

# STARS AND STRIPES

## AFGHANISTAN

### NATO International Security Assistance Force

#### March 2012

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Azerbaijan	Czech Republic	Germany	Jordan	Montenegro	Republic of Macedonia	Spain	United Kingdom
Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Latvia	Netherlands	Republic of Korea	Sweden	United States



**FULL NAME:** Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Afghanistan literally means Land of the Afghan)

**CAPITAL:** Kabul

**LOCATION:** Central Asia

**BORDERING COUNTRIES:** Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, Pakistan

**AREA:** 647,500 square miles. Landlocked with mostly rugged mountains and some plains in the north and southwest.

**AREA SIZE:** Slightly smaller than the state of Texas.

**POPULATION:** 29 million (2010 estimate)

**CLIMATE:** Arid to semi-arid; cold winters and hot summers

**RELIGION:** Sunni Muslim and Shiite Muslim

**LANGUAGE:** Pashto, Dari, Turkic languages (mostly Uzbek and Turkmen)

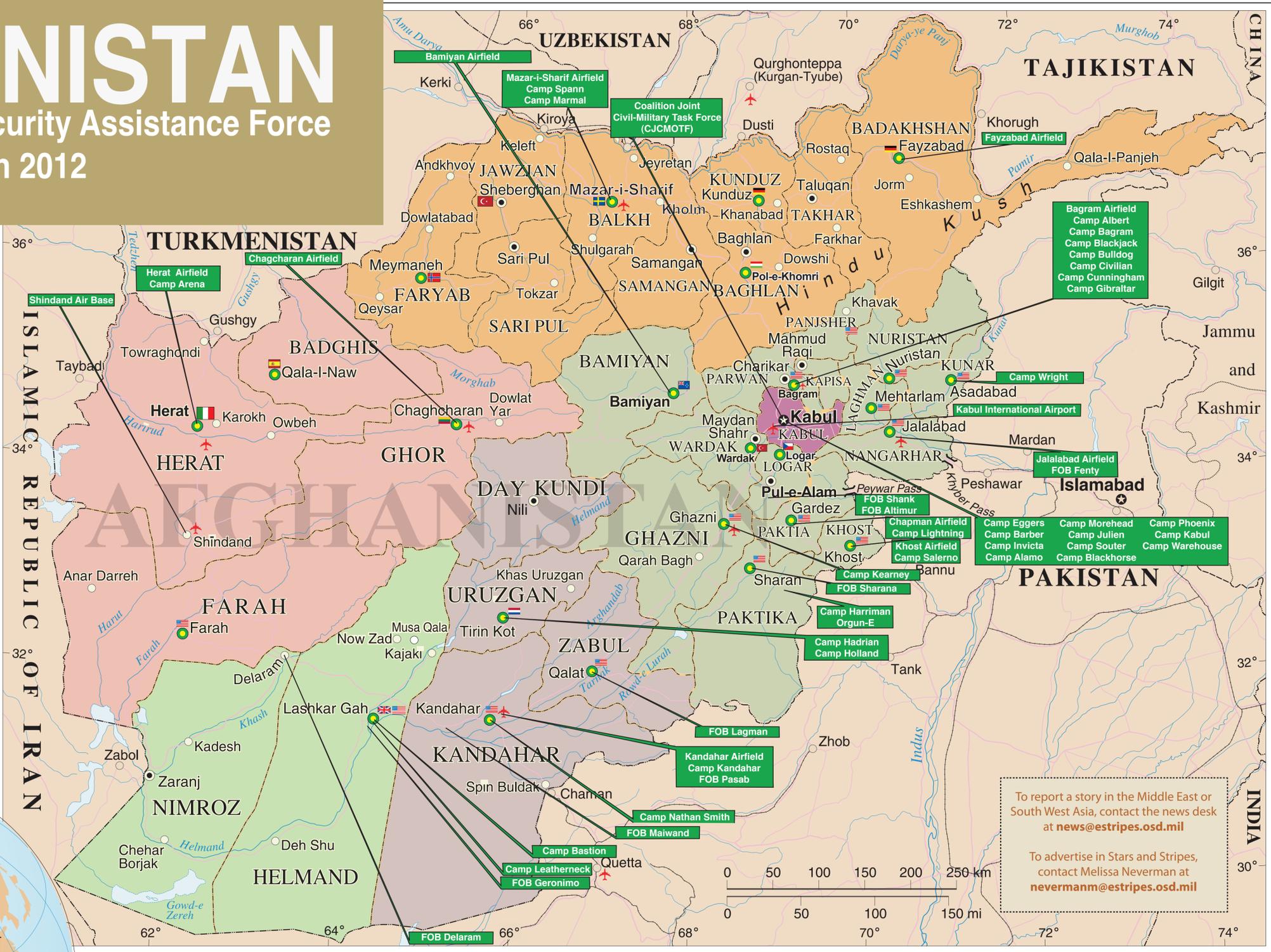
**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** Male: 44.45 years Female: 44.87 years (2010 estimate)

**INDEPENDENCE:** Aug. 19, 1919, from the United Kingdom

**NATIONAL HOLIDAY:** Independence Day, Aug. 19

**BACKGROUND:** U.S.-led air strikes were launched Oct. 7, 2001, against Afghanistan for harboring Saudi exile Osama bin Laden, the top suspect in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. A loose collection of warlords called the Northern Alliance took control and captured Kabul from the Taliban in November with the help of U.S. bombs and special forces. Troops from the U.S. and other nations have attempted to stabilize the country ever since amid violence and intimidation by the Taliban.

**POLITICAL SITUATION:** An interim administration, headed by Hamid Karzai, took power on Dec. 22, 2001, after various delegates in Bonn, Germany, signed an accord. The administration ruled for six months, and an emergency loya jirga, or meeting, was convened to decide on a transitional authority to lead Afghanistan until the people could elect a permanent government. Karzai was elected president by the loya jirga in June 2002 and appointed a cabinet. In 2004, Karzai was elected to a five-year term in the country's first nationwide post-Taliban vote. He won another term after Abdullah Abdullah, his top rival in 2009 elections, dropped out of a run-off election, saying the process was tainted.



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### LEGEND

- National Capital
- Provincial Capital
- ISAF PRT
- (Provincial Reconstruction Team)
- PRT Lead Nation
- Town, Village
- International Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Railroad
- Regional Command North
- Regional Command South
- Regional Command East
- Regional Command West
- Regional Command Capital
- Regional Command South West

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