In 2005 the final benchmarks of the Bonn Process were met, culminating in the establishment of a government in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) now faces the challenge, together with the government, of identifying a new framework for ongoing support to build security, improve governance, and promote development, while reducing the country’s dependence on illegal narcotics and building closer ties with the region. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), whose mandate was originally supposed to expire with the completion of the Bonn Process, will expand its role both geographically and functionally in support of these objectives.

Background
After the events of 11 September 2001, a coalition of international forces led by the United States attacked the Taliban regime and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan. By late November of that year, the Taliban were effectively removed from power, and Kabul fell to Northern Alliance forces acting with intelligence and aerial support from the US military. After intense UN-facilitated negotiations outside Bonn, Germany, an interim administration headed by Hamid Karzai was selected to assume power in Kabul.

The Bonn Process became the road map for Afghanistan’s emergence as a sovereign, self-governing state after more than two decades of conflict, foreign invasion, and civil war. The process provided for a six-month interim administration that would prepare for the convening of an Emergency Loya Jirga (ELJ) to elect/select a transitional administration. The transitional administration would in turn prepare for a Constitutional Loya Jirga, ratify a new constitution, and hold national elections within two years. The interim and transitional administrations would also preside over other key reforms in the fields of public administration, justice, human rights, monetary policy, and public finance. The final benchmark of the Bonn agreement was election of a fully representative government, achieved with the 18 September 2005 elections to the Wolesi Jirga (lower house of the National Assembly) and provincial councils. On 9–11 November the provincial councils elected two-thirds of the members of the upper house (Mesharano Jirga); the rest of the members were appointed by President Karzai.

An annex to the Bonn agreement requested the UN Security Council to authorize deployment of a multinational force to assist the government in providing security. Accordingly, the Security Council authorized the creation of ISAF on 20 December 2001, with a mandate to operate within Kabul and its environs under the initial command of the United Kingdom. ISAF deployed alongside—but operationally distinct from—coalition forces under overall US command, which continued to wage battle against the Taliban and Al-Qaida forces.

ISAF was created to address the security/military dimension of the Bonn agreement, in particular by providing security against factional fighting in Kabul. To oversee and help implement the political side of
the process, the Security Council on 28 March 2002 established an integrated mission. UNAMA, under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Lakhdar Brahimi, was tasked with monitoring and assisting the Afghan government in meeting the benchmarks of the Bonn Process.

**ISAF: Mandate, Functions, and Challenges**

Security Council Resolutions 1386, 1413, and 1444 mandate ISAF under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to assist in the maintenance of security in support of a succession of post-Bonn Afghan governments and the UN. NATO took over command and control of the mission in August 2003. A detailed military technical agreement between the ISAF commander and the interim authority of Afghanistan provides the framework for ISAF operations. On the basis of those provisions, ISAF was to exist only until the successful conclusion of the Bonn Process, that is, until the general elections in 2005. But NATO’s Secretary-General and other allied officials subsequently pledged that the mission would remain in Afghanistan until peace and stability were restored.

The initial role of ISAF was to assist Afghanistan in providing a safe and secure environment within Kabul and surrounding areas. In carrying out this mission, ISAF conducted patrols throughout sixteen police districts, either alone or jointly with the Kabul City Police. ISAF also runs civil–military cooperation (CIMIC) projects throughout the city, focusing on the provision of basic human needs such as fresh water, electric power, and shelter.

After repeated calls by Hamid Karzai, UN Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi and nongovernmental organizations, NATO leaders, acting on Security Council Resolution 1510 (2003), finally agreed to expand the reach of ISAF beyond Kabul. Germany took over a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Kunduz in September 2003 and transformed it into the largest PRT in the country. These are relatively small, civil–military organizations, under the authority of either NATO or coalition forces. Although the models differ, they are all broadly involved in security, governance, and reconstruction. As of the end of November 2005 there were twenty-three PRTs across the country, of which ISAF directed nine. ISAF coordinates its activities with the Afghan government through various high- and field-level forums such as the PRT Executive Committee, chaired by the Afghan minister of interior, as well as...
through embedded Afghan military officers at each PRT.

