

May 2007

SECURING, STABILIZING, AND RECONSTRUCTING AFGHANISTAN

Key Issues for Congressional Oversight

Following the withdrawal of US and coalition forces from Afghanistan, in August 2021 the State Department requested that GAO temporarily remove and review reports on Afghanistan to protect the safety of individuals associated with US assistance or programs. As a result of that review, GAO decided to redact some information from this report.



G A O

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Abbreviations

AEF	Afghan Eradication Force
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
CERP	Commanders' Emergency Response Program
Defense	Department of Defense
GDP	gross domestic product
IG	Inspectors General
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODA	official development assistance
PEP	Poppy Elimination Program
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
State	Department of State
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

May 24, 2007

Congressional Committees

As the United States reviews plans to accelerate its efforts to secure, stabilize, and rebuild Afghanistan, I have enclosed a series of issue papers for your consideration. These papers are based on the continuing and prior work of GAO on Afghanistan, which we have provided to the Congress since June 2003.

Since 2001, the United States has appropriated over \$15 billion to help secure, stabilize, and reconstruct Afghanistan.¹ In February 2007, the administration requested \$12.3 billion in additional funding to accelerate some of these efforts to prevent the conflict-ridden nation from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists and from devolving into a narco-state. More than 50 nations, including the United States, and several multilateral organizations are engaged in securing, stabilizing, and reconstructing Afghanistan. Progress has been made in areas such as economic growth, infrastructure development, and training of the Afghan army and police, but after more than 5 years of U.S. and international efforts, the overall security situation in this poor and ethnically diverse country has not improved and, moreover, has deteriorated significantly in the last year. The lack of security limits the success of efforts to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan. Direct challenges to these efforts include a resurgence of the Taliban, the limited capabilities of Afghan security forces, inadequate infrastructure, limited government capacity, corruption, a largely illiterate and untrained labor force, a dramatic increase in drug production, and a lack of viable licit economic opportunities. Furthermore, these efforts are complicated by regional influences, and the recent transfer of the security mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Since 2003, we have issued five reports on U.S. efforts in Afghanistan—one on food and agricultural assistance, two on reconstruction assistance, one on efforts to establish Afghan national security forces, and one on drug

¹This does not include the cost of U.S. military operations.

control programs.² We identified programmatic improvements that were needed, as well as many obstacles that limited success and should be taken into consideration in program design and implementation (see table 1). A key improvement we identified in most of the U.S. efforts was the need for improved planning, including the development of strategic plans with elements such as measurable goals, specific time frames, cost estimates, and identification of external factors that could significantly affect efforts. Some additional needed improvements we identified include better coordination among the United States and other donor nations, more flexible options for program implementation, and timelier project implementation. We also concluded that several obstacles, especially deteriorating security and the limited institutional capacity of the Afghan government, challenge the effectiveness of U.S. efforts.

²GAO, *Foreign Assistance: Lack of Strategic Focus and Obstacles to Agricultural Recovery Threaten Afghanistan's Stability*, [GAO-03-607](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2003); *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Deteriorating Security and Limited Resources Have Impeded Progress; Improvements in U.S. Strategy Needed*, [GAO-04-403](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 2, 2004); *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Despite Some Progress, Deteriorating Security and Other Obstacles Continue to Threaten Achievement of U.S. Goals*, [GAO-05-742](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 28, 2005); *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined*, [GAO-05-575](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2005); *Afghanistan Drug Control: Despite Improved Efforts, Deteriorating Security Threatens Success of U.S. Goals*, [GAO-07-78](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 15, 2006).

Table 1: Summary of Prior GAO Findings on Afghanistan

Areas of focus	Key programmatic improvements needed	Obstacles
Emergency food assistance	(1) Develop joint U.S.-Afghan Interagency strategic focus and plan. (2) Consider more flexible procurement and distribution options. (3) Improve coordination.	(1) Unstable security situation. (2) Control by warlords of much of the country. (3) Growth of opium production. (4) Inadequate international resources.
Afghanistan reconstruction	(1) Develop comprehensive operational strategy/strategic plan. (2) Improve financial data. (3) Improve coordination. (4) Develop performance management plan for USAID in Afghanistan. (5) Require performance management plans from contractors. (6) Communicate performance information.	(1) Deteriorating security. (2) Growth of opium production. (3) Inadequate resources. (4) Delayed funding. (5) Poor contractor performance and limited capacity.
Afghan army and police	(1) Develop detailed plans for completing the training and equipping of the Afghan army and police. (2) Help ensure congruent progress in all security pillars.	(1) Deteriorating security. (2) Limited Afghan capacity. (3) Lack of an effective judiciary. (4) Growth of opium production. (5) Continued presence of armed militias.
Drug control	(1) Minimize project delays.	(1) Deteriorating security. (2) Limited Afghan capacity. (3) Lack of infrastructure, educated populace, and functioning governmental institutions.

Source: GAO.

Responsiveness to our recommendations for programmatic improvements varied. For example, officials from the Departments of Defense (Defense) and State (State) generally concurred with the recommendation in our 2005 report on efforts to establish an Afghan army and police that detailed plans would facilitate more effective management of resources and promote better long-term planning. As of May 2007, however, the departments had not provided us with such plans. On the other hand, in response to recommendations in our 2004 and 2005 Afghanistan reconstruction reports, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) developed a strategic plan and performance management plans and the agency's planning and performance management for Afghanistan are now more thorough.

Progress to date has been mixed in all areas we have reported on, including reform of Afghanistan's security sector. We reported that progress needs to be congruent in all five pillars of the security reform agenda established by the United States and several coalition partners. These pillars included: creating a national army, reconstituting the police, establishing a working judiciary, combating illicit narcotics, and demobilizing the Afghan militias. The United States has been involved to some degree with each of the five pillars and initially was charged with taking the lead in establishing the Afghan army, but has since allocated significant resources to reconstituting the police and countering the illicit drug trade. While some progress has been made in each pillar, the United States and its coalition partners continue to face challenges. Although some army and police units have been trained and equipped, Defense reports that none are capable of independent operations, Afghanistan still has no formal national judicial system for the police to rely upon, opium poppy cultivation is at record levels, and the Afghan police often find themselves facing better armed drug traffickers and militias.

