



THE SEPTEMBER 2005 PARLIAMENTARY AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN



PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (NDI)



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NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Democracy depends on legislatures that represent citizens and oversee the executive, independent judiciaries that safeguard the rule of law, political parties that are open and accountable, and elections in which voters freely choose their representatives in government. Acting as a catalyst for democratic development, NDI bolsters the institutions and processes that allow democracy to flourish.

Build Political and Civic Organizations: NDI helps build the stable, broad-based and well-organized institutions that form the foundation of a strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions—the voice of an informed citizenry, which link citizens to their government and to one another by providing avenues for participation in public policy.

Safeguard Elections: NDI promotes open and democratic elections. Political parties and governments have asked NDI to study electoral codes and to recommend improvements. The Institute also provides technical assistance for political parties and civic groups to conduct voter education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. NDI is a world leader in election monitoring, having organized international delegations to monitor elections in dozens of countries, helping to ensure that polling results reflect the will of the people.

Promote Openness and Accountability: NDI responds to requests from leaders of government, parliament, political parties and civic groups seeking advice on matters from legislative procedures to constituent service to the balance of civil-military relations in a democracy. NDI works to build legislatures and local governments that are professional, accountable, open and responsive to their citizens.

International cooperation is key to promoting democracy effectively and efficiently. It also conveys a deeper message to new and emerging democracies that while autocracies are inherently isolated and fearful of the outside world, democracies can count on international allies and an active support system. Headquartered in Washington D.C., with field offices in every region of the world, NDI complements the skills of its staff by enlisting volunteer experts from around the world, many of whom are veterans of democratic struggles in their own countries and share valuable perspectives on democratic development.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

NDI established an office in Afghanistan in March 2002, initiating programs to support the development of emerging political parties and civic groups as effective and viable participants in Afghanistan's political and electoral processes. In addition to training on political party development, the Institute sponsored conferences on issues such as the role of political parties in Afghanistan, increasing women's participation in politics, and the 2004-2005 elections.

In 2004, the Institute established eight Election Training and Information Centers (ETICs) in Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Bamiyan, Herat, and Khost to provide political parties the infrastructure, services, and information necessary to participate effectively in Afghanistan's political and electoral process. Through the ETICs NDI conducted national-scale training seminars and workshops for registered parties on political party development, campaigning, and electoral processes, providing resource materials on such topics as organizational strengthening, constituency outreach, and improving media relations. In advance of the 2005 parliamentary elections, NDI trained over 13,000 campaign participants—including over 2,000 women—and provided training workshops to approximately 44,000 candidate agents. NDI has also assisted in the establishment of an Afghan election monitoring organization known as the Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), which conducted the country's most extensive domestic monitoring effort for the September 2005 elections.

Currently, NDI is implementing a one-year program to support women representatives in the National Assembly. In addition, the Institute anticipates implementing future programs designed to strengthen political processes in the newly formed National Assembly and provincial councils.

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I. Executive Summary

With the selection of the leadership of the National Assembly of Afghanistan during the last week in December, the final stages of the 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections have come to a close. These elections not only represent a critical step in Afghanistan's democratic development, they also mark the fulfillment of the major political aims of the Bonn Process.

This report discusses the political environment, technical preparations, campaign period, and results of the September 18, 2005 National Assembly and provincial council elections in Afghanistan. In addition, the report assesses the implications of these elections regarding the political dynamics in the new parliament and future challenges to the country's political development.

The first two sections of this report provide background information on the Bonn Process, the evolving security situation, and the key electoral participants in the 2005 polls. Sections four and five examine the processes surrounding pre-election preparations, the campaign period, election day, and vote counting. Sections six, seven, and eight detail the overall election results and the political implications for the Wolesi Jirga, provincial councils, and the indirectly elected Meshrano Jirga. The final section of the report examines some of the major challenges facing the future political development of Afghanistan's democratic institutions.

