

Whereas Yugoslavia was a strong state broken up by internal tensions, Afghanistan has been a weak state pulled apart by its neighbors. The 1979 Soviet invasion sparked a period of civil war and unrest that lasted over 20 years. After the Soviets withdrew, various factions occupied and then lost control of the capital, Kabul, until the rise of the Taliban in 1996. The Taliban gained control of the urban areas and most of the countryside and established an Islamic fundamentalist regime under Sharia law. Under this regime, women had no rights; there was no freedom of the press or religion; and the country was ruled by an autocracy. Afghanistan became a host for al Qaeda. Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network used their money and influence to support the Taliban regime; in return, they were permitted to train operatives and plan operations on Afghan soil.

Resistance to the Taliban rule came predominantly from the Northern Alliance, a coalition of Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, and some Pashtun elements, supported by money, arms, and training from Iran, Russia, and India. By the latter half of 2001, the Northern Alliance controlled only a small area in the north and northeast of the country, which contained no major urban centers.

In response to the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), whose goal was to eliminate al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The operation began on October 7, 2001. With the assistance of U.S. money, airpower, and targeting from U.S. Special Operations Forces, the Northern Alliance was able to take Kabul in mid-November. The United States also instigated and supported

smaller Pashtun risings in the south. Most Taliban resistance collapsed within a few weeks.

Expatriate and Northern Alliance Afghan leaders met in Bonn, Germany, in late November 2001 to establish an interim successor regime. On December 5, they signed the Bonn Agreement, which established a road map and timetable for achieving peace and security, reestablishing key institutions, and reconstructing the country. Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun leader then commanding the siege of Kandahar, was chosen as the chairman of an interim government. It was broadly based and generally representative, although Tajiks retained control of the three most important "power ministries": Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs.

On December 20, 2001, UNSCR 1386 created a framework for international assistance to postwar Afghanistan. The international community agreed to establish and construct a peacekeeping force, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in the capital and to assist the interim Afghan government in its efforts to reestablish national structures and rebuild the economy.

## **CHALLENGES**

Afghanistan was devastated after 23 years of conflict. The country had a long tradition of weak central government, tribalism, banditry, and ethnic tension. The triumph of the U.S.-assisted Northern Alliance had left the ethnic Pashtuns, the country's largest ethnic group and the principal base of support for the Taliban, feeling underrepresented in the successor regime.

### **Security**

Security throughout Afghanistan was threatened from three sides: first, residual Taliban and al Qaeda elements; second, general banditry and lawlessness; and third, tensions among regional commanders operating, at least nominally, under the authority of the new interim government and fielding locally raised militias of 10,000 to 20,000 soldiers.

## Humanitarian

The major humanitarian concerns as coalition forces entered Afghanistan in 2001 were the fate of refugees and IDPs, and the provision of food for the coming winter. Before the fall of the Taliban, millions of Afghans had fled to Pakistan and Iran. By late 2001, some 4.5 million Afghans lived as refugees in other countries. Most of these people went to Iran (2.4 million) or Pakistan (2.2 million), although some 30,000 were in other countries in the region, such as Tajikistan (16,000) and India (12,000). It was difficult to estimate with any accuracy the number of Afghans who were internally displaced, but the U.S. Committee for Refugees believed the figure to be about 1 million at the end of 2001.<sup>1</sup> There was serious concern about the food situation at the onset of winter. Many international assistance organizations believed that refugees returning home after years in Pakistan and elsewhere would be unable to find food or shelter.

## Civil Administration

Few state institutions in Afghanistan were functioning at the end of 2002. Decades of civil war had decimated the civil service and government bureaucracy. The United States and the international community planned to support and buttress the new Afghan government, rather than rule the country as they had in Kosovo. This approach required significant resources to establish and strengthen a new Afghan government. In keeping with this focus, the international presence was small in Kabul and almost nonexistent elsewhere. Unfortunately, the international resources available to help build Afghan institutions for governance were also modest, at least compared to the amounts made available to Bosnia and Kosovo several years earlier.