In the absence of national security forces capable of independently providing security for the country, ISAF is helping to provide security for Afghanistan. However, ISAF's ability to do so is limited by a number of factors, such as national restrictions on its component forces and shortages in troops and equipment. Lastly, though reconstruction assistance helped Afghanistan elect its first president, return millions of children to school, and repatriate millions of refugees, Afghanistan continues to face reconstruction challenges, which are exacerbated by the security-related concerns described above.

Defense, State, and USAID officials have suggested that securing, stabilizing, and reconstructing Afghanistan will take at least a decade and require continuing international assistance. If the recent administration budget proposals for Afghanistan are approved, the United States will increase funding for Afghanistan well beyond earlier estimates. Until recently, Defense's plans for training and equipping the Afghan army and police, called the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), were based on the assumption that the insurgency in Afghanistan would decline and the overall security situation would improve. However, Defense revised its plans to adapt to the deteriorating security situation and to rapidly increase the ability of the ANSF to operate with less coalition support. These modified plans call for a total of \$7.6 billion for the ANSF in 2007, which is over a threefold increase compared with fiscal year 2006 and represents more than all of the U.S. assistance for the ANSF in fiscal years 2002 through 2006 combined. The costs of these and other efforts will

require difficult trade-offs for decision makers as the United States faces competing demands for its resources, such as securing and stabilizing Iraq, in the years ahead.

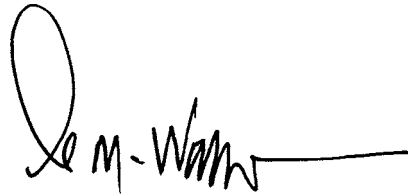
Significant oversight will be needed to help ensure the Congress has visibility over the cost and progress of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. The enclosures that follow provide background information on Afghanistan and discuss suggested areas for additional oversight on the following topics:

- efforts to train and equip the Afghan National Security Forces,
- international security forces,
- counternarcotics,
- Afghanistan's judicial system, and
- reconstruction.

These enclosures are based on our completed Afghanistan related work and incorporate updated information from current budget and program documents. We also discussed these topics with cognizant Defense, State, and USAID officials involved in securing, stabilizing, and reconstructing Afghanistan. Additionally, we met with U.S. Central Command officials, who provided the current status of (1) their efforts to train and equip the ANSF and (2) the recent transition of the security mission from U.S. to ISAF control. Moreover, we met with experts from various academic and research institutions and reviewed their reports related to Afghanistan. Finally, we provided a draft of this report to the relevant agencies for advanced review. Each agency informed us that they were not providing formal comments. However, each provided technical comments, which we incorporated, as appropriate. We conducted our review from January through May 2007 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

We are sending copies of this report to Members of Congress and cognizant congressional committees. We will also make copies available to others on request. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact Jacquelyn L. Williams-Bridgers, Managing Director, International Affairs and Trade, at (202) 512-3031 or williamsbridgersj@gao.gov, or Charles Michael Johnson at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs can be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in enclosure VII.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. M. Walker", followed by a horizontal line.

David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States

Enclosures

List of Congressional Committees

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Chairman
The Honorable Richard D. Lugar
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
The Honorable Ted Stevens
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
The Honorable Duncan L. Hunter
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Lantos
Chairman

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives

The Honorable John P. Murtha
Chairman

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chairwoman

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable John F. Tierney
Chairman

Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

Enclosure I: Afghanistan Facts and Figures

Afghanistan is a mountainous, arid, land-locked country with limited natural resources. It is bordered by Pakistan to the east and south; Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and China to the north; and Iran to the west (see fig. 1). Afghanistan's land area is about 647,500 square kilometers, which is slightly smaller than the state of Texas.

Figure 1: Map of Afghanistan



Source: Map Resources.

Conflict has ravaged Afghanistan for nearly three decades. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and withdrew only after waging a prolonged war against Afghan resistance groups. Following a protracted civil war, by 1998, most of Afghanistan was under the control of the fundamentalist Taliban group. Under the Taliban, Afghanistan became a haven for terrorists. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States, several allies, and Afghanistan's Northern Alliance forcibly removed the Taliban regime from Afghanistan for providing a safe haven to al Qaeda terrorists. In late 2001, a conference in Bonn, Germany established a process for political reconstruction that included the adoption of a new constitution and called for democratic elections. On December 7, 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan. The National Assembly was inaugurated on December 19, 2005.

Demographics and Development Indicators

Afghanistan's population, estimated at over 31 million, is ethnically and linguistically diverse. Afghanistan's largest ethnic groups include the Pashtun (42 percent), Tajik (27), Hazara (9), Uzbek (8), Aimak (4), and Turkmen (3). Although some ethnic groups are predominant in specific regions, such as the Pashtun along much of the border with Pakistan, many regions are populated by multiple ethnic groups. Over 30 languages are spoken in Afghanistan, but most of the population speaks either Dari/Persian (46 percent) or Pashtu (42). The population is largely rural and mostly uneducated. Almost half of the population is under the age of 15. Islam is the predominant religion—80 percent of the population is Sunni and 19 percent is Shi'a.

Development indicators published by the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) rank Afghanistan at the bottom of virtually every category. Life expectancy at birth is 43 years of age. More than 20 percent of all Afghan children die before the age of 5, of which a third die soon after birth. The per capita income for Afghanistan is estimated to be about \$200 per year, excluding income from illicit drug production and trafficking, and over 70 percent of Afghan adults are illiterate. According to the World Bank, limited available data suggest that more than a third of rural households face chronic or temporary shortages of food.

Natural Resources

Resource limitations pose constraints on development in Afghanistan. Only 12 percent of the land in Afghanistan is arable, the country has limited access to fresh water, and potable water supplies are inadequate. Unlike some other countries in the region, Afghanistan does not produce

oil or have substantial oil reserves. Instead, much of the population relies on wood for fuel, which has led to rapid deforestation and soil degradation. In addition, much of the country is prone to damaging natural hazards, including earthquakes in the Hindu Kush mountains, flooding, and droughts.