ISAF was involved in security sector reform (SSR) and in training the first units of the new Afghan National Army and National Police. The mission continued to operate and control Kabul International Airport’s military and civilian air traffic (some 3,000 flights per month). In late 2004, ISAF helped equip the airport with night vision equipment allowing it to airlift Afghan pilgrims to Saudi Arabia during the Hajj season on a twenty-four-hour basis. ISAF also supported the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of over 58,000 former combatants, which ended in July 2005. It is also assisting the government of Afghanistan in the disarmament of an estimated 120,000 persons belonging to illegally armed groups, who will eventually return to civilian life.

ISAF commands a degree of credibility after assisting the Afghan forces and coalition in providing security for the Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002, Constitutional Loya Jirga from December 2003 to January 2004, presidential elections in October 2004, and elections to the National Assembly and provincial councils in September 2005. The size of the mission increased from its initial level of 8,000 troops to 12,000 during the period of the recent elections. According to the UK Defense Secretary and NATO Secretary-General, as many as 20,000 extra soldiers could be deployed, mainly to stabilize the south, still a center of insurgent activity.

Nevertheless, ISAF faced significant challenges as 2005 drew to a close. The scope of the mission and the security needs of the country are far greater than the resources provided to it. Most PRTs are underresourced and understaffed, especially the civilian political and assistance personnel. Although there are standardized terms of reference for the PRTs agreed upon by NATO and the coalition forces, each team has a degree of leeway in choosing the activities it deems most appropriate. In general, the ISAF PRTs’ peace support activities include vehicular patrols, coordination with
In response to a recent increase of violence, particularly in the south, ISAF is strengthening its posture and presence in Afghanistan. Under NATO command, it has taken over a large number of PRTs and is expected to eventually take control of all provinces in a counterclockwise order, except the eastern region, where the coalition forces will control the porous border area with Pakistan. NATO and the coalition agreed on a four-phase process involving the northeast, west, south, and southeast respectively. During the first and second phases, ISAF established PRTs in areas where there was little antigovernment insurgency. In 2005, it began moving to the south where conditions are less secure. As ISAF begins to constitute a larger portion of the total international security presence in Afghanistan, it becomes even more urgent that contributing countries operate under a common set of rules and a common command, with fewer national caveats.

The cultivation, processing, and trafficking of narcotics in 2004–2005 complicated the security environment in Afghanistan. The NATO-written ISAF mission statement requires specific authorization from the ISAF commander for any participation in counternarcotic operations. An example of the problem this can create: the German parliament prohibited German troops in Afghanistan from participating in any counternarcotics activities, yet ISAF PRTs currently operate in locations where their local Afghan partners, including subnational officials, are either involved in the drug trade or indirectly benefit from it.

Moreover, the initial division of labor between ISAF and coalition forces placed ISAF in largely secure areas in the northern half of the country. Now that ISAF is expanding to more hostile environments, such as Kandahar, it risks losing the higher degree of credibility it enjoys with development actors relative to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). It may have to adopt more aggressive force protection methods that could potentially alienate local communities.

There are competing visions for the future of the mission following the official end of the Bonn Process. The United States is pushing for the unification of command of OEF and ISAF, which would entail an eventual takeover of combat operations by NATO. Some ISAF troop contributors thus far refuse to engage in a war-fighting mission.

UNAMA: Mandate, Functions, and Challenges

Established in early 2002 by Resolution 1401 for an initial period of twelve months, UNAMA’s mandate is to assist Afghans to:

- Create political legitimacy through democratization.
- Maintain peace and stability by negotiating disputes with the help of the UN Secretary-General’s good offices.
- Monitor and report on the human rights situation.
- Advise on the development of institutions and assist in coordinating external support to the reconstruction process.