## Democratization

Although the Bonn Agreement had established democratization as a goal, the United States and the rest of the international community

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Committee for Refugees, *World Refugees Survey 2002*, Washington, D.C., 2002, p. 6. According to UNHCR, 52,927 Afghans filed asylum applications in Europe, North America, and Oceania during 2001.

focused on achieving a more-modest objective: the creation of a broadly based and representative regime whose base could be further broadened and whose legitimacy could be enhanced over time using traditional Afghan political processes, specifically the *loya jirga* (general assembly). The Bonn Agreement created a government that represented the various ethnic groups in Afghanistan and that was designed to help reduce intergroup tension. The Pashtuns were the largest ethnic group in the country, but many had supported the Taliban government and were therefore tainted in the eyes of others at Bonn. The Northern Alliance, on the other hand, was made up principally of ethnic Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazara. Northern Alliance forces arrived triumphantly in Kabul in late 2001. Relations between the various ethnic groups were expected to be delicate, and the continued viability and long-term prospects of the country depended in large measure on how these relationships were handled in the following months.

### **Reconstruction**

Afghanistan's economy was ravaged by over 20 years of conflict. The country's infrastructure was crippled; roads were in severe disrepair; buildings had been destroyed or become run down through lack of maintenance; the availability of electricity and water was sporadic at best; and there were few employment opportunities for working-age individuals in the country. There was no stable national currency. Some of the regional commanders issued their own currencies. A multiyear drought, which began in 1999, resulted in widespread famine that had severely damaged Afghanistan's economy. The constant cycle of conflict over the past few decades had rendered the key economic institutions—a central bank, treasury, tax collection and customs, the statistical administration, the civil service, and the legal and judicial system—either weak or nonexistent.

### **THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ROLES**

From the outset, the United States and the international community attempted to keep a small international footprint in Afghanistan. Countries pledged significant financial assistance to Kabul at a Tokyo donor's conference in January 2002, but few donors had effective means in Kabul of delivering such assistance, and none, including

the United States, had the capacity to deliver more than basic humanitarian aid to the larger country beyond the capital.

### **Military**

A small international peacekeeping force of about 5,000 troops, initially under UK command, was established for the capital, Kabul. U.S. and coalition forces of about 8,000 troops continued to conduct counterterrorist operations against residual Taliban and al Qaeda elements throughout the country, mostly along the border with Pakistan. But they did not undertake any peacekeeping or stabilization responsibilities. The United States initially opposed establishing a countrywide international stabilization force for several reasons. There was some fear that Afghanistan's legendary xenophobia would manifest itself anew in resistance to any substantial foreign troop presence. The U.S. administration wanted to break with the pattern of ever-more-ambitious nation-building endeavors that its predecessor had set. Establishing even a modest countrywide peacekeeping presence would raise daunting logistical challenges. Because of the country's destroyed infrastructure, all troops, equipment, and sustaining supplies would initially have to be flown in. Few countries, other than the United States, had the airlift capacity to mount such an effort. Finally, the U.S. administration viewed Afghanistan as the opening campaign in a larger war against terrorism. U.S. policymakers did not want to tie down significant numbers of U.S. forces or logistical capabilities in Afghanistan.

### **Civil and Economic**

On the civil side, as on the military, the United States and the international community decided to focus on building the capacity of the Afghan government and empowering it to expand control throughout the country. At Bonn, the Afghan parties had asked the UN to "monitor and assist in the implementation of all aspects" of the agreement.<sup>2</sup> To that end, UNSCR 1401, passed on March 28, 2002,

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<sup>2</sup>UN, The Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions [the Bonn Agreement], December 2001, Annex II.

directed the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to integrate all UN activities in the country. UNAMA's limited mandate included promoting national reconciliation; fulfilling its responsibilities under the Bonn Agreement; and managing all UN humanitarian, relief, and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan in coordination with the interim authority. As part of the international effort, several countries volunteered to lead various aspects of the rebuilding of the Afghan government and infrastructure. Germany, for example, took responsibility for training the national police; Italy offered to assist with justice system reforms; and the United States volunteered to train a new national army and border force.