Given the considerable political, administrative, and security-related concerns prior to the 2005 elections, the successful constitution of the National Assembly and provincial councils represents a major success and a historic milestone in the progress of Afghanistan's political development. As an extremely resource-poor and aid-dependent country suffering from 25 years of warfare, these elections, and the establishment of new legislative institutions, mark a major achievement. Given the enormous challenges facing Afghanistan's future development, these elections are both a confirmation of the country's potential and a reminder to the international community of its responsibility to honor the aspirations of Afghan citizens through continued support and assistance to their newly formed institutions.

II. Afghanistan's Political Development

Bonn Process

On October 7, 2001, following the Taliban's refusal to expel Osama Bin Laden from Afghanistan, the United States led an international coalition of states in a military campaign to oust the Taliban. Operation Enduring Freedom, as the military campaign was known, quickly defeated the Taliban and supported warlord-led opposition groups, including the Northern Alliance, to regain control of Kabul. While the effort to disband the Taliban and capture Bin Laden continued, the United Nations began working with Afghan expatriates and the Northern Alliance to try and rebuild the country and create a stable governing body.

The demise of the Taliban provided a new opportunity for Afghans to rebuild their country. While the military offensive continued on the ground, the UN took a lead in the international reconstruction effort in Afghanistan. While promising to leave a "light footprint" in Afghanistan and allow Afghan citizens to rebuild their own country, the United Nations brought together the leading Afghan groups to Bonn, Germany in November 2001, to discuss plans for a future government in Afghanistan. The groups included the Northern Alliance, which represented the governments driven from power by the Taliban in 1996, under Massoud, Dostum, and Rabbani; the Rome Group, which represented former King Zahir Shah; the Peshawar Group, which represented millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan; and the Cyprus Group, which represented an Iranian backed group of Afghan exiles.

This meeting in Germany culminated with the signing of the Bonn Agreement, which provided for short-term power sharing among the groups listed above and established a timetable for a two-year transitional period. According to the Bonn agreement, an Interim Administration would be established to govern Afghanistan for the first six months of 2002. Its immediate function was to facilitate the provision and distribution of internal aid in the country. The Interim Administration's most important function was to convene a *Loya Jirga*, a council of tribal leaders, in June 2002. King Zahir Shah, who returned to Afghanistan on April 18, presided over the gathering to give the process legitimacy, but otherwise played a largely ceremonial role. The meeting was unofficially chaired by representatives of the US government and Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations' special representative for Afghanistan. The *Loya Jirga* in turn elected a Transitional Authority to govern until a representative government was elected by mid-2004.

Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun who broke with the Taliban early and had a long-standing friendship with the former king Zahir Shah, was appointed Chairman of the Interim Administration. Pashtun representation in the government was otherwise relatively low, with a dominant presence of the Northern Alliance, including General Mohammed Fahim, Younis Qanooni, and Abdullah Abdullah, who are all ethnic Tajiks from the Panshjeer valley and members of the Northern Alliance. Pashtuns from the southern regions of Afghanistan—including Kandahar, the Taliban's stronghold—had little representation in the new government.

As stipulated by the Bonn Agreement, on June 9, 2002, the Emergency *Loya Jirga* was convened. The *Loya Jirga* brought to Kabul more than 1,700 Afghans from across the country charged with selecting a broad-based, representative government. The attendees of *Loya Jirga* variously include tribal or regional leaders, political, military and religious figures, royalty, and government officials, etc. There are no time limits in the *Loya Jirga* process and it continues until decisions are reached. Decisions are made by consensus and no formal votes are taken. The mixed results of Afghanistan's Emergency *Loya Jirga* were largely a result of conditions in which it was held. Because international peacekeeping forces were not extended beyond Kabul to neutralize regional warlords, the politics of intimidation effected the election of delegates and influenced the major decisions at the *Loya Jirga*. "This is not a democracy. This is a rubber stamp," declared Sima Samar, the Minister of Women's Affairs and a delegate to the assembly. "Everything has been decided ahead by the powerful ones," she said, noting that numerous former militia leaders had taken part in the deal making. Afghans had gathered at the *Loya Jirga* to help shape their new government but many left frustrated at their lack of influence over the decision-making process. Some delegates also felt the process had been controlled "from behind the scenes" by the international community.

