2005.<sup>18</sup> Afghan enthusiasm about the regional elections reflects a real belief that the voices of rural

17. See the World Bank and Anne Evans, Nick Manning, Yasin Osmani, Anne Tully, and Andrew Wilder, "A Guide to Government in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2004), 80, available at [http://www.areu.org.af/download\\_pub.asp?id=155](http://www.areu.org.af/download_pub.asp?id=155).

18. Joint Electoral Management Body, "2005 Afghanistan Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections," July 24, 2005, [http://www.jemb.org/pdf/final\\_numbers\\_candidates24-07-05\\_eng.pdf](http://www.jemb.org/pdf/final_numbers_candidates24-07-05_eng.pdf).

Afghanistan can and should be brought to the heart of government decision-making in Kabul. However, realities on the ground temper this optimism.

The technical and financial challenges of running an election are significant factors that drag down the average of this indicator. For any election in Afghanistan to be representative, registration and voting stations must be available throughout the country, as much of the population live far from urban centers. This raises the cost of elections and makes their accountability difficult. Establishing registration centers in remote areas has proved extremely labor-intensive, and providing adequate staff has sometimes been a problem due to the security situation. For example, the United Nations had difficulty deploying sufficient international elections supervisors for the presidential elections.<sup>19</sup>

Technical barriers have also contributed to piecemeal voter education efforts for both the presidential and parliamentary elections. Polling data show that a majority of Afghans received no voter education before the presidential election.<sup>20</sup> Since then, election training centers have been established, but they have not reached enough people; as of this writing, many Afghans still did not know what to expect from their vote in the parliamentary elections. Afghans told us they were disappointed that there had been few, if any, improvements in their lives since the presidential election, but expressed enthusiasm for the electoral process.

The presidential elections also revealed the cultural challenges to democratic governance. Polls and media reports highlighted barriers to female participation in a culture where women's actions are sometimes strictly monitored by male relatives. There have been important changes: over the course of the presidential elections, Afghan women demonstrated for their rights, and the United Nations and NGOs provided special civic education to women. The roster of candidates for the parliamentary elections in 2005



A woman from Daikondi province (lower right) was a candidate in the 2005 Parliamentary election.

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**I voted for Karzai, and I want to vote in the parliamentary election. The local government does not have any responsibility and exists only in name. — Nuristan**

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19. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Special report on voter registration," January 29, 2004.

20. Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, "Take the Guns Away: Afghan Voices on Security and Elections," September 2004, 11.

featured 350 women, or 12 percent of the 2,900 candidates. The constitution has reserved seats for 64 women, representing a quarter of the total in the *wolesi jirga* (lower house).

Security issues associated with the October 2004 presidential elections accounted for 38 percent of the negative data for this indicator. Anti-government groups, some related to the notorious warlord Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and the Taliban, assassinated 12 election workers between May and August 2004 and threatened attacks on polling stations on election day itself.<sup>21</sup> Registration in some areas became dangerous and election monitoring problematic, which meant that local commanders could station armed men near the election booths and potentially influence the vote.<sup>22</sup> The increase in Taliban-related activity in 2005 suggests that security will be essential to the future success of elections.

Beyond the obstacles evident in the presidential elections, the parliamentary election process has come under fire because of the chosen voting system. Single,



How well the needs of Kuchi nomads are represented in the new government system remains to be seen.

nontransferable voting minimizes the influence of political parties and may allow commanders to coerce voters to support their favored candidates.<sup>23</sup> Although our interviews show that Afghans distrust local government officials, the United Nations claimed in June 2005 that only 4 percent of registered candidates had connections with commanders and that few government officials had actually nominated themselves.<sup>24</sup> Further, and despite the lack of incentives, more than 60 political parties had registered with the Ministry of Justice, including five groups associated with major militias. Some party leaders, like former Northern Alliance commander Yunis Qanooni, are forming coalitions to act as effective opposition to the

government. Such developments indicate that whatever the short-term technical obstacles to a real public voice, the country's leaders are beginning to take a new and positive course toward democracy.

21. Michael O'Hanlon, "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Taliban Afghanistan" (updated monthly), Brookings Institution, June 30, 2005, <http://www.brookings.edu/afghanistanindex>.

22. International Crisis Group, "Elections and Security in Afghanistan," March 30, 2004, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref\\_id=2554](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref_id=2554).

23. For a fuller discussion of the single nontransferable voting system, please see United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, "Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) System," May 26, 2005, <http://www.unamaafg.org/news/ParElection.htm#factsheets>.

24. Jean Arnault, "Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Afghanistan," June 24, 2005, [http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/\\_UN%20Docs/\\_sc/\\_briefings/05jun24.htm](http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/_UN%20Docs/_sc/_briefings/05jun24.htm).

## Conclusion

To date, President Karzai has played a central role in Afghanistan's reconstruction; he has managed to both bridge the ethnic and regional divide and serve as a respected leader in the international community. He is currently irreplaceable, however; there is a dearth of up-and-coming leadership that could fill his shoes if need be. This threatens progress in all sectors of reconstruction, but especially in governance. It is thus all the more important that Afghanistan's governmental institutions are strengthened and competent leadership is cultivated so that Afghans begin to trust and follow the rules of their new society.

President Karzai's approach toward commanders has been criticized as a sign that he is unwilling or unable to squarely take on local power holders. But overly confrontational tactics could destabilize the nascent government because of the power many commanders still wield. Although progress to date has been slow, Karzai has incrementally increased his power over the commanders by removing a few key ones from their spheres of influence. The task is not as simple as some critics imply; historically, no leader or regime has been able to bring all of the commanders under control. The problem is that, as the present reality continues, commanders become entrenched and government credibility suffers.

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**Everyone is taking bribes, and no one is working honestly. Now, uneducated people are in the government and have dirty money. — Helmand**

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So far, state-building efforts have focused largely on Kabul. This was predicated on the perceived need for a strong government of national unity and also reflected the real security constraints on operating outside of the city. But progress in Kabul does not have an immediate impact on the lives of the majority of Afghans, who are living in other parts of the country. Security conditions have improved to the point that more reconstruction efforts can go forward outside of the capital. Our findings support a strategy to foster greater government capacity at the local level in a way that takes into account existing forms of local governance that Afghans accept.

# Justice and Accountability

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The formal justice system in Afghanistan remains unable to confront impunity or criminal networks, adjudicate land disputes, or protect citizens' rights. Afghans continue to rely on traditional methods that tend to be applied unevenly.

- Afghans do not yet trust formal justice institutions.
- Afghans enjoy more political, economic, and social rights now than at any time in the past 23 years, but the status of women remains low and land issues remain unresolved.
- Afghans remain cynical toward the formal justice system because commanders and war criminals operate with impunity.

Our research indicates that, despite a high demand, Afghans' immediate needs for a functioning justice system are not being met. Justice and Accountability is the worst

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There are greater freedoms. Women are working in offices and children are going to school. — Kapisa

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performing pillar of the five we assessed. Some institutional foundations have been laid, but to date there has been little progress in Afghans being able to seek justice in the court system. The formal justice sector remains the weakest link in Afghanistan's emerging governance landscape.

constitution, the construction of courthouses, and the establishment of national institutions for human rights advocacy and legal education. A coordinated strategy for legal

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Conversations we used to have 100 feet underground we can now have right here. — Parwan

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reform and reconstruction has not emerged, however, and efforts remain piecemeal and narrow.<sup>1</sup> Of the \$3.5 billion in National Development Budget funds disbursed from 2001 to 2004, only \$15.8 million was directed to the justice sector.<sup>2</sup>

Part of the problem is that the Karzai presidency has put a higher priority on stability than justice. President Karzai's political appointments suggest that he has sought peace by appeasing the country's different factions rather than by securing justice for past crimes. In the eyes of many Afghans, this culture of impunity at the top explains why

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1. USIP, "Establishing Rule of Law in Afghanistan," March 2004, 1, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr104.html>.

2. Afghanistan Ministry of Finance, "Financial Report Fourth Quarter 1380–Second Quarter 1383 (January 21, 2002–September 20, 2004)," October 2004.

the arbitrary behavior of commanders continues to trump the rule of law in many provinces.

Meanwhile, there is little judicial training for judges and lawyers, who are both poorly paid and poorly vetted. The court infrastructure has received some rehabilitation. In general, both the international community and the Afghans do not appear to have reached solid conclusions about the direction the judicial system should take. Most disputes are therefore resolved by the informal justice system.

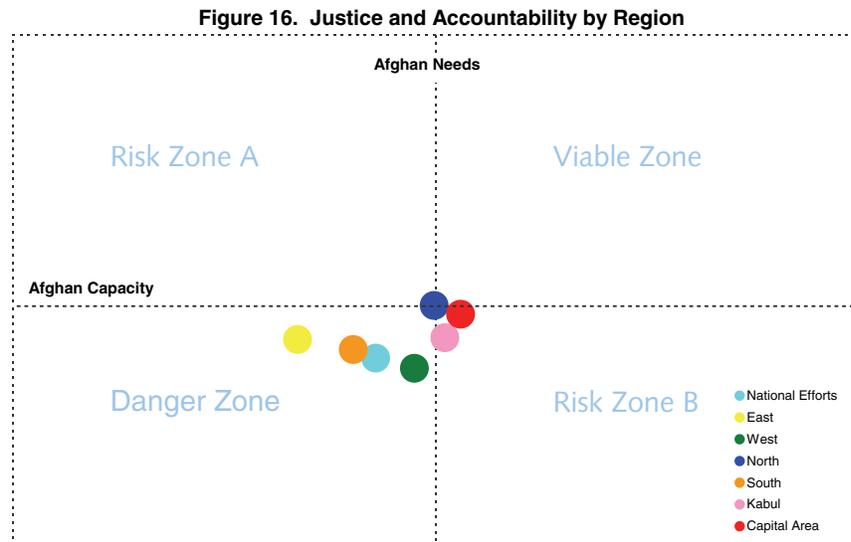


Figure 16 shows the state of justice and accountability, in terms of long-term development and the satisfaction of short-term needs, by region. Table 9 lists various aspects, or indicators, of justice and accountability in the current Afghan situation, each of which is discussed below. Figure 17 graphs the state of each justice and accountability indicator. Figure 18 presents the interview data on justice and accountability.

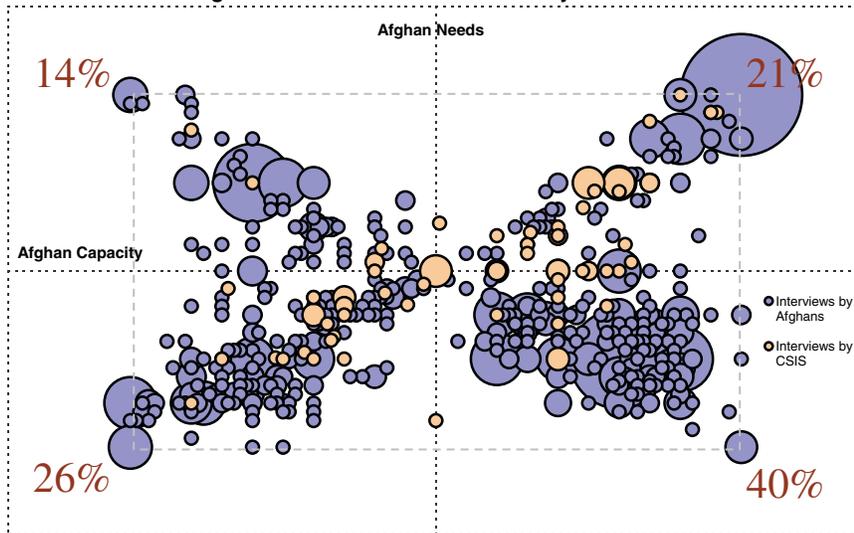
**Table 9. Justice and Accountability Indicators**

Indicator	Details
The justice system	The constitution, the Supreme Court, justice infrastructure, judges and lawyers, access to justice, informal dispute resolution
Rights protection	Women’s issues, basic freedoms
Impunity	Transitional justice, amnesty, Taliban

Figure 17. Justice and Accountability by Indicator



Figure 18. Justice and Accountability Interviews

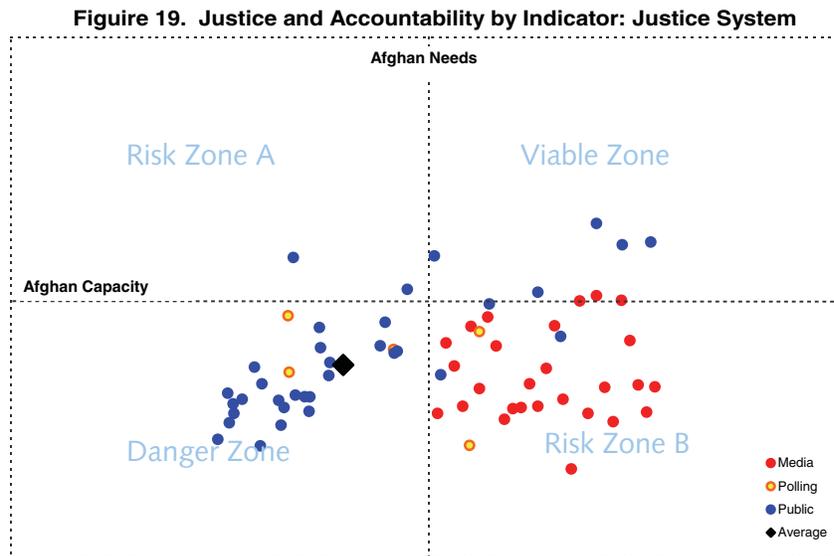


## The Justice System

Afghans do not yet trust formal justice institutions. This indicator combines issues of training, capacity, standardized legal code, corruption, the Supreme Court, judicial processes, penitentiaries, and court infrastructure. The outlook is bleak. Only 5 percent of our data indicate that Afghans’ short-term needs are being met, placing this indicator among the weakest performers in any sector.

This is not entirely surprising: judicial reform is complex and a functioning justice system takes time to establish. There is bound to be some initial frustration while insti-

tutions are built and processes implemented.<sup>3</sup> In some cases, construction of courthouses and institutions is proceeding without full consideration and coordination of the broader issues involved, reducing the likelihood that the emerging institutions will fit the needs of the country.



Our findings show that Afghans have little confidence in the rule of law over the long term. Only 20 percent of the data in this indicator suggest that indigenous capacity is being built. Furthermore, most of these positive findings relate to infrastructure or programmatic outputs, such as the establishment of new courts, the announcement of a new commission, or a new training course at the university, and not to the operational outcome—that is, the daily exercise of justice. In terms of international interventions, our findings suggest that the lack of proper court and prison infrastructure and the lack of training are two areas in which the international community could assist.

Yet if the formal justice system is relatively powerless to protect the rights of citizens, traditional justice mechanisms in local communities have a relatively high legitimacy and capacity for mediating and adjudicating cases, even if the “legal” principles applied in such forums are inconsistent. Rulings often do not align with international human rights standards, and are vulnerable to power politics and fundamentalist forces.<sup>4</sup> A central challenge in the justice sector is therefore to enable the emerging formal system to engage with and integrate a deeply rooted (but flawed) informal justice system.<sup>5</sup>

3. This is particularly true in Kabul, where our data showed that Afghans rated the capacity of the justice system as very high, despite the fact that their short-term needs are not being fulfilled. High expectations in Kabul are understandable, given that reforms are taking place largely within the city limits and are thus more visible to the people in Kabul than they are to residents in rural communities.

