

Afghanistan Force Requirements

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Objectives

- Create conditions in Afghanistan to prevent the re-establishment of safe havens for al Qaeda and other trans-national terrorist groups
- Establish sufficient stability to ensure that these conditions can be sustained over time with foreign financial assistance but with very limited foreign military presence

COIN Strategic Framework



- Security
 - Defeat the insurgency together with the ANSF
 - Expand and improve the ANSF as rapidly as possible
 - Make the lines cross
- Governance
 - Remediate damage that corruption and abuse of power have done to the legitimacy of the Afghan Government
 - Help and cajole GIRoA to emplace systems and procedures to improve legitimacy over the next few years
 - Improve the capacity of GIRoA at all levels to provide essential services to the Afghan people, especially security, justice, dispute resolution, and basic agricultural and transportation infrastructure
- Development
 - Focus development efforts on building Afghan capacity to develop their own country rather than on developing it for them
 - Ensure that development empowers the government, not the enemy
 - Address corruption and the perception of corruption within the international development effort
- **Security and governance have priority over development**

Governance and Troop Levels

- Improving Afghan governance requires a significant presence of international forces to:
 - Provide security and mobility to advisors, mentors, and auditors
 - Provide independent sources of information about the situation on the ground
 - Provide the bureaucratic infrastructure through which to disburse and monitor the expenditure of funds in an organized and purposeful manner
 - Create checks on abuses of power by local officials
 - Provide planning capabilities at the provincial and local level

Afghan Government Legitimacy

- Establishing the legitimacy of the Afghan government is a requirement for successful counter-insurgency
- Elections are one way of establishing legitimacy, but they are neither sufficient nor necessarily determinative
- US must redouble its efforts to help Afghanistan establish the legitimacy of the institutions of its government
- A key part of these efforts must be dramatically increasing transparency in Afghan budgetary procedures (building on models already in place in some ministries)
- The US must also work to encourage the Afghan government to establish procedures for electing provincial and district governors and sub-governors who are currently appointed by the president
- The US and the international community together control virtually all of Afghanistan's budget; they have enormous leverage if they choose to use it (much more than the leverage the US had on oil-rich Iraq)
- The presence of large numbers of American and international forces and the irreplaceable role they currently play in providing security for the Afghan government and its officials also offer enormous leverage

Sources of Legitimacy

- Elections are one source of legitimacy, but only one
- Legitimacy is also defined by the performance of the government, both in its ability to provide desired services and in its adherence to social norms
- Karzai would likely have won fair elections, although possibly not in the first round, and he would almost certainly have carried the Pashtun areas heavily—so the problem is not the imposition of an unacceptable leader but rather the manipulations that led to this particular outcome
- The fraud is unquestionably damaging to Karzai's legitimacy and therefore harmful to the ISAF effort
- But in the mid- and long-term, legitimacy will be defined much more by the actions Karzai and the international community take now than by the fraudulence of these elections
- We should not condone the fraud; on the contrary, we should deplore it
- But we should accept the outcome of the Afghan legal processes now underway to review the result and then develop and use all possible leverage with Karzai to shape the new government in ways that will repair the damage to its legitimacy and begin to improve the situation

Legitimacy After the Election



- The US can also work to help the Afghan government reform itself using tools similar to those we employed in helping the Iraqi government rid itself of malign actors supporting sectarian cleansing and death-squads in 2007:
 - US forces can collect evidence of malfeasance by Afghan officials at all levels
 - That evidence can be presented to those officials, to their superiors, to Karzai, to Afghan courts, to the public, or, in some cases, to international courts
 - In some cases, criminal action should result; in some cases, the officials should be removed; in some cases, the aim is simply to pressure those officials to stop certain specific behaviors that threaten the success of the mission
 - This is not a crusade against corruption—officials are only targeted when their actions seriously jeopardize our efforts
 - This does not require the removal of Karzai or some of his key allies (including family members) from positions of power—as in Iraq, it should be possible to rechannel their behavior away from the activities that are most damaging
- The US has demonstrated that it can generate such precise and surgical pressure on critical points in a political system in Iraq
- This approach requires significant numbers of American forces actively patrolling among the population—only in that way can our leaders develop the intelligence they need to determine which malign actors must be addressed and to gather the information needed to address them

Legitimacy and Force Levels



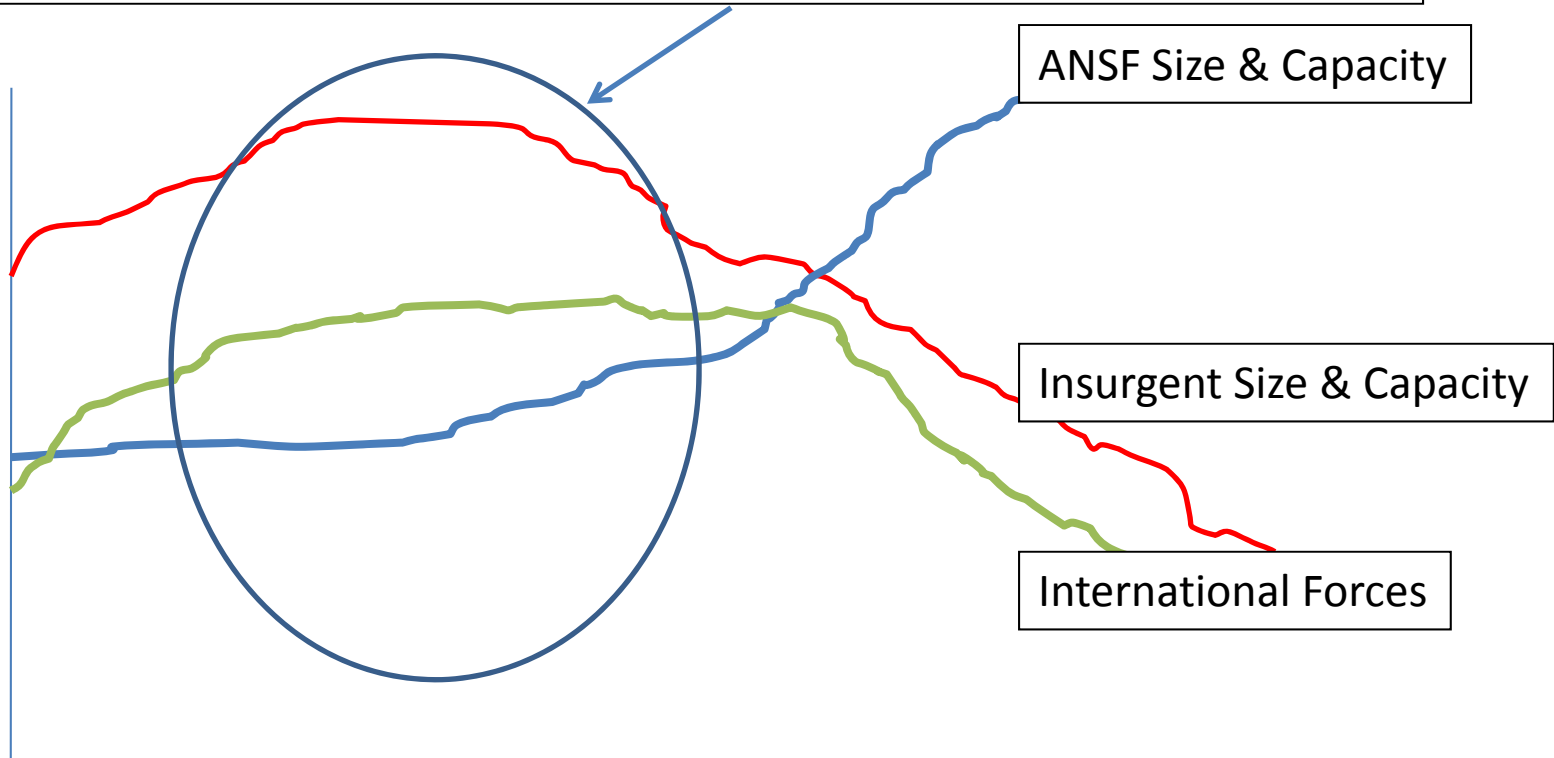
- The flaws of the August 20 election increase the requirement for additional forces rather than decreasing it
- If the US declares that it will not send additional forces because of those flaws, it is de facto declaring that it regards the election as illegitimate, the Karzai government as illegitimate, and the Afghan enterprise as unworthy of additional effort, all of which will seriously exacerbate damage to the legitimacy of the government within Afghanistan as well as to the will of the international community to continue the struggle
- Failing to send additional forces, moreover, deprives the US of the ability to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this flawed election, particularly the opportunities to leverage Karzai's insecurity and growing recognition that he must take real steps to re-establish the legitimacy of his government
- This is not a symbolic question—undertaking any of the steps outlined in this document to address systemic problems that undermine the legitimacy of the Afghan government require additional American military forces operating in a COIN mission on the ground

Legitimacy and the ANSF

- What is the ANSF fighting for if the US makes it clear that it regards the Afghan Government as illegitimate?
- The ANSF leadership is well aware that it cannot manage the violence in Afghanistan on its own
- Announcing that no US reinforcements are on the way is likely to damage ANSF morale seriously, particularly coupled with US interactions with the Afghan government that suggest the US does not accept its legitimacy
- The ANSF does not exist or fight in a vacuum—its quality and performance depends heavily on its belief that the international community supports it and will continue to support it adequately, and on its belief that its cause is just

Security: Making the Lines Cross Sooner

An increase in international forces is needed both to accelerate ANSF training and to reduce the insurgent threat, lowering the requirement for ANSF capability to manage the residual threat and allowing a more rapid start to the reduction in international forces



ANSF Current Status

- As of June 2009, the Afghan Ministry of Defense had 103,475 authorized personnel, with 89,521 actually assigned. Of those, Afghan National Army operational units had 66,406 soldiers authorized with 53,417 assigned in around 80 kandaks (battalions). The remaining MoD personnel were assigned to headquarters, infrastructure, ministerial and general staff positions, and training and transfer accounts. The AWOL rate is running at around 9%. The official capability ratings of Afghan kandaks puts about 66% of them in operational status (CM1 or CM2).
- The uniformed police had 47,384 authorized and 51,406 assigned. The police have been ineffective and often accelerants to the insurgency through their corruption and penetration by militias and insurgents. The US has been overseeing a reform program called Focused District Development, but as of February 2009 FDD had trained and was reforming 55 of 265 districts, and another 9 districts were in progress. CSTC-A planned to put 100 districts through the FDD program in FY2010. Corruption and ineffectiveness in the ANP is compounded by inadequate equipment to play a counter-insurgent role—Afghan Uniformed Police have light weapons, no heavy machine guns, and very few armored or even up-armored vehicles, so they are often outgunned by insurgents with no meaningful protection. For these reasons, we cannot now consider Afghan Uniformed Police as counter-insurgents.