The Tokyo donor's conference on January 21–22, 2002, set the stage for the reconstruction effort. International representatives pledged more than \$1.8 billion to rebuild Afghanistan in 2002 and a total of \$4.5 billion over 5 years. Some donors made multiyear pledges, and a number of countries offered support in kind, without specifying a monetary value. A few specific pledges included:

- United States: \$297 million in 2002
- Japan: \$500 million over 30 months
- EU: \$500 million in 2002
- Saudi Arabia: \$220 million over three years
- World Bank: \$500 million over 30 months.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT HAPPENED

With rare exceptions, U.S. and international military forces have been well received throughout the country. A national government has been established whose legitimacy, if not effective power, has been widely acknowledged throughout the country. A few battalions of the new Afghan National Army (ANA) have completed training. Reconstruction has begun, particularly in the capital. Despite these improvements, the situation in Afghanistan remains precarious. The

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<sup>3</sup>Howard W. French, "A Nation Challenged: Donors," *New York Times*, January 22, 2002, p. A1; Ilene R. Prusher, "Rich Donors Try to Finesse Flow of \$4.5 Billion into Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 2002, p. 6.

national government controls only a small part of the country. Regional commanders and tribal chieftains retain authority throughout most areas outside Kabul and maintain militias that vastly outnumber the embryonic ANA. The lack of adequate security outside the capital has hindered the flow of international assistance and limited the resumption of normal economic activity.

### **Security**

A number of armed forces operate within Afghanistan. To guarantee security within Kabul, a brigade of international peacekeeping forces, initially under British command, cooperates effectively with the Northern Alliance troops and police who took the city from the Taliban. Despite occasional incidents, including the murder of two cabinet ministers, the capital has generally been quiet, allowing the resumption of normal economic and political life. In other urban and rural areas, security, such as it is, is provided by militias and some few police under regional commanders, who for the most part pay nominal allegiance to the central government. Forces loyal to these commanders occasionally come into conflict with each other, although U.S. influence, exercised through its local military and civil representatives, has usually been sufficient to tamp down such outbreaks. Finally, the United States and its coalition allies have continued to operate, in cooperation with local forces, in actions centered around the border region with Pakistan, against residual Taliban and al Qaeda elements and, more recently, against extremist elements claiming allegiance to former mujahideen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The International Security Force, numbering some 5,000 troops, has been well received by Afghans throughout the capital and has been highly effective at maintaining stability across the city. ISAF forces have conducted mounted and dismounted patrols, and their presence has had a significant psychological effect on the populace. As a result of these and other efforts, some Afghans trust ISAF more than their own police.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 8,000 U.S. and other coalition forces continue to conduct operations throughout the country. The

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<sup>4</sup>Interviews with ISAF commander, deputy commander, and other staff officers, November 2002, Kabul, Afghanistan.

battles at Tora Bora in December 2001 and Operation Anaconda in March 2002, both of which occurred after the Taliban disintegrated, were major actions for OEF forces.

The principal way that U.S.-led coalition forces initially attempted to promote stability in the outlying regions of the country was through Special Forces and Civil Affairs teams stationed in major cities, such as Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, and Kandahar. The United States deployed these small elements (generally less than ten soldiers) to liaise with local leaders and gain influence through financial and humanitarian assistance. As discussed below, civil affairs units conducted small-scale reconstruction projects or other activities in these cities to build goodwill among the populace.

During spring 2002, the Afghan regime and various international groups pressed the United States and other governments to expand ISAF beyond Kabul. Critics argued that Afghanistan could not be reunified or rebuilt without the establishment of a secure environment throughout the country.<sup>5</sup> The ratio of peacekeeping forces to population in Afghanistan was significantly smaller than in any other operation examined in this study. While there were 18.6 peacekeepers per thousand people in Bosnia and 20 per thousand people in Kosovo, the 4,800 ISAF soldiers amount to 0.18 peacekeepers per thousand Afghans—or one hundred times less. Even if OEF troops are counted in the total, the result is a troop-to-population density 50 times smaller. By spring 2002, the U.S. administration had moved away from its initial operation to any expansion of ISAF's area of responsibility, but it soon became clear that other nations were not ready to provide the necessary troops, particularly since the United States made clear that its forces were not going to participate in any peacekeeping or stabilization mission in Afghanistan.

As an alternative, the United States developed a concept for creating several 60- to 80-person provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in various regions of the country. These teams were to expand the "ISAF effect" to areas outside Kabul using U.S. and coalition military and

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<sup>5</sup>For a good summary of the critique of the security situation in Afghanistan, see the Web site for the Future of Peace Operations Project at the Stimson Center. For a more recent critique, see CARE International in Afghanistan, "A New Year's Resolution to Keep: Secure a Lasting Peace in Afghanistan," policy brief, January 2003.