4. CSIS interview with Deborah Isser, USIP, June 6, 2005.

Beyond the idea that the new system should align with Afghan preferences and customs as much as possible, there is little consensus about the specific direction that justice should take in Afghanistan. International observers and decisionmakers admit to having an incomplete understanding of the competing principles and institutions: legal codes, *shari'a* law, customary law, *pashtunwali*, tribal tribunals, *jirgas* and *shuras*.<sup>6</sup> The constitutional *loya jirga* underscored bitter divisions among Afghans themselves over the same issues.

Most of our data in this sector reflects abuse of the system by those with money and guns. Commanders play a key role in undermining existing local justice systems and



Groups of elders, such as this one in Mazar-i-Sharif, continue to be relied on to resolve disputes.

ensuring that dispute resolution favors either friends or the wealthy and influential. Commanders set up their own commissions and ad-hoc courts, or influence the decisions of *jirgas* in their areas to ensure they control key assets, such as land.<sup>7</sup>

Actions of the Karzai government highlight the political nature of the challenges confronting the formal justice sector.

In 2002, President Karzai appointed a radical Islamist as Supreme Court Chief Justice. Fazl Hadi Shinwari is an ally of the Saudi-backed fundamentalist commander Abd Al-Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf. He has appointed a number of political allies in the Supreme Court, none of whom have a degree in secular law.<sup>8</sup> Through a parallel fatwa council, he has issued fatwas against “indecent” media and coeducation, many of which have been ignored for their radical nature.<sup>9</sup> These statements have attracted bad press and dragged down the data in this indicator.

The overall justice sector has also suffered from confusion about the overlapping mandates of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, and the Attorney General’s office. The Judicial Commission, which was established in 2002 to “rebuild the domes-

5. The southern region was the least affected by justice reform; there is little hope that the government can provide an alternative to traditional methods and rule of the gun. This is largely due to insecurity, which has aggravated reconciliation and complicated rights protection.

6. CSIS interview, Deborah Isser.

7. Sayed Yaqub Ibrahim, “Land Disputes Unsettle the North,” Institute for War and Peace Reporting, July 5, 2004, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200407\\_124\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200407_124_1_eng.txt).

8. International Crisis Group, “Judicial Reform and Transitional Justice,” January 28, 2003, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1631&l=1>.

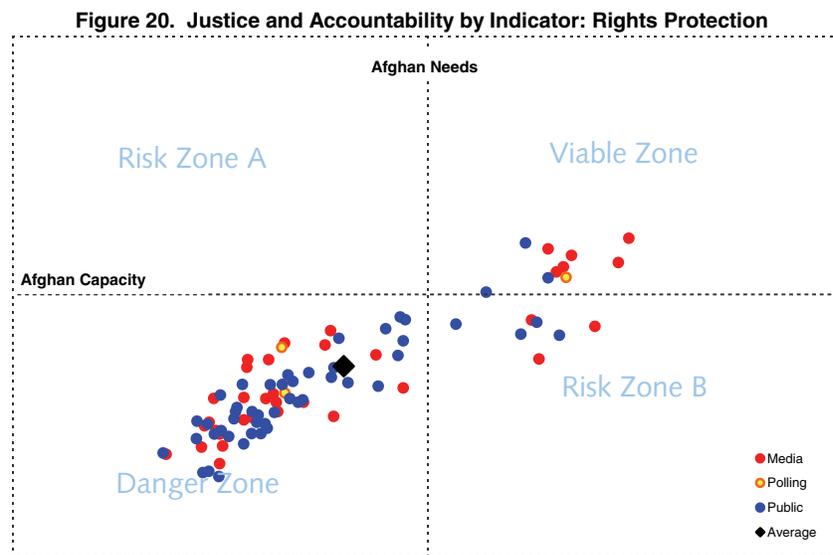
9. Rory McCarthy, “Afghan judge outlaws ‘immoral and smutty’ cable television,” *The Guardian*, January 22, 2003. It is believed that President Karzai will remove Shinwari as chief justice by early 2006.

tic justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law and Afghan legal traditions,”<sup>10</sup> has also suffered from unclear reporting lines and a membership that did not represent much of the country.<sup>11</sup>

## Rights Protection

Afghans enjoy more political, economic, and social rights now than at any time in the past 23 years, but the status of women remains low and land issues remain unresolved.

Much has changed since the Taliban. A progressive constitution provides equal rights for men and women. Our interviews show that many Afghans are pleased that they now have the right to free speech. Freedom of the press has taken root slowly, but is growing; there are more than 200 print news sources in Kabul alone and independent radio stations are accessible to millions of Afghans, though some reporters interviewed by CSIS expressed concern that their freedom was precarious. In urban centers, women enjoy greater freedom of movement than they used to and than they do in rural areas. Afghans have also begun to exercise their freedom to assemble, as evidenced by protests against the killing of female NGO workers and against child kidnappings in Kandahar.<sup>12</sup>



Despite these advancements, rights protection remains weak; 80 percent of our data in this indicator fell in the Danger Zone, and only 12 percent in the Viable Zone. How-

10. “Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions (Bonn Agreement),” December 2001, [http://www.afghan-web.com/politics/bonn\\_agreement\\_2001.html](http://www.afghan-web.com/politics/bonn_agreement_2001.html).

11. International Crisis Group, “Judicial Reform and Transitional Justice.”

12. Amin Tarzi, “Afghan Demonstrations Test Warlords-Turned-Administrators,” Radio Free Afghanistan, March 9, 2005, <http://www.azadiradio.org/en/specialreports/2005/03/F47A925B-CD9C-49F4-A17C-279E252A8FE4.ASP>.

ever, of the points that fall in the Viable Zone, most relate to the successes of one institution, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, which has investigated over 2,500 cases of human rights violations and resolved them with an estimated 70 percent success rate.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most significant rights issues in Afghanistan is the treatment of women. In many cases, women are still not permitted to work or to get an education, despite

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**The problem of land-grabbing in the north hasn't been solved yet, and I won't return until it is.**  
— IDP, Kandahar

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constitutional guarantees of their rights to do so. Families and communities often place restrictions on women, and many women are still not allowed to move around their towns, or vote, or speak out, especially in rural areas where formal justice mechanisms are rare.<sup>14</sup> Past violence and oppression have also left their mark. Some women fear intimidation, violence, or even drawing attention to themselves:

when asked why they were not exercising their rights, women often told us that “people will talk.” Women who worked for NGOs have been threatened and even killed as a means of preventing others from working or going to school.<sup>15</sup>

Interviews with Afghans verify that a similar backlash is working against independent radio stations and the free media. Although a provision in the constitution

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**There is no law.** — Kabul

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protects the rights of the media, a law passed in March 2004 restricting criticism of Islam and officials has been used as a censorship tool.<sup>16</sup> In addition, some journalists reportedly have received threats concerning their coverage of the elections.<sup>17</sup>

Land rights legislation remains weak and vague, and land disputes make up a significant portion of civil cases. Few records of land ownership exist, which makes resolution of land disputes difficult and sometimes subjective. Therefore, a land court that has been set up to resolve land issues is not viewed as effective and is generally underused. Afghans prefer to seek resolution through the customary system of *shuras* and *jirgas*, because these institutions apply local knowledge. This system is weak, however, and has allowed local commanders and government officials to dispossess people of their homes and to redistribute land to friends, family, and constituents.<sup>18</sup> The issue

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13. Hafizullah Gardesh, “Standing Up for Human Rights,” Institute for War and Peace Reporting, January 31, 2005, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200501\\_159\\_3\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200501_159_3_eng.txt).

14. U.S. Department of State, “Afghanistan—Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,” March 1, 2005, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41737.htm>.

15. Three Afghan women who worked for an NGO were found raped and strangled, with a note instructing women not to work; night letters have been sent to communities warning parents not to send their girls to school. For more, see Xinhua, “UN Calls Upon Afghan Government to Punish Murderers of Women,” May 5, 2005; Ron Synovitz, “Afghanistan: U.S. Investigates Taliban ‘Night Letters’ Threatening Villagers,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, March 10, 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticleprint/2004/03/c47dc6f9-5e79-4213-8c0e-2430cf0557b5.html>.

16. Farida Nekzad, “Media Law Seen As Over-Restrictive,” Institute for War and Peace Reporting, April 7, 2004, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200404\\_114\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200404_114_1_eng.txt).

17. Human Rights Watch, “Afghanistan: U.N. Rights Monitoring Still Needed,” April 20, 2005, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/04/20/afghan10515.htm>.

of land rights requires clarification as refugees and internally displaced people return to their homes and public land remains vulnerable to appropriation.<sup>19</sup>

Human rights abuses such as child labor and kidnapping, prisoner mistreatment, and arbitrary justice emerge repeatedly from the data. In Afghanistan, as in other post-conflict settings, the ramifications of these abuses are compounded by the pervasive insecurity. Many of those involved in human rights abuses are regional strongmen who continue to cause the major security problems in Afghanistan today.

## Impunity

Afghans remain cynical about the formal justice system because commanders and war criminals operate with impunity. Our findings for this indicator overwhelmingly fall in the Danger Zone. Offices and titles such as “minister,” “chief of staff,” and “governor” appear to be rewards for raining destruction on one’s countrymen. One poll found that 75 percent of respondents believe that bringing human rights violators to justice will bolster peace, stability, and security.<sup>20</sup> Current senior officials are implicated in crimes that include indiscriminate military attacks, intentional targeting of citizens, land expropriation, abductions, rape, murder, and looting.<sup>21</sup> If these high-profile cases are not dealt with, local, low-level commanders will continue their criminal behavior.

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**If the government forgives Taliban ministers, we cannot forgive them. They are dirty people. — Kabul**

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As a result of this continuing culture of impunity, many Afghans feel that their lives have not changed despite the cessation of conflict. Commanders control their local areas as they always have, but now their power has been legitimized by the political positions they hold in the new government. In fact, many implicated in past crimes are currently serving in the police and military forces, and are continuing to operate as regional warlords and strongmen with links to criminal networks.<sup>22</sup> Yet the international commu-

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**Criminals are arrested but are soon released because they have influence, power, and money. — Kandahar**

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18. Former Kandahar governor Sherzai, among others, allegedly expropriated land to friends and family. Hafizullah Ghashtalai, “Friction Over Land Rights in the South,” Institute for War and Peace Reporting, April 1, 2004, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200404\\_113\\_3\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200404_113_3_eng.txt).

19. Liz Alden Wily, “Looking for Peace on the Pastures: Rural Land Relations in Afghanistan” (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, December 2004). Our data from the northern region show that land seizures by local commanders and land disputes between returning IDPs and refugees have been a source of injustice, but there is faith that the government will be able to create capacity in the long term.

20. Sima Samar and Nader Nadery, “Afghanistan: A Cry for Justice,” *International Herald Tribune* Online, February 3, 2005, [http://www.aihrc.org.af/rep\\_Eng\\_29\\_01\\_05.htm](http://www.aihrc.org.af/rep_Eng_29_01_05.htm).

21. Human Rights Watch, “Blood-Stained Hands: Past Atrocities in Kabul and Afghanistan’s Legacy of Impunity,” July 7, 2005, 125, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/afghanistan0605/>.

22. Ibid.

nity and the Afghan government have shown little inclination to pursue transitional justice.

The link between a lack of justice in the short term and the inability to assure it for the long term is clear. Immunity for past crimes contributes to the perpetrators' sense of impunity for present and future crimes. De facto amnesty for commanders is matched by de jure amnesty offered to moderate Taliban by the government and the United States in return for their constructive participation in the political system and military operations.<sup>23</sup> A majority of Afghans disagree with this policy: 61 percent reject amnesty for Taliban members, particularly when it is proposed by non-Afghans.<sup>24</sup>

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**If there is no justice, how can there be security? — Helmand**

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## Conclusion

Both the Afghan government and the international community have paid far too little attention to Afghanistan's justice sector, in part because of the precarious balance between maintaining peace and delivering justice. The result has been only minimal progress. Although some infrastructure has been built, qualified and educated judicial personnel, particularly judges, are in short supply. Afghans do not trust the formal justice system to do an honest job of resolving their cases, preferring customary mechanisms instead. Further, most Afghans still have a poor understanding of their constitutionally protected rights. When setting priorities, the international community and the Afghan government should keep in mind that good governance and sustainable security are not possible without the support of a judicial system that Afghans know, understand, and trust.

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**Local disputes are concluded by local elders. All cases except for murder are solved that way. — Balkh**

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23. Reported in two sources: Christian Dennys, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Rearmament," Japan Afghan NGO Network, June 6, 2005, <http://www.jca.apc.org/~jann/Documents/Disarmament%20demobilization%20rearmament.pdf>; and International Crisis Group, "Getting Disarmament Back on Track," February 23, 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3290&l=1>.

24. Samar and Nadery, "Afghanistan: A Cry for Justice."

# Economic Opportunity

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**Economic growth has been significant but uneven. Commanders still maintain illicit sources of revenue. Job opportunities are lacking for most Afghans—including ex-combatants.**

- Afghans are surviving, but they remain vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, and income is unpredictable.
- Poppy cultivation is a vital short-term economic strategy in rural areas, but is neither sustainable nor legal.
- The economy continues to grow, but foreign investment remains low.

Despite Afghanistan's economic growth over the past three years, many Afghans have seen little improvement in their lives.<sup>1</sup> Thirty percent of Afghans are unemployed, and another 30 percent are working part-time or in jobs for which they are overqualified.<sup>2</sup> Seventy percent of Afghans survive on less than \$2 a day.<sup>3</sup> Salaries, especially for government workers, are low, when they are paid at all. The 17.5 million<sup>4</sup> Afghans living in rural areas are vulnerable to shocks, such as drought or the death or sickness of a breadwinner, and they have few social safety nets. Sixty-one percent of rural Afghans are deemed vulnerable to extreme poverty, and urban areas also suffer from high levels of destitution.<sup>5</sup>

The thousands of former militia members without sufficient livelihoods add another dimension of instability to Afghanistan's economic woes. Incomplete reintegration, often due to poor economic prospects, undermines the demobilization process and has the potential to destabilize the country.

Economic governance reforms, including important legislation governing financial, commercial and trading markets, have established the foundations of a market-led economy, but large-scale investments and jobs have been slow to materialize. Capital that has returned to the country has been invested in the non-tradable sector, primarily

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1. Percentage growth in real GDP according to the International Monetary Fund was 29 percent in 2002–2003, 16 percent in 2003–2004, and 7.5 percent in 2004–2005. See International Monetary Fund, "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Fourth Review Under the Staff-Monitored Program," July 2005, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05237.pdf>.

2. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: ILO to Tackle Unemployment," December 6, 2004.

3. United Nations Development Program, "Security with a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities—Afghanistan Human Development Report," 2004, [http://www.undp.org.af/nhdr\\_04/NHDR04.htm](http://www.undp.org.af/nhdr_04/NHDR04.htm).

4. World Bank, "Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection: An Initial Assessment" (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, June 2005).