Economy

After the fall of the Taliban government in late 2001, the Afghan economy grew rapidly as a new government was established and international aid flowed into the country. While limited economic statistics are available, the World Bank estimates that the Afghan economy grew approximately 16 percent in 2003, 8 percent in 2004, and 14 percent in 2005 (see table 2). Inflation has fluctuated, from around 10 percent in 2004 and 2005 to as low as 4 percent in December 2006 due to a decline in international energy prices, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).¹ According to IMF and private economic consulting firms, while the economy is expected to grow rapidly over the next few years, Afghanistan is still a very poor country attempting to recover from decades of warfare and economic neglect.

Table 2: Growth of Afghanistan's Economy, 2000-2005

Indicator	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Gross domestic product (GDP) (billions of constant 2000 U.S. dollars)	N/A	2.7	4.4	4.9	6.1	7.3
GDP growth (annual percent)	N/A	N/A	29	16	8	14
Official development assistance (ODA) (billions of constant 2000 U.S. dollars)	0.2	0.4	1.4	1.7	2.3	2.8
Ratio of ODA to GDP (percent)	N/A	17	32	35	37	38

N/A = data unavailable

Source: GAO analysis of World Development Indicators data from the World Bank.

Note: GDP is based on nondrug output. GDP growth is calculated based on constant (inflation-adjusted) local currency (Afghani) values, not U.S. dollars. ODA consists of disbursements of loans made on concessional terms (net of repayments of principal) and grants.

¹In July 2006, IMF reported that substantial shortcomings continue to affect Afghanistan's national accounts, balance of payments, monetary, and social sector data. Given the security environment in Afghanistan and the ongoing development of the statistical system's capacity, statistics presented here for context and background should not be considered completely reliable.

Since 2001, the Afghan economy has received large amounts of foreign assistance. In 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, official development assistance (foreign grants and concessional loans) from international donors was \$2.8 billion, or over a third the size of the national economy. In addition, about 60 countries attended a January 2006 conference in London on the *Afghanistan Compact*, which maps out how the international community will contribute to Afghanistan's future development. Afghanistan has also received substantial reduction in its external debt, which had totaled over \$11 billion. However, according to IMF, Afghanistan's ability to assume additional debt for development purposes is limited due to Afghanistan's remaining debt and limited export revenues.

In terms of international trade, Afghanistan's exports are dominated by illicit narcotics (opium and its products, morphine and heroin), which have an estimated total value of \$2.7 billion to \$2.8 billion per year, according to the World Bank.² By contrast, officially recorded exports are estimated at several hundred million dollars. The country is highly import dependent for basic goods like petroleum products; construction materials; machinery and equipment; medicines; textiles; and, in bad harvest years, food, with imports financed largely by aid and (to a considerable extent) illicit drug proceeds. According to the World Bank, growth and diversification of legal exports will be critical for the country's longer-term development success.

²The World Bank reports that data are limited on the extent of production and export of opium, given its illicit nature.

Enclosure II: U.S. Efforts to Train and Equip the Afghan National Security Forces Face Several Challenges

In the wake of decades of war that left Afghanistan without an army or a functioning police force, the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other coalition nations have been working to develop the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police—referred to as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—to provide security for Afghanistan. After several years of relative calm since the ousting of the Taliban, security deteriorated significantly in 2006. The use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings increased fourfold, with approximately 130 suicide attacks launched by militants. This deterioration in security has been blamed in part on the weakness of the ANSF.

The United States has provided over \$6 billion through fiscal year 2006 to train and equip the Afghan army and police. Citing deteriorating security in Afghanistan and the need to rapidly establish independent security forces, the administration has requested \$7.6 billion and \$2.9 billion for fiscal years 2007 and 2008, respectively, to accelerate efforts to train and equip the ANSF (see table 3).

Table 3: Defense and State Support for Afghan Army and Police, Fiscal Years 2002-2008

Dollars in millions								
Assistance program	Fiscal years							
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 request ^a	2008 request	Total
Afghan army ^b	\$76.9	\$372.6	\$723.7	\$1,736.6	\$768.0	\$4,883.2	\$1,903.7	\$10,464.7
Afghan police	25.5	5.0	223.9	813.9	1,293.7	2,730.6	948.9	6,041.5
Total	\$102.4	\$377.6	\$947.6	\$2,550.5	\$2,061.7	\$7,613.8	\$2,852.6	\$16,506.2

Sources: Departments of Defense and State.
^aFiscal year 2007 includes approximately \$1.6 billion that has been appropriated and approximately \$6 billion as requested by Defense in the 2007 Global War on Terror Supplemental Request.
^bAfghan army includes detainee operations.

According to Defense documents and discussions with Defense officials, the 2007 and 2008 budget requests, as well as the provision of sufficient mentors and trainers, would allow Defense and State¹ to complete the training and equipping of the ANSF by December 2008—almost a year

¹Defense is responsible for training and equipping the Afghan army. Defense and State share responsibility for police training.

ahead of previous plans—at which time the United States would transition its efforts to sustaining the ANSF. According to Defense progress reports from March 2007, 21,600 combat troops² and 62,500³ police officers and patrolmen and women have been trained, equipped, and assigned. Therefore, over the next 2 years,

- Defense plans to complete the training and equipping of 70,000 army personnel, including an additional 29,045 new combat troops (for a total of 50,645), and complete the establishment of an Afghan Ministry of Defense and military sustaining institutions;⁴ and
- Defense and State plan to complete the training and equipping of 82,000 police personnel—an increase of 20,000 over previous plans—including at least 19,500 new recruits, and complete the reform of Afghanistan’s Ministry of Interior, which oversees the police.

These plans are ambitious and require both the rapid expansion of efforts to train and equip new recruits and substantial improvements in the current forces’ capabilities to operate independently. According to Defense progress reports from March 2007, no army combat units are fully capable of operating independently and less than 20 percent are fully capable of leading operations with coalition support. Defense reports that no Afghan police units are fully capable of operating independently and that only 1 of 72 police units is fully capable to lead operations with coalition support.⁵ Moreover, according to Defense officials, due to attrition and absenteeism, the number of forces on hand is less than those trained. For example, although 20,400 combat troops had been assigned to

²We note that in early 2005, Defense reported that it had provided basic training for 18,300 combat troops and projected that it could train an additional 27,700 combat troops by the fall of 2007, for a total of 46,000 combat troops (see [GAO-05-575](#)).