On June 19, Hamid Karzai was officially sworn in by the *Loya Jirga* as President of Afghanistan. Ten days later, Karzai appointed a cabinet to lead the newly established Afghan Transitional Administration (ATA). Many of the warlords and tribal leaders successfully influenced the decision-making process for cabinet posts, and acquired almost all high level positions, as only two civilians with non-military histories gained ministries.

Under the Bonn Agreement, the ATA was responsible for drafting and implementing a new constitution. The constitutional drafting process was viewed by many political analysts and observers to be problematic, as a number of electoral issues that would be covered in new constitution—the type of electoral system to govern the country, the role of political parties in the electoral system, and the role of women and minorities in the new government, for example—were designed to be addressed in a public consultative process before the final document was to be ratified. This process was limited, however, by the government's refusal to release its draft of the constitution at the time of the consultations, preventing citizens from commenting on the actual document.

A Constitutional *Loya Jirga* (CLJ) was convened in mid-December 2003 which, after three weeks of deliberation, ratified Afghanistan's new constitution on January 4, 2004. The CLJ comprised of 450 elected delegates, including reserved seats for women, minorities and refugees, and 52 delegates appointed by President Karzai, half of which were women. Many observers reported intimidation and vote buying throughout the election process, enabling warlords and Islamists to make a strong showing at the *Jirga*.

The new constitution called for a strong presidential system of government, but gave the national assembly—which will consist of the Wolesi *Jirga* (House of people) and a Meshrano *Jirga* (House of elders)—oversight powers including the right to impeach ministers and approve cabinet appointments. The constitution also stipulated that men

and women have equal rights and duties before the law. Although Sharia law was not mentioned in the constitution, it established Afghanistan as an Islamic republic with Islam as its “sacred religion,” mandating that “no law shall be contrary to the beliefs and practices of Islam.” Two other controversial issues were settled in the Jirga: former king Mohammad Zahir Shah is to be given the title “Father of the Nation” for his lifetime, and Pashto and Dari are the national languages with other minority languages to be considered official languages in the areas in which they are spoken.

Though the constitution stated that “every effort will be made” to hold the presidential and parliamentary elections at the same time, slow progress on improving security and registering voters prompted the transitional government to announce that the presidential and parliamentary elections would take place separately; the presidential election was held in October 2004 while the parliamentary and provincial council elections were scheduled to take place in September 2005.

Presidential Election

On October 9th, 2004, Afghanistan held the first direct presidential elections in its history. A reported 10.5 million Afghans registered to vote, with women making up 41.3 percent of those registered (for a detailed discussion of the registration process, see page 12). The elections themselves were generally peaceful and orderly, despite widely publicized threats by remnants of the Taliban regime to disrupt the polling. Eighteen candidates campaigned for the presidency and over 70 percent of registered citizens voted. Interim President Hamid Karzai was elected President with 55.4 percent of the vote. The success of the 2004 elections, in the face of substantial obstacles, laid a strong foundation for efforts to establish and institutionalize democratic governance in the country.

Prior to the election, many believed that the voting would be conducted primarily along ethnic and tribal lines. While ethnic affiliations played a strong role in the campaigning and voting, the actual polling results demonstrated that Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, managed to gain substantial support throughout much of the country and from the various ethnic and tribal communities. He achieved this level of popular appeal by making use his position as a widely known and well regarded national figure, and also by undertaking a conscious efforts to appeal across ethnic and tribal lines. The other 17 presidential candidates consisted of former officials, politicians with strong ethnic group support, professionals and tribal leaders. Karzai’s strongest opponents were: former education minister, Yunus Qanooni a Tajik; Mohammad Mohaqeq a member of the Hazara ethnic group; and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, a strong leader in the Uzbek community. Qanooni received 16 percent of the vote, Mohaqeq received 12 percent, and Dostum received 10 percent of the vote. The remaining 14 candidates received 7 percent of the votes cast.