Bottom Line: The ANSF now adds around 50,000 counter-insurgents to the mix

ANSF Expansion

- Current plans call for expanding the ANA to 134,000 by the end of 2011
- This expansion can be accelerated to meet that goal by October 2010
- Assuming the current ratio of combat forces to end strength of around 60%, the ANA can probably have around 80,000 troops in combat formations by October 2010, an addition of 30,000 over June 2009
- Adding that many troops requires recruiting and training even more to account for significant casualty rates among the combat forces

Bottom line: The ANA can add around 30,000 counter-insurgents by October 2010, for a total of 80,000—but only if decisions to accelerate ANSF expansion and resources necessary for it are made and committed at once

US Forces

- US Forces in Afghanistan currently number around 64,000
- Of those, roughly 34,000 are combat formations assigned to counter-insurgency roles; the rest are support elements, trainers, and classified forces
- US COIN formations include roughly 17 maneuver battalions and as many as 12 combat support battalions re-missioned to function as counter-insurgents
- The US contingent therefore can put about 23,300 soldiers on the ground doing counter-insurgency
 - In Iraq, by contrast, the 15 US brigades before the surge could put around 72,000 counter-insurgents on the ground; at the height of the surge, it was more like 105,000

ISAF Forces

- 42 countries now contribute military forces to the NATO mission in Afghanistan
- 11 of them provide battalion-sized maneuver formations that can participate in COIN operations:
 - Italy: 3
 - Holland: 1
 - Canada: 2
 - France: 2
 - Turkey 1
 - Poland: 1
 - Denmark: 1
 - UK: 6
 - Australia: 1
 - Romania: 1

Bottom line: roughly 20 deployable non-US ISAF battalions can provide around 16,000 counter-insurgents

Available Counter-Insurgents

- US: 23,200
- Non-US ISAF: 16,000
- Afghan National Army: 50,000*
- **TOTAL: 89,200**
- ANA expansion can add 30,000 more by October 2010, bringing the total to 119,200

* Only about 66% of ANA troops are in kandaks rated as operationally capable (CM1 or CM2)

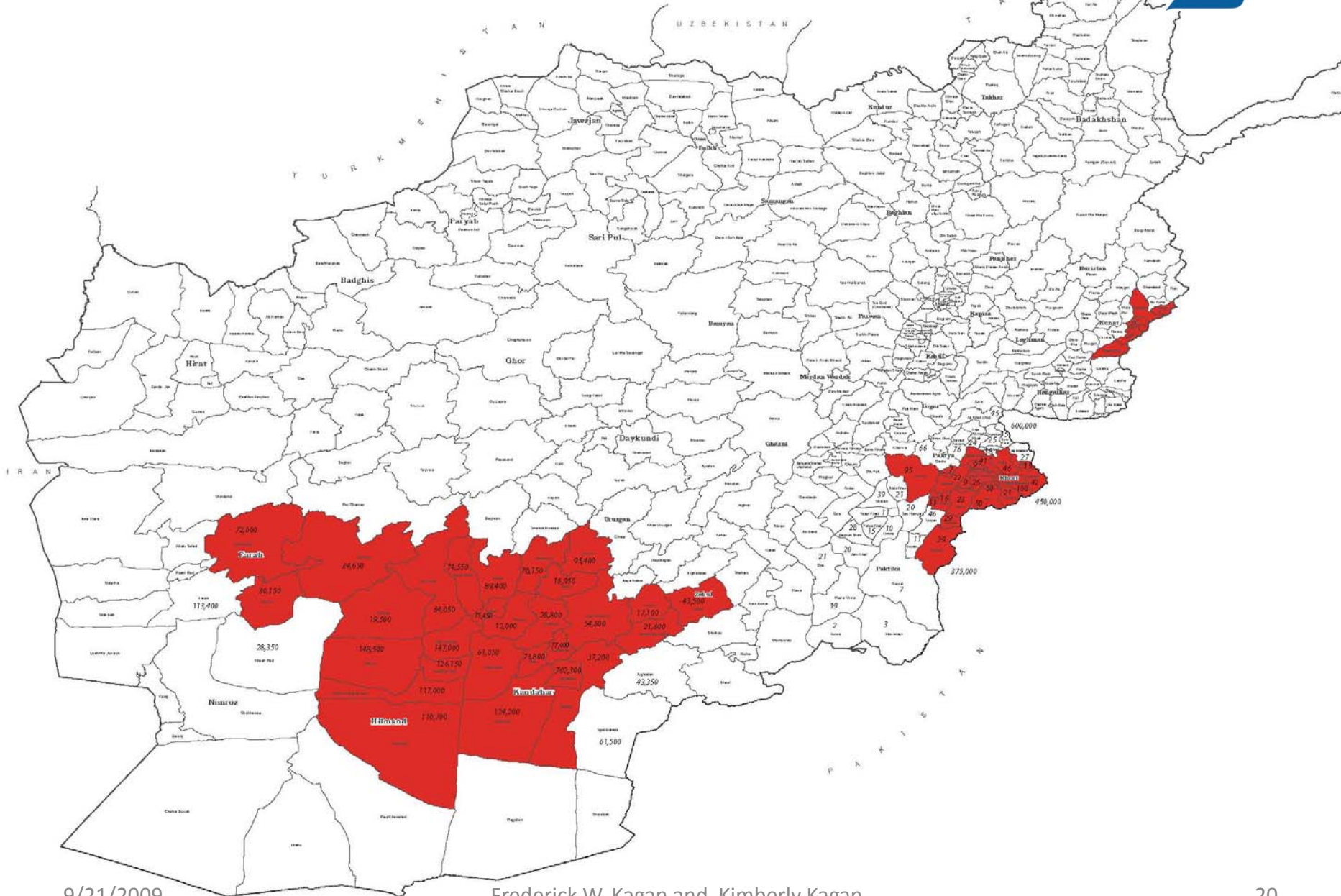
Occupation?

- In Afghanistan, one-and-a-half times as large as Iraq with at least as large a population, the total number of international forces available to interact with the population now is under 50,000
- Most Afghans never see a member of ISAF
- Afghans who interact with ISAF forces are generally far more concerned with what those forces are doing and whether or not they are providing security than with how many of them there are
- The issue of “foreign occupation” is a propaganda theme, not a finely-calibrated reality