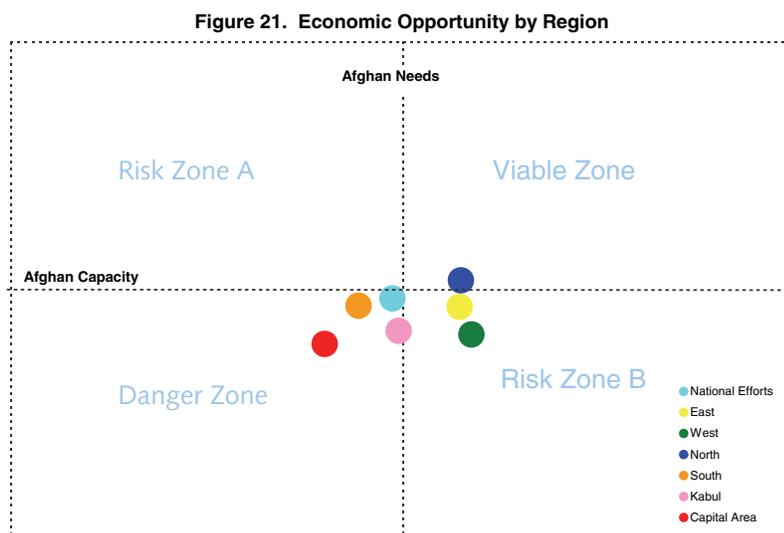
5. Ibid.

in construction and property.<sup>6</sup> Given the absence of property titles, these realities have tended to enrich the powerful and dispossess the poor.

Broad-based economic development will depend on agriculture, trade, and investment in medium-sized industrial enterprises.<sup>7</sup> Afghanistan's insecurity, corruption, and depreciated infrastructure pose serious challenges to this development. Many Afghans get by on short-term employment, seasonal migration, and informal support systems. Vulnerability to economic shocks has not decreased, because poverty alleviation in Afghanistan depends on access to infrastructure and public services, both of which remain in poor condition.

Given these circumstances, it is unsurprising, though troubling, that the area where poppy is cultivated has increased from 81,000 to 206,000 hectares over the last four years.<sup>8</sup> Our findings illustrate the centrality of the crop to short-term survival in much of rural Afghanistan, and the corrosive effect it has on local governance and security.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 21 shows the state of economic opportunity, in terms of long-term development and satisfaction of short-term needs, by region. Table 10 lists aspects of economic opportunity in the current Afghan situation, each of which is discussed below.



6. Investment in the non-tradable sector does not necessarily increase potential export earnings; rather, it is likely to increase inflation. The IMF attributes most of the growth in April 2005 to investment in telecommunications and construction. See IMF, "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Fourth Review Under the Staff-Monitored Program," <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05237.pdf>.

7. From the government strategy on economic development in Government of Afghanistan, "Securing Afghanistan's Future," March 2004, [www.af/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf](http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf).

8. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey: 2004," November 2004, [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2004.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan_opium_survey_2004.pdf). Note: The U.S. government has estimated that 206,000 hectares have been planted in 2005. See Christopher Blanchard, "Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., 2004, 2.

9. The crop is now present in all provinces, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. See UNODC and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004."

**Table 10. Economic Opportunity Indicators**

Indicator	Details
Jobs and cost of living	Employment, sources and stability of income, urban–rural divides, equity of resource allocation
Poppy	Income generation, harvest and income figures, indebtedness, impact on security and governance, counternarcotics approaches & national strategy
Economic climate	Growth, investment, trade, regulatory environment, business climate

## Jobs and Cost of Living

Afghans are surviving, but they remain vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, and income is unpredictable. Our data show that Afghan economic needs are not being met, and the overall average in this indicator is in the Danger Zone (figure 22). This reflects an unemployment rate of 30 percent and the resulting unpredictability of Afghans' economic situation.<sup>10</sup> A dire economic situation contributes to corruption, as government workers rely on bribes to survive, and to potential instability when ex-combatants do not successfully reintegrate and instead return to their commanders.



Internationally funded reconstruction projects are providing short-term employment for Afghans.

Of the 17.5 million Afghans living in rural areas, 61 percent are estimated to be vulnerable to extreme poverty.<sup>11</sup> Our results show that Afghans living in rural areas rely on day labor, seasonal migration, and child labor to supplement their household incomes. This suggests that while people are getting by in the immediate term, much of Afghanistan's population is at risk in the long run. Moreover, poverty in Afghanistan is

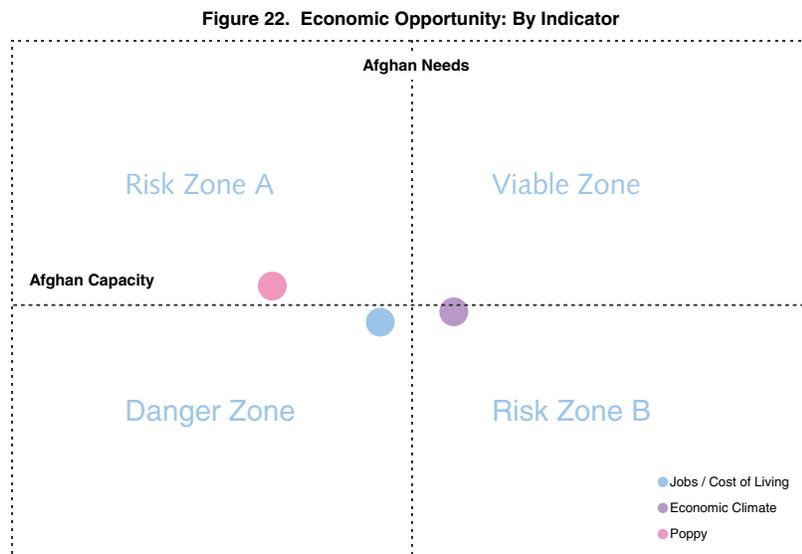
10. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: ILO to tackle unemployment"; United Nations Development Program, "Security with a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities—Afghanistan Human Development Report," 2004, [http://www.undp.org/af/nhdr\\_04/NHDR04.htm](http://www.undp.org/af/nhdr_04/NHDR04.htm).

11. World Bank, "Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection."

measured not only by income, but also by access to land and financial capital, physical assets, nutrition levels, indebtedness, and public services. In other words, economic opportunity in rural Afghanistan is negatively affected by poor social well-being.

The majority of our data relating to the urban environment for jobs and income fall in the Viable Zone. Our interviews reveal that the markets are bustling with entrepreneurial Afghans starting up small businesses to take advantage of foreign exchange. This is not to underestimate the harshness of life in the cities. Construction projects employ Afghans, but only for short periods of time. Moreover, with the influx of international organizations, prices have soared in urban areas, inflating the cost of living.<sup>12</sup> Many Afghan families must send their children onto the streets to earn extra money. Schooling, even though it is free, is a luxury they cannot afford. It is estimated that 40,000 children are working on the streets of Kabul.<sup>13</sup>

Low government salaries, averaging about \$40 a week, have meant poor service delivery.<sup>14</sup> Teachers went on strike in western Afghanistan in spring 2005, meaning 70,000 children could not attend school.<sup>15</sup> Some police have turned to bribery to subsidize their low salaries and cover their living costs. Judges have done the same, jeopardizing fair judicial processes.



Afghans resent contractors' recruitment of low-cost foreign labor from nearby countries, primarily from Pakistan and Bangladesh. NGOs and the United Nations

12. The IMF states that inflation in the provinces has been consistently lower than in the urban centers. See IMF, "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Fourth Review Under the Staff-Monitored Program," 34, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05237.pdf>.

13. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Poverty forces children to quit school to work," June 28, 2004.

14. United Nations Development Program, "Security with a Human Face."

15. Reuters, "Afghan teachers' strike keeps 70,000 out of school," April 26, 2005, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/MHII-6BU5YZ?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=afg>.

have been widely criticized for hiring qualified Afghans away from government jobs, which pay only a fraction of what NGOs can offer. This practice has created an internal brain drain, with some of the most highly educated Afghans working for international organizations.<sup>16</sup> In some cases, this contributes to or solidifies income inequalities between better-educated returnees and Afghans who did not leave the country.

Poor economic prospects hamper the successful reintegration of ex-combatants. Ex-combatants in particular need economic alternatives to discourage them from returning to their former commanders and contributing to instability. According to several accounts, crime has increased since the launch of the DDR process.<sup>17</sup> This may be attributed to the lack of income for demobilized men, some of whom are turning to drastic measures to survive.

## Poppy

Poppy cultivation is a vital short-term survival strategy in rural areas. Results in this indicator reveal that poppy cultivation is helping many Afghans meet their economic needs in the short term, but that production is detrimental to sustainable capacity. In 2004, around 356,000 households were estimated to be involved in cultivation.<sup>18</sup> Over half our data with respect to poppy falls in Risk Zone A (figure 23), indicating that needs are being met but not in a way that positively affects the ability of Afghans to sustain their economic opportunity over the long term.



This sign, provided by the Qandahar Drug Control Coordination Unit (QDCCU) on the outskirts of Kandahar city, serves as a reminder of the continued narcotics problem in the south.

This is clearly a situation in which short-term interests are trumping and likely undermining long-run goals.<sup>19</sup> Some poor Afghans have become dependent on the harvest of poppy to pay debts to drug lords. They are also vulnerable to government regulation and new efforts to eradicate the

16. Edward Girardet, “Misspent: A people’s good will,” *International Herald Tribune*, May 20, 2005, 6.

17. CSIS interviews with U.S. officials, UN officials, and humanitarian organizations, February–March 2005.

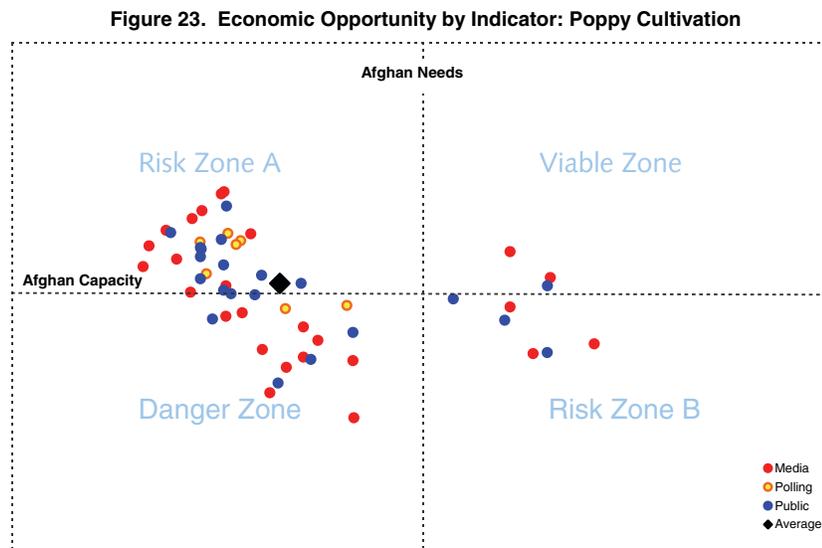
18. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, “Afghanistan Opium Survey: 2004,” November 2004, [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2004.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan_opium_survey_2004.pdf).

19. In July 2005, President Karzai called poppy a “sweet poison—it tastes delicious but it kills us.” See “Drug menace more dangerous than terrorism for Afghanistan: Karzai,” *Agence France Presse*, July 9, 2004.

crop. In addition, there is a strengthening connection between poppy production and political power that could derail positive developments made in the governance, security, and justice sectors.

Poppy accounts for 38.2 percent of Afghanistan's GDP, and more than 10 percent of the rural population is involved in some way in its cultivation or harvesting.<sup>20</sup> Farming poppy leads to higher incomes, and families living in areas where the crop is cultivated have more employment opportunities.<sup>21</sup> About 1.3 million Afghans take part in the annual harvest from June to July. Many also find work weeding the crop from February to March.<sup>22</sup>

Although it has been grown in Afghanistan for decades, poppy previously had been confined to a handful of areas. Now it is produced in every province.<sup>23</sup> This is partly because the five-year drought between 1998 and 2004 devastated the agricultural sector. Poppy requires far less water than other crops and is much more profitable; gross income per hectare of poppy is 21 times that of wheat.<sup>24</sup> Poppy is also less perishable than other crops, an important factor in a country without refrigerators and silos. Public source data indicate that some programs are under way to provide the storage facilities that could make other crops more profitable.<sup>25</sup>



20. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey: 2004"; United Nations Development Program, "Security with a Human Face."

21. Labor can earn on average \$11.53 a day in the poppy harvest, but only \$2.92 a day for unskilled casual labor. See World Bank, "Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection."

22. Ibid.

23. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, "World Drug Report," June 2005, [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR\\_2005/volume\\_2\\_web.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR_2005/volume_2_web.pdf).

24. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey: 2004."

25. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Afghanistan: 14,000 grain silos to be distributed to farmers," May 12, 2005, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6CBDGS?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=afg>.

Money made by poppy growers is meager compared to money made by traffickers, who take an estimated 78 percent of the opium export value.<sup>26</sup> In 2004, despite a fall in the market price, traffickers' profits increased by 69 percent.<sup>27</sup> Poppy cultivation also reinforces rural income inequalities. Poppy is most prevalent on arid land owned by the poor, who have little irrigation or livestock. Meanwhile, rich households have managed to reinvest their profits on poppy in infrastructure to increase yields on their other crops.<sup>28</sup>

This explains why 85 percent of our data in this area was negative in terms of long-term Afghan capacity. Afghan farmers do not benefit from the poppy industry in the long term; rather, it leaves them heavily indebted to the drug traders who lend credit in advance of the harvest at crippling rates.<sup>29</sup> Further, the opium economy is taxed and controlled by local commanders, reinforcing the stranglehold they have on the lives of ordinary Afghans.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the unsettling issues that poppy revenue raises among Afghan farmers, the potential for poppy to derail progress in the broader reconstruction effort is strong. In Afghanistan, the tremendous revenue from poppy production has strengthened power brokers inside and outside of the government. Illegal revenue streams of such magnitude lessen the impact of deliberate reconstruction aid. The influence of narcotics could easily cause backsliding in all of the other sectors in the immediate term.

Although it agrees that the narcotics trade is a barrier to development, the international community has taken too long to respond with a coherent strategy and adequate resources. The United Kingdom committed \$960 million from 2003 through 2007.<sup>31</sup> The United States committed to spending \$780 million on counternarcotics in 2005. Both commitments received criticism from the Afghan government for prioritizing eradication and temporary jobs.<sup>32</sup> In November 2004, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime released its industry survey announcing that cultivation was now taking place in all provinces, considerably increasing the international pressure on the government as well as the government's pressure on its international partners.

The challenge of opium is complex and requires parallel efforts, including police training for interdiction at border crossings; alternative livelihoods for farmers, including microfinance schemes; eradication in areas where cultivation is new; and public

26. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey: 2004."

27. Ibid.

28. World Bank, "Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Protection: An Initial Assessment."

29. For a full discussion of the problem of rural indebtedness, see David Mansfield, "Rural Finance in Afghanistan: The Challenge of the Opium Economy," discussion paper for the December 2004 Kabul workshop on the challenge of the opium economy, organized by the UK's Department for International Development and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in collaboration with the World Bank, December 2004, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFGHANISTAN/Resources/AFRFW\\_4\\_Role\\_of\\_Opium\\_as\\_Source\\_of\\_Credit.htm](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFGHANISTAN/Resources/AFRFW_4_Role_of_Opium_as_Source_of_Credit.htm).