U.S. civilian officials. These PRTs contain a civil affairs section, a security section, and various USAID and DOS officials. They are intended to support the development of a more-secure environment in the provinces, facilitate cooperation between the Afghan interim authority, civilian organizations, and the military; and strengthen the Afghan government's influence through interaction with regional political, military, and community leaders. The first PRT deployed to southeastern Afghanistan in December 2002, a year after the fall of the Taliban and the installation of the Karzai regime. It is unclear, however, whether this strategy will be able to establish security throughout the country in the medium or long run.

The United States has also undertaken to lead the creation of a new ANA and to join with Germany in creating a national police force. Building the ANA has proved much more difficult than anticipated. The first several battalions that completed the 10-week instruction program, for example, graduated at half strength or less. There has been no sustained training program for the ANA battalions after graduation. This has resulted in further significant attrition in the first few battalions, as soldiers have drifted away from inactive garrison life. Although a sustainment program was eventually created, the goal of creating a 4,800-man "Kabul Corps" by the national elections scheduled for summer 2004 seems unrealistic. As of early 2003, roughly 1,500 minimally trained ANA soldiers were under arms.

The soldiers participating in training have generally been motivated and ethnically diverse. The officer corps, however, has largely comprised ethnic Tajiks from the northeastern Panjshir valley. Minister of Defense Fahim Khan, who also serves as the senior vice president of the Afghan government, has repeatedly pledged his commitment to the ANA. In practice, however, he has proved reluctant to divert money or equipment from the primarily Tajik forces who fought the Taliban under his command, currently garrisoned in Kabul and the surrounding region, and who remain loyal to him.

Within the U.S. government, the interagency process was not as detailed in its preparation for OEF as it was for prior operations in the Balkans and elsewhere. One reason for this lack of coordination was the short time between the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the start of OEF, on October 7, 2001. An additional factor was the fact that Presidential Decision Directive 56, the Clinton administration's planning document for complex contingency operations, had

expired during the transition in administrations and was not renewed. The Bush administration eventually published a political-military plan, in March 2002, but this plan did not guide the planning or initial execution of postconflict activities in Afghanistan.

During the conflict, new coordination mechanisms were established between CENTCOM and coalition countries, as well as with domestic and international agencies. A "coalition village" of trailers was established in the CENTCOM headquarters parking lot in Tampa, Florida. While the focus of the coalition cell was on coordinating military support for OEF, the village also became a center for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The UN and the U.S. NGO consortium, InterAction, for example, established a presence at CENTCOM and met regularly with CENTCOM and coalition staff. Although the UN and NGO presence ended at CENTCOM headquarters after the fall of the Taliban, the coalition village continued to play an important role in coordinating military and humanitarian activities in Afghanistan.

Such stability as Afghanistan has enjoyed over the past two years has derived significantly from a benign regional environment. In the aftermath of September 11, the United States persuaded Pakistan to abandon its support of the Taliban; provided decisive military might to the anti-Taliban coalition of the Northern Alliance, also supported by Iran, Russia, and India; and persuaded all of Afghanistan's neighbors to stop pulling it apart and support its consolidation under the Karzai regime.

### **Humanitarian**

Nearly all the principal humanitarian assistance organizations were involved in Afghanistan before the global war on terrorism began. All the key UN agencies, including UNHCR, the UN Development Programme, and the Mine Action Service, had active programs in the country. Hundreds of NGOs were also present, some with sizable contingents. Afghanistan was the United States' top recipient of humanitarian aid even before September 11, receiving \$174 million in fiscal year 2001.

