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Revised June 21, 2010, to correct the legend on p. 3. In the Development section, Domestic revenue is blue; Assistance from donors is white.

United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

June 15, 2010

Congressional Committees

Subject: *The Strategic Framework for U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan*

The United States and its international partners¹ from over 40 nations have been engaged in efforts to secure, stabilize, and rebuild Afghanistan since 2001. In an effort to establish clear and specific U.S. strategic goals, the President of the United States, in March 2009, outlined the U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. This strategy emphasizes a strategic goal to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan and prevent their return. The strategy was followed by the completion, in August 2009, of a Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Afghanistan. In December 2009, the President reaffirmed the U.S. strategic goal and underscored the importance of U.S. efforts to secure and stabilize Afghanistan to help ensure the safety of the United States and the American people.

To assist the Congress in its oversight of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, this publication and its interactive graphic (1) identify and describe key U.S. and international strategies and plans that collectively guide U.S. efforts in Afghanistan; (2) provide examples and information about key efforts to assist Afghanistan; and (3) identify oversight issues that Congress may wish to consider in its work. During April and May 2010, we presented this strategic framework to Congress as part of our classified briefing on the Afghanistan campaign plans.²

The strategic framework includes relevant strategies—the Afghan National Development Strategy, the U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan,³ and the Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy. It also includes U.S. plans: the Operation Enduring Freedom Campaign plan, the National Security Council Strategic Implementation Plan, and the U.S. Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan (ICMCP). The ICMCP, describes three lines of effort—security, governance, and development⁴—to be implemented by U.S. civilian and military personnel. Finally, NATO plans include the NATO Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan, and the operational plans for NATO⁵ and for NATO’s subordinate command—the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

¹Included among these international partners are the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is an alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe.

²The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010 mandated that GAO review and assess the campaign plan for Afghanistan. As part of our response to the mandate, we provided classified briefings on the campaign plans to relevant Congressional committees.

³The U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan refers to the March 27, 2009 and December 1, 2009 speeches delivered by President Obama.

⁴The U.S. Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan also identifies ‘Information’ as an important line of effort.

⁵The NATO Operational Plan (OPLAN) referred to in this publication is the Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum OPLAN.

Since 2003, we have issued multiple reports and testimonies related to U.S. efforts in Afghanistan (see <http://www.gao.gov/highrisk/risks/national-challenges-iraq/>). Over the course of this work, we have identified improvements that were needed as well as many obstacles that affect success and should be considered in program planning and implementation. We also concluded that several existing conditions, such as security, the limited institutional capacity of the Afghan government, and the lack of sufficient infrastructure continue to create challenges to U.S. efforts to assist with securing, stabilizing, and rebuilding Afghanistan.


This publication represents an update to our April 2009 report, *Afghanistan: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight*, and is based on our past and continuing work. Our ongoing work on Afghanistan includes U.S. and coalition partners' efforts to develop a capable Afghan National Army, the expansion of U.S. civilian presence in Afghanistan, U.S. efforts to develop Afghanistan's agricultural and water sectors, and contracting issues related to U.S. forces.

To describe the strategic framework for Afghanistan, illustrated by the interactive graphic on the following page, we reviewed GAO's past reports on Afghanistan, including those that analyze U.S. plans for the country. We reviewed strategies, reports, and other documents for Afghanistan including those listed in the graphic. We interviewed officials from the Departments of Defense and State, including State's Office of the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan; U.S. Central Command; and the U.S. Agency for International Development. To illustrate the lines of effort in the graphic, we used examples that were priorities in the U.S. Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan or that we had identified as significant in previous GAO reports. For example, the graph illustrating the security line of effort—daily average attacks against civilians and ISAF and Afghan security forces—is based on our reporting on the security environment in Afghanistan. The oversight issues are based on our past, ongoing, and planned work on Afghanistan, including the Afghan security environment, the campaign plans for Afghanistan, training and equipping of Afghan National Security Forces, U.S. counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan, expansion of agricultural opportunities, and logistical support for the deployment of U.S. forces. We updated relevant data when possible and tested the reliability of data not previously reported.

We conducted our work from November 2009 through June 2010 in accordance with all sections of GAO's Quality Assurance Framework that are relevant to our objectives. The framework requires that we plan and perform the engagement to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to meet our stated objectives and to discuss any limitations in our work. We believe that the information and data obtained, and the analysis conducted, provide a reasonable basis for any findings and conclusions.