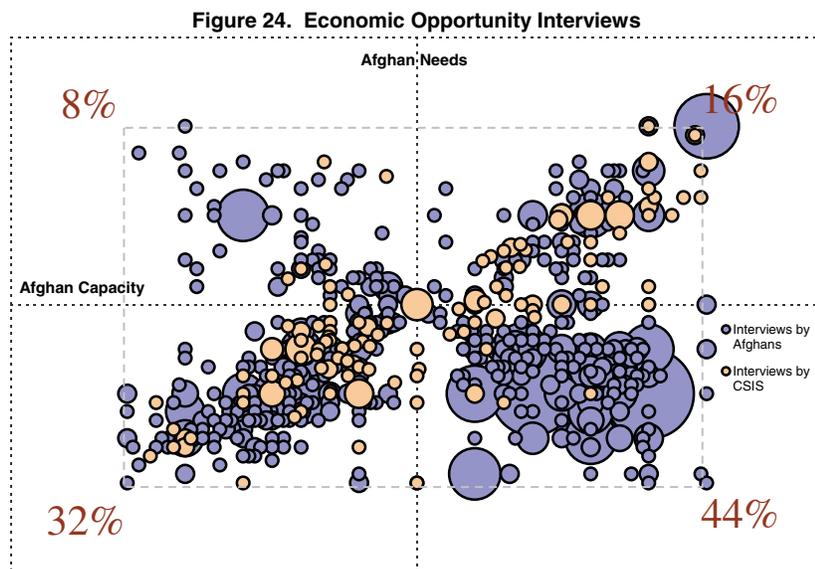
30. Jonathan Goodhand, "Frontiers and Wars; A Study of the Opium Economy in Afghanistan" (draft), January 2003, <http://www.crisisstates.com/download/others/SeminarJG29012003.pdf>.

31. The United Kingdom is the lead nation for narcotics.

32. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Interview with counternarcotics minister," January 26, 2005.

awareness to overcome farmers' opposition to changing their way of life. The Afghan government launched a National Drug Control Strategy in May 2003 that aims to reduce production by 70 percent over 5 years and to eliminate the industry in 10 years.

The Afghans we interviewed, especially in the eastern region of the country, reported that without more valuable crops, and without access to basic infrastructure like roads and irrigation channels, they will continue to rely on poppy as a coping strategy. The UN estimated that farming families received \$605 million gross from poppy sales in 2004. In light of this, the alternative livelihoods projects look slim: the United States' alternative livelihoods program for fiscal year 2005 has a value of \$75.5 million and the UK's contribution for 2005 is \$50 million. The hope is clearly that these amounts, if invested wisely in processing and value-adding plants and machinery, will leverage competitive yields for farmers. That outcome is unlikely, however, until the threats of eradication or arrest become credible enough to deter farmers from switching to poppy.

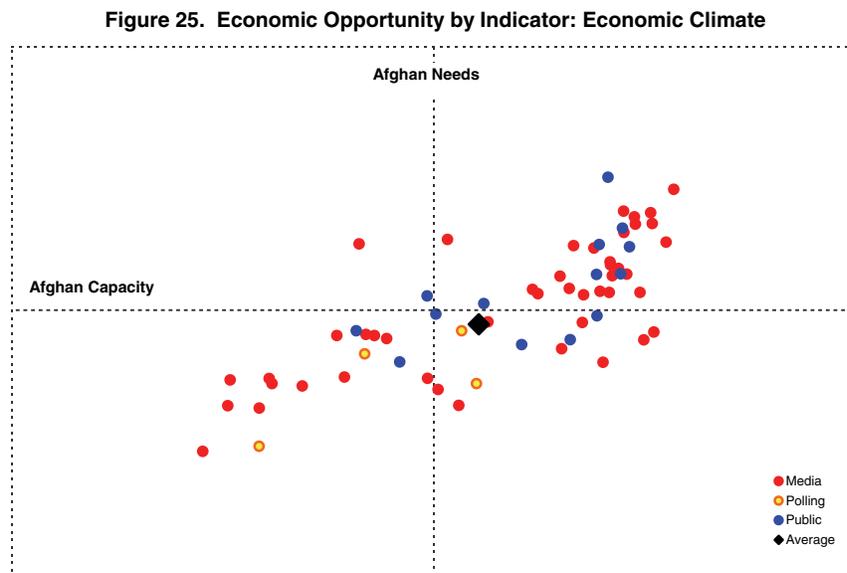


The United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime Rapid Assessment Survey conducted from January to February 2005 shows a decline in poppy cultivation in the majority of provinces, including the three provinces—Helmand, Nangarhar, and Uruzgan—that make up 52 percent of the total area under cultivation.<sup>33</sup> According to the survey, many farmers refrained from planting poppy. The reduction underlines the importance of continuing a strong national campaign that threatens action against provincial governors who do not succeed in wiping out the crop, that continues to build interdiction capacity in the police forces, and that continues to threaten eradication.

33. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan: Opium Rapid Assessment Survey," March 2005, [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/rapid\\_assessment\\_afghan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/rapid_assessment_afghan_2005.pdf).

## Economic Climate

The economy continues to grow, but foreign investment remains low. The government has made a strong start in building a framework to align the country with the global economy, and the data we collected reflect a positive outlook for the economic climate. More than two-thirds of the data on this indicator reflect a growing capacity, with just under half in the Viable Zone (figure 25). Public sources, including United Nations agencies, are the most optimistic, charting the high-level conferences, donor projects, and government programs that are keeping officials in Kabul busy. The government also appears to have been very active in concluding regional trade and transit agreements.<sup>34</sup> Some important new legislation has been passed, such as the investment law, the central bank law, the commercial banking law, and the customs code.



The goal of these reforms is to attract investment, which is needed to generate jobs, consolidate peace, and sustain economic growth to lift Afghans out of poverty.<sup>35</sup> Private-sector growth is needed to generate tax revenues that can help the government to finance itself. The new business licensing office has registered more than 6,000 new businesses and facilitated nearly \$760 million of foreign investment.<sup>36</sup> The economy grew 7.5 percent in the fiscal year ending March 2005.<sup>37</sup> The new currency has been stable despite the heavy influx of foreign aid into the economy. International banks

34. Mariam Nawabi, "Afghanistan's Trade Routes," Development Gateway, February 3, 2004, <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/afghanistan/rc/filedownload.do~itemId=382412>.

35. The government set a target of 9 percent annual GDP growth for 10 years. Yet even at this rate, it will take until 2015 for Afghan incomes to reach \$500 per year. See Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan, "Securing Afghanistan's Future," March 2004, [www.af/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf](http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf).

36. Hedayat Amin Arsala, "Creating an Enabling Environment for Private Sector Development," speech by the Minister of Commerce at the Afghanistan Development Forum 2005, April 5, 2005, [http://www.adf.gov.af/resources/themes/theme%203%20-%20Creating%20an%20enabling%](http://www.adf.gov.af/resources/themes/theme%203%20-%20Creating%20an%20enabling%20).

have opened for business. All these factors contribute to a more attractive economic climate, particularly for foreign investors.

However, the volatile security environment is a clear deterrent to capital flowing into Afghanistan. In addition, media data highlight the lack of infrastructure as a major

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**I am a shopkeeper. I am working today, but tomorrow there is no work. We would like a factory to provide jobs. — Parwan**

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impediment to attracting foreign businesses. For example, power shortages were cited as the reason why a large German cement manufacturer, Heidelberg Cement, decided against opening a cement plant near Kabul.<sup>38</sup>

To date, there has been considerable investment in the Kabul property and construction market.

The UN Development Program attributes this to the presence of public sector institutions, the international community, and the reinvestment of revenue from the narcotics trade.<sup>39</sup> There has been relatively little investment in rural infrastructure and agriculture. So while urban centers become the enclave of the powerful, the countryside barely scrapes by.<sup>40</sup> This spurs urban migration and increases incentives for corruption in urban centers.

Corruption reportedly is rampant in urban property development.<sup>41</sup> Government officials issuing licenses take bribes; contracts are awarded to those with connections;

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**I am a government employee and earn only 2,000 Afghanis (\$40) a month. This does not cover my expenses. If the government pays attention to salaries, mine might increase. — Nangarhar**

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and many companies have relationships with regional warlords, exempting them from border taxes.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, some industries are becoming increasingly exclusionary, with contracts awarded to those with political connections.<sup>43</sup> Foreign companies from Turkey, China, and Pakistan benefit more regularly than Afghan companies, partly because many Afghan companies have not developed the capacity to compete in complex and demanding tender processes. All business is frus-

trated by complicated procurement rules, complex and time-consuming regulations, high registration fees, and a burdensome bureaucracy.<sup>44</sup> In addition, profit-making Afghan companies have registered as NGOs to take advantage of the preferable regulatory environment for NGOs.<sup>45</sup>

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37. International Monetary Fund, "Islamic State of Afghanistan: Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix."

38. Simon Clark, "Karzai's Afghanistan, Poisoned by Heroin Habit, Seeks Investors," Bloomberg, March 22, 2005, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000100&sid=azmMmdBu2edg>.

39. United Nations Development Program, "Security with a Human Face."

40. One indicator of this is inflation. The IMF states that inflation in the provinces has been consistently lower than in the urban centers. See IMF, "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Fourth Review Under the Staff-Monitored Program," 34, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05237.pdf>.

41. Sarah Lister and Zainiddin Karev, "Understanding Markets in Afghanistan: A Case Study of the Market in Construction Materials," Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, June 2004.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. International Monetary Fund, "Islamic State of Afghanistan: Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix."

Partly as a result of this, donors and NGOs have been criticized by the Afghan government for forming a parallel, unaccountable government,<sup>46</sup> and it is true that international donors often finance their projects outside the national budget system. However, despite perceptions of NGO dominance, less than 10 percent of assistance to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2003 went directly to national and international NGOs, whereas 16.5 percent went directly to private companies such as Louis Berger and Bearing Point.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, 27.8 percent of assistance, or \$1.2 billion, was channeled directly through the government to fund projects.<sup>48</sup>

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**Women work, but they don't tell their extended relatives that they work. They tell them that they go to school. — Kandahar**

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Afghan employment levels, skills, and technology will not increase while foreign companies and international NGOs and contractors monopolize procurement and reconstruction. Our findings reveal some frustration among Afghans and the government that short-term reconstruction needs are prioritized over the longer-term capacity in the indigenous business community.<sup>49</sup> Procurement data available for 2003 show that of 172 contracts awarded, only 24 went to Afghan companies.<sup>50</sup> While short-term reconstruction is often a genuine priority, donors would do well to consider the impact of foreign sourcing on the long-term business climate.

One promising way to spur the economy is to take advantage of Afghanistan's position as a "land bridge" between central and south Asia, as well as between the near and far East. Customs levied on goods coming into the country have been a primary source of income for the government. These will increase dramatically once the Asian Development Bank's project to construct two "superhighways" from central Asia, through Afghanistan, to ports in the Indian Ocean is completed, reducing travel times radically.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, plans and negotiations con-

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**I am borrowing money from friends to survive. — Ghazni**

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45. "Creating an Enabling Environment for Private Sector Development," discussion paper prepared by the Minister of Commerce for the Afghanistan Development Forum 2005, <http://www.adf.gov.af/agenda.asp>.

46. Minister of Finance Anwar Ahady, in "Aid groups running Afghanistan: Minister," *The Australian*, April 21, 2005, 8.

47. In 2002, USAID awarded Louis Berger a \$300 million contract to oversee road and school building, including the Kabul-Kandahar highway. In 2003, USAID awarded Bearing Point a three-year \$64.1 million contract to help the government prepare most aspects of economic governance. See Center for Public Integrity, "Contractors: Afghanistan," July 28, 2005, <http://www.publicintegrity.org/wow/bio.aspx?act=pro&fil=AF>.

48. International Monetary Fund, "Islamic State of Afghanistan: Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix."

49. The 2005 Afghanistan Development Forum featured much discussion about the participation of Afghans in the reconstruction of their own country. Legislation has since been written in an attempt to resolve the for-profit/not-for-profit dispute, in which NGOs are accused of hiding behind their status.

50. Hedayat Amin Arsala, "Creating an Enabling Environment for Private Sector Development."

51. The journey from Dushanbe to Karachi currently takes 65 hours, but will be reduced to 29 hours once construction is complete. Government of Afghanistan, "Securing Afghanistan's Future."

tinue with regard to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan pipeline project that will make Turkmen natural gas supplies available to meet the high demand for energy in Pakistan and India.<sup>52</sup>

Trade with other countries in the region has increased since 2001, but the trade deficit is currently financed by aid and narcotics. Afghanistan exports rugs, fresh fruit (grapes, pomegranates), and dried fruit (primarily raisins) to Pakistan and Iran. However, decades of warfare compounded by four years of drought have destroyed the orchards and the irrigation systems that traditional crops like almonds and pistachios need.<sup>53</sup> Now that the five-year drought appears to be coming to an end and crop production can resume, Afghanistan's farmers lack the machinery and infrastructure to add value to these crops. For example, Afghanistan's legendary grapes are shipped fresh to Pakistan and Iran, where they are made into juice and other byproducts. In Afghanistan, the secondary product of grapes is raisins, which are far less profitable than processed products. In addition, limited trade during the Taliban era has allowed other countries in the region to take over the carpet market. Afghanistan has thus lost its share of the horticulture and carpet-weaving markets, both of which it traditionally dominated in the region.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, urban markets are overflowing with goods from neighboring countries, crowding out still-uncompetitive domestic producers from all sectors.

Our interviews revealed that farmers, in particular, desired the means to improve their businesses through training and the provision of equipment, seeds, fertilizer, and financial capital. To support access to financial capital, a consultative group of 28 international donor agencies and the Ministry of Finance have established the Microfinance and Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan. This facility funnels money from donors into small microfinance loans that have already benefited 20,000 Afghans.<sup>55</sup> Microfinance projects are helping farmers to acquire the resources they need to build up their profits, helping existing businesses to expand, and providing an important means of empowering women in communities to work.<sup>56</sup> In addition to microfinance, the country's first credit union is under way, and a banking system is emerging.<sup>57</sup> In the absence of assured increases in foreign investment, building up indigenous businesses is one of the most promising ways to expand government revenue.

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**I teach full-time, but if my salary does not increase, I will have to become a thief. — Balkh**

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52. Tahir Ikram, "Turkmens, Afghans, Pakistanis in Gas Pipeline Talks," Reuters, April 12, 2005, <http://reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=8155683>.

53. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Survey of the Horticulture Sector 2003," 2004, [http://www.fao.org/documents/show\\_cdr.asp?url\\_file=/docrep/007/y5163e/y5163e00.htm](http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/007/y5163e/y5163e00.htm).

54. Wahidullah Noori, "Carpet Industry Looks to Revival," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, December 2, 2004, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200412\\_150\\_3\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200412_150_3_eng.txt).

55. World Bank Group, "Ten Things Worth Knowing About The World Bank in Afghanistan," July 2005, <http://www.worldbank.org.af/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/AFGHANISTANEXTN/0,contentMDK:20147616~pagePK:141137~piPK:217854~theSitePK:305985,00.html>.