As in Kosovo, the speed with which displaced Afghans and Afghan refugees returned home once the conflict ended took the international community by surprise. In addition to UNHCR, the Interna-

tional Office of Migration and the World Food Program played large roles in facilitating refugee and IDP returns. Almost 2 million Afghans returned during 2002, principally from Pakistan and Iran.<sup>6</sup> Financial aid, food, and other support needed to help the returnees fell short both in terms of requirements and international pledges, and the large influx exacerbated these shortfalls.<sup>7</sup>

Operationally, the UN faced a great challenge and had to prepare for massive shipments of humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan and the refugee areas on the border without knowing specific requirements, the security situation, or the status of infrastructure within Afghanistan. The UN Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) was established to control the surge in activities required for large deliveries of food and other resources. The UNJLC included a large staff representing most UN agencies. It played an important coordinating role in the delivery of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. By design, the UNJLC focused on logistical, not policy, issues. This limited the organization's broader influence. The creation of the UNJLC was the first full implementation of a concept that had been provisionally tested in Africa during the late 1990s outside that continent.<sup>8</sup>

Another area where states and international organizations played a critical role was in medical support. By summer 2002, a number of military resources that had been sent to the theater for military missions were also being used for humanitarian relief. Military doctors, for instance, were seeing more Afghan civilians for treatment than combatants of any type.<sup>9</sup> Some coalition members set up field hospitals to contribute to the humanitarian effort. At the one-year point in the conflict, for example, the Jordanian hospital in Mazar-e Sharif had treated over 105,900 civilians, the Spanish hospital in Bagram over 11,800, and the Korean hospital in Manes, Kyrgyzstan, over 2,000.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>UNHCR, "Assisted Voluntary Repatriation Summary Report," January 31, 2003a.

<sup>7</sup>Carlotta Gall, "Food and Hope Are Scarce for Returning Afghans," *New York Times*, September 17, 2002.

<sup>8</sup>Interviews with UN and international officials, Kabul, Afghanistan, November 2002.

<sup>9</sup>Indira A. R. Lakshmanan, "Boredom Is Surgical Team's Ideal Battleground Scenario," *Boston Globe*, October 6, 2002, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Eric Schmitt, "In Afghanistan: What's Past and What's Still to Come," *New York Times*, October 13, 2002.

To coordinate military assistance to humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, the U.S. military established a civil-military operations task force.<sup>11</sup> This Kabul-based task force monitored four- to six-man coalition humanitarian liaison cells in key cities around Afghanistan. The cells were designed to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the local populace and to provide a capability for ongoing coordination with international organizations and NGOs. These forces initially focused on reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. This was a departure from the traditional role of military civil affairs, which focuses on setting conditions for international organizations and NGOs to conduct humanitarian assistance. ISAF civil-military cooperation elements conducted similar activities to help build goodwill among the populace in Kabul. ISAF, unlike OEF forces, had a UN Security Council mandate for conducting peacekeeping and humanitarian activities, which facilitated its interaction with international and nongovernmental relief agencies.

The emphasis on such activities as rebuilding schools and digging wells led to a great deal of positive press for the U.S. military but also heightened the natural tensions between civilian organizations and the military.<sup>12</sup> Civil-military relations steadily improved from Somalia to Haiti and the Balkans, but operations in Afghanistan tended to renew old frictions.<sup>13</sup> Two aspects of this operation frustrated and sometimes alienated humanitarian organizations: the military focus on direct action, as opposed to facilitation, and the issue of military uniforms.

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<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, *Civil Affairs Operations*, Washington, D.C., Field Manual 41-10, January 11, 1993, and JCS, *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations*, Washington, D.C., Joint Publication 57, February 8, 2001. While Army and Joint doctrine has included the basic idea for some time, this was the first time such an organization was used in an actual operation. Initially, planners envisioned that the organization would be a wholesale clearinghouse for humanitarian shipments and would be based in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. This view was eventually discarded in favor of more direct facilitation and support of humanitarian activities.

<sup>12</sup>Susan Glasser, "Soldiers in Civilian Clothing," *Washington Post*, March 28, 2002.

<sup>13</sup>For excellent treatments of civil-military relations prior to Afghanistan, see Daniel Byman, Ian Lesser, Bruce Pirnie, Cheryl Benard, and Matthew Waxman, *Strengthening the Partnership: Improving Military Coordination with Relief Agencies and Allies in Humanitarian Operations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-1185-AF, 2000; Pirnie (1998); and Chris Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College Peacekeeping Institute, 1996.