We provided a draft of this report for review and comment to the Departments of State and Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Each agency provided technical comments, which we have incorporated into the report where appropriate.

We are sending copies of this publication to the congressional committees listed in Enclosure 3, as well as the Secretaries of Defense and State; and the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The report is available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. If you have any questions, please contact, Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov. Key contributors are in enclosure 4.



Charles Michael Johnson Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade
Enclosures

Strategic Framework for U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan

U.S. Goal: Disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan and prevent their return

Framework Documents



Interactivity instructions

For more information, including oversight issues:

- Roll your mouse over the **◆** for online version.
- See Enclosures 1 and 2 for print version and instructions for printing.

Lines of Effort

Each *Line of Effort* below contains strategies called "Transformative Effects" that are implemented at the national and local levels. "Information" is also noted as an important effort to positively influence the Afghan population.

- Security**
 - Population security
 - Action against irreconcilables
 - Countering the nexus of criminality, corruption, narcotics, and insurgency

- Governance**
 - Elections and continuity of governance
 - Expansion of accountable and transparent governance
 - Access to justice
 - Claiming the information initiative
 - Government and community-led reintegration

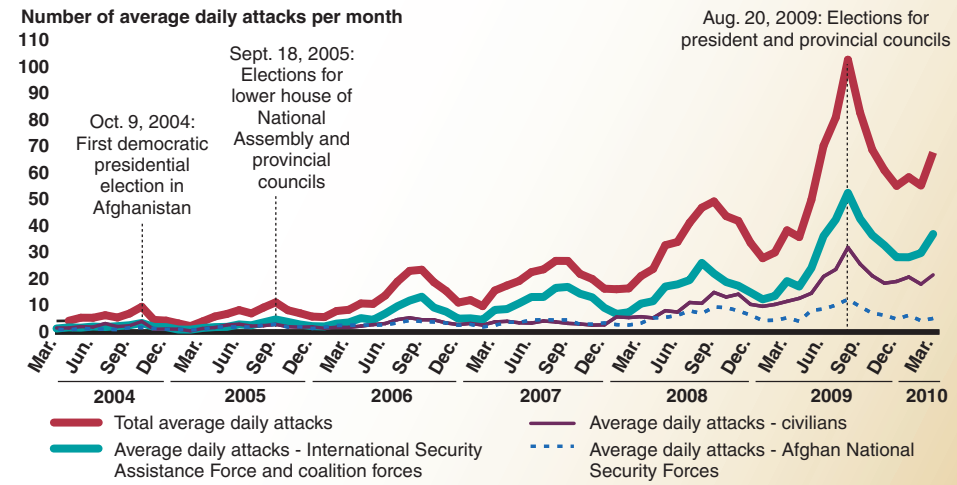
- Development**
 - Creating sustainable jobs
 - Agricultural opportunity and market access
 - Border access for commerce, not insurgents

Source: Department of State.

Examples of U.S. and International Efforts; Key Oversight Issues

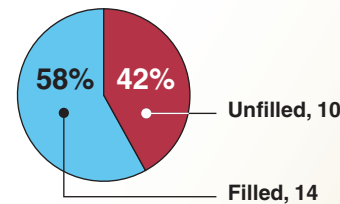
Security: U.S. and NATO efforts focus on stabilizing Afghanistan

Average daily attacks by type in Afghanistan, 2004-2010



Governance: U.S. and International partners focus on building accountable government

Ministerial positions (April 2010)