³Defense officials indicated that Afghanistan’s Ministry of Interior reports the number of police assigned and that these numbers may not be reliable. The Ministry of Interior Forces include, among others: uniformed police, border police, counternarcotics police, and personnel for sustaining purposes, such as training, education, and procurement.

⁴Sustaining institutions include medical, logistics, intelligence, and recruiting units.

⁵Although Defense reports that no army or police units are fully capable of operating independently of coalition forces, Defense officials stated that some units of the Afghan army have conducted successful operations and State officials provided examples of successful police operations.

combat units as of mid-January 2007, Defense officials stated that approximately 15,000 were actually present for duty.⁶

Furthermore, efforts to equip the Afghan security forces have faced problems since their inception. In 2004 and 2005, Defense planned to equip the Afghan army with donated and salvaged Soviet weapons and armored vehicles. However, much of this equipment proved to be worn out, defective, or incompatible with other equipment. In 2006, Defense began providing the forces with U.S. equipment—an effort that faces challenges.⁷ As security has deteriorated, equipment needs have changed, and their associated costs have increased. For example, the Afghan army was initially provided with pickup trucks, such as those in figure 2, and 9-millimeter pistols; more recently, Defense has begun providing more protective equipment, such as Humvees, and more lethal weapons, such as rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.

Moreover, procedures to ensure that the intended recipients receive, retain, and use their equipment as intended have lagged. For example, the Defense and State Inspectors General (IG) reported that when the United States first began training the police, State's contractor provided trainees with a one-time issue of uniforms and nonlethal equipment upon graduation. However, many students sold their equipment before they reached their duty stations, and the program was terminated. The IGs reported that most equipment is now distributed from Kabul to police units' provincial headquarters, but hoarding equipment is reportedly a large problem, maintenance is insufficient, and end-user accountability of distributed equipment is limited.⁸

⁶Defense officials state that approximately 40 percent of the absences were authorized and 60 percent were unauthorized.

⁷These efforts began in 2005; however, the equipment did not arrive until 2006.

⁸U.S. Departments of Defense and State Inspectors General, *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness* (Washington, D.C., Nov. 14, 2006).

Figure 2: Trucks Purchased for the Afghan National Army



Source: GAO.

In addition, the Afghan Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for managing the country's national police force, faces a number of problems that have required reform or restructuring. According to officials from State and its police training contractor, these problems include pervasive corruption; an outdated rank structure overburdened with senior-level officers; lack of communication and control between central command and the regions, provinces, and districts; pay disparity between the army and police; and a lack of professional standards and internal discipline. According to State, the Ministry of Interior is in the process of implementing pay and rank reforms. Reforms to date include removal of over 2,000 high-ranking officers (colonel and above) and steps to make pay for rank-and-file police officers more equitable. Additional planned reforms include establishing parity between the salaries of police and military and selecting police officers based on merit rather than loyalty and local influence.

Prior Recommendations

In our 2005 report on the Afghan security forces, we recommended that, because of Afghanistan's prolonged conflict and its limited financial resources, the Secretaries of Defense and State develop detailed plans for completing and sustaining the Afghan army and police forces. We

proposed the plans include clearly defined objectives and performance measures; milestones for achieving stated objectives; future funding requirements; and a strategy for sustaining the results achieved, including transitioning program responsibility to Afghanistan. We suggested that the Secretaries provide this information to the Congress when the executive branch next requests funding for the Afghan army or police forces.

In addition, because reform in the other pillars of the Afghan security sector—building an effective judiciary, curbing the production and trafficking of illicit narcotics, and disarming and reintegrating militia fighters—is critical to the success of the army and police programs, we recommended that the Secretaries of Defense and State work with the other nations to help ensure that progress in the other pillars is congruent with the progress made in the army and police programs. We suggested that the Secretaries regularly report to the Congress—no less than annually—on the progress made in addressing these other security pillars.

Though Defense and State generally concurred with our recommendations, both suggested that existing reporting requirements addressed the need to report their plans for completing and sustaining the Afghan army and police forces. Our analysis of Defense and State reporting to the Congress, however, indicated that the departments did not have the detailed plans as we recommended. In recent months, we again asked Defense and State for plans that are responsive to the recommendation. Though both Defense and State officials asserted that detailed plans for fielding fully functioning Afghan army and police forces by a stated end date have been done, they have not provided them to us. We continue to believe that developing and following such plans and ensuring concurrent progress in the other security pillars is essential to the overall future success of the Afghan security effort.

Oversight Questions

- What is the overall strategic plan for U.S. efforts in Afghanistan? What is the operational concept for the ANSF? How are U.S. plans to train and equip the ANSF incorporated into the strategic plan for Afghanistan?
- How much funding has the United States provided to train and equip the ANSF? How do Defense and State track funding for the ANSF, including obligations and expenditures? What equipment, training, and services has the United States provided through drawdowns and as excess defense articles?

- How much funding, training, equipment, or other services have the other coalition partners provided to train and equip the ANSF?
- What is the anticipated total cost to fully train and equip the ANSF? What is the estimated annual cost to sustain these forces, and who will pay for it? What are the plans for Afghanistan to take program and financial responsibility for its army and police?
- What have been the results to date of efforts to train and equip the ANSF? What and how much equipment has been provided? How does the United States track where it is and how it is used? How many troops have been trained and equipped? Of those, how many are available for duty? What are the capabilities of these troops to operate independently of coalition troops?
- What performance measures are used to assess progress in developing Afghan army sustaining institutions? What progress has been made? What is the desired end state, and what is the anticipated time frame for completion?
- What performance measures are used to assess progress in reforming the Afghan Ministry of Interior? What progress has been made? What is the desired end state, and what is the anticipated time frame for completion?