First, most of the civilian organizations preferred that the military concentrate on providing a secure environment and conducting such tasks as road and bridge repair, for which they had unique capabilities that the NGOs did not have. Many NGO officials understood the public relations need for the military to be seen rebuilding schools and other infrastructure. But these officials preferred that the military leave these tasks to the civilian organizations, which they believed were best suited for them.<sup>14</sup>

Second, civilian relief agencies vehemently objected to U.S. military personnel not wearing uniforms while conducting humanitarian tasks. During operations against the Taliban, some civil affairs teams wore civilian clothes because commanders were concerned that Taliban or al Qaeda forces would target uniformed teams that had little force protection. Civilian relief agency personnel in the field generally did not let this development affect their own activities. At higher levels, however, the uniform issue became a major sticking point for humanitarian organizations. They believed that such a posture set a precedent that threatened their impartiality and the security of their own representatives in the field.<sup>15</sup> The issue came to a head in April 2002, when the heads of 16 major U.S.-based relief groups wrote to U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice to “express concern over U.S. military personnel conducting humanitarian activity wearing civilian clothes,” arguing that it endangered aid workers.<sup>16</sup> On April 19, 2002, CENTCOM announced that it would modify the clothing prescribed for such personnel and would require uniforms.<sup>17</sup> This disagreement temporarily soured relations between the two groups, and although it has been resolved, the lingering effects remain unclear.

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<sup>14</sup>Interviews in Washington, D.C.; Tampa, Florida; and Kabul, Afghanistan, September–November 2002.

<sup>15</sup>Interviews in Washington, D.C.; Tampa, Florida; and Kabul, Afghanistan, September–November 2002.

<sup>16</sup>InterAction, “Humanitarian Leaders Ask White House to Review Policy Allowing American Soldiers to Conduct Humanitarian Relief Programs in Civilian Clothes,” news release, Washington, D.C., April 2, 2002.

<sup>17</sup>Peter Slevin, “U.S. Troops Working Relief to Modify Clothing,” *Washington Post*, April 21, 2002.

### Civil Administration

International coordination in Afghanistan was much more ad hoc and dependent on personal relationships. In Kabul, there was no overarching organization, such as Bosnia's OHR, or a robust and empowered UN presence, such as UNMIK in Kosovo. The U.S. embassy staff in Kabul was too small to accomplish its objectives. Constraints stemming from force protection concerns and the lack of space in the embassy compound further limited the embassy's ability to promote international coordination. Outside Kabul, cooperation hinged almost entirely on personal relationships. In some regions, international civilian relief organizations and military forces acted in close liaison with each other. In other regions, relations were tense, and there was little unity of effort.

As mentioned earlier, the international civilian presence in Afghanistan was deliberately modest. Individual states and international organizations launched initiatives, but there was no overarching framework for these efforts. UNAMA, for example, was initially small and had limited capacity. UNAMA has, however, grown in Kabul and elsewhere and has established pillars responsible for political affairs and relief, recovery, and reconstruction. The Secretary General's Special Representative, Lakdar Brahimi, has had advisers for human rights, gender, drugs, rule of law, police, and military and demobilization.<sup>18</sup> Still, UNAMA's role and authority in Afghanistan pale in comparison to those of UNMIK in Kosovo. The principal focus for the international civil effort during the first six months was organizing the *loya jirga*.

With the focus on building government capacity, individual states have volunteered to assist various Afghan authority institutions. Germany, for example, has taken responsibility for the training of the Afghan national police and has established an academy for retraining current police and training new recruits in accordance with international law-enforcement norms. Italy has begun to assist in the recreation of the country's legal and justice system.<sup>19</sup> As part of its effort to assist the emerging ANA, the United States has begun devel-

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<sup>18</sup>Information about UNAMA is available on its Web site.

<sup>19</sup>For a detailed discussion of Afghan judicial reform, see ICG, *Afghanistan: Judicial Reform and Transitional Justice*, January 28, 2003a.

oping a concept for the creation and training of an Afghan border security force. Although funding for this initiative has not yet materialized, the concept currently calls for establishing a 12,000-person force to guard Afghanistan's major border crossings.