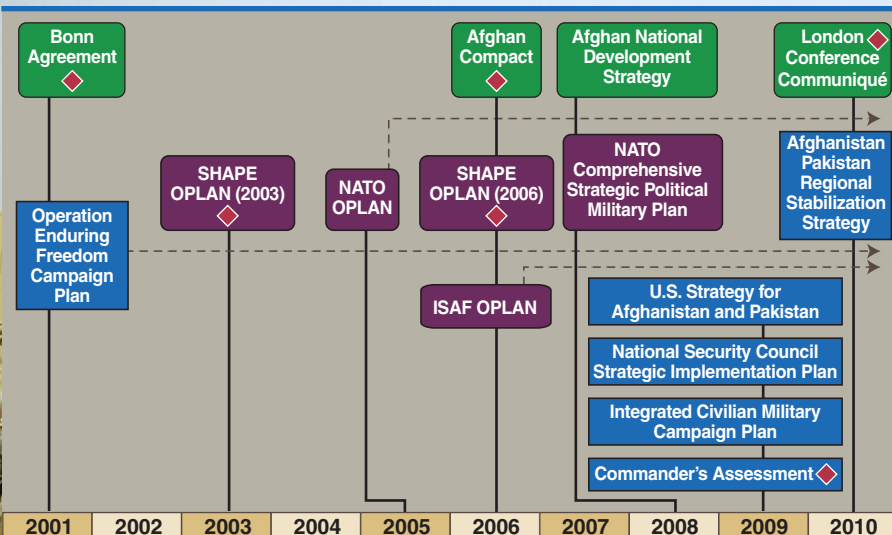


- After two rounds of voting, as of April 2010 Afghanistan has filled key ministerial positions, yet some positions remain unfilled and are being led by acting ministers
 - Efforts at the local level include the National Solidarity Program, which seeks to empower the grassroots of Afghan society by facilitating the establishment of elected governance bodies to help build and restore infrastructure
- Source: World Bank.



Source: Department of State (data); Defense Imagery (photo).

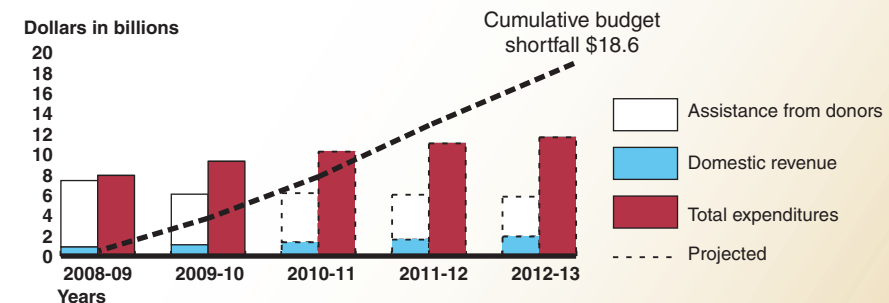
Timeline of Selected Documents



Source: GAO analysis; Map Resources (map).

Development: U.S. and international partners provide substantial assistance to Afghanistan

Anticipated funding and expected expenditures, 2008-2013



Source: Afghanistan National Development Strategy - 2008 (data); Defense Imagery (photo).

Note: According to the August 2009 first annual report on the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the cumulative budget shortfall is projected to increase to \$22.3 billion by 2013.



Enclosure 1: Framework and Selected Documents Comprising the Strategic Framework for U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan

This enclosure provides information regarding documents shown in the graphic under “Framework Documents” and “Timeline of Selected Documents”. This information can also be accessed via the interactive rollovers in the electronic version of the graphic.

Printing Instructions: To print this report and the Strategic Framework graphic on 8.5 x 11" paper first set the page scaling to “Fit to Printable Area” in the print dialogue box. Then uncheck “Choose Paper Source by PDF page size.”

Table 1: Descriptive Information about Afghan, U.S., and NATO Documents Comprising the Strategic Framework for U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan

Documents	Date Issued	Description
<i>Afghan Documents and International Agreements</i>		
Bonn Agreement	December 2001	The Bonn Agreement, signed in December 2001 under the sponsorship of the United Nations, was the first of several international agreements that laid out a framework for the transition of Afghanistan from Taliban rule to a new Afghan national government. The agreement established an interim authority for Afghanistan, requested the United Nations to authorize an international security force to assist in the transition, and set out the role of the United Nations to advise the interim authority.
Afghan Compact	January 2006	The Afghan Compact (January 2006) was the product of the 2006 London Conference- a meeting of Afghanistan’s government, over 50 other nations, and the United Nations and other international organizations. The compact first introduced the concept of security, governance, and development as the areas of focus for Afghan reconstruction activities. In the compact, the Afghan government, with the support of the international community, committed to achieving benchmarks in these areas, such as developing a professional national army by the end of 2010.
Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS)	2008	The Afghan National Development Strategy (2008) is that country’s guiding document for achieving its reconstruction goals. The strategy focuses on improving the country’s security, governance, and economic growth and reducing poverty. It also provides information on the resources needed to carry out the strategy and on the shortfall in Afghanistan’s projected revenue. It was released in 2008 and is effective through 2013.