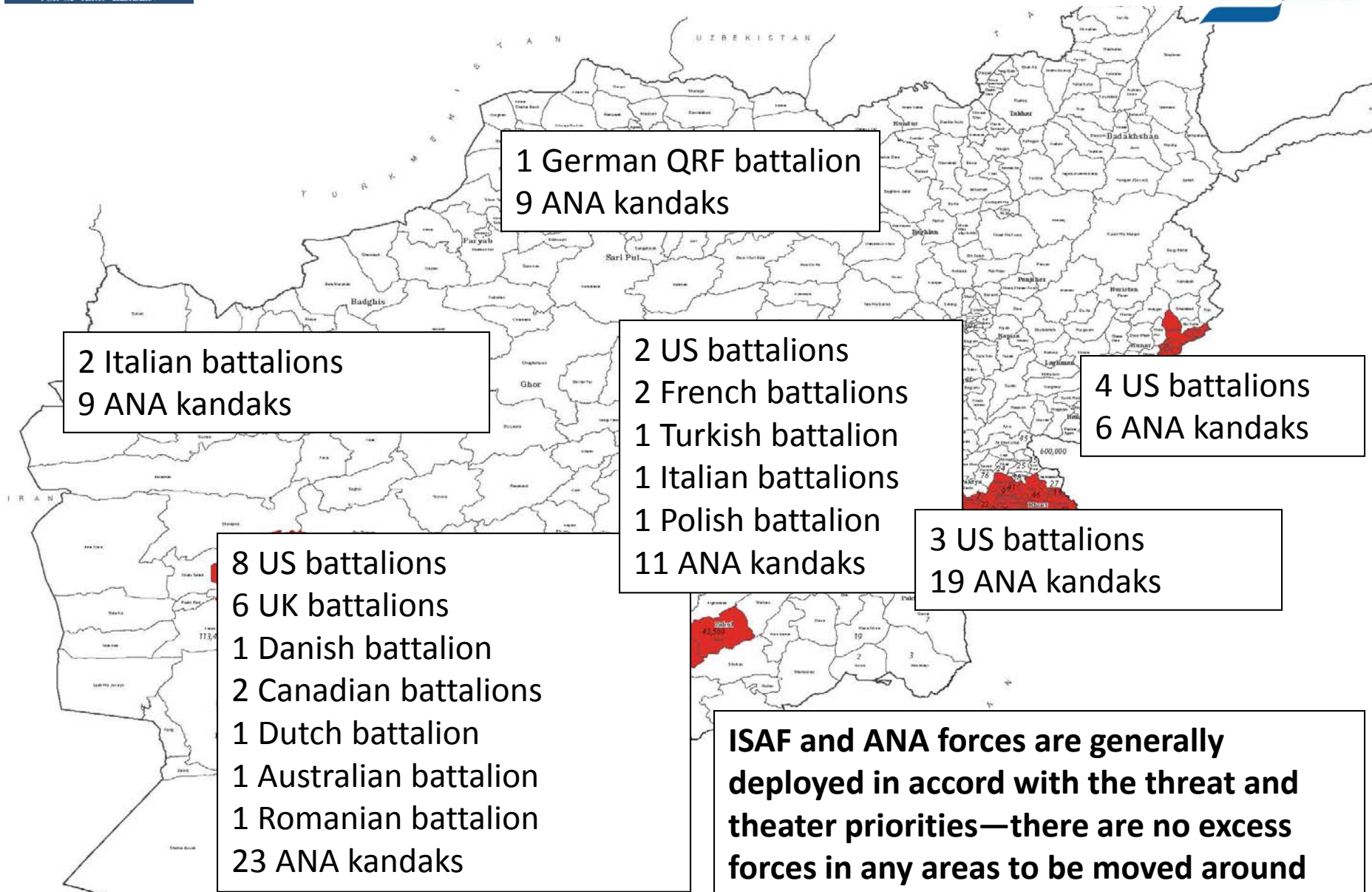
Prioritizing Efforts

- Most dangerous insurgency is in RC(South) and in the Greater Paktia area of RC(East)
- RC(South)
 - Critical population concentrations in Helmand River Valley from Garmsir to Sangin (~650k)
 - Critical population concentrations in Kandahar around Kandahar City (~1 million)
 - Tarin Khowt (~95k)
 - Enemy support zones and sanctuaries in surrounding areas (~780k population widely dispersed)
 - COIN effort should focus on population of ~1,650,000 concentrated in an area of about 800 square miles in Helmand and about 450 square miles in Kandahar
 - Operations in enemy sanctuaries and support zones will also be required, but at lesser force densities
- RC(East)
 - Contested population centers in Greater Paktia (Khowst, Paktia, and eastern Paktika Provinces) number ~650 k over about 3,500 square miles, including some support zones and sanctuaries
 - COIN efforts should focus on Khowst Province, Paktia Province, and Bermel District of Paktika Province
- Concentrate efforts in Nangarhar and along the Konar River Valley, but not in northern Konar or Nuristan
- Sustain efforts in Wardak, Lowgar, Kapisa, and Parwan
- Accept significant risk in Ghazni, and Uruzgan outside of Tarin Khowt
- Mitigate risk in Konduz
- Hold in Parwan, Wardak, Lowgar, Kapisa, Laghman
- Accept risk in Herat
- Accept significant risk in Farah and Nimruz, Badghis, and Ghor

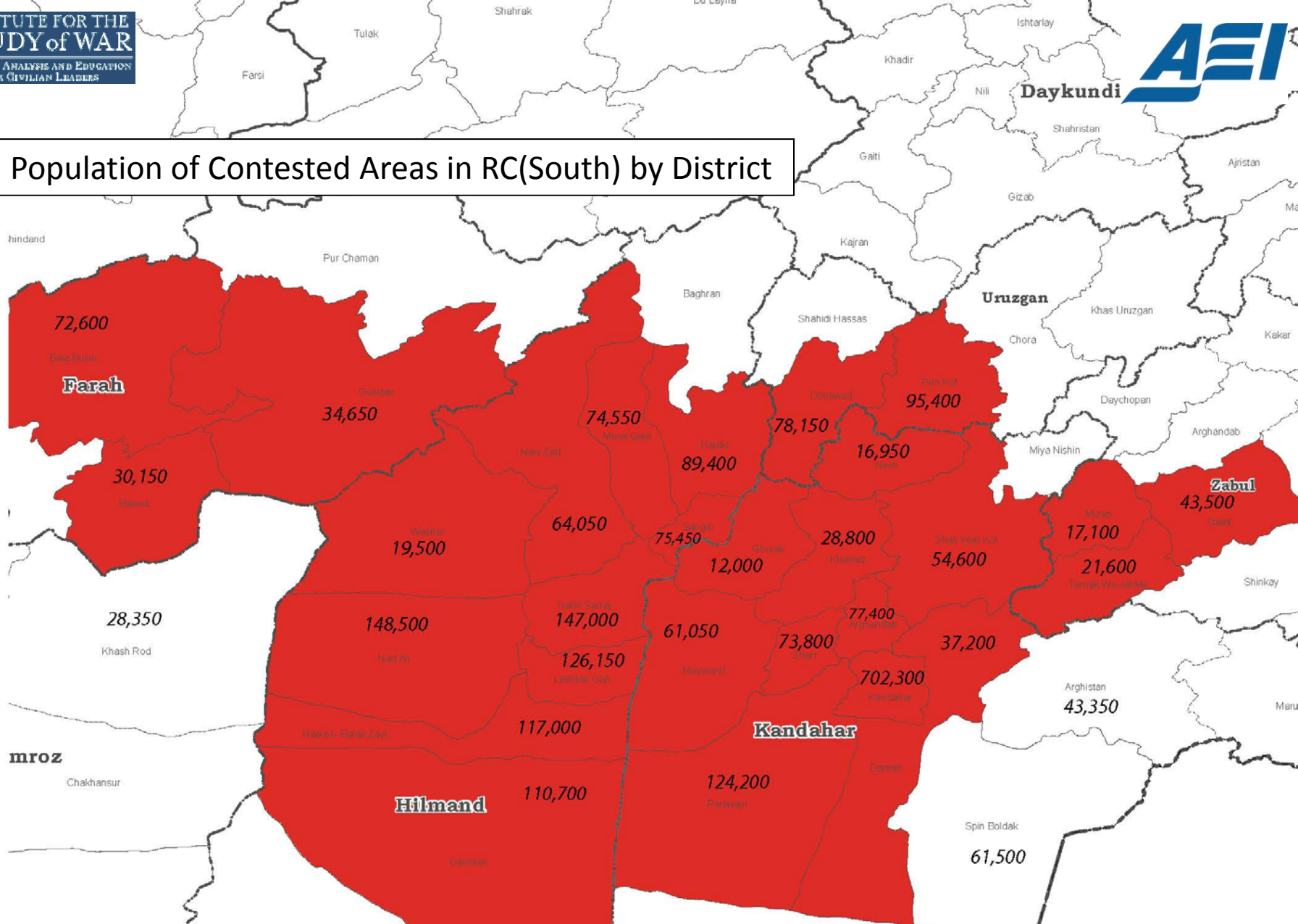
Priority Areas



Distribution of ANA and ISAF Forces

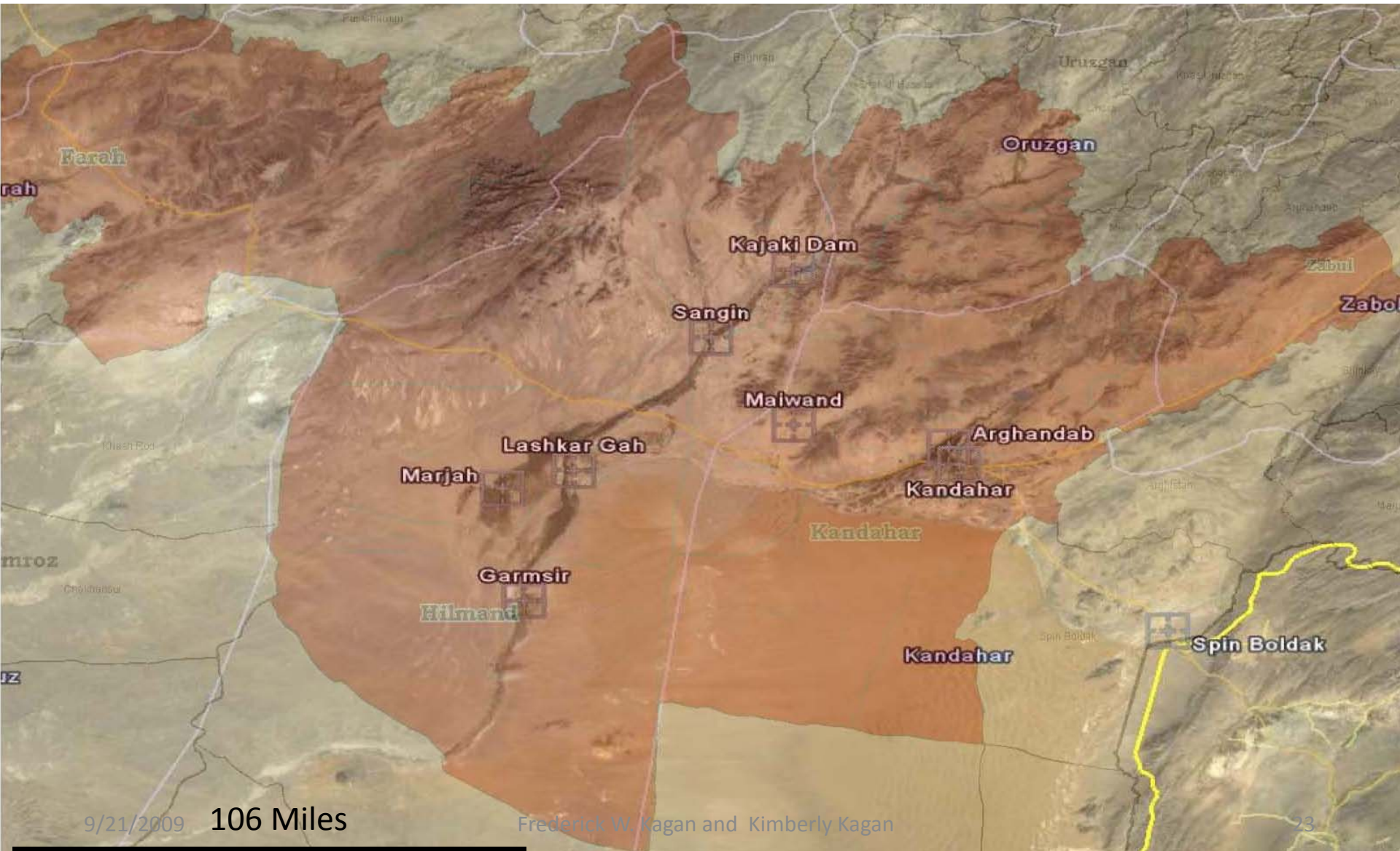


Population of Contested Areas in RC(South) by District



Source: Afghanistan Information Management Services (www.aims.org.af), but see final slide for methodological detail