Despite the overall success of the 2004 election, it was clear that significant challenges remained ahead of the 2005 national elections. The electoral infrastructure created in advance of the presidential election needed to be strengthened and expanded dramatically

to implement parliamentary and provincial council elections attracting thousands of candidates in districts nationwide. Significant progress on improving the security environment, strengthening the capacity of the newly constituted Interim Electoral Commission (IEC) and increasing civic and voter education were also needed to ensure that successful parliamentary and provincial council elections would take place as scheduled. Authorities originally planned for these elections to take place in April 2005, but the polling date later postponed until September 18, 2005, due to these multiple logistical challenges.

Legal Framework for Elections

The legal framework governing the electoral process was based on the constitution, electoral law, political party law, executive decrees and regulations issued by the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB). While some of these rules succeeded in providing a sound basis for regulating the elections process, there were problems in the design, implementation and enforcement of many of the rules.

Certain regulations governing the electoral process were vague, such as the definition of the campaign period, decreasing the likelihood that candidates would fully and consistently comply with regulations. There were also delays in releasing important regulations until relatively late in the pre-election period. One example of this concerned regulations on counting procedures, which were needed to specify procedures regarding the ability of domestic election monitors and candidate agents to accompany ballot boxes as they are transported from polling centers to provincial counting centers. Many candidates expressed concern about the security of this vote-counting process, which could have been addressed through the early release of these regulations and protocols.

Afghanistan's election law established the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) as the country's electoral system. Under SNTV, each elector has one vote in multiple-member provinces; candidates with the highest vote totals were sequentially awarded the seats assigned to each province.

Political parties face great challenges in competing in elections under SNTV. The systems favors large, highly organized and sophisticated political parties, few of which existed in Afghanistan prior to the elections. For parties to be successful under SNTV, they must first have an accurate estimation of their potential support in a certain constituencies. Second, they must field the number of candidates that will maximize the seats they can win based on their estimated support base. If a party fields too many candidates, it risks splitting its voter base among their candidates, reducing the chances that any will win seats. If a party can correctly estimate the number of candidates to put forward, it must have the organizational capacity to instruct and discipline its supporters to divide their votes among its candidates to maximize each candidate's potential of winning a seat. In an emerging political party system such as in Afghanistan, SNTV favors regionally concentrated, ethnically affiliated, and established political parties at the expense of nascent national or policy-oriented groups and coalitions (for a more detailed analysis of Afghanistan's major political groupings, see pages 20-26).

Many members of the international community and domestic political actors questioned the retention of SNTV for use in these elections on the grounds that it would create a fragmented legislature. SNTV proponents—including the United States government, electoral authorities, and President Karzai—unofficially provided a number of additional reasons for choosing SNTV: ease of voter education and of voting; promotion of women by encouraging them to run as independents; and decreasing the power of parties dominated by warlords.

Ironically, most of the suggested merits of voting under SNTV proved inaccurate:

- SNTV made voter education more difficult as the ballot was very lengthy in many provinces, and the lack of party symbols (and the addition of generic symbols) meant that voters had to spend longer periods in the polling booth to search for their candidate among 100 to 400 different names.
- Women did run as independents, only to encounter major difficulties in identifying the resources—volunteers, financing, and mobility—to run adequate campaigns. As a result, many women actually ran as party candidates while claiming to be independents.
- While many newly established political parties faced greater challenges under SNTV, the larger warlord-led regional parties proved that they could thrive under SNTV, employing the necessary discipline to mobilize their support base to vote strategically. It was the smaller, moderate democratic parties who suffered most under SNTV, as they lacked the organizational capacity to succeed under this system; almost all of these newer parties were consequently defeated during the elections.