London Conference Communiqué	January 2010	The Communiqué, issued in January 2010, was the product of the 2010 London Conference. Conference participants committed to helping the government of Afghanistan in several areas, such as anti-corruption and improving the capability of the Afghan army and police forces. Conference participants also acknowledged the intention of NATO's North Atlantic Council to begin transitioning the lead responsibility for security, province by province, from ISAF to Afghanistan forces in late 2010/early 2011.
<i>U.S. Plans and Strategies</i>		
Operation Enduring Freedom Campaign Plan	November 2001 continuing	The Operation Enduring Freedom Campaign Plan (2001) and updates are classified. Operation Enduring Freedom is the ongoing U.S. led operation that conducts counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere. It is a U.S. led operation that coordinates with ISAF. It operates under a U.S. commander who also is the commanding general of ISAF.
U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan	March 2009	In March 2009, the President of the United States presented the U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, based on a policy review he requested upon taking office. The goal of the strategy is to defeat, disrupt, and dismantle Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to prevent their return to either country. The strategy initiates a regional approach by linking Afghanistan and Pakistan in a common fight against violent extremists. It incorporates input from the Afghan and Pakistani governments, NATO, and international partners and organizations in Afghanistan. The strategy emphasizes economic assistance to Pakistan as well as an expectation that Pakistan will combat Al-Qaeda and violent extremists in sanctuaries in Pakistan. For Afghanistan, the strategy commits to increasing U.S. troop levels to fight extremists along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, train Afghan security forces, and provide civilian experts to help the Afghan government. In December 2009, the President reaffirmed the March 2009 U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and announced the planned deployment of an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan to target the insurgency, secure key population centers, and train Afghan security forces. The President also stated the additional troops would accelerate efforts and allow the transfer of U.S. forces out of Afghanistan beginning in July 2011. He reaffirmed the need to pursue a more effective civilian strategy and focus assistance in areas, such as agriculture, that could make an immediate impact.
National Security Council Strategic Implementation Plan	July 2009	The National Security Council Strategic Implementation Plan (July 2009) is classified. According to State Department officials, the plan was released in July 2009 and provides a series of goals and objectives for

		implementing the U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The plan also includes measures of effectiveness to track progress in achieving the objectives.
Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan (ICMCP)	August 2009	The ICMCP (August 2009), signed by the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan and the commanding general, U.S. Forces, Afghanistan, was developed collaboratively by the U.S. agencies working in Afghanistan, the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan, ISAF, the government of Afghanistan, and other partner nations. The plan provides guidance for U.S. personnel in Afghanistan and lays out a counterinsurgency campaign to secure and support the Afghan people and government. The plan calls for integrated civilian and military teams to address lines of effort by working on 11 specific efforts called transformative effects.
Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy	January 2010	The regional stabilization strategy, released in January 2010 and updated in February, signed by Secretaries of Defense and State, focuses on U.S. non-military efforts and states that the U.S. combat mission is not open-ended but the United States is committed to building a lasting partnership with Afghanistan and Pakistan. The strategy focuses on building the capacity of Afghan institutions to combat extremism, deliver high-impact economic assistance, create jobs, and reduce insurgent funding from the illicit narcotics trade. The strategy identifies key initiatives, such as building the capacity of government in population centers in Eastern and Southern Afghanistan, improving agricultural development, and reintegrating Taliban who renounce Al-Qaeda.
<i>NATO Plans and Documents</i>		
Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) Operational Plan	June 2003	The SHAPE OPLAN (June 2003) is a classified document. According to a NATO official, this plan was issued in 2003 to direct NATO operations inside Kabul. SHAPE, a component of NATO, was established in 1951 as part of an effort to establish an integrated and effective NATO military force. SHAPE's mission is to prepare, plan and conduct military operations in order to meet NATO political objectives.
	April 2006	The SHAPE OPLAN (April 2006) is a classified document. According to a NATO official, this plan provided for NATO to assume responsibility throughout Afghanistan – all regions plus established Regional Command Capital (Kabul).