56. See USAID Weekly Activity Update, "Rebuilding Afghanistan," Issue 57, May 5–May 11, 2004; Benjamin Hu, "Microcredit empowers Afghan women; Borrowers developing businesses," *Washington Times*, April 10, 2004; Betsy Cummings, "Macro demand for microcredit; Women in poor nations need more cash to expand start-ups," *International Herald Tribune*, January 28, 2005, 15.

## Conclusion

Afghans have little control over their economic lives. Most rely on good weather for income, or on the influx of assistance that has created short-term opportunities in construction. Income for most Afghans therefore remains unreliable and insufficient. Most Afghans also see that reconstruction, rather than tapping their own skills and capacities, has enriched those who are already in power or foreigners who win the big contracts. Thus, while the statistics indicate that Afghanistan's economy is growing steadily, there is widespread frustration and need. The government strategy for economic growth has focused from the start on attracting foreign investment. Although understandable, more attention should now be paid to channeling reconstruction resources directly through (and to) the Afghan people. Supporting Afghan initiatives, reintroducing income taxes, and strengthening revenue collection at the borders will help to meet Afghans' economic needs in the short term as well as to establish long-term economic viability.

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57. Sayed Yaqub Ibrahimi, "Marching to a Different Tune," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, May 13, 2005, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200505\\_172\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200505_172_1_eng.txt); USAID Weekly Activity Update, "Rebuilding Afghanistan," Issue 45, February 10, 2004.

# Social Well-being

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Services have improved significantly, but they are difficult to access and quality remains mediocre.

- Communications are greatly improved in all urban areas and in some rural areas.
- Most electricity is provided by generators, and the vast majority of Afghans do not have power.
- The need for irrigation is urgent, and repair of damaged systems has been slow.
- There have been isolated successes in the transportation sector, but lack of roads is preventing Afghans' access to markets, health care, and education.
- Children are returning to school, but teachers are unqualified and schools are difficult to access.
- The health care system suffers from poor infrastructure, lack of access, and a lack of trained doctors.
- Afghans are returning to their country by the millions, increasing the strain on services that are already stretched.

We reviewed a wide range of indicators covering health and nutrition, education, communications, transportation, repatriation and shelter. Afghanistan has not reached the Viable Zone in any of these areas; many Afghans find it difficult to access basic services. Some areas of progress within these indicators have emerged, however, that may catalyze broader gains in social well-being and improve economic opportunity. Education, cellular communications, and transportation stand out as successes. Irrigation, urban management and electricity stand out as weaknesses that may slow further progress.

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**There is still no power, no roads, a water problem. Where is the money going? — Kabul**

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Six of the 12 programs prioritized by President Karzai in his 2004 National Program for Reconstruction cover social well-being indicators as we define them.<sup>1</sup> The central government sees this sector as highly important to ensuring Afghanistan's stability, but it is not involved in direct implementation of these projects. For example, over 80 percent of health care is provided by the 2,000 NGOs currently registered in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The six programs are Refugee Return, Education, Transport, Urban Management, Telecommunications, and Energy and Mining. See President Karzai and the Government of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan: Rebuilding our Nation, Afghanistan's National Program for Reconstruction," April, 2005, <http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/adf/Statements/Statement%20-%20Government%20of%20Afghanistan%20-%20President%20Hamid%20Karzai.pdf>.

The influx of international humanitarian aid over the past four years has done much to improve basic social indicators in Afghanistan. However, Afghans still have limited access to basic services like health care, education, power, and clean water, and the quality of services is generally low. Roads are being built, primarily with funding from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Commission, India, Italy, Japan, the United States, Iran, and Pakistan. Of note is the U.S.-funded Kabul-Kandahar road, which serves as a symbol of international commitment to reconstruction and facilitates the transit of thousands of dollars of goods between Afghanistan's north and south. In our interviews, Afghans acknowledged that these larger roads were necessary, but that they also needed more secondary and farm-to-market roads.<sup>3</sup> Plans are under way to establish a nationwide power grid, combining imported power and generated power.<sup>4</sup>

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Teachers are so bad that I have to work here to pay for additional courses. — Ghazni

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Since 2002, thousands of schools have been built, but books and other educational materials, female teachers, and qualified teachers are still scarce. New health clinics, built to accommodate both men and women, are short on medical personnel, equipment, and medicine. Power, where it is available at all, is largely provided by generators. Access to shelter for returning refugees and IDPs is limited. Proof of property ownership, possessed by few returnees, is a prerequisite to building on any tract of land. Our interviews reflect an appreciation among Afghans for the considerable reconstruction activity in the social well-being sector, but, at the same time, a frustration that they are unable to benefit from it, because it is too difficult to access and the service quality is inadequate.

Improving results in social well-being is essential to building the Afghan government's visibility and Afghans' allegiance to it. However, the overwhelming presence of humanitarian actors in Afghanistan (that are often directly funded by donor countries instead of through government channels) has hindered a sense of national ownership. The spread of actors working on the ground that answer to different donors has also made it difficult to coordinate service delivery and monitor progress.

Figure 26 shows the state of social well-being, in terms of long-term development and the satisfaction of short-term needs, by region. Figure 27 presents the interview data on social well-being.

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2. Sayed Mustafa Kazemi, Afghan Ministry of Commerce, "Creating an Enabling Environment for the Private Sector," April 2005, <http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/adf/Pillar%203/3.1%20Trade%20&%20Investment.pps>.

3. Notably, USAID has led a program called RAMP (Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program) targeted to the construction of farm-to-market roads. For more information, see <http://www.ramp-af.com/>.

4. Ministry of Water and Power of Afghanistan and Norconsult, "Draft Power Sector Master Plan, Chapters 3 and 4," May 2005.

Figure 26. Social Well-being by Region



Figure 27. Social Well-being Interviews

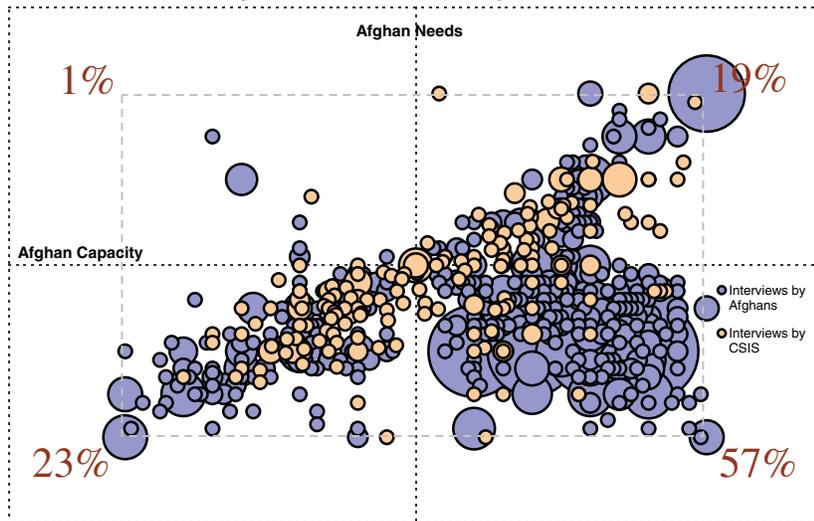
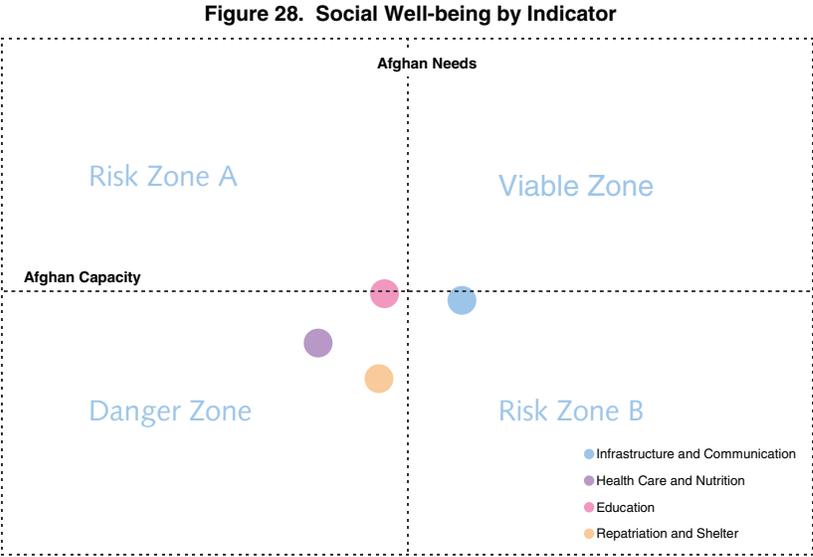


Table 11 lists various aspects, or indicators, of social well-being in the current Afghan situation, each of which is discussed below. Figure 28 graphs the state of each social well-being indicator.

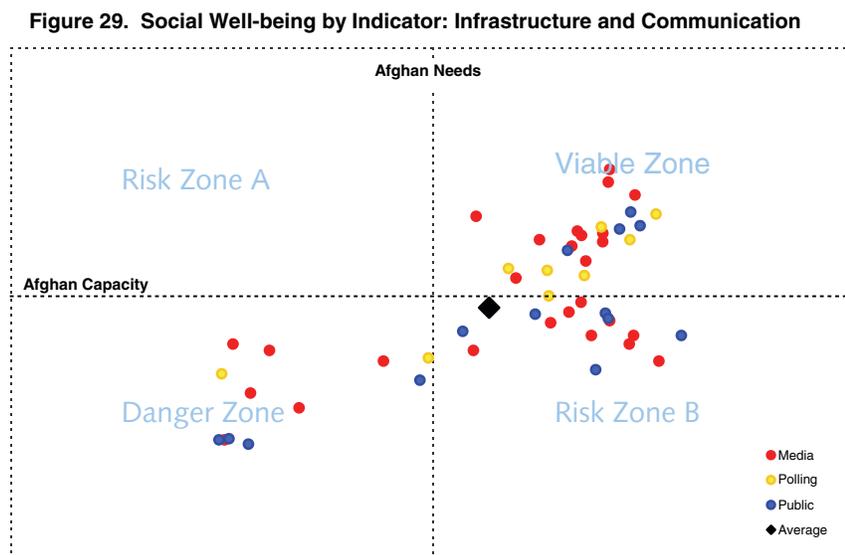
**Table 11. Social Well-being Indicators**

Indicator	Details
Infrastructure and communications	Telecommunications, power, irrigation, and roads
Education	Primary, secondary, and higher; vocational; enrollment and attendance/access issues
Healthcare and nutrition	Health indices, including mortality
Repatriation and shelter	Repatriation and resettlement, land issues



## Infrastructure and Communications

Figure 29 shows a vast spread of data. More positive data generally represent the communications and road-related points, while more negative data generally represent power and irrigation.



### Communications

Communications are greatly improved in all urban areas and in some rural areas. Two Afghan companies, Roshan and Afghan Wireless Communication Corporation, invested early in cellular licenses offered by the Ministry of Communications and now dominate the cellular market. Demand for cell phones is high, and access has expanded to connect major cities and even some rural areas. The private sector, both Afghan and international, has invested more than \$80 million in mobile licenses.<sup>5</sup> More than 75 firms have applied for licenses to establish more GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) systems in Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the rapid expansion of cellular service, the government, the people and new businesses are more connected throughout the country than they have ever been. The government has also profited from the licensing deals.

More than 85 percent of Afghan men own a working radio.<sup>7</sup> Radio programming facilitates information sharing, civic education, and connectivity between geographically remote areas of the country. It also equalizes access to information between social

5. Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration with the ADB, UNDP, IMF, and World Bank, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward," March 2004, <http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf>.

6. Altaï Consulting, "Nationwide Media Evaluation Project," February 2005, [http://www.altaiconsulting.com/dyn/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=39](http://www.altaiconsulting.com/dyn/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=39).

7. Internews survey, 1999, <http://www.internews.org/regions/centralasia/afghanistan.htm#Media>.

groups and gender. Women now produce or speak on radio programs. NGOs offer journalism courses in urban centers around the country, often in alliance with the universities. Independent newspaper circulation and broadcast and cable television stations have also increased, particularly in urban areas.

Illiteracy, power shortages, inadequate and damaged broadcast equipment, and radio towers in disrepair still constrain communications access and quality to some extent.<sup>8</sup> Radio coverage across the country has radically improved, however, and radio programming has been diversified. Our data in this sub-indicator are very positive.

## Power

Most electricity is provided by generators, and the vast majority of Afghans do not have power. Only 6 percent of Afghans have access to electricity, but power generation capacity is improving. Our data on power were overwhelmingly negative on both capacity and needs fulfillment. Research in the Economic Opportunity section points to the lack of electricity as a major barrier to investment.

Reconstruction plans in this sector are ambitious; goals include generation and distribution of electrical power through a rehabilitated national grid so that 24 percent of Afghans are connected by 2010.<sup>9</sup> In the near term, generators



The lights along this road in Kandahar city are powered almost entirely by generators.

scattered around the country typically provide power. Kandahar has a regular power schedule, with power every other day, and 70 percent of Kabul's residents are receiving power every night.<sup>10</sup> Both are largely powered by generators.

Some alternative power solutions exist and are receiving modest attention. Natural gas reserves can, if properly tapped, contribute significant gas-fired electrical capacity. Donors have made some isolated efforts to make solar power technology available.<sup>11</sup> Hydropower is perhaps the most promising energy source.

Given the vulnerability of large-scale infrastructure to potential insurgent attacks, there is a case for small-scale hydropower (micro-hydro) or local diesel generators.

8. Ibid.

9. Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward."

10. Wahidullah Amani, "Turning the Lights On in Kabul," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, February 24, 2005, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr\\_200502\\_162\\_1\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200502_162_1_eng.txt).

11. The Asian Development Bank has promised a \$750 million grant to introduce solar energy for rural communities not connected to the grid. See "ADB to develop solar energy for Afghanistan," *PakTribune Online Edition*, February 19, 2005, <http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=91158>.

Some remote communities have benefited from donor-assisted efforts in this area.<sup>12</sup> The government's village block grant scheme, the National Solidarity Program, has attempted to leverage the popularity of micro-hydro power to increase community involvement, primarily to maintain the infrastructure.<sup>13</sup> This approach requires villages to present to the central government a construction plan for a project, such as a micro-hydro generator, a school, or a road. The central government then grants the village a block grant of around \$20,000 for the project. This creates common interest among communities and builds up civil society involvement in reconstruction.

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**Afghans need to be patient.  
Before you go to sleep, you need  
to prepare a bed to sleep in.**  
— Herat

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## Irrigation

**Irrigation needs are immediate, and repairs have moved slowly.** Before the conflict, horticulture accounted for 60 percent of Afghanistan's export revenues.<sup>14</sup> Horticultural products, particularly if processed and packaged, represent a credible alternative to poppy, but lack of irrigation is the major constraint. An estimated 30 percent of the country's irrigation systems were damaged by conflict or lack of maintenance.<sup>15</sup> To address this problem, the Ministry of Irrigation is working with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Bank to rehabilitate more than 1,000 broken irrigation systems over the next three years.<sup>16</sup> While good for long-term capacity building, this will not meet Afghans' needs in the short term.