From an administrative standpoint, the disadvantages of SNTV—in particular the large number of candidates the system produced—were also apparent throughout the electoral process. Heavily populated provinces had to print oversized, multi-page ballots to list all registered candidates. With almost 6,000 individual campaigns, campaign finance regulations could not be implemented and enforced, and candidate vetting had to continue throughout the campaign period and up to the election day itself. Finally, extensive planning had to be undertaken to allow equal access to over 240,000 candidate agents to the polling and counting centers on election day and during the prolonged counting process.

Security

Security constituted the greatest threat to the success of the September elections. As expected, violence perpetrated by a revitalized Taliban escalated as the elections approached. Armed factions, some of which are associated with the mujahedeen period, continue to operate in many parts of the country. This violence was not always targeted at election workers or candidates, but nevertheless created an atmosphere of fear around the

elections with the aim of destabilizing the government. In addition, tribal and family rivalries sometimes lead to broader social conflict that creates an atmosphere of fear in some communities. Although the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) were mandated to provide security for the elections, many believe that they had been inadequately trained and equipped to carry out this responsibility effectively. Almost 30,000 International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and Coalition Forces troops are stationed in Afghanistan, although their primary responsibilities do not include providing security for the elections. The international coalition continues its efforts to repel resurgent Taliban forces and excise al-Qaeda from Afghanistan. These forces are also deployed in strategic locations around the country in an effort to disrupt and bring to an end the illegal narcotics trade.

The parliamentary elections were held in an environment still plagued by violence. By most measures, the security environment had deteriorated somewhat beginning in 2005, with an increase in the number and sophistication of anti-government attacks. In the period prior to the elections a series of pro-government clerics were assassinated in Kandahar and other provinces, and multiple suicide bombings were carried out attacking government and police targets. Six candidates were murdered prior to election day, and electoral officials and civic education contractors were also targeted in a variety of attacks. Intimidation by armed groups and local government authorities were alleged to have occurred during the candidate nomination process, particularly in areas where armed groups are backing specific candidates.

As election day drew closer, intimidation also rose. Although the elections were to be conducted nationwide, neither the government nor the international community were able to guarantee security to candidates in certain “no go” areas. This situation benefited candidates protected by powerful local and provincial figures. As a result, candidates’ campaign activities in some provinces were limited and voters were faced with threats of violence and coercion leading up to election day.

III. Key Electoral Participants

Political Parties

At the time of the candidate nomination process (May 2005) there were 73 parties that were eligible to participate in the September 2005 elections. These parties, in addition to numerous non-registered parties, represent a mix of old and new political groups, some of which have evolved over the last three decades.¹

While political parties are not new to politics in Afghanistan, the October 2004 presidential election was the first time that parties had the opportunity to participate in a democratic electoral process. Some of the presidential candidates were party-affiliated, and even those who were not often relied on party support and organization during their campaigns. Many parties also participated in the presidential poll as candidate agents, constituting a large percentage of the 65,000 candidate agents that were accredited by the JEMB. Political parties that have emerged vary considerably in their policy orientations, geographic reach and the resources available to them.

Nevertheless, several factors have limited the development of an effective party system. First, the public's perception of parties has never been favorable, as the idea of a party system has been associated with past civil strife. To avoid these associations, President Karzai chose not to form or join a political party, further marginalizing party organizations after the 2004 presidential election. As discussed earlier, the SNTV electoral system favors independent candidates, because most parties, especially those that have only recently emerged, lack the organizational capacity to mobilize their supporters effectively under this system. Finally, the JEMB made a decision to exclude party names and symbols from the ballot. Thus, it was difficult for voters to identify a candidate's party affiliation, if any. In addition, some independents were, in fact, aligned with a party, although their allegiance was not well-known, or even actively concealed. Only 12 percent of candidates registered as affiliated with a political party.