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Operational Plan	2005 continuing	The NATO OPLAN (2005) is classified. NATO's main role in Afghanistan is to assist the Afghan government in exercising and extending its authority and influence across the country, paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance. It does this predominately through its UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force.
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Operational Plan	March 2006 continuing	The ISAF OPLAN (March 2006) is classified. ISAF is a NATO-led mission in Afghanistan established by the UN Security Council in December 2001. ISAF is composed of troops contributed from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other nations, including member nations of the European Union and NATO. ISAF conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development.
NATO Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan	April 2008	The NATO Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan (April 2008) is classified. According to State Department and NATO officials, this document provides broader political objectives for the NATO alliance in Afghanistan and establishes a framework for measuring those objectives.
Commander's (ISAF/U.S. Forces, Afghanistan) Initial Assessment	August 2009	The Commander's (ISAF and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan) Initial Assessment (August 2009) provided an overall assessment of the situation in Afghanistan; reviewed plans and ongoing efforts; and identified revisions to operational, tactical, and strategic guidance. While the assessment acknowledges some progress, it contains findings and recommendations, including the need for additional resources, to address what it termed at the time a deteriorating situation.

Sources: Department of Defense, Department of State, U.S. Mission to NATO, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Agency for International Development, United Nations, Government of Afghanistan documents.

Enclosure 2: Lines of Effort Background, Illustration, and Key Oversight Issues

This enclosure provides information regarding the lines of effort to assist Afghanistan in the graphic, as well as key oversight issues for the Congress to consider. This information and the key oversight issues can also be accessed via the interactive rollovers in the electronic version of the graphic.

Table 2: Background Information, Illustrations, and Key Oversight Issues Regarding the Lines of Effort to Assist Afghanistan

Lines of Effort	Background, Illustrations, and Key Oversight Issues
Security	<p>As shown in the graphic, the data indicates that the pattern of enemy-initiated attacks in Afghanistan has remained seasonal in nature, generally peaking from June through September each year and then declining during the winter months. While attacks have continued to fluctuate seasonally, the annual attack “peak” (high point) and “trough” (low point) for each year since September 2005 have surpassed the peak and trough, respectively, for the preceding year. In December 2009, the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan stated that the Taliban and other extremist groups exercise increasing influence in many areas of the south and east, and attacks and instability are rising in parts of the north and west.</p> <p>To reverse this situation, in December 2009, the President committed an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan to be deployed throughout 2010. GAO has reported that Afghanistan’s difficult and uncertain overland supply routes, lack of infrastructure, other logistical difficulties, and lack of oversight for contractors pose challenges to this deployment. As of early 2010, about 107,000 contractors support U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and DOD reports this number is likely to increase.</p> <p>Another critical effort to improving the security situation lies in implementing the U.S. and ISAF counterinsurgency strategy, which integrates civilian and military efforts. According to publicly released documents approved by the U.S. and Afghan governments, and NATO, these efforts include action against irreconcilable elements in Kandahar and Helmand during 2010, and trying to train about 300,000 Afghan army and police by October 2011.</p> <p>Key Oversight Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the United States, NATO, and ISAF measuring progress for security and what metrics are they applying? • How do the United States and its international partners coordinate and evaluate their efforts in Afghanistan? • Given commitments in other parts of the world, to what extent has DOD evaluated its ability to provide trained and ready forces with required skills within desired timeframes to support the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan? • To what extent has DOD evaluated its ability to transport U.S. military, civilian and contractor personnel, and equipment within desired timeframes, given factors such as security considerations,