## Roads and Transportation

**The transportation sector has had isolated successes, but lack of roads is thwarting Afghans' access to markets, health care, and education.** Our data fall on average in the Viable Zone, but only 16 percent of the country's roads were paved as recently as 2003.<sup>17</sup> Afghanistan's "ring road," which connects the urban centers of Kabul, Mazar-I-Sharif, Herat, and Kandahar, and spokes across the border into Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, and

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12. USAID, "USAID Support Brings Power to Rural Homes and Improves Livelihoods," USAID/OTI Afghanistan Hot Topics, April 2004.

13. Specifically, we refer to the National Solidarity Program; see <http://www.mrrd.gov.af/prog/nsp.htm> for a description on the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development Web site.

14. Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward."

15. International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Seed Unit–Future Harvest Consortium to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan, "Seed and Crop Improvement Situation Assessment in Afghanistan," April 2002, [http://www.icarda.org/Afghanistan/NA/Full/Physical\\_F.htm](http://www.icarda.org/Afghanistan/NA/Full/Physical_F.htm) and <http://community.eldis.org/webx?233@939.UerEaaEae76.0@.eea0648!enclosure=.eea0649>.

16. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Rural areas face lack of arable land," June 22, 2004, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=41812&SelectRegion=Central\\_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=41812&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN).

17. World Bank Development Indicators, as reported by the Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward."

Tajikistan, has been the subject of major international focus. When complete, the ring road will facilitate regional trade, regional transit trade, and associated business development along its route. About 66 percent of the Afghan population lives within 50 kilometers of the ring road.<sup>18</sup>

Transportation projects are typically large-scale, and these have been particularly dangerous in Afghanistan. The rehabilitation of the Kabul-Kandahar section of the ring road attracted hostile attacks throughout construction.<sup>19</sup> Weather and insecurity are impeding progress on the road connecting Kabul and Balkh provinces and on the Kabul-Jalalabad road.<sup>20</sup> Violence against the USAID-funded project to complete the Kandahar-Herat portion of the ring road has led to two deaths, five injuries, three kidnappings, and 29 other hostile attacks since the start of 2005.<sup>21</sup>

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**The people don't trust the health system, so they go to Pakistan. My brother was ill and died en route. — Kandahar**

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Our interviews also reveal frustrations in rural villages about small-scale road construction projects that do not connect to other villages or to bigger thoroughfares. Other Afghans complain that poor roads render health clinics and schools inaccessible.

The work associated with transportation should generate local private-sector activity, especially in the construction sector. That said, large-scale procurement is managed by donor organizations and their practices tend to favor the international private sector.

## Education

**Children are returning to school, but teachers are unqualified and schools are difficult to access.** Of all indicators within this sector, education shows both the highest capacity and highest needs fulfillment, and borders on the Viable Zone (see figure 28). At the same time, the United Nations Development Program highlighted Afghan education as the worst in the world.<sup>22</sup>

The media are the most optimistic of our information sources on education, perhaps reflecting the positive symbolism implicit in children returning to school. Between 2002 and 2004, more than 4 million Afghan children, 30 percent of whom

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18. Relief Web, "Afghanistan Ring-Road—Impact on Population Centers," July 16, 2003, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900LargeMaps/SKAR-64GEZE?OpenDocument>.

19. Lou Hughes, "The Road from Kabul to Kandahar," *The Globalist*, February 2, 2005, <http://www.theglobalist.com/DBWeb/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=4370>.

20. Zubair Babakarkhail, "Road project falls behind schedule," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 10, 2005, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/news/viewStory.asp?lng=eng&id=554>; Simon Clark, "Karzai's Afghanistan, Poisoned by Heroin Habit, Seeks Investors," *Bloomberg*, March 22, 2005, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000100&sid=azmMmdBu2edg>.

21. USAID, "Road Update," May 15–31, 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/afghanistan/weeklyreports/053105\\_roadweekly.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/afghanistan/weeklyreports/053105_roadweekly.pdf).

22. United Nations Development Program, *Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities*, Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004, 66, <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/>.

were girls, returned to school.<sup>23</sup> The start of the post-winter school cycle in 2005 was expected to bring yet more children back to school.

Of the Afghans we interviewed, 65 percent noticed an increase in the country's ability to provide education, and 42 percent placed education in the Viable Zone. In



This school, built with international funds, had no funding for books or teachers at the time of the CSIS visit.

general, our data show that Afghans recognize the increased availability of education. Many were pleased that universities now allow women to attend and that schools offer English classes. Nevertheless, Afghans point to the shortage of teachers, the quality of teachers, inadequate educational materials, and limited accessibility

of education—due to economic, security, infrastructure, and cultural factors—as continuing issues.

Of the 4.3 million students currently enrolled, 91 percent (3.9 million) are in primary school.<sup>24</sup> This underlines not only the demographic reality of Afghanistan as a



This eight-year-old boy said, "I don't go to school because I have to make money for my mother and younger brother." He earned 20 Afghanis (40 cents) a day selling sunflower seeds.

country dominated by a young population, but also the need for serious investment in secondary teacher training to be prepared for the next few years. For older Afghans, vocational training is an avenue to getting a job. Vocational training is generally limited to skills like carpentry and weaving and to reintegration for former militia. Strengthening and broadening training options to include computer education, accounting, and other bureaucratic processes could increase the employability of Afghans in both the government and private organizations.

Afghanistan's 100,000 teachers are predominantly male. The majority lack professional credentials; most teach primary education.<sup>25</sup> Less than 15 percent of teachers

23. United Nations Children Fund, "UNICEF: Afghanistan Education Fact Sheet," February 2005, [http://www.unama-afg.org/news/\\_pr/\\_english/UN/2005/UNICEF-Education%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.unama-afg.org/news/_pr/_english/UN/2005/UNICEF-Education%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf).

24. Afghan Ministry of Education, as cited in Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward."

25. United Nations Children Fund, "UNICEF: Afghanistan Education Fact Sheet," February 2005, [http://www.unama-afg.org/news/\\_pr/\\_english/UN/2005/UNICEF-Education%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.unama-afg.org/news/_pr/_english/UN/2005/UNICEF-Education%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf), p. 1.

hold professional teacher training credentials.<sup>26</sup> Some students, even some in primary school, are taking jobs to pay for private English and computer classes because the quality of their teachers is so poor. Afghans we interviewed said that if salaries were higher, the education system would attract better teachers. Some also told us that educational materials, such as books, and facilities, such as science labs, were old and out of date.

Since 2002, over 1,750 schoolhouses have been rehabilitated, but barriers to access remain.<sup>27</sup> Afghans we interviewed revealed that some parents resist allowing their daughters to attend school. Others were so poor that they force their children to work instead. Still others keep their children at home for fear of kidnapping or crime. Combined with the difficulty of travel over poor roads, each of these limits access to education for many children. Public source data suggest these barriers may be higher in certain regions. In the southern and western provinces of Zabul and Badghis, only 1 percent of girls go to school, and of the nine provinces with the lowest school enrollment rates, seven are in the south.<sup>28</sup>

## Health Care and Nutrition

**The health care system suffers from poor infrastructure, poor accessibility, and a lack of trained doctors.** The average of our data regarding health care falls in the Danger Zone (see figure 30). Poor infrastructure, isolation, and a lack of trained doctors mean many Afghans are vulnerable to disease and ill health. The government estimates that NGOs provide more than 80 percent of the health care delivered outside of Kabul.<sup>29</sup> Yet even this assistance, according our data, fails to meet much of Afghanistan's dire immediate health care needs.

Our public source data for Afghanistan show that one woman dies of childbirth complications every 20 minutes, that life expectancy averages 44.5 years, and that one of every five children dies before the age of five.<sup>30</sup> Health care and nutrition are particularly important, given the harshness of the climate and remoteness of much of the country. The 2004–2005 winter, as well as the floods from the spring thaw, prompted a humanitarian crisis: an estimated 500,000 people in addition to the 6 million who were anticipated needed food assistance through the end of 2004.<sup>31</sup>

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26. Ibid.

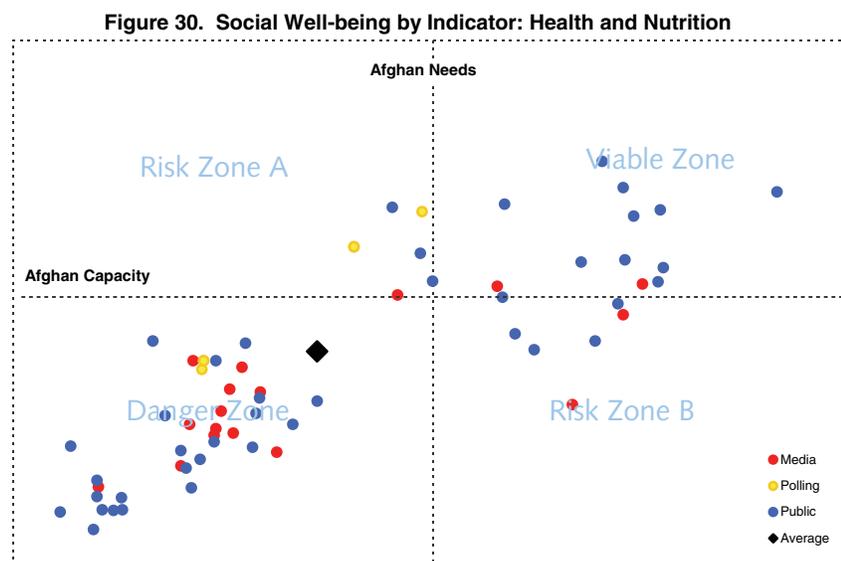
27. Ibid.

28. Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, "Report Card: Progress on Compulsory Education (Grades 1-9)," March 2004, 3.

29. Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward."

30. "Afghanistan Situation 'Perilous': U.N. Report Card Sees Risk of Chaos," CNN, February 22, 2005, [http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/02/21/afghanistan.un/"index.html](http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/02/21/afghanistan.un/); United Nations Development Program, "Afghanistan's Future Holds Promise and Peril," News Bulletin (Kabul), February 21, 2005, <http://www.undp.org.af/#>; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Plight of 'Forgotten Women' Needing Health Care in Rural Areas," March 2, 2004, [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=39783&SelectRegion=Central\\_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=39783&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN).

31. World Food Program, "Urgent WFP Food Aid to Afghans Hit By First Snow, Then Floods," March 22, 2005, <http://www.wfp.org/newsroom/subsections/search.asp?section=13#>.



Poor roads have prevented some rural Afghans from reaching health care providers. During the winter, some areas were entirely cut off from access to health care services, which directly contributed to health crises in remote villages.<sup>32</sup>

Male doctors are increasingly seeing female patients, but our interviews reveal that many women remain unwilling to see (or are prevented from seeing) male doctors. Public sources and interviews alike indicate that there are few female health professionals, effectively limiting women's access to health care, given cultural realities. Paktika province, for example, recently had only one female doctor for a population of more than 2 million people.<sup>33</sup>

According to our interviews, medicine remains prohibitively expensive for many Afghans. Some told us that their doctors instructed them to buy medicine in the market if the medicine in the clinic was too expensive. However, pharmacists in the market, many of whom are operating illegally, often sell expired or phony medicine, a practice that the government has been powerless to stop.<sup>34</sup> In some heavy poppy-growing areas like Badakhshan, opium is used as a panacea for all illnesses.<sup>35</sup>

There have been some notable successes in the health sector, particularly in international community-led long-term capacity building. The United Nations has put great effort into large-scale, quick-impact disease eradication and vaccination programs.

32. Carlotta Gall, "Hundreds of Children May Have Died in Afghanistan's Extreme Cold," *New York Times*, February 18, 2005, p. A12.

33. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Plight of 'Forgotten Women' Needing Health Care in Rural Areas."

34. Zarghona Salihi, "Expired Drugs to be Torched," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, April 7, 2005, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/news/viewStory.asp?lng=eng&id=460>; Bashir Gwakh, "Government Enforcing Rules on Pharmacies," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, March 7, 2005, <http://www.pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=e&sid=585>.

35. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Women and Addiction," August 24, 2004.

These short-duration programs have tremendous long-term benefits. For example, in 2005 the Ministry of Public Health, working with UNICEF and the World Health Organization, launched a three-day polio eradication campaign with 40,000 volunteers across the country going door to door. The campaign reached 5 million children, and Afghanistan is now almost entirely polio-free.<sup>36</sup> Similar programs vaccinating children against tetanus, measles, leishmaniasis, and malaria have been equally successful.<sup>37</sup> Afghans generally have iodine-deficient diets, a prevalent cause of brain damage, so a new campaign is under way to encourage Afghan families to consume more iodized salt.<sup>38</sup> Privately run Afghan salt factories now produce enough for the entire population.



At the time of the CSIS visit, this clinic at Zhahr-i-Dasht, an IDP camp of an estimated 40,000 people, had no doctors or nurses on duty. It also had run out of medicine and was not expecting a new shipment for another two weeks.

## Repatriation and Shelter

Afghans are returning to their country by the millions, causing increased strain on services that are already stretched. More than 3.7 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since December 2001.<sup>39</sup> This is an endorsement of the improved security situation, but also raises serious challenges. UNHCR alone cares for about 184,000 IDPs who have not yet returned to their areas of origin and has provided 100,000 rural shelter units benefiting over half a million Afghans in the past two years.<sup>40</sup> While this

36. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, press briefing, February 2005.

37. UNICEF website: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_7353.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_7353.html); United Nations Development Program, “Afghanistan’s Future Holds Promise and Peril,” News Bulletin (Kabul), February 21, 2005, <http://www.undp.org.af/#>; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, “Afghanistan: Dramatic Reduction in Leishmaniasis Possible—WHO,” August 12, 2004.

38. World Health Organization (WHO), “Eliminating iodine deficiency disorders,” September 3, 2003, <http://www.who.int/nut/idd.htm>.

39. United Nations High Commission for Refugees, “Afghan Returns From Pakistan Cross 2.5 Million Mark,” July 21, 2005, <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/txis/vtx/news/opensdoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&page=home&id=42dfb0f44>.

40. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, “Afghanistan: UNHCR shelter programme helping more than 100,000,” August 10, 2004.

helps meet immediate needs, it demonstrates that repatriation and return do not equal resettlement.

Our data reveal that the IDP population still has critical humanitarian needs and make clear the imperative to increase long-term resettlement. Many Afghans, hearing about improved conditions at home, return from Pakistan and Iran to find that they have fewer services and less income than they did when they were abroad.<sup>41</sup>

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**Karzai has promised a lot and has delivered a lot. But we had electricity under the Taliban, and now we don't. — Kabul**

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The huge influx of people is straining urban management. Kabul's population has increased from 700,000 to 3 million over the last three and a half years.<sup>42</sup> Of an estimated 10,000 homeless people

in Kabul, 4,000 are in squatter camps. Slums are beginning to emerge on the city's outskirts.<sup>43</sup> Rural returnees face different challenges. With few, if any, recorded land titles, returnees are finding it hard to resettle. Land issues are generally resolved by the traditional justice system, which is subject to ethnic and financial partiality.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

Afghanistan's human development index is among the worst in the world, with a ranking of 172 among the 177 countries examined.<sup>45</sup> Despite this, our research in this sector

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**There is a lot of water, but no irrigation canals. As a result, there are no crops, and there is hunger. — Kapisa**

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found that ambitious projects have yielded a sense of optimism among Afghans. A national vaccination program, a major road rehabilitation project between two major cities, cellular connectivity around the country, and increased primary school enrollment all make Afghans feel that their country has improved, which alone can produce short- and long-term benefits.