## Democratization

The Bonn Agreement established a framework for the political transition of Afghanistan. The agreement named an interim authority that would take office on December 22, 2001. This authority was to serve as the government until the convening of the emergency *loya jirga* six months thereafter. The *loya jirga* would

decide on a Transitional Authority, including a broad-based transitional administration, to lead Afghanistan until such time as a fully representative government can be elected through free and fair elections.<sup>20</sup>

The *loya jirga* was set up to be both a process and an event. The process was designed to enable the broad and equitable participation of the Afghan people at every level of society through the convening of local and regional meetings during spring 2002 to choose representatives for the nationwide *loya jirga*. Over 1,500 participants were selected through such grassroots processes and participated in the *loya jirga* in June 2002.

Preparations for this *loya jirga* began as soon as the interim authority came into office. At the lowest local level, meetings of village elders decided on groups of electors. This was not a strictly democratic process but was broadly inclusive. The electors then met in late May and early June 2002 on a regional basis to choose district representatives for the *loya jirga*.<sup>21</sup> The emergency *loya jirga* convened in Kabul from June 10 to 16. A transitional administration was named, and Hamid Karzai was elected as its president. The disproportionate representation of former Northern Alliance leaders in the cabinet did abate somewhat, with the Tajiks retaining two of the "power ministries,"

<sup>20</sup>Bonn Agreement, paragraph I.4.

<sup>21</sup>For an in-depth discussion on the preparations for the *loya jirga*, see ICG, *The Loya Jirga: One Small Step Forward?* Washington, D.C., May 16, 2002b.

Defense and Foreign Affairs, but ceding Interior. Nevertheless, some Pashtun leaders remained skeptical about the central government and were reluctant to cooperate fully with Kabul.

An entire generation of civil servants was lost during the 1980s and 1990s and cannot be replaced quickly. It is also unclear how effectively the national government will be able to extend its authority to the regions over time. A constitutional *loya jirga* and national elections are tentatively planned for late 2003 and summer 2004, respectively. At this point it seems unlikely that either the security situation or the administrative capacity of the Afghan government will support a nationwide electoral process up to even minimal international standards.

### **Reconstruction**

The rough estimate of Afghanistan's per capita GDP in 2002 was between U.S. \$150 and \$180, excluding illegal poppy cultivation and narcotics production. An estimated 60 to 80 percent of the population lives below the international poverty threshold of \$1 a day. In 1996, Afghanistan ranked 169th out of 174 countries in the UN Human Development Index, and conditions deteriorated through 2001. The average life expectancy is a little above 40 years, and over 50 percent of children under the age of five are malnourished.<sup>22</sup> The country's infant mortality rate, life expectancy, and literacy rates are all among the lowest in the world.

The efforts at postconflict reconstruction have shown some signs of economic improvement. Inflation slowed markedly in the months after the intervention. According to the IMF, the Kabul consumer price index increased just 1 percent between March 22 and June 21, 2002. Indications of a recovery are strongest in certain sectors in Kabul, such as construction and services. The government's budgetary system is now being restored with assistance from the IMF and the U.S. Treasury, as part of efforts to establish the macroeconomic framework necessary for economic growth and to enable

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<sup>22</sup>For details, see IMF, *Islamic State of Afghanistan: Report on Recent Economic Developments and Prospects, and the Role of the Fund in the Reconstruction Process*, Washington, D.C., Country Report No. 02/219, October 2002.



the country to receive and utilize foreign aid. On October 7, 2002, the Afghan government introduced a new currency, the afghani, a significant step toward facilitating and improving financial transactions. In addition, a basis for future economic growth is being created as schools are reopened. The numbers of students and teachers returning to school as a result of a donor-assisted back-to-school campaign have far exceeded expectations, with 3 million students enrolled and another 1.5 million looking for schooling opportunities.

Opium production and export have resumed in Afghanistan despite central government attempts to prohibit such activity. Drug smuggling is thus responsible, in some measure, for such economic growth as has occurred in a number of regions. In 2002, UK officials, backed by UK military units, implemented a program of enforced purchases and destruction of opium crops in certain high-production regions, with some limited success. The United States was unwilling to engage U.S. troops in similar efforts and has also been unwilling to allow newly trained ANA units to be used for counternarcotics missions. In 2003, the central government has chosen to rely on regional authorities to enforce an uncompensated crop destruction program. This is likely to have minimal effect in areas whose local commanders are complicit in drug operations or where Kabul's writ runs weakly.