	<p>limitations on the availability of overland supply routes and access to air bases, and limited existing facilities for staging and reception?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has DOD developed mitigation plans for addressing potential challenges, including any alternatives should delays occur in getting U.S. forces with their accompanying equipment in place to conduct their missions within desired time frames? • To what extent has DOD identified the role of contractors in Afghanistan, including the types of services they will provide with regard to security? • To what extent has DOD identified its contractor requirements and taken steps to ensure that sufficient personnel are in place to effectively manage and oversee contractors in Afghanistan? To what extent are current and proposed Afghan National Security Force levels based on an analysis of Afghanistan’s needs and long-term ability to sustain its forces?
<p>Governance</p>	<p>As illustrated in the graphic, the Afghanistan government is in the process of appointing its full cabinet of ministers. Strengthening the Afghan government is an essential part of U.S. and international efforts in Afghanistan. According to the ANDS, significant governance issues that Afghanistan must address include multiple and parallel government structures, weak public sector institutions, and high levels of corruption. The United Nations reported in January 2010 that Afghanistan required a systematic approach to building civilian institutions and the government lacked the sub-national institutions needed to provide services.</p> <p>U.S. and international strategies aim to strengthen Afghanistan’s government range from helping hold elections to building the capacity of government at all levels. To assist in these efforts, the United Nations, and over 60 nations committed during the January 2010 London Conference to more fully resource civilian efforts; and the United States made it a priority to provide a surge of civilian expertise. According to State Department officials, the surge intends to support all civilian efforts, and this increase is supported by strengthened civilian-military structures such as National Level Working Groups. U.S. plans include the provision of technical advisors to key ministries in Kabul such as Finance and Agriculture, and assistance at the local levels. For example, the District Development Plan intends to strengthen the government of Afghanistan’s ability to deliver services with U.S. and ISAF support, and is expected to expand in 2010. Other U.S. efforts include helping Afghanistan train 16,000 civil servants, most at the provincial and district level, by 2011. At the community level, the National Solidarity Program highlighted in the graphic is a program funded by the Afghanistan National Trust Fund, to which the United States is a major contributor.</p> <p>Key Oversight Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the United States ensuring there are adequate numbers of civilians to meet surge requirements for the governance efforts? • How is the United States working to develop Afghan government capacity at the appropriate central government and provincial levels?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the strategy to help Afghanistan train the number of civil servants needed to provide strengthened governance? • What efforts has the United States made to enhance Afghan accountability and reduce corruption?
Development	<p>Strengthening the Afghan economy is critical to the counterinsurgency strategy. According to the U.S Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan, poverty and widespread unemployment in population centers are exploited by insurgent and criminal elements for recruitment. GAO has reported that the illicit narcotics industry equals as much as one-third of Afghanistan’s licit economy, is a notable source of funding for the insurgency, and competes with licit development. Finally, Afghanistan cannot cover its projected government expenditures without relying on expected levels of foreign assistance contributions from the international community. Donor assistance accounted for about 88 percent of Afghanistan’s total funding during the 2008-2009 budget year and greater shortfalls are projected in the coming years.</p> <p>From 2002 to 2009, the U.S. and the international community have assisted Afghan reconstruction and development, with the U.S. providing about \$38.6 billion for these purposes. Projects include improving Afghanistan’s roads and transport network, building schools, and developing water and energy projects. According to the U.S. Afghanistan and Pakistan Stabilization Strategy, the highest U.S. reconstruction priority for 2010 is implementing a civilian-military agricultural development program to create jobs and sap the insurgency of fighters and revenue. Specific initiatives include issuing credit vouchers to farmers, particularly in Helmand and Kandahar. U.S. military commanders also planned to use the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) to provide urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs to assist the local population. Longer term efforts focus on creating sustainable jobs in the private sector, among other things.</p> <p>Key Oversight Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective are economic and development assistance programs in insecure areas? What are the development priorities in the most insecure areas? What strategies does USAID have to maintain ongoing efforts in these areas? • To what extent are the United States, international organizations, and donor countries developing plans to address Afghanistan’s projected budget shortfall. • How are U.S. and international partners ensuring the projects and programs they fund are sustainable by the Afghan government? • How do USAID and DOD coordinate their reconstruction projects with each other and with other donors who provide assistance in the same area?

Sources: Department of Defense, Department of State, U.S. Mission to NATO, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Agency for International Development, United Nations, Government of Afghanistan documents.

Enclosure 3: List of Congressional Committees

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

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Chair
The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Chair
The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chair
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

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

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chair
The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Howard L. Berman
Chair
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Ranking Member
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United States House of Representatives

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The Honorable Darrell E. Issa
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United States House of Representatives

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The Honorable Jeff Flake
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael Honda
United States House of Representatives

Enclosure 4: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition, the following staff contributed to the results presented in this report: Tet Miyabara, Assistant Director; Nina Pfeiffer; Marcus Oliver; Erin Smith; Etana Finkler; Jonathan Mulcare; Martin De Alteriis; and Mark Dowling.

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