To support these functions, the mission is divided into two primary “pillars,” or components, each headed by a Deputy SRSG. One is responsible for relief, recovery, and reconstruction (RRR). The other is responsible for the electoral process, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), and the verification of political and other human rights. The mission has special advisers on human rights, gender, drugs, rule of law, police, military and demobilization, and legal issues, to complement the primary pillars.

UNAMA’s contribution to stabilization and transition in Afghanistan has been significant. It successfully managed presidential elections in October 2004—the first in the country’s history—and parliamentary elections in September 2005. Voter registration was a major challenge, including help in the drafting of laws governing political parties and the elections process. UNAMA was also
responsible for convening two Loya Jirgas, which involved complex political negotiations and logistical arrangements.

UNAMA initially focused on institutions in the capital, but due to the spread of violence and power struggles across the country, it also established and then strengthened field offices to address destabilizing factors at the local level. Soon after its creation, it deployed human rights officers to register complaints and recommend corrective action where appropriate. They remain present throughout the country, although nongovernmental organizations have complained that the number of officers is too few. The Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission presented its report *A Call for Justice* to President Karzai in January 2005, claiming that violations by power holders and local officials were still common practice.

UNAMA helped with strategic aid coordination, shifting operational coordination to the government. It also helped convene the Afghan Development Forum, and has led the current discussions of a post-Bonn conference to be held in London early in 2006. It also worked closely with the Afghan government in monitoring various reform programs (over which UNAMA does not have direct control), such as judicial reform, public administration reform, and security sector reform.

### UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution passage and start date</th>
<th>28 March 2002 (UNSC Res. 1401)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRSG</td>
<td>Jean Arnault (France)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>$63.6 million (1 January 2005–31 December 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength as of 31 October 2005 (unless otherwise noted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military observers: 12</td>
<td>(30 August 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian police: 6</td>
<td>(30 August 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International civilian staff: 198</td>
<td>(30 August 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local civilian staff: 688</td>
<td>(30 August 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN volunteers: 43</td>
<td>(30 September 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Election workers sort the ballot papers at a counting center in Kabul, 18 October 2004
In other sectors, such as DDR, UNAMA’s role was largely that of policymaker, providing secretariat support and some technical advice. There have been uneven results in DDR, but somewhat better results in training the Afghan National Army. The reform and training of the Afghan National Police is viewed as painfully slow. The least successful reform attempts, however, have been in the judicial system and in counternarcotics.

In terms of the parliamentary elections, all Bonn benchmarks were met more or less on schedule, credit for which is owed in part to UNAMA. As 2005 drew to a close, the future of the mission was the subject of debate about the kind of advice, monitoring, and support the nascent democracy in Afghanistan would need. Discussions currently center on a three-year mandate focused on security, governance, and economic benchmarks, and on joint Afghan-UN monitoring of both the Afghan government and donors. The plan is for the new mandate to come from an international declaration at a conference in London in January 2006, to be confirmed by the Security Council.

* * *

Afghanistan has been a truly multilateral project of international counterterrorism, state building, and economic cooperation. The relative success of the mission, culminating in presidential elections at the end of 2004 and parliamentary and local elections in late 2005, had a great deal to do with the local population’s acceptance of the international presence. If the strains caused by the international presence throughout Afghanistan grow, that relationship could change.

The year 2005 was marked by major developments for ISAF—expanding its size and geographic coverage by taking over more PRTs and venturing into more challenging environments—and by the conclusion of the Bonn Process. But these events do not warrant declaring “mission accomplished” and scaling down military and economic assistance. In October 2005 the UN was leading discussions with the Afghan government and donors over a post-Bonn agreement, known as the Kabul Agenda. Continued international security and political support to the Afghan government will undoubtedly be needed to consolidate gains to date.