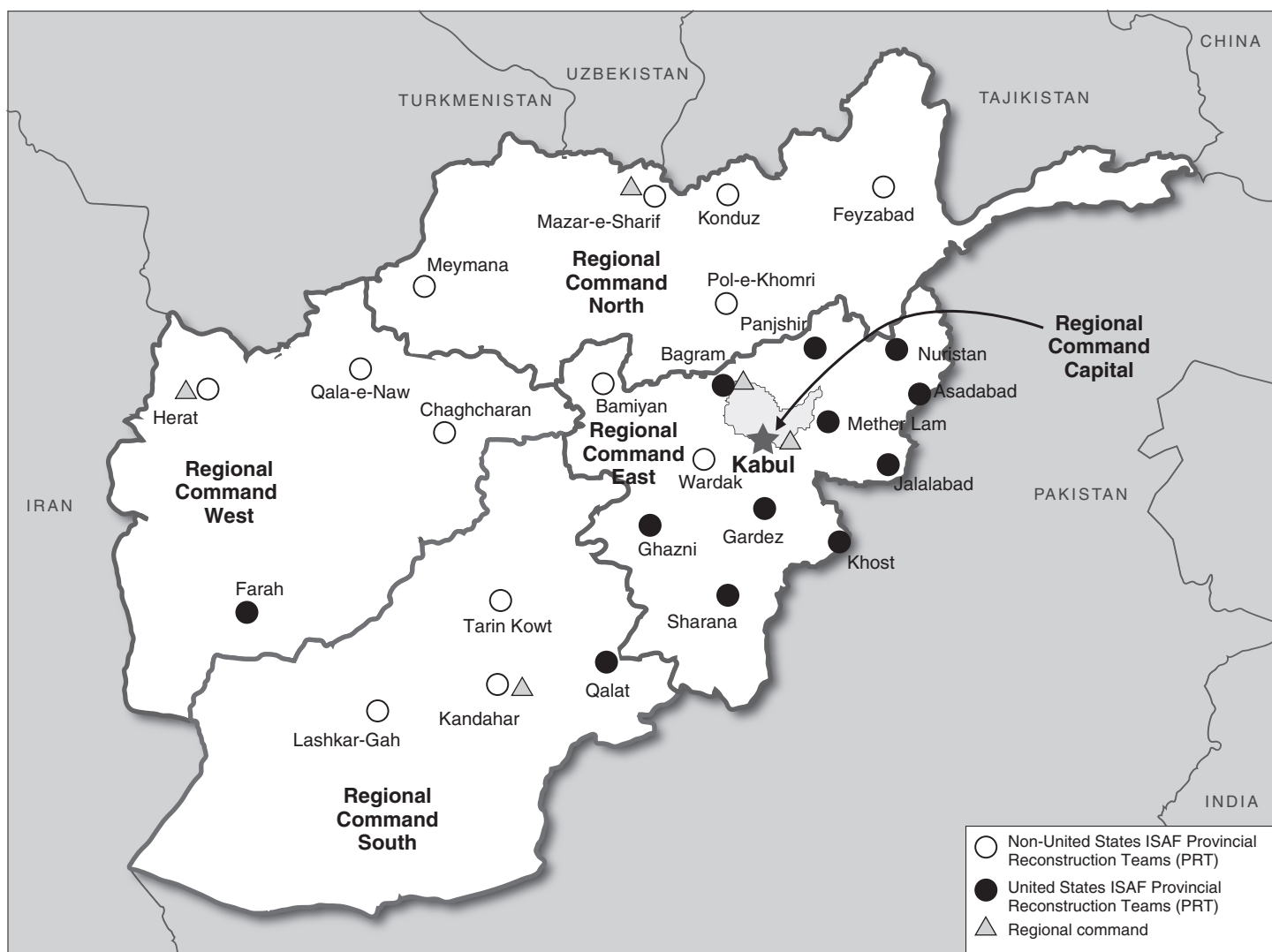
Enclosure III: International Security Forces Limited by Several Factors

Pending the creation of functioning Afghan army and police forces, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), with approximately 35,000 troops from 37 nations,¹ was formed to assist the government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment to enable reconstruction. ISAF was formed in December 2001 under a United Nations (UN) mandate to provide security in Kabul and its surrounding area, and to assist Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment. In 2003, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed to (1) assume command and control for the ISAF mission and (2) assume responsibility for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in northern and western Afghanistan. Although NATO had difficulty persuading nations to provide the resources needed for these teams, as of November 2006, it oversees 25 PRTs throughout Afghanistan, which are structured around five regional commands, as shown in figure 3. Twelve PRTs are led by the United States. The PRTs' mission is to assist the government of Afghanistan to extend its authority; to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment; and, through military presence, enable security-sector reform and reconstruction efforts. Each PRT has a lead country assigned, but PRTs are joint military-civilian organizations and often include representatives from other ISAF member states. For example, the United States has officials from the Departments of State and Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) at many of the PRTs to observe and assist in reconstruction efforts.

¹These include about 14,000 U.S. troops and 21,000 troops from the 36 other coalition member countries. In January 2007, several NATO countries pledged to send additional troops.

**Enclosure III: International Security Forces
Limited by Several Factors**

Figure 3: PRTs and Regional Commands in Afghanistan



PRTs in Regional Command South
 Kandahar (Canada)
 Lashkar-Gah (United Kingdom, Denmark, Estonia)
 Tarin Kowt (Netherlands, Australia)
 Qalat (United States)

PRTs in Regional Command West
 Chaghcharan (Lithuania, Denmark, Croatia, Iceland)
 Farah (United States)
 Herat (Italy, Hungary, France)
 Qala-e-Naw (Spain)

PRTs in Regional Command North
 Feyzabad (Germany, Denmark, Czechs, Switzerland)
 Konduz (Germany, Hungary, France, Belgium, Romania, Luxembourg)
 Mazar-e-Sharif (Sweden, United States, France, Denmark, Romania, Finland)
 Meymana (Norway, Finland, Latvia)
 Pol-e-Khomri (Hungary)

PRTs in Regional Command East
 Asadabad (United States)
 Bagram (United States, Korea)
 Bamiyan (New Zealand)
 Gardez (United States)
 Ghazni (United States)
 Jalalabad (United States)
 Khost (United States)
 Mether Lam (United States)
 Nuristan (United States)
 Panjshir (United States)
 Sharana (United States)
 Wardak (Turkey)

Sources: ISAF and Defense (data); Map Resources (map).