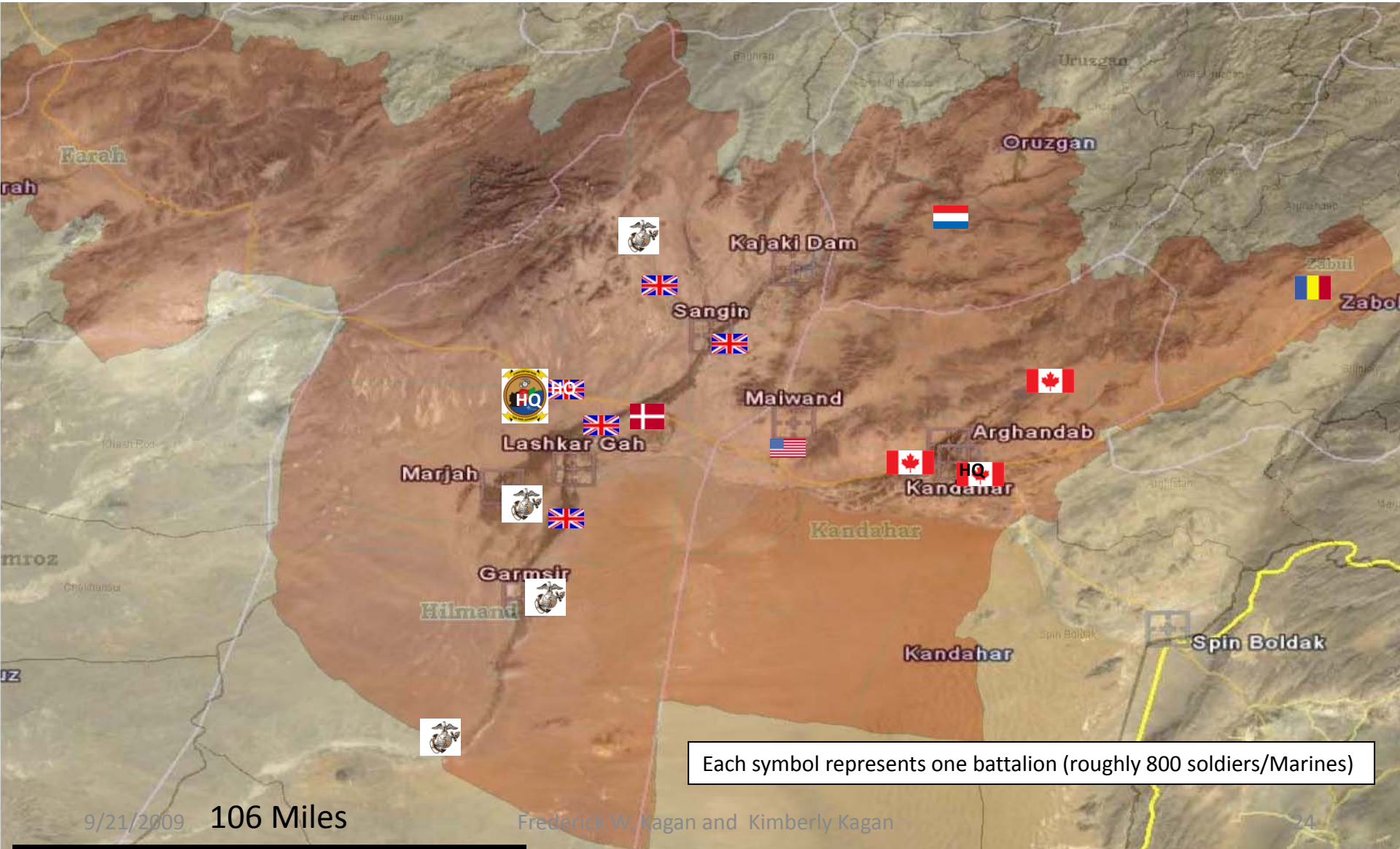
Contested Districts in RC(South) with Terrain



9/21/2009 106 Miles

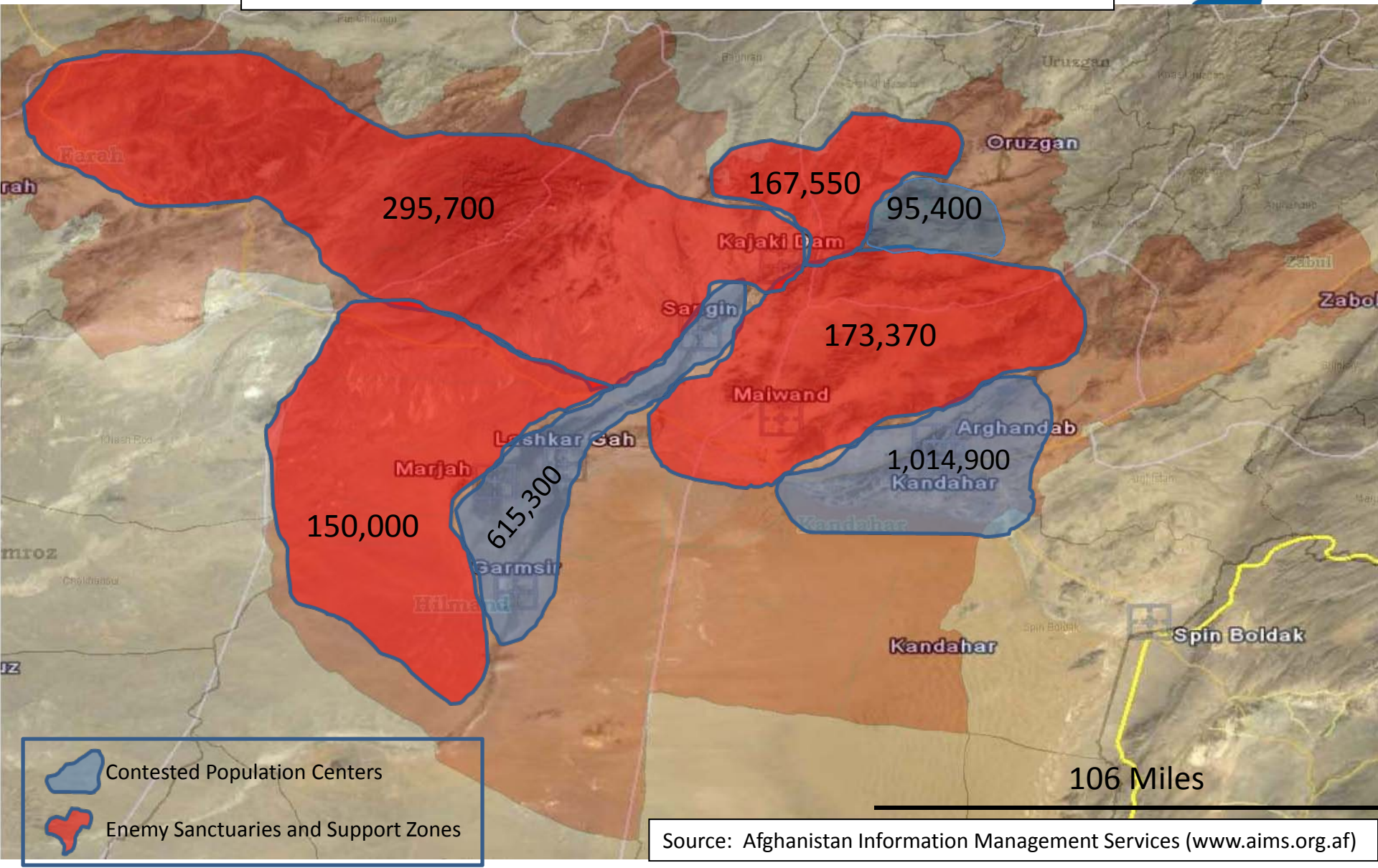
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Coalition Forces in RC(South)