Political parties in Afghanistan are being marginalized at a time when they could be performing several essential roles. Currently, absent strong political parties, Afghans have no institutionalized way, other than by the single act of voting, for expressing their support for or opposition to government policies. In addition, it is through parties that the nation's diverse ethnic and linguistic groups can be most effectively included in the political process. Stronger political parties could also help the newly formed legislature

¹ Some parties are the remnants or off-shoots of the mujahedeen parties of the 1970s. These include Eqtedar Milli Afghanistan, Nohzat-e Milli and Hizb-e Afghanistan-e Nawin (New Afghanistan Party). The "Leftist" parties, largely offshoots of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which was active between the 1960s and 1980s include Hizb-e Mutahid-e Milli (United National Party), Wolesi Milat and Zazman-I Inqilabi Zaahmatkishanan-i Afghanistan (SAZA). A separate grouping of parties constitutes those associated with the Nation Front for Democracy (NDF), a group of pro-democracy parties active in the lead-up to the Constitutional Loya Jirga. These include the Hezb-e Kar wa Tawse'ah (Labor and Development Party), Nohzat-e Azadi Wa Democracy and the Afghanistan Liberal Party. Other parties that are significant in terms of their membership, geographical scope and religious orientation, but which do not fall into the above divisions, include the Republican Party of Afghanistan, Afghan Millat, Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami, Jamiat-e Islami, Hizb-e Islami, Ittihad-e Islami and Wahdat Islami-e Mardum.

organize itself by mediating and bargaining among the various interests that will be represented in the Wolesi Jirga. More effective parties, in short, would strengthen political stability during this critical stage of Afghanistan's ongoing transition.

Independent Candidates

Officially only 13 percent of the candidates registered were formally affiliated with a political party; however, most observers agree that the true figure was far higher. Many party candidates chose to register as independents, for two major reasons. First, due to delays in the party registration process, several large parties were prevented from registering until the eve of the candidate nomination process. Yunus Qanooni's Naveen Party was the largest of these parties, and ultimately registered the majority of their candidates as independents. Second, the negative perception of parties as destructive forces in recent Afghan history led many candidates to hide their party affiliation in order to avoid a popular backlash.

The lack of public party identities and platforms in the campaign meant that virtually all candidates ran as independents. Because parties could not play a more active role in supporting candidates, campaigning was restricted to relatively narrow geographical boundaries. As media advertising was tightly controlled through the efforts of the Media Commission, there was no noticeable dominance of the media by parties or party candidates, and independents took advantage of the subsidized ads through the campaign period. While campaigning by independents was active and pervasive in most provinces, the overwhelming number of separate campaigns raised barriers to campaigning on grounds aside from ethnic, regional, or tribal affiliations.

The Joint Electoral Management Body

In the months leading up to the September 2005 elections, the JEMB made significant progress in the technical administration of the electoral process. Most observers agree that the JEMB was better prepared than it was prior to the presidential election. The JEMB established offices in every province around the country, all of which were staffed and operational months ahead of election day. The JEMB identified a limited number of senior personnel, each of whom was responsible for recruiting and training a portion of the 200,000 national staff it deployed on election day. To improve its capacity to carry out public outreach, the JEMB established an external relations department. Attempting to make its operations as transparent as possible, the JEMB also revamped its website, regularly updating it and ensuring that its latest regulations are available on-line.

The JEMB also conducted a civic education program in advance of the elections. With a relatively short timeframe in which to conduct these elections, the JEMB had to focus much of its public awareness efforts on voter education, rather than on broader civic education. As a result, citizens were largely familiar with the mechanics of voting (which was very important given the complexity of the ballot) but many voters lacked a full understanding of the duties of the members they are electing. Without a fuller understanding of post-election governance, citizens may also have unrealistic

expectations about the Wolesi Jirga. This problem is even more pronounced in connection with the provincial councils, whose powers and roles remain undefined by a law on provincial councils.