ISAF's responsibilities and efforts in Afghanistan are increasing. However, its ability to provide security for the country is limited by a number of factors. Although NATO has command over ISAF troops, control is ultimately exercised by each nation. ISAF's rules of engagement are heavily influenced by limitations imposed by national governments (referred to as national caveats) that, for example, prevent troops from some countries from performing certain tasks or missions, or moving between geographic areas of operation. As a result, the burden of combat, when it arises, falls disproportionately on the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Romania, Australia, and Estonia, which have forces in or lead PRTs in the more hostile regions of Afghanistan. Furthermore, some ISAF troops are limited by shortages of certain types of critical equipment, and most do not have strategic capacity, such as airlift.

Only the military elements of PRTs are integrated into the ISAF chain of command. Therefore, each lead nation can have its own concept, priorities, and, in some cases, national caveats that guide specific PRT operations. For some PRTs, particularly in the more volatile south and east, providing security is the priority, but for others in more secure areas, reconstruction is the highest priority. Overall, PRTs aim to contribute to stability and facilitate reconstruction via activities such as patrolling, monitoring, influence, and mediation. Many have also participated to some extent in specific reconstruction projects by providing funding or other assistance, particularly in areas where nongovernmental organizations have been unable to operate.

The U.S.-led PRTs facilitate reconstruction by providing security but also devote substantial resources to reconstruction projects that are designed to advance U.S. security objectives. U.S. commanders, including those leading PRTs, have access to funds provided under Defense's Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP). According to Defense officials, in fiscal years 2005 and 2006, CERP funds for Afghanistan totaled \$391 million, and the requests for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 are \$231 million and \$210 million, respectively. According to the U.S. Central Command, CERP-funded projects are intended to gain the confidence of local residents and leaders and discourage them from cooperating with insurgents. U.S. CERP funds have been used by PRT commanders for rapid implementation of small-scale projects, such as providing latrines for a school or a generator for a hospital, and do not require prior approval or coordination at the federal level.

Oversight Questions

- How do the national caveats placed on the various ISAF forces affect ISAF's ability to provide security for Afghanistan and the operations of the PRTs? What equipment shortages and capability limitations exist among the ISAF-member nations and how are they being addressed?
- What reconstruction programs and projects do the various PRTs engage in? How do PRT lead nations manage their programs to ensure accountability?
- How much funding has Defense provided for CERP-funded projects in Afghanistan? How are CERP funds being used in Afghanistan? How does Defense track CERP projects and ensure accountability for the use of these funds?
- How does the United States coordinate its PRTs with those run by other coalition partners? How does the United States coordinate its CERP-funded PRT reconstruction projects with USAID and other donors (including nongovernmental organizations) who may be providing reconstruction assistance in the area?

Enclosure IV: Worsening Security and Other Factors Hinder U.S. Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan

Combating illicit narcotics in Afghanistan is one of the five security pillars. Since 2002, the United States has provided over \$1.5 billion to stem the production and trafficking of illicit drugs—primarily opiates—in Afghanistan. Despite U.S. and international efforts in these areas, the UN estimated that the number of hectares of opium poppy under cultivation grew by 50 percent in 2006, and a record 6,100 metric tons of opium was produced. The UN estimated that the export value of opium and its derivatives—morphine and heroin—equaled about a third of Afghanistan’s licit economy, with drug profits reportedly funding terrorists and other antigovernment entities. Initial estimates for 2007 indicate that the amount of opium poppy under cultivation will remain the same or possibly increase. The continued prevalence of opium poppy cultivation and drug trafficking throughout Afghanistan imperils efforts to secure and stabilize the country.

To combat opium poppy cultivation, drug trafficking, and their negative effects on Afghan institutions and society, the United States, working with allied governments, in 2005 developed a five-pillared counternarcotics strategy addressing (1) alternative livelihoods, (2) elimination and eradication, (3) interdiction, (4) law enforcement and justice reform, and (5) public information. USAID and State initiated a number of projects under each of the U.S. counternarcotics strategy’s five pillars, but delays in implementation—due to the security situation, poor infrastructure, and other factors—limited progress. Many projects have not been in place long enough to fully assess progress toward the overall goal of significantly reducing poppy cultivation, drug production, and drug trafficking.

Alternative livelihoods. USAID implemented projects to provide economic alternatives to poppy production and thus reduce the amount of Afghanistan’s economic activity attributable to the drug industry. Results varied in the three principal alternative livelihoods regions, in part because of the differing security risks and access to infrastructure.

Elimination and eradication. State supported the Afghan government’s efforts to prevent poppy planting and eradicate poppy crops if prevention failed. State provided support for central and provincial eradication efforts (see fig. 4). Central government eradication efforts improved with the reorganization of the Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) into smaller, more mobile units and the addition of purchased and leased transport and logistical-support aircraft. However, in 2006, AEF’s fielding was delayed because of coordination problems, reducing the amount of eradication possible. In addition, not all Poppy Elimination Program (PEP) teams,

which were designed to help governors discourage farmers from growing poppy, were fully fielded.

Figure 4: AEF Using a U.S.-Provided Tractor to Eradicate Opium Poppy



Source: State Department.

Interdiction. State and Defense assisted Drug Enforcement Administration-led efforts to help build Afghan capacity to destroy drug labs, seize precursor chemicals and opiates, and arrest major traffickers. State and Defense also provided support for border security enhancements in neighboring countries and the counternarcotics police. In the neighboring countries of Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, State began border security projects.

Law enforcement and justice reform. State supported the Afghan government's efforts to increase its capacity to arrest, prosecute, and punish traffickers and corrupt officials. State provided support for Department of Justice prosecutors, who helped develop and implement a new counternarcotics law; corrections reform, including training guards and refurbishing courthouses; and a planned justice center.

Public information. State led a public information campaign intended to convince the Afghan populace to reject poppy cultivation and trade. However, because of delays with the PEP team implementation, the campaign was not able to rely on planned support from the teams.

Prior Recommendation

In our 2005 report on U.S. assistance for the Afghan army and police, we concluded that progress in the other security pillars was critical to eventually sustaining and maximizing the effectiveness of the army and police.¹ As we note in enclosure II, Defense and State have not specifically reported on progress in the counternarcotics or other security pillars, as we recommended.