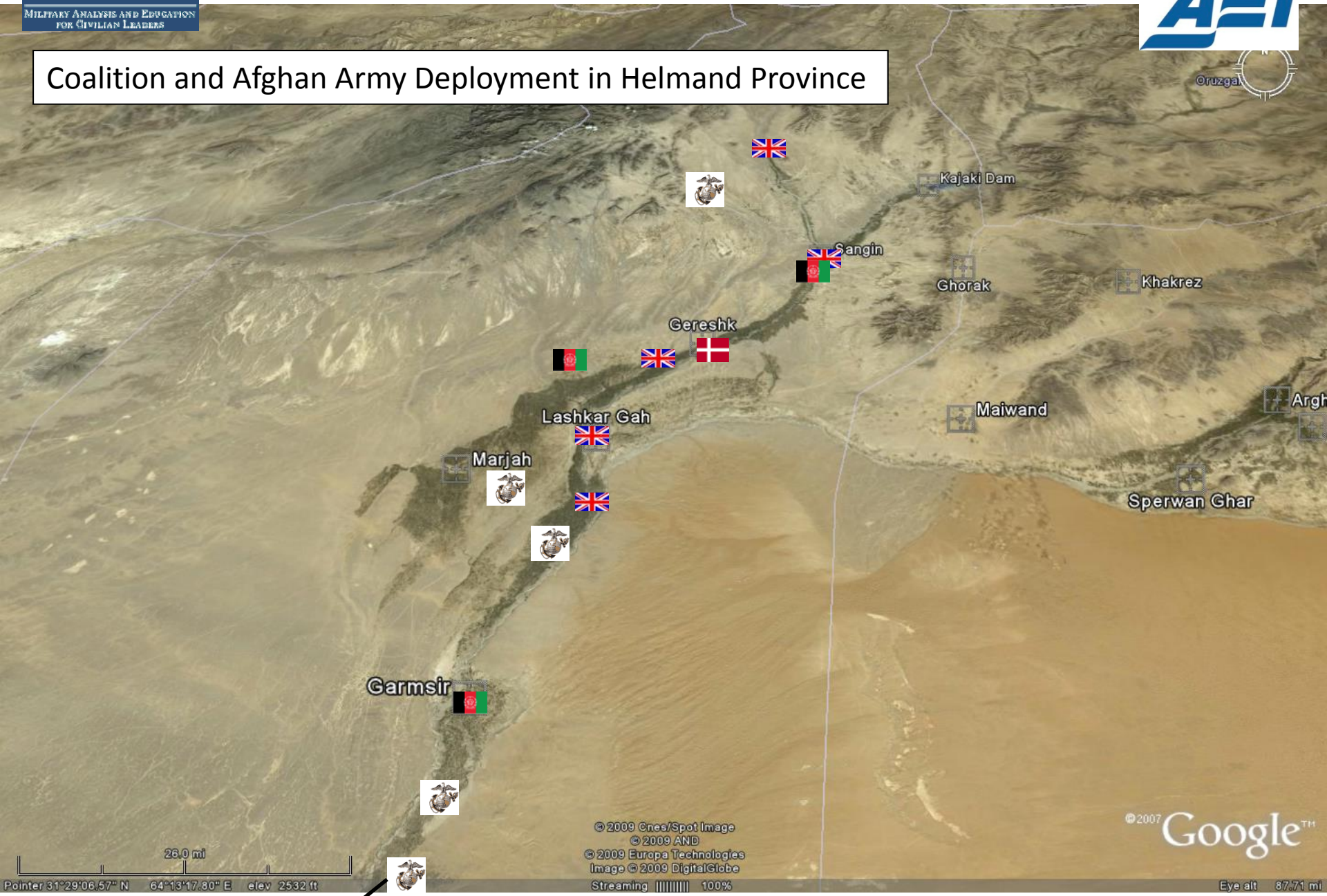
Each symbol represents one battalion (roughly 800 soldiers/Marines)

Populations of Contested Centers and Enemy Support Zones and Sanctuaries



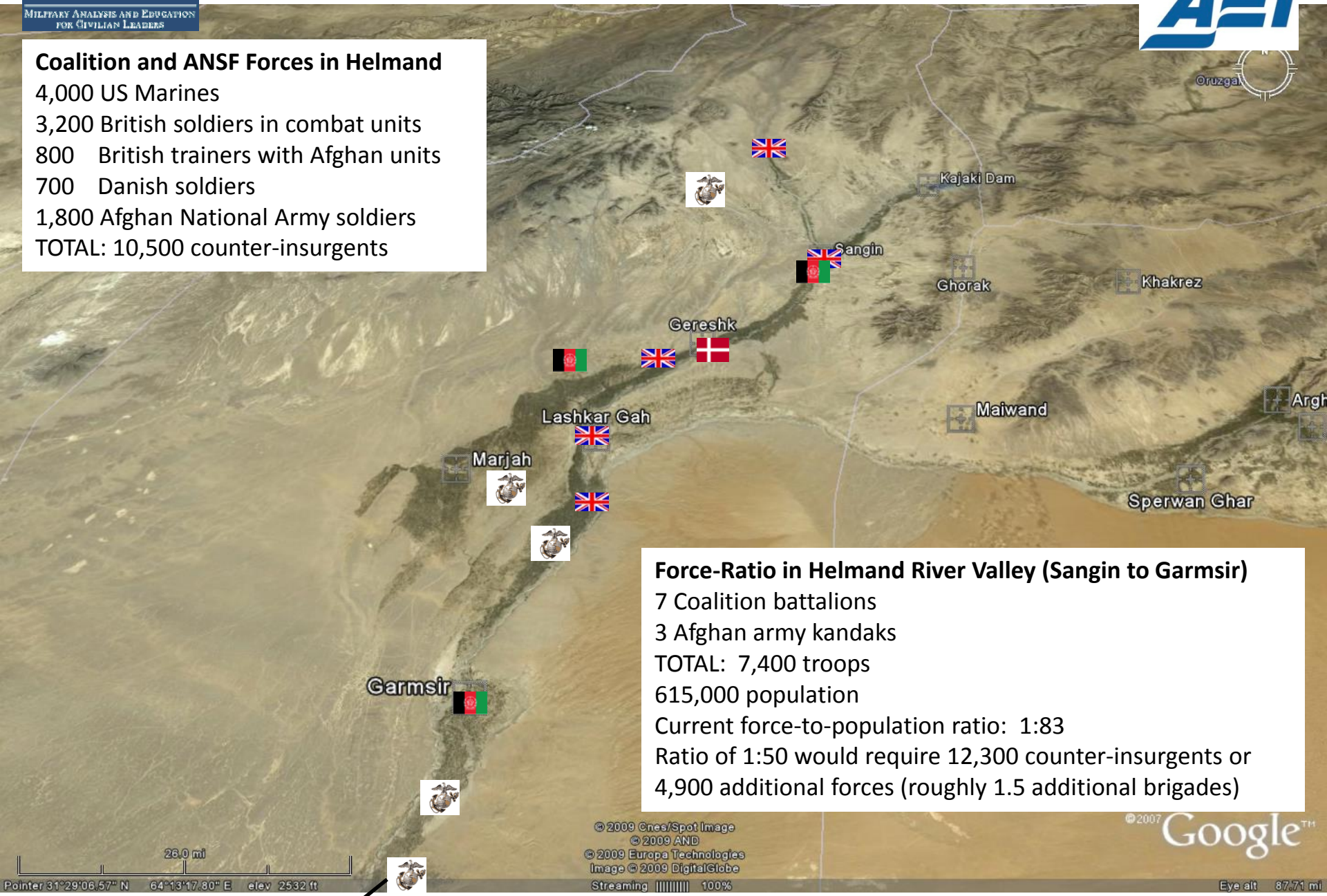
Source: Afghanistan Information Management Services (www.aims.org.af)

Coalition and Afghan Army Deployment in Helmand Province



Coalition and ANSF Forces in Helmand

- 4,000 US Marines
- 3,200 British soldiers in combat units
- 800 British trainers with Afghan units
- 700 Danish soldiers
- 1,800 Afghan National Army soldiers
- TOTAL: 10,500 counter-insurgents**



Force-Ratio in Helmand River Valley (Sangin to Garmsir)
7 Coalition battalions
3 Afghan army kandaks
TOTAL: 7,400 troops
615,000 population
Current force-to-population ratio: 1:83
Ratio of 1:50 would require 12,300 counter-insurgents or
4,900 additional forces (roughly 1.5 additional brigades)

Coalition and Afghan Forces in Kandahar City and Environs



Kandahar City

- Urban area with around 750,000 people
- ISAF does not maintain permanent security presence or regular patrols in Kandahar City
- 3 Afghan kandaks in the city are not partnered with ISAF forces
- Taliban is present in the city and influences the city from surrounding districts, but the extent of its presence and influence is not knowable
- Since Afghans do not generally fight in cities, it is not clear whether or not ISAF and the ANSF will have to clear the city with a traditional 1:50 counter-insurgency ratio of forces
- Some argue that sending any ISAF forces into the city will cause it to explode or, at least, deteriorate, but there is no clear evidence or historical pattern to corroborate this assertion
- Whether or not ISAF sends forces into the city, the ANSF will at some point have to secure it and maintain its security—counter-insurgent requirements in the province therefore must take account of this requirement as well
- The need to provide ISAF assistance to the ANSF in securing the city is sufficiently likely that sound planning requires ensuring that ISAF has adequate forces at its disposal for this eventuality, giving COMISAF the options he needs to respond to changing circumstances