The real challenge is sustaining the financial contributions to a sector that still needs massive investment to train teachers and doctors, to rebuild and maintain infrastructure, and to perform the regular functions of government in these areas. The international community has proven itself largely capable of meeting emergency needs. Its record of providing long-term reconstruction support is far less impressive in general, and in Afghanistan in particular. Afghanistan has received much less assistance than other post-conflict countries. In per capita terms, Afghanistan received \$52 over

41. United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "Afghan New Year signals new returns, new challenges," March 21, 2005, <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/>.

42. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Challenges of Rapid Urban Development," June 24, 2004.

43. Carlotta Gall, "In Frigid Capital, Lack of Housing and Planning is Fatal," *New York Times*, February 4, 2005, p. A4.

44. See J. Grace and Adam Pain, "Rethinking Rural Livelihoods in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, July 2004).

45. United Nations Development Program, *Security With a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities*, Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004, <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/>.

the first two post-Taliban years, compared to Kosovo's \$814, Bosnia's \$390, and Haiti's \$152.<sup>46</sup> Iraq, with a roughly similar population, receives roughly ten times Afghanistan's assistance. In the social well-being sector alone, as defined in this report, Afghanistan needs more than \$2 billion a year for seven years to reach its national targets.<sup>47</sup> Such a large sum will be hard to come by, but will be necessary if Afghanistan and its social networks and services are to approach sustainability.

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46. James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel Swanger, and Anga Timilsina, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2003).

47. Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration, "Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward."

# Recommendations and Conclusions

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Afghans have lived through numerous attempts to “modernize,” “reconstruct,” or “build” Afghanistan. Most of these have been imposed on local populations from the outside and above, by foreigners or Afghan elites seeking to transform Afghanistan according to their own visions of progress. Today, however, a broad cross section of Afghans has the opportunity to play a significant role in forging a new Afghanistan. The Afghan government and the international community have stood behind a common vision of a country that can transcend the radicalism, divisiveness, and wrenching poverty that is all most Afghans have ever known.

The reconstruction of Afghanistan is an enormous and unpredictable task, made more difficult by the country’s segmented geography, years of war damage and non-investment, a bulging youth population, and continuing insecurity. Suffering is the rule, rather than the exception, in Afghanistan. One local woman told us, “Around here, we drink our pain.”

Yet Afghans are hopeful this time around. The heavy fighting has stopped. The harshness of the Taliban period has been replaced by an increasingly inclusive government. Afghans speak fondly of electing their president, and of watching their children go to school for three uninterrupted years. As one Afghan told us, “I was in hell, but I just put one foot in heaven.” There is hope as well in largely untapped local capacity.

Hope, though, has been tempered by unmet expectations and a realistic assessment of day-to-day life. Afghans continue to worry about commanders, crime, and the lack of dependable police. They see corruption and a culture of impunity undermining the promising new government, and they worry about Kabul’s ability to deliver to the provinces, where most people live. The Afghans we heard from not only think of their present needs; they are concerned with their future and their country’s future. They prioritize education and rule of law. They recognize the fragility of the current moment, without losing sight of their long-term goals.

Reconstruction goals in Afghanistan must be both achievable and sensitive to local conditions if they are to be attained. Reaching for too much too soon could lead Afghans to resist rapid changes to their culture and way of life and to have unattainable expectations. Placing the benefits of reconstruction too far off in the future could lead to a backlash on the part of Afghans wanting more. The emergency phase in Afghanistan has passed, but the country is not yet ready to move on to a more traditional “development” relationship with donor states. The needs remain too great, and the state remains too weak.

The goal in Afghanistan should be to provide ten years of relative peace so that Afghans have a chance to build their skills, make a living, connect to each other and the world, and establish an open government under the rule of law. After ten years of peace, Afghanistan would still be a desperately poor country with a young population, but unified and working to build a safe and prosperous future. The first steps have been taken, but the longer journey still awaits.

That journey is likely to be fraught with problems. Bilateral and multilateral partners will inevitably reduce their contributions. Right now, international spending accounts for 90 percent of Afghanistan's total budget, with the United States leading the way with approximately \$15 billion per year. If this money tapers off prematurely, the effect on Afghanistan's future is likely to be devastating. Political pressures are on the rise in the United States and elsewhere calling for a reduction in force levels in Afghanistan. But international engagement must not diminish because of fatigue—it should be a result of increasing Afghan capacity.



Success will depend on abiding by five principles that should guide the reconstruction effort:

1. International forces must guarantee Afghan security for the next decade.
2. International financial assistance must move more quickly into the hands of ordinary Afghans, such as through the direct payment of salaries.
3. The Afghan government and international donors must look beyond Kabul for reliable partners in local government and civil society.
4. International assistance must free Afghans from the burden of time-consuming survival strategies by providing economic efficiencies that will improve productivity.
5. Afghan leaders must convince fellow Afghans that working together as citizens of a shared community is the only viable path to safety and prosperity.

This comprehensive study of Afghanistan's reconstruction progress reveals that, despite significant progress since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan has not yet reached the Viable Zone, and its fate remains "in the balance."

Security performs better than any other pillar, primarily because of the long-term capacity that has been built up in the Afghan National Army. Two-thirds of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan supports the U.S. troop presence there, and \$3 billion of the remaining \$5 billion per year goes to supporting the Afghan National Army. Despite

this investment, Afghans are only just beginning to feel safe on a day-to-day basis. Our study indicates that the immediate security needs of Afghans are only minimally being met.

The results from the Governance and Participation and Social Well-being assessments reveal that a broad foundation for future success has been built. Afghans recognize the strides made toward creating an inclusive and responsive government, as well as the heavy investment that has poured into their country to help provide for their basic needs. This study shows, however, that Afghans' immediate social well-being and governance needs remain unmet. Commanders play a key role in undermining performance in both areas.

Economic Opportunity and Justice and Accountability both fall in the Danger Zone, with Justice and Accountability performing the worst of any pillar. Rule of the gun rather than rule of law persists throughout much of Afghanistan, and too few legitimate means of earning money are available to most Afghans. Poppy cultivation provides immediate economic benefit, but is dangerous for the long-term interests of the country.

These findings have important implications for bilateral and multilateral partners in the coming months. Their concentrated efforts in Afghanistan must continue because they underpin the sense of public confidence, which is indispensable. Progress has been made, but still needs to be solidified, and priorities must now change to reflect the current situation.

The major investment the United States has made in improving Afghanistan's security situation must reap greater benefits for Afghans on a day-to-day basis. Finding ways to increase public safety will prove as important as confronting insurgents. Out of the roughly \$2 billion per year the United States spends on non-security-related programming, the majority is spent on counternarcotics and election assistance. The United States and international partners must not lose sight of the importance of expanding local ownership and playing a catalytic role in Afghan society. As the leader of the international effort, the United States must deliver in flexible, innovative, adaptive, pragmatic, and nonideological ways.

## Summary of Findings

What follows is a brief summary of our findings in each of the five pillars, along with a set of crosscutting recommendations.

### Security

Establishing security and public safety in a post-conflict society means enabling people to resume regular routines through the reinforcement of three basic freedoms: movement, speech, and assembly. This job remains incomplete in Afghanistan.

Security is now provided by a mixture of the U.S. military, NATO forces, the ANA, local militias, police, and private guards. Day-to-day safety for most Afghans remains uncertain. Movement around the country is constricted, curfews and unsafe areas are standard, kidnappings and bombings occur with some frequency, and fighting persists in the southern and eastern regions of the country.

Our findings confirm that most Afghans trust international forces and see them as a long-term necessity. The dominant presence of 18,000 American soldiers is changing, as responsibility begins to be transferred to a growing pool of 8,000 NATO troops. NATO has been steadily increasing its role beyond Kabul, moving across the North to the West, and aims to take over responsibility for the South and East in 2006. Quick, tough, and surprising U.S.-led military initiatives have dulled the threat of insurgency or anti-government forces, but the increasing frequency of attacks in the past few months highlight the on-going dangers.

The Afghan National Army has started in a positive direction. Well-trained and well-paid, the ANA has embedded foreign military advisers in most of its units. Its 23,000 trained soldiers, sheltered from any significant tests so far, will need to play a more active role if public safety is to increase in Afghanistan. As the ANA grows in effectiveness and size to a planned level of 70,000, it must also remain accountable to civilian oversight.

Police are critical to daily public safety, but are not yet meeting Afghan expectations. They are poorly paid and poorly trained, and commanders are still the de facto power holders in many local areas. DDR has succeeded in collecting heavy weapons and demobilizing 60,000 militia, but the process remains incomplete and flawed. Even though 57 leaders of private armies turned in weapons in order to qualify as candidates for the National Assembly elections, many former warlords have re-armed “demobilized” forces under the guise of local police through funds provided by drug trafficking.

A rules-based system has yet to take hold in Afghanistan, and incentives remain stacked in favor of the commanders. The lack of alternative livelihoods for demobilized soldiers means they have little option but to pick up the gun again. Provincial leaders still find themselves in an uncertain political environment of shifting alliances and extralegal challenges to their authority, making private militias necessary to maintaining power. Afghanistan remains caught in a Hobbesian world, something even U.S. forces have recognized and have sought to exploit in their efforts to enlist private militias in the hunt for al Qaeda operatives.

International actors worry about Afghanistan becoming a “kleptocracy” or a “narco-state,” while Afghans’ chief concern remains the violence and crime that pervade their society.

## Governance and Participation

Providing people with an open and trusted government that is capable of delivering the most basic services remains an enormous challenge in Afghanistan. While there has been important progress, the larger job lies ahead.

Afghans have favorable feelings about President Hamid Karzai, but they recognize that his reach does not extend far beyond Kabul. Provincial and local governments and local civil society remain weak. Efforts to build long-term capacity have focused on investments in national infrastructure rather than on a decentralized approach that invests in people.

The weakness of the Afghan government is apparent—in terms of both its ability to deliver services and its capacity to generate revenue without foreign assistance. The Afghan government relies on external sources for 90 percent of its revenue, roughly

\$4 billion to \$7.8 billion per year. Too much of this money finds its way into the pockets of corrupt officials.

Afghans resent the presence of warlords in the government, but understand the trade-offs necessary to preserve peace. Public confidence in governors and regional authorities is low, with the majority maintaining their own militias and assuming office in illegal ways. At the same time, Afghans realize that government responsiveness begins at the local and regional level.

Elections are a rallying point to bring local voices into the political process. Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, for instance, sees elections as a way to expose warlords and potential spoilers “as soon as possible to the popular will.” Elections could play this role, but technical, financial, cultural, and security-related obstacles continue to hinder a truly free public voice in Afghanistan.

## **Justice and Accountability**

The challenge of establishing justice and accountability is to create the conditions in which people are free to exercise their basic rights, live without intimidation, and have recourse to a fair system for resolving differences. Afghanistan has a long way to go in each of these areas.

Afghanistan is a land rife with disputes. Loss of life and loss of property from years of fighting have left a strong sense of bitterness. Tensions persist between ethnic, religious, regional, and social groups in Afghanistan, as well as between returning refugees and those who never left.

While there are multiple methods for arbitrating differences in Afghanistan, the formal justice system remains unable to confront criminal networks or impunity, adjudicate land disputes, or protect citizens’ rights. Afghans remain cynical about the formal justice system because commanders and war criminals who carried out past abuses remain in prominent positions. President Karzai’s reluctance to arrest a few high-profile abusers and demonstrate the end of impunity could threaten the long-term viability of rule of law.

Afghans enjoy more political, economic, and social rights now than at any time in the past three decades, but the status of women remains low. Women’s centers and teachers could play a larger role in both civic education and alternative dispute resolution.

## **Economic Opportunity**

Providing economic opportunity in post-conflict settings depends on more than sustaining livelihoods with minimal external assistance. Countries like Afghanistan pose the added challenge of providing work for a generation of young ex-combatants who represent the country’s troubled past as well as its hope for the future. Getting economic opportunity right is vital to consolidating peace.

Afghanistan’s economy has grown steadily for three and a half years, but it remains heavily dependent on outside aid. According to recent UN reports, Afghanistan remains one of the world’s poorest and least-developed lands, and its people some of the most vulnerable to extreme poverty and destitution.

Power, roads, water, and dependable communications are inadequate, especially in rural areas in Afghanistan. This severely hampers agricultural productivity and leaves farmers highly vulnerable to bad weather and other shocks, leading many to turn to poppy cultivation. Investment in small-scale infrastructure projects could help to connect people and provide the necessary inputs for growth.

Urban reconstruction has generated short-term employment opportunities in the larger cities. The post-conflict boomtown effect, however, is not without dangers in Afghanistan: inflated asset prices have raised the cost of living for the poor while encouraging the rich and powerful to seize property, sometimes forcing the poor off their land. State regulators, therefore, play an important role to ensure a just allocation of the peace dividend.

For the most part, the influx of internationals and the return of millions of refugees have provided new markets for products such as cellular phones, services such as those provided by hotels and restaurants, and traded consumer goods. These positive developments have also focused Afghans' attention on the need to increase their productivity in order to compete in regional export markets and participate in the reconstruction of their country.

## Social Well-being

Afghanistan's human development is the lowest in the region and among the worst in the world. Life expectancy is 45 years on average. Half of Afghan five-year-olds are underweight, and one expectant Afghan mother dies every 30 minutes from lack of care. Even if growth continues as planned, the Afghan government is predicting a per capita GDP in 2015 of only \$500.

Afghanistan is lacking in most basic services. Electricity—when it exists—is typically provided by generators, but the vast majority of Afghans do not have power. Irrigation needs are immediate, and rehabilitation has moved slowly. The health care system suffers from poor infrastructure and a lack of access and trained doctors. Afghans are returning to their country by the millions, causing an increased strain on services that are already thinly stretched.

The winter of 2004–2005 was a cruel reminder of the harshness of the environment and its effect on local people. Hundreds of villages in the central Hindu-Kush mountain range were cut off by heavy snowfalls, which then melted suddenly and destroyed roads, fields, and houses. Despite a massive humanitarian response, no one knows how many died.

Natural catastrophes are likely to continue to have severe consequences for Afghanistan because of the limited infrastructure and response capability. Afghanistan will not be prepared for the next drought or earthquake. Its people are scattered across the country at a rate of 40 people per square kilometer, and few of its roads are paved. A lack of roads prevents Afghans' access to markets, health care, and education. An infrastructure backbone linking Afghans to services and to one another would be a positive step, but insufficient in itself to sustain progress.

Education could help to change the current reality for Afghans. In March 2002, more than 3,000 schools opened for the new school year, offering a new beginning for millions of Afghan children. Today, more Afghans are in school than ever before.

Between 2002 and 2004, 4.2 million Afghan children returned to school, of whom 30 percent were girls. Since 2002, approximately 1,800 schools have been rehabilitated.

