

Phase I: Kabul-Kandahar Highway

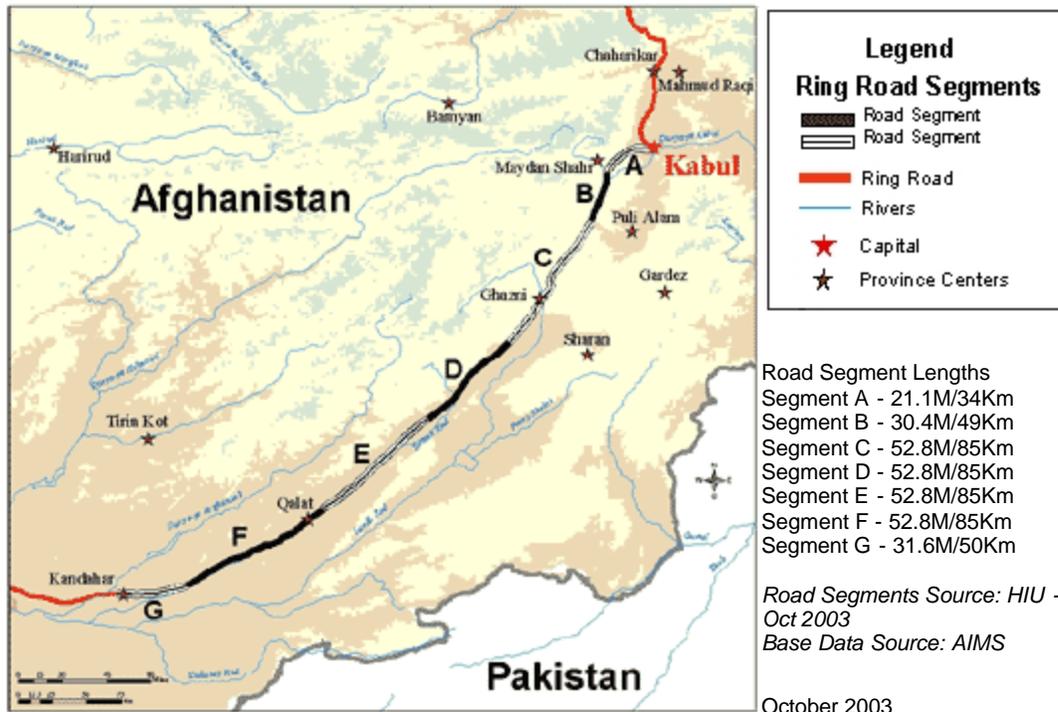
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The journey from Kabul to Kandahar was an arduous trip that required two days to travel; much of the road (surface) and several bridges suffered considerable deterioration, damage and lack of investment over the years, particularly during two-and-a half decades of civil war and hostilities. President Karzai stated that reconstruction of the country's principal road system is key to Afghanistan's economic recovery, as more than 35% of Afghanistan's population lives within 50 kilometers (31 miles) of the highway. Today, the first step toward reconstruction of Afghanistan's national road system is complete. Phase I of the 389 kilometer (241 miles) highway linking Kabul to Kandahar is open to traffic. As a result, people from Kabul to Kandahar enjoy better access to markets, healthcare, schools and jobs. At the national level, the highway has already begun to contribute to Afghanistan's improved economic growth, security and national unity. The entire length of the Kabul-Kandahar highway is 482 kilometers (300 miles). USAID reconstructed 389 kilometers (242 miles) of the highway; the government of Japan funded the reconstruction of 50 kilometers (31 miles) of highway, and the remaining 43 kilometers (27 miles) did not require resurfacing.



Benefits of the Kabul to Kandahar Highway

- The travel time from Kabul to Kandahar is reduced from two days to approximately five hours.
- Travel speeds on the Kabul to Kandahar highway have increased to an average 60 mph.
- The highway enhances access to health care for Afghans.
- Increased labor mobility will help Afghanistan's workers and employers.
- Greater diversity of products and services are available through increased inter-provincial trade. The local markets centers are more accessible to more people because of the highway.
- Farmers with wheat surpluses in the north now have access to wheat-deficient markets in the south.
- The highway links diverse regions of Afghanistan (the north with the south), fostering national unity.



Background on the Project

- In September 2002, USAID contracted with the Louis Berger Group, a leading American engineering and construction firm to manage the construction of the Kabul to Kandahar Highway.
- Louis Berger divided the highway into five subcontracts: one Afghan-American firm (Afghanistan Reconstruction Company), three Turkish firms (Mensel JV, Kolin JV and Gulsan-Cukurova JV) and an Indian firm (BSC/C&C).
- More than 1,060 mines and unexploded ordinance were removed by de-miners prior to construction which now allows safe pedestrian and horse drawn traffic to travel on the road shoulders.
- Completion of Phase I was accomplished in 11 months (January 2003 to December 2003).
- The total project cost to complete Phase I of the highway was approximately \$190 million.

Phase II of the Project

- In the spring and summer of 2004, additional layers of asphalt will be laid, highway shoulders will be completed, and signage and road markings will be provided.
- Paving operations for the Kandahar to Herat highway, 566 km long (340 miles), are scheduled to begin in the spring of 2004.

Budget Phase I and Phase II

Project Activity	Cost (in millions)
Construction	\$218
Engineering	\$ 11
Demining	\$ 10
Security	\$ 10
Other Costs (mobilization, etc.)	\$ 21
Total	\$ 270

For further information please contact the USAID Mission to Kabul Press Officer at 011-9370-278-684 (cellular) or the USAID Mission HQ at (202)-216-6288, extension 120 (this is a US direct dialed number which will transfer automatically to the USAID Mission Kabul phone network).