Coalition and ANSF Forces in Kandahar City area

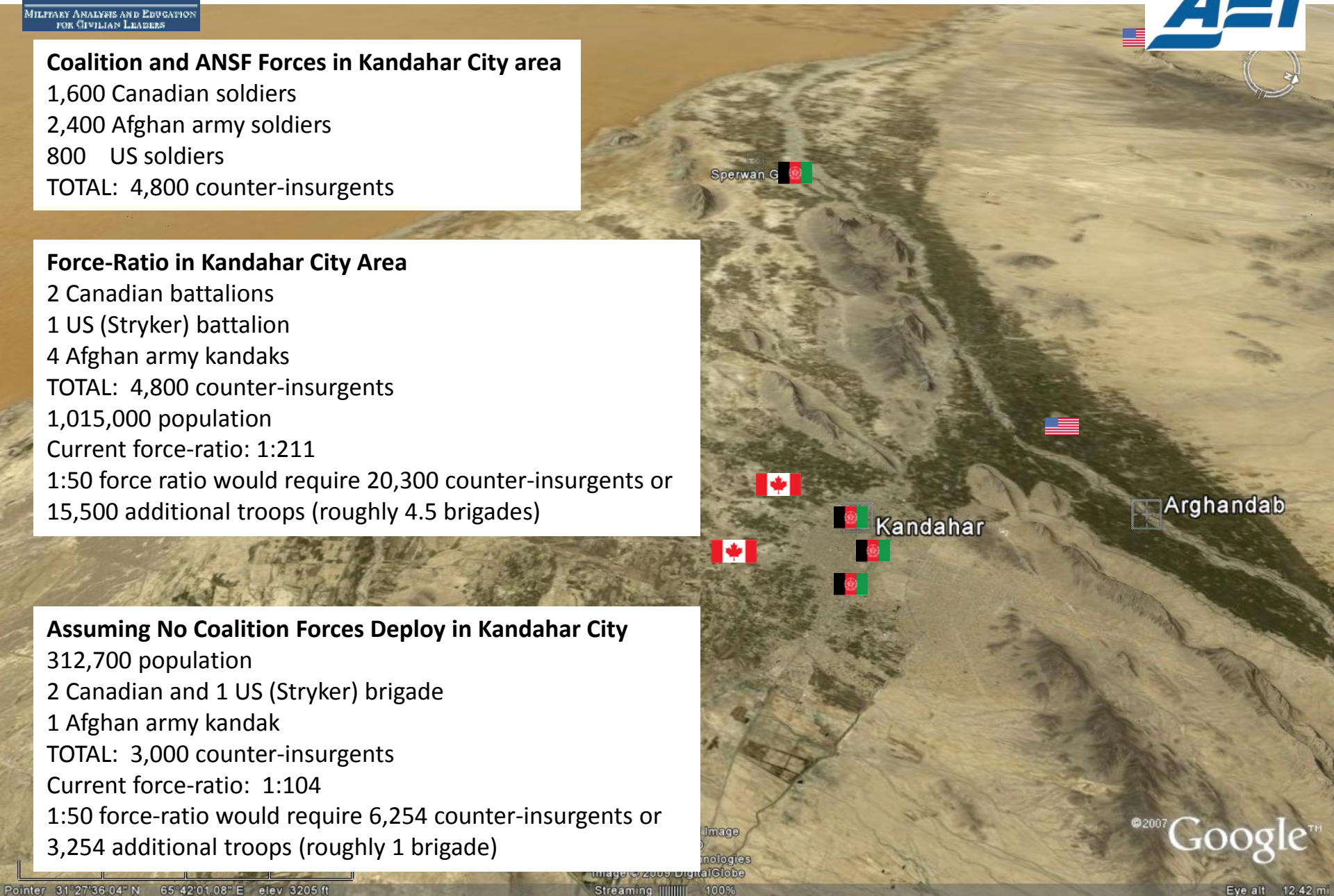
1,600 Canadian soldiers
2,400 Afghan army soldiers
800 US soldiers
TOTAL: 4,800 counter-insurgents

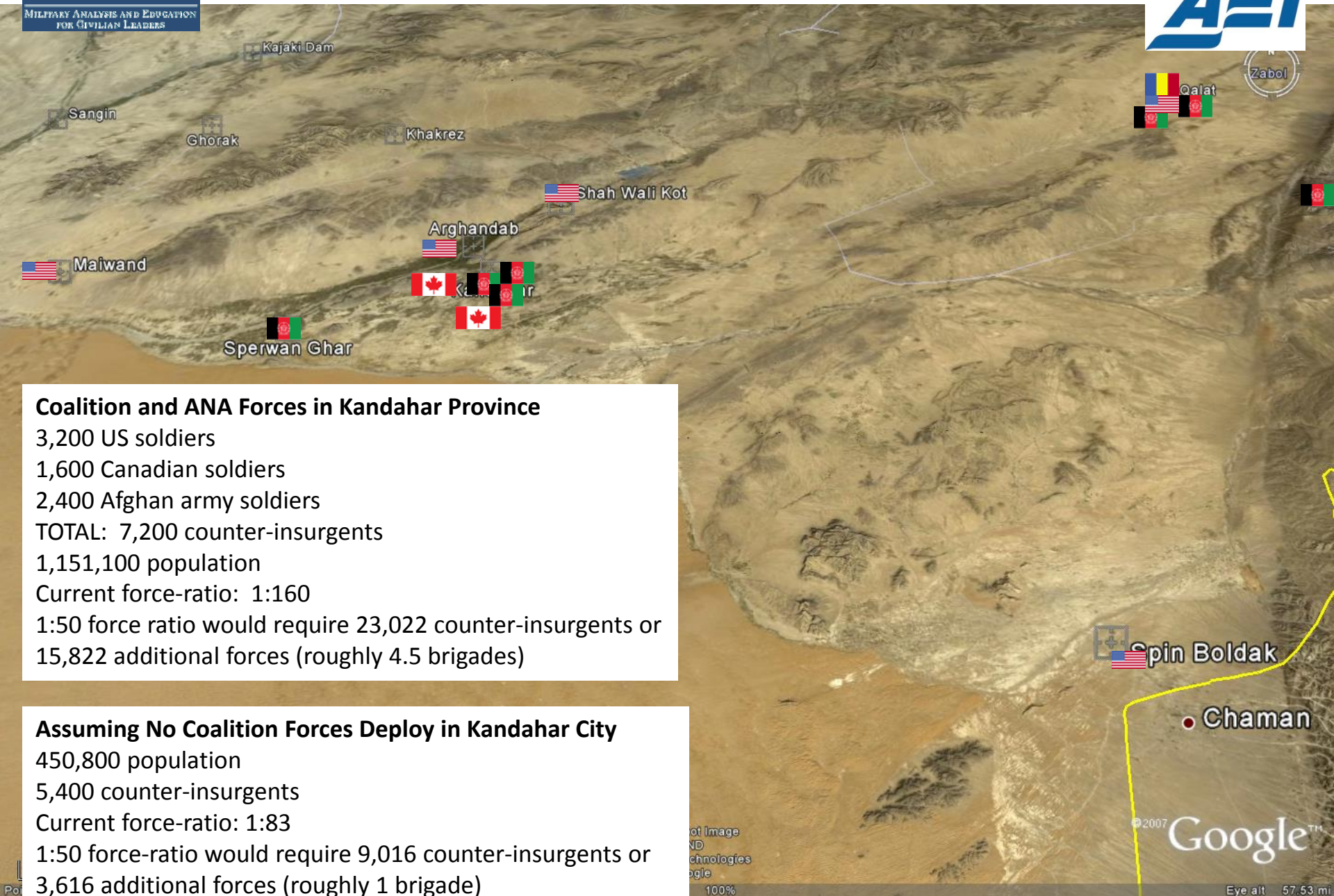
Force-Ratio in Kandahar City Area

2 Canadian battalions
1 US (Stryker) battalion
4 Afghan army kandaks
TOTAL: 4,800 counter-insurgents
1,015,000 population
Current force-ratio: 1:211
1:50 force ratio would require 20,300 counter-insurgents or
15,500 additional troops (roughly 4.5 brigades)

Assuming No Coalition Forces Deploy in Kandahar City

312,700 population
2 Canadian and 1 US (Stryker) brigade
1 Afghan army kandak
TOTAL: 3,000 counter-insurgents
Current force-ratio: 1:104
1:50 force-ratio would require 6,254 counter-insurgents or
3,254 additional troops (roughly 1 brigade)





Coalition and ANA Forces in Kandahar Province

3,200 US soldiers

1,600 Canadian soldiers

2,400 Afghan army soldiers

TOTAL: 7,200 counter-insurgents

1,151,100 population

Current force-ratio: 1:160

1:50 force ratio would require 23,022 counter-insurgents or

15,822 additional forces (roughly 4.5 brigades)