Oversight Questions

- What is the current status of U.S. funding provided for counternarcotics in Afghanistan, and how much has been expended? What has this funding supported?
- What is the status of the State- and USAID-funded counternarcotics programs? What has been accomplished in each of the five counternarcotics pillars?
- What counternarcotics assistance have the Departments of Defense and Justice, including the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, provided?
- How will the Afghan counternarcotics strategy be adjusted if, as is expected, the 2007 poppy cultivation figures show no decrease?

¹[GAO-05-575](#).

Enclosure V: Progress Establishing a Working Judicial System Lags behind the Other Security Pillars

Establishing a working judiciary in Afghanistan based on the rule of law is a prerequisite for effective policing. It is one of the five security pillars. However, according to donor officials, few linkages exist in Afghanistan between the Afghan judiciary and police, and the police have little ability to enforce judicial rulings. In addition, judges and prosecutors are not being exposed to police training and practices.

Supported by the United States, other donors, and international organizations, Italy—initially the lead nation for reforming the judiciary—followed a three-pronged strategy: (1) developing and drafting legal codes, (2) training judges and prosecutors, and (3) renovating the country’s physical legal infrastructure. However, according to Italian and U.S. government officials, the reform program was underfunded and understaffed.

Nevertheless, Italy and the other donors made some progress in promoting reform. This included drafting a new criminal procedure code, training several hundred judges, and renovating courthouses. USAID officials indicated that they continue to have projects to develop a judicial code of conduct and to train both sitting and new judges. They also have projects to develop and implement uniform procedures and rules for courts and to establish a common curriculum for law courses. Also, as noted in enclosure IV, the United States has supported the Afghan government’s efforts to increase its capacity to arrest, prosecute, and punish illicit drug traffickers and corrupt officials.

However, these accomplishments and current efforts address only a portion of Afghanistan’s overall need for judicial reform. Afghanistan’s judicial sector is characterized by a conflicting mix of civil, religious, and customary laws, with too few trained judges, prosecutors, or other justice personnel. Furthermore, its penal system is nonfunctioning, and its buildings, official records, and essential office equipment and furniture have been damaged extensively. U.S. and other donor officials informed us that progress in rebuilding the judicial sector lags behind the other security pillars and that the reform effort is being undermined by systemic corruption at key national and provincial justice institutions.

Prior Recommendation

Although we did not specifically examine U.S. assistance efforts to help establish a working judiciary in Afghanistan, in our 2005 report on U.S. assistance for the Afghan army and police, we concluded that progress in the other security pillars is critical to eventually sustaining and maximizing the effectiveness of the army and police.¹ As we note in enclosure II, Defense and State have not specifically reported on progress in the judicial or other security pillars, as we recommended.

Oversight Questions

- What is the status of efforts to develop a working judicial system in Afghanistan?
- How much funding has the United States provided for Afghanistan's judicial system, and how much of that has been expended? What has this funding been used for?
- What are the key obstacles to judicial reform, and how will they be addressed?
- To what extent have the United States, its coalition partners, and the government of Afghanistan developed a strategy, clear objectives, and an estimate of the time and resources needed to complete justice sector reforms?

¹[GAO-05-575](#).

Enclosure VI: Reconstruction Efforts Have Lacked Strategic Focus and Are Constrained by Security Concerns

To date, the United States has provided about \$4.4 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan, and the administration has requested an additional \$2.4 billion for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan, largely led by USAID with support from international donors and other U.S. government entities, helped Afghanistan elect its first president, return millions of children to school, and repatriate millions of refugees. However, the reconstruction needs of Afghanistan are immense, and reconstruction efforts face a number of challenges. Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries and ranks near the bottom of virtually every development indicator category, such as life expectancy; literacy; nutrition; and infant, child, and maternal mortality (see encl. I). Nearly three decades of war and extended drought have destroyed Afghanistan's infrastructure, economy, and government.

U.S. reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan has taken place in three stages since the ouster of the Taliban. In 2002 and 2003, USAID initially focused on humanitarian and short-term assistance, such as assistance to displaced persons and food assistance, which helped avert widespread famine. Although USAID continues to provide some humanitarian assistance, this assistance is now a much smaller part of its program.

In 2004, USAID expanded assistance to include quick impact projects, such as infrastructure projects. At that time, due to a variety of obstacles, especially security and limited Afghan capacity, USAID had not met all of its reconstruction targets in areas such as health, education, and infrastructure. The largest component of these reconstruction efforts was the construction of roads, which, after decades of neglect, were in disrepair or lacking altogether. The United States, Afghanistan, and international donors deemed road construction critical to economic growth and security.

In recent years, USAID expanded Afghan reconstruction assistance to a comprehensive development package that focuses more on increasing Afghan capacity and aims to address a wide range of needs, such as agriculture, education, health, road construction, power generation, and others. As shown in table 4, USAID has allocated reconstruction assistance to 12 primary program categories, with more than \$1.8 billion, or about 27 percent of U.S. reconstruction assistance, to roads.

**Enclosure VI: Reconstruction Efforts Have
Lacked Strategic Focus and Are Constrained
by Security Concerns**

Table 4: USAID Funding for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Fiscal Years 2002-2008, by Program Category

Dollars in millions

Program category	Fiscal years							Total ^a	Percent of total ^a
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 request	2008 request		
Roads	\$51	\$142	\$354	\$276	\$255	\$446	\$338	\$1,862	27
Power generation	3	0	77	286	61	135	203	765	11
Alternative livelihoods	3	1	5	185	121	211	121	647	9
Elections, governance, rule of law, Office of Transition Initiatives	25	42	153	103	23	124	56	526	8
Support to government of Afghanistan	41	40	103	117	60	47	62	470	7
Health and clinics	8	56	83	111	51	72	66	447	7
Education and schools	19	21	104	86	49	62	54	395	6
Food assistance	159	51	49	57	60	22	10	408	6
Economic growth	21	12	84	91	46	68	61	382	6
Agriculture	27	56	50	77	27	55	31	324	5
Provincial Reconstruction Teams	0	11	56	85	20	117	30	319	5
Internally displaced persons	108	23	10	0	0	0	0	141	2
Other ^b	7	7	45	37	5	15	16	131	2
Total	\$471	\$462	\$1,173	\$1,511	\$778	\$1,374	\$1,048	\$6,817	100