JEMB regulations also provided for a candidate vetting process (for a detailed discussion of the effectiveness of this process, please see the “Candidate Registration and Vetting” section below). An independent Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), which was responsible for handling and adjudicating all electoral complaints and challenges, was also established by the JEMB. The ECC headquarters in Kabul completed training for provincial election commissioners, who were deployed to all provinces during the pre-election period. Given the highly contested nature of these provincial-based elections and the absence of a functioning judicial system, the establishment of the ECC was an important achievement. (For more information on the ECC, please see section V below).

Election Monitors and International Observers

The 2005 elections were observed by both international and domestic election monitors. In total, the JEMB accredited 242,503 persons. Of these, 10,607 were national observers, 781 international observers, 31,854 were political party agents, 197,981 candidate agents and 1,280 media representatives.² Domestic election monitoring groups deployed observers across the country in large numbers during these elections.³ Afghanistan’s largest domestic monitoring organization, the Free and Fair Elections Foundation (FEFA), was established through the support and expertise provided through NDI’s USAID-funded elections programs. In the October 2004 presidential elections, FEFA had the most extensive coverage (2,300 monitors) and provided the most comprehensive account of the October 2004 presidential election. During the parliamentary and provincial council elections, FEFA fielded more than 7,000 male and female observers in 3,700 polling centers, accounting for 65 percent of the total polling centers in the country. FEFA was organized in each of the 34 provinces and covered a total of 217 districts including all 14 provincial districts and the 22 city districts of Kabul.

² JEMB, JEMB Final Report, December 2005

³ The following domestic groups were accredited as official observers: the Afghan Women Network, Anjuman-e-Fahleen Huqooq Zanan Turkman, Anjuman-e-Farhangi Awahai Zaranj, Bunyaad-e-Sadah-e-Azadi, Bunyad Inkishaf-e-Bazsazi Shahab (SDRF), Bunyadi Enkishafi Maiham (MDF), Community Forum Development Organisation (CFDO), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), Democratic Lawyer's Union of Afghanistan, Etahadia Mili-e-Journalism-e-Afghanistan (Journalists' Union), Free and Fair Election Foundation of Aghanistan (FEFA)*, Human Rights Association for Turkman Women, Jamahia Hoquq Danaan-e-Jawan Afghanistan (Jahja), Kabul Orthopedic Organisation (KOO) Kahnnoon Tafaum, Kamiusun Mostaqilia Huqoq Bashar (AIHRC), Musesa Bazsazi sul-e-Emar-e-Mujadad-e-Afghanistan (RPRA), Reyasat Shura-e-Mardum Asly Kabul, Sazman-e-Jonbish Nawin Afghanistan, Shora-e-Adalat-e-Kwahan-e-Afghanistan, Shura-e-Islami Hambastagi Milate Afghanistan Shura-e-Markazi Etehadia-e-Bihzaad Arya, Shura-e-Markazi Etehadia-e-Mili-Karkunaan-e-Afghanistan, Shura-e-Mili Hambastagi Turkmanan Afghanistan, and Teachers Association (UOTA), the National Unity Tribes Assembly of Afghanistan.

*NOTE: FEFA observation partners include DSM (Democrats Students Movement), AAYR (Association of Afghans Youth Rights), AWSE (Afghan’s Women Service & Education), ECW (Educational Center for Women), UAY (Union of Afghan Youth), JACKS (Afghan Capability & Knowledge Society), THRA (Training Humans Rights Association), SRP (Surkhroad Rehabilitation Program), RSA (Rehabilitation Services for Afghanistan), MSCO (Morning Social & Cultural Organization), ANPA (Afghan National Participation Association), HPS (Heart Professionals Society), ISPRC (International Strategic & Political Research Center), CoAR (Coordination of Aid for Rehabilitation), Association of Judges, Anjuman-e-Qazi Wazir Mohammad Akbar Kahn, and others.