Assuming No Coalition Forces Deploy in Kandahar City

450,800 population

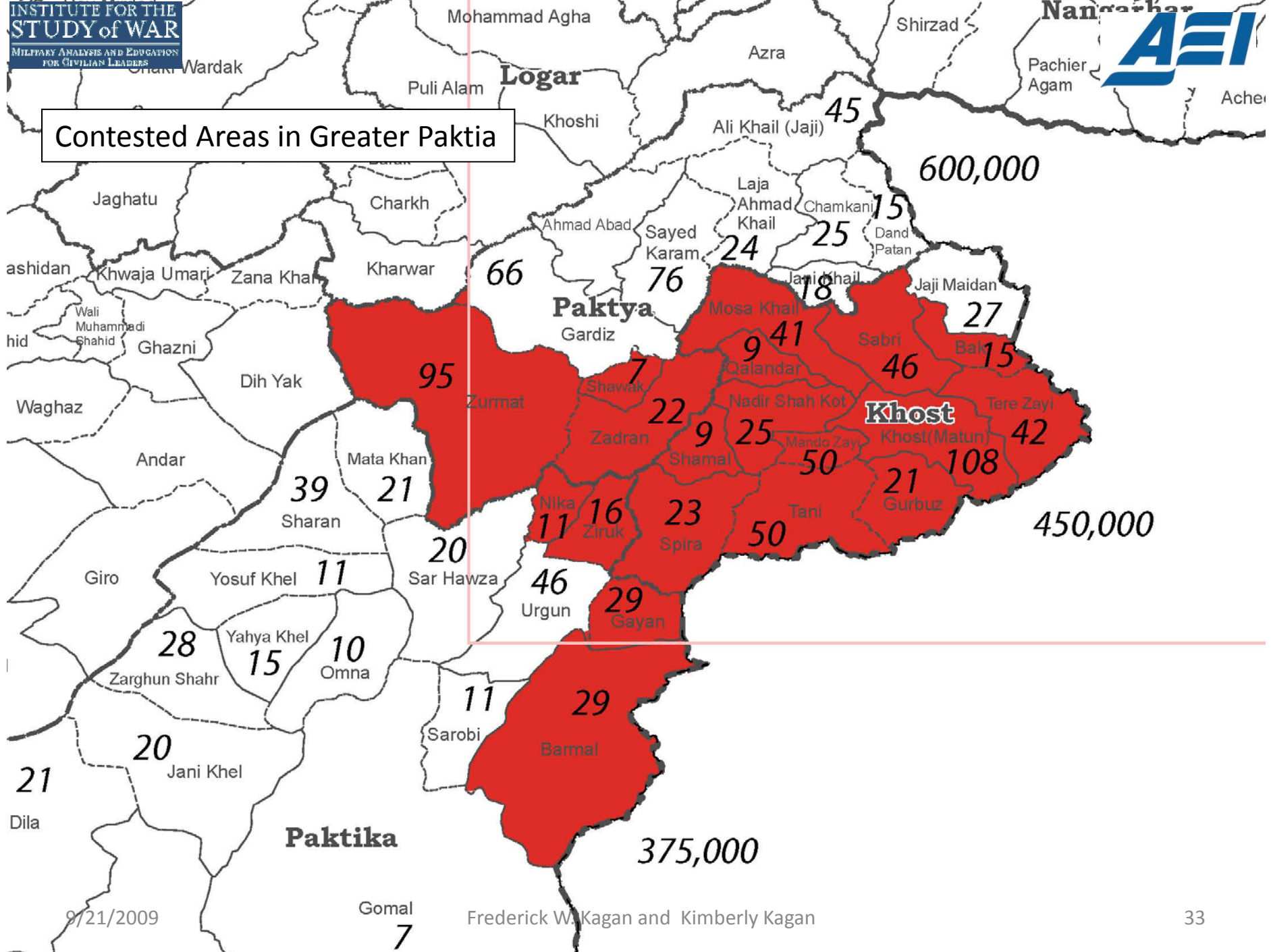
5,400 counter-insurgents

Current force-ratio: 1:83

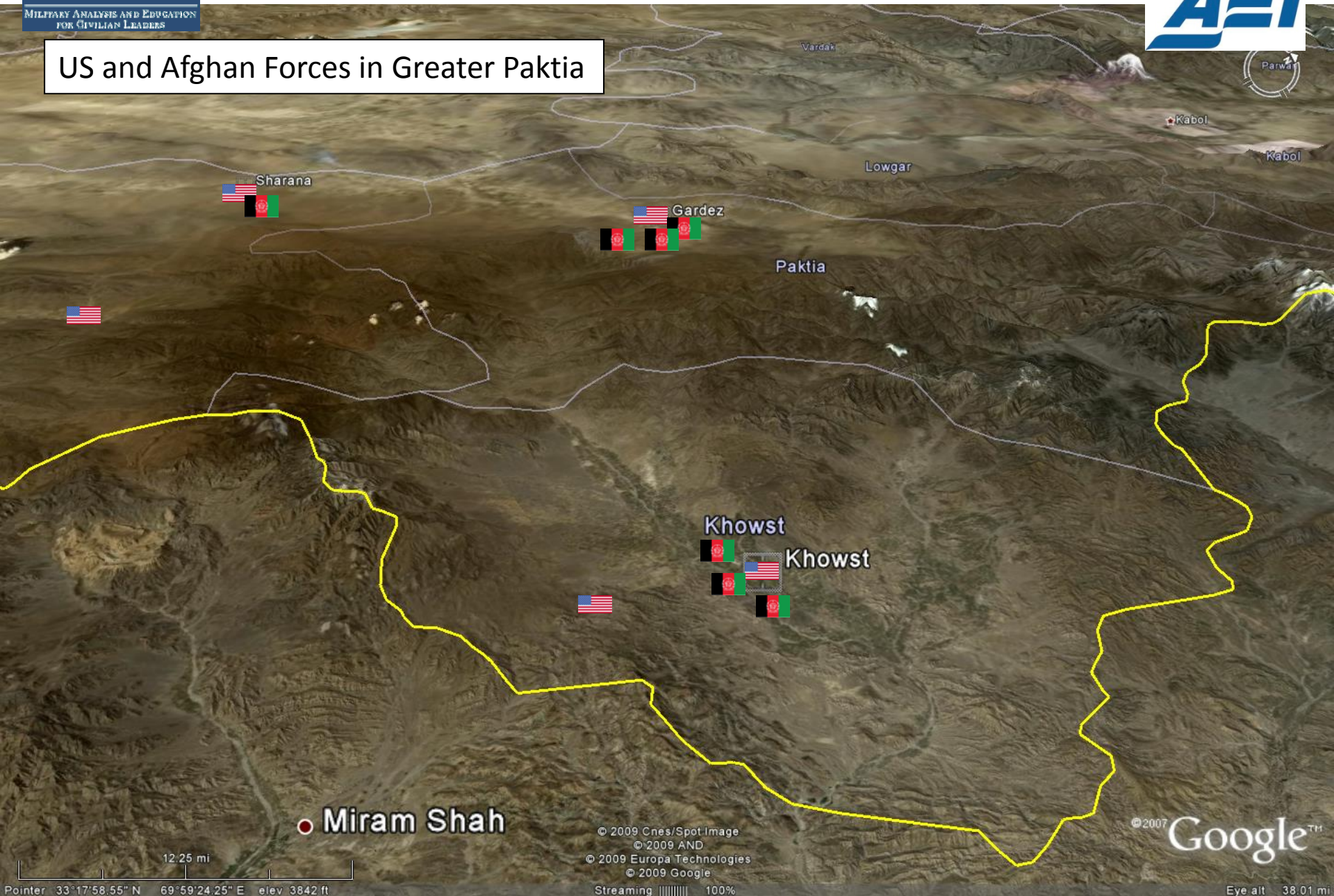
1:50 force-ratio would require 9,016 counter-insurgents or

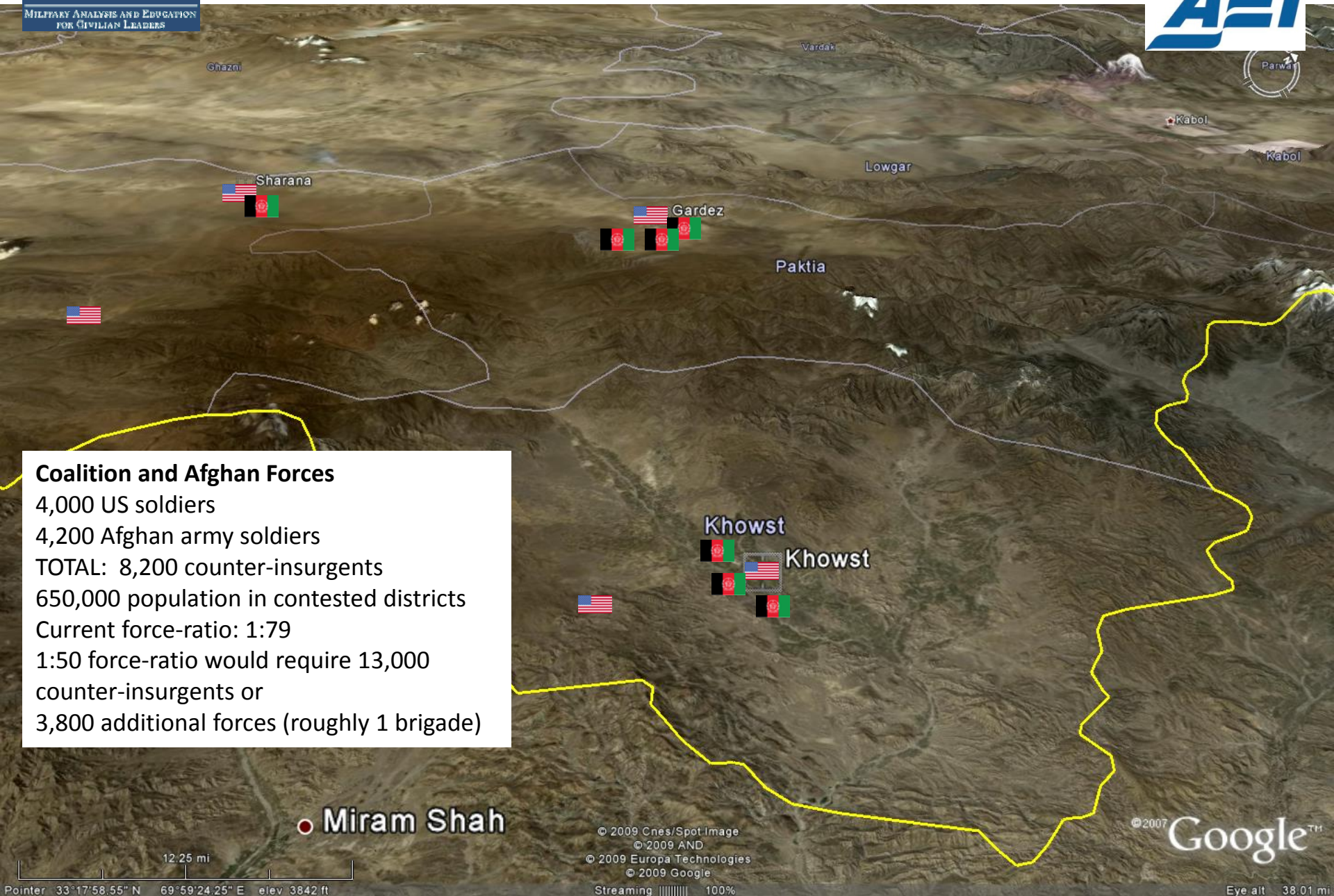
3,616 additional forces (roughly 1 brigade)

Contested Areas in Greater Paktia



US and Afghan Forces in Greater Paktia





Coalition and Afghan Forces

4,000 US soldiers
4,200 Afghan army soldiers
TOTAL: 8,200 counter-insurgents
650,000 population in contested districts
Current force-ratio: 1:79
1:50 force-ratio would require 13,000
counter-insurgents or
3,800 additional forces (roughly 1 brigade)