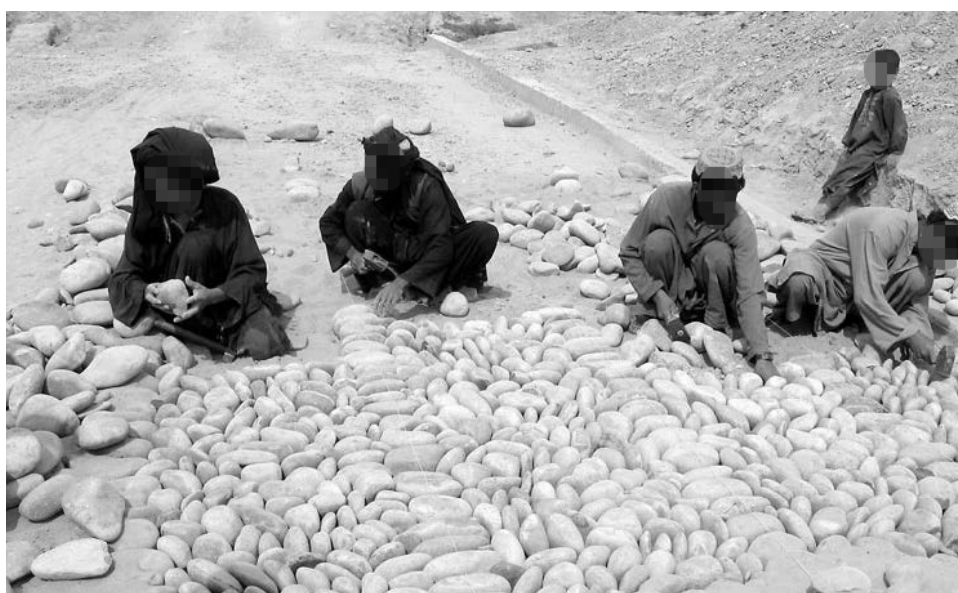
Source: GAO analysis of USAID data.

^aTotals may not add due to rounding.

^bIncludes water, information technology, and program support.

USAID's road construction efforts include primary roads, including parts of Afghanistan's ring road, and secondary and urban roads, some of which connect to the ring road, as depicted in figure 5.

Figure 5: Cash-for-Work Cobblestone Road Project



Source: GAO.

Road reconstruction and construction has attracted considerable donor assistance. As of January 2007, about \$5.2 billion for transportation infrastructure projects had been provided or promised by the United States and more than 10 other donors. Nearly \$4 billion of this was for 366 completed projects, including most of the ring road. The ring road connects Kabul to Kandahar in the south, Herat in the east, and Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, completing a circle or ring. The portion of the ring road from Kabul to Kandahar was a signature project for USAID—opening in December 2003 to much fanfare. The Kabul-Kandahar road reduced travel time between the two cities from several days to 6 hours. However, the U.S. Embassy has restricted official U.S. travel on the road because of heightened security risks.

Because most reconstruction project evaluation has not yet taken place, it is not clear whether the broad range of USAID's reconstruction programs in Afghanistan has led to improved results in many sectors or whether, given the obstacles USAID faces, the breadth of its efforts limits USAID's ability to achieve significant results in a smaller set of priority areas.

In addition, many of USAID's reconstruction programs target specific geographic areas. In 2005, we reported that two-thirds of obligated fiscal year 2004 funds supported local projects in Afghanistan's 34 provinces, but

Kabul and Kandahar provinces received approximately 70 percent of these funds, mainly for roads. More recently, alternative livelihood programs have focused on providing economic alternatives in opium poppy-growing areas. Further, the administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2008 specifies that some of the funding be provided for roads in areas targeted by insurgents and for rural development in poppy-producing regions. Focusing assistance on such targeted geographic regions has resulted in some complaints that regions only receive assistance if they have problems such as opium poppy cultivation or heightened security concerns.

Prior Recommendations

In 2004, we recommended that the Administrator of USAID revise USAID's strategy for its assistance program to Afghanistan.¹ Specifically, we suggested that, among other things, the strategy should contain measurable goals, specific time frames, and resource levels. We also recommended that the Secretary of State produce an annual consolidated budget report and semiannual obligation and expenditure reports. In response, USAID agreed and has revised its operational strategy for Afghanistan much as we suggested. State, on the other hand, disagreed and noted that it already keeps the Congress informed through briefings, hearings, and mandated reports. We disagreed at the time and continue to believe that regular reporting of both obligations and expenditures for U.S. assistance to Afghanistan would provide the Congress with a more complete picture of what funds actually have been spent.

In 2005, we recommended that the Administrator of USAID (1) establish a performance management plan that complies with USAID directives, (2) clearly stipulate in all future reconstruction contracts that contractors are to develop performance management plans specific to the work they are conducting, and (3) more completely communicate the performance information from the plans to executive decision makers in Kabul and Washington, D.C.² Overall, USAID concurred and has developed the performance management plans we suggested. However, USAID's plans are ambitious and assume that security in Afghanistan will improve, which has not happened.

¹[GAO-04-403](#).

²[GAO-05-742](#).

Oversight Questions

- How much funding has the United States provided for Afghanistan's reconstruction, and how much of that has been expended? What has been achieved to date? What obstacles have been encountered? How has USAID taken these obstacles, such as the worsening security situation, into account in planning for future reconstruction efforts?
- What are USAID's reconstruction priorities? How have USAID funds been allocated? How are USAID's programs prioritized and sequenced? What is the current geographic distribution of obligated funds for local programs? How do USAID's reconstruction priorities align with the overall U.S. strategy for securing and stabilizing Afghanistan?

Enclosure VII: GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contacts

Jacquelyn L. Williams-Bridgers, (202) 512-3031 or williamsbridgersj@gao.gov, or Charles Michael Johnson at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

Key contributors to this report include Al Huntington (Assistant Director), David Bruno, Joe Carney, Miriam Carroll, Thomas Costa, Martin de Alteriis, Mark Dowling, Etana Finkler, David Gootnick, Elizabeth Guran, Laura Holliday, John Hutton, Ernie Jackson, Hynek Kalkus, Reid Lowe, Elizabeth Repko, George Taylor, Phil Thomas, Pierre Toureille, Adam Vodraska, Tim Wedding, Eve Weisberg, Christina Werth, and Loren Yager.

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