Despite this achievement, literacy remains a privilege in Afghanistan. Only 14 percent of Afghan women are literate—only 8 percent in rural areas. Fewer than 60 percent of Afghan men are literate. Only 100,000 teachers are salaried nationwide. The vast majority lack necessary qualifications, and very few are women.

These challenges are compounded by Afghanistan's growing population: 45 percent of the country is under 14, and the population is growing at a rate of 4.8 percent a year. The government's own population estimate of 23.7 million is based on a 2.1 percent annual growth rate since 1979, but the reality could be somewhere in the range of 30 million. The pressure now is on primary schools, which absorbed 9 out of every 10 children who returned to school in 2003. As this generation grows up, secondary and tertiary education will require massive investments in teacher training and materials.

## Crosscutting Recommendations

Governments and international actors tend to make poor choices in post-conflict settings. Often this is a failure of strategy, prioritization, and sequencing. The following recommendations are intended for both the Afghan government and the international community.

The needs of Afghanistan go well beyond what any discrete set of recommendations can offer. The following are meant to highlight priority areas that could have a multiplier effect on Afghanistan's reconstruction. We do not suggest that these ideas are untested in Afghanistan, only that they have not yet been the priority areas of concern.

Our findings suggest that prioritizing the following set of crosscutting recommendations will help to move Afghanistan toward the Viable Zone.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Target attention, resources, and military forces on key border crossings and adjacent regions in an effort to confront criminal networks, make regional and local governors more effective and accountable, and reduce the illicit trafficking of poppy.

- Deploy the Afghan National Army with embedded international trainers and monitors to borderlands in order to secure unstable areas against threats from neighboring states and internal anti-government groups.
- Secure and monitor the collection of customs revenue and ensure its transfer from regional authorities to the national government, thus strengthening central government resources and weakening the financial autonomy of commanders.
- Interdict and convict narcotics traders.
- Reward honest local governors whose border guards and police are transparent and accountable with regional development incentives.

Commanders pose a major problem to Afghanistan's reconstruction, but most cannot be confronted militarily without risking a renewed outbreak of major fighting. The place to start weakening the grip of criminal networks and strengthening the national and local government is at the major border crossings. Historically, Afghanistan's

strongest warlords have established personal fiefdoms from the duties they have collected on legal and illegal trade at the four major border-crossing regions: Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad, and Herat.

In a country with limited public funding sources, customs duties are one of the most reliable sources of government revenues. Reports suggest that the police squads now guarding the borders have in some cases not been paid in months, and are more concerned with protecting themselves than with stopping armed traffickers. By securing the four major border areas with the ANA and international trainers and monitors, the national government will secure a reliable stream of income.

There is some evidence that an earlier effort to change the balance of power in Herat is working. A similar effort in the other main border regions is likely to produce results. Taking over this key governmental function will help to consolidate the national government's monopoly on the use of force.

At the same time that it confronts criminal networks, the national government must also support those governors and local police officials in border areas who are willing to operate in an open and transparent way. President Karzai retains the ability to appoint all 34 provincial governors. He should dismiss governors in border regions who facilitate and benefit from criminal networks, and should develop governance agreements with their replacements that address the transparent handling of public resources and open political participation and debate.

Because so many of the existing governors have checkered pasts, it is incumbent upon President Karzai to find a package of incentives that will give those who have some promise the ability to become constructive public servants. It would make sense, therefore, to give governors in border regions some ability to deliver on high-priority initiatives. A modest start would be a \$1 million operating budget for each province and a regional project fund of up to \$5 million. These funds could be dispensed on a monthly basis with simplified project monitoring that would require governors to explain their spending choices.

Such a mechanism builds off the successes of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and National Solidarity Program (NSP), which make up most of the 13 percent of donor funding that is funneled through the Afghan government. These programs channel donor funds directly into Afghan hands, which allows for spending flexibility while ensuring wide public engagement with decision-making, thereby increasing a sense of national ownership.

Governors should also be required to speed the delivery of services, such as local construction, to the Afghan people and to direct resources to training and incentive packages for local police. A colonel in the Afghanistan police with 26 years of service told us that he was paid \$70 per month while a colonel in the ANA was receiving \$420 per month. If police are to share the burden of providing public safety and stopping drug trafficking, they must be paid accordingly.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Forge connections between Afghans by investing in communications, roads, and irrigation; eliminate barriers between Afghans by securing roads and investing in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

- Spread the benefits of economic expansion out from the cities, thus slowing the movement of people to overburdened urban areas.

- Link governance and service delivery to local infrastructure development by investing in hydro projects to revitalize and connect rural areas.
- Build roads that connect people and regions and that provide jobs through road construction. Ensure the safety of roads through ANA deployments.
- Take advantage of Afghanistan's location by better connecting the country to its neighbors.
- Continue to support advances in radio broadcasting and cellular telephone services.
- Scale up the indigenous capacity to adjudicate land and water rights disputes.

Afghanistan has always been a divided country. The opportunity exists to reduce these divisions by targeting reconstruction assistance and building on indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms. Many isolated programs exist, but what is lacking is an overall strategy to connect Afghans to one another and to their neighbors, and to lessen the tensions that divide. Minimizing the isolation of peoples within Afghanistan will play a critical role in fostering the sense of nationhood.

Afghanistan needs capital investment in infrastructure. At present, most Afghans spend large portions of their day surviving in relative isolation: seeking water, food, or fuel, walking to the markets, or just staying warm. Power lines have fallen into disuse or have been destroyed by war. Much the same is true of roads, power plants, industry, and irrigation.

The reliable distribution of electricity linking the major cities would significantly improve the daily lives of millions of Afghans and create a greater sense of national connectedness. Meanwhile, harnessing the hydropower of Afghanistan's watersheds through the purchase of simple turbines could provide electricity where other models of power generation are not available. The international community also needs to redouble its support to the Afghan government's efforts to increase the amount of irrigated land available to its farmers.

Afghanistan should invest heavily in road construction. Better roads not only will connect people, goods, and services to the four major economic centers of Afghanistan; their construction will provide much-needed jobs. Attention should be given to the secondary roads that link Afghanistan to its neighbors, thereby re-establishing the trade routes that are the arteries of the region's economic development.

However, infrastructure will foster these connections only if there is a trusted dispute resolution system. Rule of law will exist in Afghanistan only with the creation of an effective formal justice system; but such a system is years, if not decades, away. In the interim, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms should be strengthened. These could focus on land and water usage rights, the primary flashpoints in post-conflict countries—particularly while Afghanistan's refugees and internally displaced resettle.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Improve the safety, health, literacy, and education of Afghans—particularly women and youth. Success will depend on strengthening the prospective Afghan middle class by identifying, training, and paying key agents of change.

- Raise the importance of teachers, health care providers, civil servants, judges, police, and community organizers to the same level as the ANA by providing the same basic benefits.
- Cut across ethnic, tribal and regional divides by promoting a national effort.
- Support indigenous training institutes to improve teachers' performance.
- Invest in literacy to help Afghanistan's growing youth population compete regionally.
- Invest in the health of women and children by training and educating female doctors.
- Encourage institutional relationships between community centers and universities in Afghanistan and similar organizations in the United States.

Afghanistan's ability to sustain reconstruction progress will depend on the commitment of a broad mix of public servants. These include teachers, judges, police, health care providers, civil servants, and community organizers. The current lack of training, along with low pay, has left a gaping hole in Afghanistan's ability to protect and aid those in need, particularly women and children.

Health care and education are both key inputs to securing a strong future. With the lowest life expectancy in Central Asia, continued inadequate health care (particularly for women and children), and crippling illiteracy rates, Afghans lack the resources necessary to lead long and productive lives.

Many women in Afghanistan are afraid to leave their homes to go to work because their husbands do not permit it. Women are also particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and operate within a much more restricted environment than men do. Many do not go to school, vote, or have access to necessary health care if the doctor is male. Such constraints on women's education and health have negative consequences for children as well.

But Afghanistan now has a huge opportunity. Getting education and health right today can embed positive values in a new vibrant generation. Nearly half of Afghanistan's population is under 14 years old, and the country is estimated to be growing at a rate of 4.8 percent per year. The challenge of providing a quality education to these young people requires a massive and sustained investment because there are only about 100,000 teachers in the nation, of whom only 15 percent are qualified. Very few are women. The same is true in the health care field, where the number of trained providers, particularly women, does not meet the demand.

In addition to ensuring higher and more secure salaries for teachers, health care providers, and other public servants, the international community should invest in strengthening Afghanistan's training institutes, including universities and local-level centers. Relationships between American and Afghan institutions could be a creative way to raise Afghan capacity—linking Afghans to a broader range of ideas and experiences that can develop over longer periods without fostering dependence or resentment.

The same type of adequate training and payment programs should be instituted for judges and police. Rule of law will not be established in Afghanistan without trained

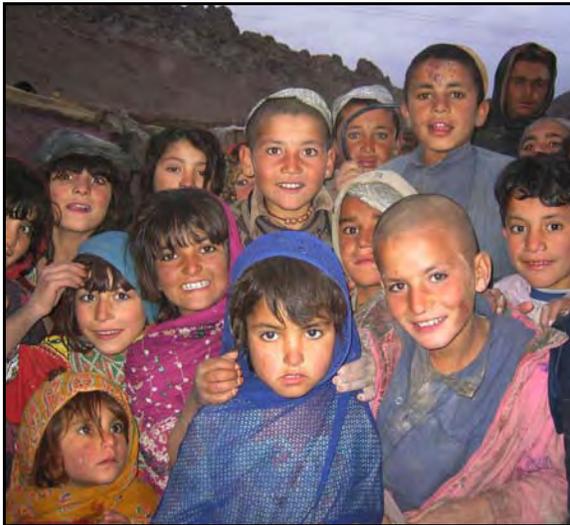
and honest public servants. Any other benefits that could possibly accrue in health and education will be wasted in the absence of rule of law.

Afghans must eventually take on these responsibilities themselves. Too often, Afghans see foreigners playing the key roles in reconstruction, and not passing on their skills to Afghans. This must change if Afghanistan's transition is to succeed.

## Conclusion

The future of Afghanistan remains in the balance. Afghans are trying to make the transition from decades of fear and survival to a new dawn. The international community must help them by removing as many of the obstacles as possible that stand in their way, including instability, a lack of teachers, poor health, and a poorly funded civil service.

The international community must further ensure that each dollar of assistance is spent as much as possible on the Afghans themselves. After four years, many Afghans feel frustrated by the pace and priorities of reconstruction efforts thus far. They feel



estranged from the major decisions shaping their country's future. They remain unable to contribute technical skills or even to work on the construction sites where foreign laborers toil. Many are confused by the rapid changes taking place in their government, their economy, and their society. Most wonder where all the money promised by the international community has disappeared to. Afghans feel themselves sinking again into a familiar pattern of dependency.

The progress that Afghans have made since 2001 is uncertain, as are the international community's grand prom-

ises. Transitions may be rapid in post-conflict countries, but they do not always end well. In Afghanistan, it is too soon to congratulate ourselves. We have not yet seen how the Afghan parliament will provide legislative oversight, or how the security apparatus will operate when tested under battle. Nor have we seen how Afghan industries will mature and begin to forge trade relationships in the region, or how the government will tax and regulate them.

If we have learned anything from the past four years, it is that our partnership with Afghanistan must be committed and resolute. It must secure short-term wins for the country while not weakening national capacity. It must build the legitimacy of government institutions while fulfilling the many immediate needs of Afghans. And it must serve as a partnership, building true foundations for Afghanistan's future rather than mere façades.

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# Background

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In the fall of 2001, General Gordon Sullivan (USA, Ret.), president of the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA), and Dr. John J. Hamre, president of CSIS, recognizing a gap in the U.S. government's ability to effectively respond to the challenges of post-war transitions, established the Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) Project at CSIS. Together, they assembled a high-level, bipartisan *Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, which included 27 former U.S. government officials, sitting members of Congress, experts, and representatives of nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.

After exploring the needs of countries emerging from conflict, the Commission published the *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework*,<sup>1</sup> which identified key pillars of reconstruction work: Security, Governance and Participation, Justice and Reconciliation, and Social and Economic Well-being. The report compiled post-conflict practices, tasks, and activities into a matrix that is now used globally as a functional tool and training instrument for post-conflict efforts. The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, for instance, used the *Task Framework* as the basis of its Essential Tasks Matrix. The PCR Project's early work emphasized the development of practical tools to fill a critical gap in the post-conflict field—the lack of anticipatory, pragmatic, non-bureaucratic, and action-forcing models for developing strategies and measuring progress.

Using this early work as a reference, the PCR Project then examined particular post-conflict cases, developing “action strategies” that identify priorities and possible setbacks and that recommend actions to take before the end of conflict to adequately prepare for the post-peace period. Our first study, which focused on Iraq, was released in January 2003, before the launch of major combat operations. Titled *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq*,<sup>2</sup> it detailed ten fundamental elements that would improve the likelihood of a lasting peace. In the spring of 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld invited the PCR Project to conduct the first post-conflict reconstruction assessment in Iraq, from which we produced *Iraq's Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A Field Review and Recommendations*.<sup>3</sup> The assessment results outlined priority areas to focus the immediate efforts of the U.S. government and its coalition partners.

As a follow-on to this work, the PCR Project began to develop a broad-based, data-rich, multidisciplinary model of measuring progress in post-conflict situations. It was designed to cut across various weaknesses and biases inherent in different information

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1. *The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework*, CSIS-AUSA, May 2002, <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/framework.pdf>.

2. *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq*, CSIS, January 2003, <http://www.csis.org/isp/wiserpeace.pdf>.

3. *Iraq's Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A Field Review and Recommendations*, CSIS, July 2003, <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/IraqTrip.pdf>.

sources, and could be modified for virtually any post-conflict situation. Our initial case study, *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq's Reconstruction*,<sup>4</sup> was published in September 2004 and was followed by supplemental reports.

Aside from its work on measuring progress, the PCR Project has produced action strategies anticipating reconstruction challenges and priority opportunities in Sudan and Sri Lanka, and a report assessing donor challenges in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (CSIS, 2004) provides an intellectual overview of post-conflict practice and policy areas, and includes a number of case histories.

In 2005 the PCR Project copublished with the U.S. Institute of Peace a special report on measuring progress in stabilization and reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> This report emerged from a working group composed of policy makers, practitioners, and scholars from the U.S. government, United Nations, World Bank, NGOs, think tanks, and academic institutions. This working group report has informed the PCR Project's methodology in a number of meaningful ways that have been incorporated into the current report.

The PCR Project continues to pursue forward-looking, strategic solutions to the peacebuilding and post-conflict problems facing the U.S. government and the international community through regional and topical projects on subjects such as Pakistan, youth, religion, and civil-military cooperation.

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4. *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq's Reconstruction*, CSIS, September 2004, [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409\\_progressperil.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409_progressperil.pdf); *Progress or Peril? Iraq Update*, October 2004, [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0410\\_progressperil.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0410_progressperil.pdf).

5. Amy Frumin, Morgan Courtney, and Rebecca Linder, *The Road Ahead: Issues for Consideration at the Berlin Donor Conference for Afghanistan*, CSIS, April 2004, <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/reports.htm>.

6. Mike Dziedzic, Frederick Barton, and Craig Cohen, *Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction*, CSIS-USIP Special Report, forthcoming 2005.