U.S. military programs to reconstruct infrastructure in Afghanistan had received considerable coverage in the media by summer 2002.<sup>23</sup> U.S. Army civil-military operations of this type have principally concentrated on small-scale projects in areas the NGO community had difficulty accessing. "We go to many areas where the aid groups have never been," SGT Arthur C. Willis observed during a delivery of construction material to a remote village. What would have been an all-day drive from Kandahar took 50 minutes by Chinook helicopter. Willis added, "We get to go to places where they can't go, or won't go."<sup>24</sup> While such an approach can help avoid duplication of effort

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<sup>23</sup>James Scott, "Rebuilding a Country, One Village at a Time," *Charleston [S.C.] Post and Courier*, July 14, 2002, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>James Brooke, "U.S. Tasks In Afghan Desert: Hunt Taliban, Tote Plywood," *New York Times*, September 14, 2002, p. 1.

and mitigate civil-military competition over the delivery of assistance, helicopters can deliver only very limited aid, making aid that must be delivered this way largely symbolic.

Although there have been numerous achievements during the past year, aid for Afghan reconstruction has not been nearly as generous as for other recent operations. For example, per capita external assistance for the first two years of conflict was \$1,390 in Bosnia and \$814 in Kosovo but is only \$52 in Afghanistan. Some countries and organizations are not even meeting the level of the pledges they made at the Tokyo donor's conference.<sup>25</sup>

## LESSONS LEARNED

America's postconflict efforts have been effective in denying the use of Afghanistan as a launch pad for global terrorism at a relatively modest cost. But there has been little progress in the creation of democratic institutions, and the limited international military and economic assistance has not allowed the Afghan government to extend its authority throughout the country. It is too early to assess the results of postconflict operations in Afghanistan fully, but the following lessons suggest themselves:

- Low input of military and civilian resources yields low output in terms of security, democratic transformation, and economic development.
- The support of neighboring states can have an important influence on the consolidation of weak and divided states.
- In the absence of pervasive security, the prospects of widespread economic recovery or political development are very limited.

Some lessons from prior U.S.-led peace operations in the post-Cold War era have not been applied to Afghanistan. There is no unity of command on either the military or the civil side. U.S. assistance is focused heavily on a few high-visibility projects, such as the training of a new Afghan Army and the rebuilding of a road from Kabul to

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<sup>25</sup>CARE International in Afghanistan, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: A Little Less Talk, a Lot More Action," policy brief, October 2002.

Kandahar. International peacekeepers have not been deployed beyond Kabul; international police have not been deployed at all; and the United States has declined to participate in such peacekeeping efforts as have taken place.

For a comparatively modest investment of troops and money, the United States succeeded in quickly installing a moderate and reasonably representative successor to the Taliban regime and in forestalling any resumption of large-scale civil conflict. This success has been greatly aided by the favorable regional environment that developed in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001. That November, the United States was able to add decisive weight to the military efforts of the Northern Alliance, which had hitherto relied on support from Iran, Russia, and India. At the same time, the United States was able to persuade the other principal regional protagonist, Pakistan, to remove its support from its Taliban clients. At the Bonn Conference, the positive actions of Iran, Russia, and India, along with the passive acquiescence of Pakistan, permitted the United States to broker a positive outcome. All these regional powers have since supported the Karzai regime and sought to dissuade regional leaders from overtly contesting his authority.

International assistance has spurred some growth, particularly in more-secure urban areas, such as Kabul. However, until entrepreneurs can travel freely and transport goods across the country without intimidation or theft, the economic growth of Kabul and other urban centers is unlikely to spread.

Government ministries have not been able to function effectively because of the lack of basic office equipment and funds to pay staff. To accelerate recovery, the government needs to be able to pay providers of government services, such as police, teachers, and medical personnel, regularly to ensure that the basic functions of government can proceed. Furthermore, Afghanistan's economy is already encountering barriers to growth because of the deficiencies of the country's infrastructure. The poor condition of all major highways greatly increases transportation costs. Most of the country is not linked to the electric power system. Where it exists, the system is in poor repair. Telecommunications is also rudimentary. Investment in these industries goes well beyond the current resources of the

government or the domestic private sector. Unless donors step in, these deficiencies will quickly slow Afghanistan's economic recovery.