● Miram Shah

12.25 mi

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Theater Synergies



- Achieving isolated successes in Helmand, Kandahar, Oruzgan, and Greater Paktia is not enough
 - Isolated “ink-spots” surrounded by enemy-controlled areas are vulnerable
 - The isolation leaves the enemy too much flexibility to respond to coalition operations, fading away in some areas, concentrating in others
- The “ink-spots” must merge at some point to achieve sustainable security
- With current forces, including planned ANSF expansion, there is no prospect of connecting pockets of success in any reasonable time frame
- Properly resourcing the counter-insurgency effort now would allow subsequent phases of operations to connect pockets of success once the ANSF has developed enough to hold areas that have been cleared with less ISAF assistance

Bottom Line: Additional Requirements

- Helmand: 1.5 brigades
- Kandahar: 1-4 brigades (depending on assumptions about Kandahar City)
- Greater Paktia: 1 brigade
- **Total: 3.5-6.5 brigades**
- NB: The Dutch battalion in Oruzgan will not be replaced in 2010 and the two Canadian battalions in Kandahar will not be replaced in 2011
- **Either the US or NATO will thus have to find an additional brigade to offset those departures within the next two years**

Other Considerations



- The best way to train indigenous forces rapidly is to partner coalition units with them together in combat
- The new ISAF commander is refocusing his efforts on such partnership
- Deciding not to send ISAF units into Kandahar city means that any Afghan forces there will not have coalition partnership
- The absence of coalition forces legally able to conduct regular patrolling in the North, and the lack of sufficient forces to conduct meaningful patrolling in the West, means that Afghan forces in those areas are also not partnered
- The most rapid and effective program for developing the ANSF, therefore, would likely require the ability to send US forces to partner with Afghan troops in Kandahar City (the higher end of the estimate in the previous slide) AND an additional US brigade to provide partner units for ANA kandaks in the North and West
- With these considerations, the total additional requirement would be roughly 7.5 brigades—26,500 troops within the brigades themselves; 37,500 overall including necessary enablers
- The theater, moreover, is currently very sparse and requires additional
 - Route-clearance teams
 - Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets and analysts
 - Engineering units (to help build and maintain bases for expanding ISAF and ANSF forces)
 - Aviation support (particularly helicopters, which are at a premium in Afghanistan’s terrain)
- The 4th Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division will be deploying later this year, but it has the mission of training Afghan troops and does not, therefore, fill any of the requirements identified above
- **The overall force requirement, therefore is likely in the 40,000-45,000 range**

Consequences of Under-Resourcing



- ISAF forces are not adequate to the requirements in any part of the country
- Small-scale redeployments in RC(East) will address some local, tactical issues, but cannot make up for the operational-level shortfalls in the area as a whole
- There are no forces to be redeployed in RC(South)—all are fully committed in tasks that cannot be abandoned
- Without additional forces in RC(South), therefore, commanders will face the following options:
 - Continue an indecisive fight in Helmand while ceding Kandahar to the enemy
 - Abandon the fight in Helmand, accepting a major propaganda defeat and humiliating the British, cede the area to the enemy and allow the Taliban to extract vengeance on all those who co-operated with us, and attempt to re-take Kandahar
 - Reduce forces in Helmand, possibly tipping what is now approaching a stalemate into a slow-lose scenario, and attempt to re-take Kandahar with forces that are not adequate to the mission
- In all cases, commanders will likely be forced to continue to shift ISAF troops around in response to growing emergencies, vitiating any meaningful COIN approach
- Current force levels do not permit coalition troops to partner with Afghan forces outside of Helmand and Greater Paktia, a factor that will significantly delay the growth in quality of the ANSF
- Considering that ANSF troops DO NOT ROTATE around the country, this means that ANSF forces in North and West, in Kandahar City, and in other parts of RC(South) are not and will not be partnered with ISAF forces
- Because ANSF forces do not rotate, ANA units in RC(South) are being ground up disproportionately. It is not at all clear that they will survive even the current level of strain. Increasing the strain by requiring them to undertake the clearing and holding of large areas of enemy-held ground without US reinforcements could well break them.
- As the commander of the 205th Corps based in Kandahar asked, “Are you trying to build an enduring [Afghan] Army or an expendable one?”
- **Bottom line: Failing to send reinforcements forces our commanders to ask, “What parts of the country would you like us to cede to the enemy? How can we cede areas to the enemy and still achieve the president’s objectives of preventing the re-establishment of terrorist sanctuaries?”**

Counter-Terrorism?



- The range of an armed Predator UAV is less than 500 miles—reaching the areas used in the 1990s as training camps for al Qaeda requires bases in either Afghanistan or Pakistan
- Special Forces teams can launch from further away, but require the availability of Combat Search and Rescue capabilities which, again, require bases in either Afghanistan or Pakistan
- The only option for pure CT operations that does not require local bases is long-range precision-guided munitions fired either from manned aircraft or from ships or submarines
 - But PGMs can only hit the targets they are aimed at; they cannot gather additional intelligence on the ground or react to changing circumstances as SF teams can, nor can they hang around to review the effects of their initial strike and then re-target, as UAVs can
 - The likelihood of seriously disrupting any network using only long-range PGMs is extremely low
- CT operations such as these are by far the most damaging individual undertakings for the perception of America in the region—they have been the principal cause of the civilian casualties that have so damaged America’s image in Afghanistan, and they have been the source of continual outrage by Pakistanis over the American violation of Pakistani sovereignty
- This strategy would confine American military involvement in this region solely to such operations

CT: Intelligence?

- Adopting an over-the-horizon CT approach means depending entirely on Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and CIA networks to locate targets
- Enemy leadership is very SIGINT savvy and very hard to target using only such information
- CIA networks, even supplemented by ISI reporting in Pakistan and local reporting through US and allied forces in Afghanistan, are not able to provide targetable intelligence on key enemy leaders even now
 - It took months to gain actionable intelligence on Beitullah Mehsud even with thousands of Pakistani troops milling around his bases and an enormous bounty on his head
 - Insurgent leaders move into and through Afghanistan even now despite ISAF efforts to target them
 - Extremely aggressive efforts by US and Iraqi forces with nearly complete freedom of movement have failed to provide actionable intelligence to target Abu Ayyub al Masri, leader of al Qaeda in Iraq since mid-2006
- The farther the strike asset (SF team, UAV, or missile) is based, the GREATER the intelligence requirement:
 - If the strike asset is located near the target, then the intelligence requirement is to know where the target will be in an hour or two
 - If the strike asset is located over-the-horizon, the intelligence requirement is to know where the target will be in 12, 16, or 24 hours
 - The difference is enormous when dealing with professional terrorists who know the dangers of staying in one place too long or moving according to any detectable pattern
- The fewer intelligence-gathering assets operating near the target, finally, the less likely they are to obtain actionable intelligence of any variety

CT Bases in Pakistan?

- Earlier this year, media reports indicated that American UAVs were flying from a Pakistani airbase near Quetta
- The revelation caused great embarrassment and diplomatic concern—and reportedly also caused the US to establish a new UAV base at Jalalabad, Afghanistan, in case the Pakistanis banned future operations from their base
- Considering the sensitivity of the Pakistani government and military to the issues of Pakistani sovereignty, and the problems associated with Pakistan's appearance of supporting an American war against its own people, relying on the use of Pakistani bases to conduct CT operations in Pakistan or in Afghanistan appears highly dubious
- At a minimum, any such strategy would be entirely dependent on the continuation in Islamabad of a government willing to pursue the current policies—an eventuality that seems highly questionable given the volatility of Pakistani politics, particularly on this issue

CT Bases in Afghanistan?

- Scenario: The US withdraws combat forces from Afghanistan, including trainers for the ANSF (which cannot be sustained without the presence of combat forces); NATO also withdraws (inevitably following a US withdrawal); violence increases as the ANSF is unable to fill the void; the Afghan Government loses control over large areas of the country, and Kabul comes under attack.
- Question: Why on earth would any Afghan leader support continued American military operations in his country aimed only at the enemies who threaten him the least?
- Question: What would be required to protect US forces based in Afghanistan to conduct CT missions?
- Question: How would they be supplied?
- Question: How would the US prevent the enemy from attacking lines-of-communication as they did with the Soviets?
 - We could certainly not rely on any over-land transport
 - Relying on air resupply is possible, BUT—the *mujahideen* had long experience in rocketing and mortaring runways when the Soviets did not control the surrounding high ground
 - All of the airbases we could use for such operations are vulnerable to such attacks
 - Would we then have to control the surrounding areas? With what?
 - The larger the force required to protect the strike-force, the greater the logistical requirements—and the more vulnerable the lines-of-communication become to even brief interruptions

Legal Framework for Afghan CT Bases

- Presence of international forces now is based on the request of the Afghan Government for support in implementing to Afghan Compact
- Adopting a pure CT approach implies abrogating the US commitment to that compact, and therefore the basis for the presence and activities of US forces in the sovereign state of Afghanistan
- The US would have to renegotiate a Status of Forces Agreement with the Afghan government to continue CT operations following such a withdrawal
- What would the Afghans demand in return for such an agreement? What restrictions would they impose? How long would the negotiations take? What would we do in the interim?

Afghan Population

- There is no reliable data on the size or distribution of the Afghan population because there has been no census in Afghanistan since 1979
- The most detailed and sober presentation is by the Afghan Information Management Services (www.aims.org.af), which is the source of the population data used in this presentation
- The district population figures given by AIMS, however, total roughly 20 million, whereas the generally-accepted figure for Afghanistan's population is around 32 million (although the CIA World Factbook notes that this figure is being revised downward and may be more like 27.5 million)
- Estimates in this product therefore use AIMS numbers multiplied by 1.5
- An additional caveat is that Afghanistan's population is very young—roughly half the population is under 15 years of age according to the CIA World Factbook
- It is thus possible that current estimates still understate the actual size of the population

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