In its two press conferences on election day and in its summary report, FEFA highlighted the following positive developments: security; quality of materials; demeanor of polling officials toward voters and observers; the mechanism of receiving complaints; and prevention of multiple voting. Among the technical issues and problems FEFA observed at the opening of the polls and the voting process were the late opening of the polls, a lack of materials, and interference by candidate agents. The violations that were reported included partisan behavior of polling officials; affiliation of polling officials with candidates or political parties; intimidation of voters; altering of the voter registration cards; and non-removal of propaganda materials in the polling centers. Proxy voting, where men voted for women (often members of the same family), was also reported. Finally, FEFA observed that the complexity of the ballot combined with little awareness by some voters on the process led to voters taking more time in casting the vote.

Several international missions were also deployed to observe election day. The European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) all sent teams to conduct medium and short-term observation. The Asia Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), which sent a delegation of some 40 observers for the October 2004 poll, also sent a delegation for the September 18 elections. International observer delegations worked closely with FEFA and other domestic monitoring groups to expand the reach of observation activities. Most international observers were not able to freely move around the country due to the security situation. FEFA, on the other hand, was able to reach many locations that were inaccessible to international observers. While even FEFA was not able to reach all polling districts, the domestic election monitors were able to provide other groups with a significantly broader and more comprehensive perspective on the elections process.

IV. Pre-Election Period

Voter Registration

Voter registration for the 2004 presidential election served as the basis for the registration for the 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections. In the absence of identity cards, the registration requirements were rudimentary: individuals were able to simply appear at a voter registration site, claim that they were Afghan citizens and of voting age (18), and were issued voter registration cards. For a number of reasons, including the lack of a census, the decision was made not to create a nationwide electronic voter registry. This opened the process to criticism, as many believed it led to widespread incidents of fraudulent or multiple registration.

For the 2004 presidential election, registration was an open national process that took no account of provincial divisions. For the 2005 provincially-based elections, however, voters had to be registered in the province in which they were planning to vote. Consequently, the registration campaign aimed to provide voters an opportunity to register, or re-register, if their voter registration cards did not specify their province of residence. The JEMB decided to re-open registration facilities to allow a number of different groups to register, re-register or change their information. The JEMB provided the following explanation for re-opening the registration process:

- Voters may not have understood when registering that they would have to vote in the province stated on their card and therefore may have recorded their permanent family residence rather than their current province of residence;
- Internal migration since registration may have meant that the details on the Voter Registration Card were incorrect and would require voters to amend their details;
- Where provincial boundaries are unclear or new provinces have been formed (Panjshir and Daikundi), many voters may have had the wrong province on their Voter Registration Cards.
- Individuals who have reached the age of 18 since the last voter registration period;
- Those who chose not to or were unable to register for the presidential election, but who wished to vote in the parliamentary elections (particularly women in some areas);
- Individuals who returned to Afghanistan since the end of the last registration process;
- Those who have lost their Voter Registration Card.

The 2005 voter registration took place between June 25 and July 21, with voters being able to register at one of over 1,055 Registration Stations (three of which were unable to open), including 82 dedicated to Kuchis. In the end, approximately 1.7 million Afghans visited the Registration Stations, increasing the registry of eligible voters by 13.9 percent over the 2004 registration totals; as a result, 12.8 million voters were registered for the 2005 elections. Women accounted for 44 percent of the total number of new registrants, with considerably higher percentages in the South and Southeast areas of the country.

Throughout the electoral process, there were many allegations of multiple registrations and multiple voting. The high turnout by female voters in the more traditional areas has led many to believe there were serious deficiencies in the registration system. The election authorities realized that they would have to accept the fact that these elections would be run in the absence of a true voter registry, which created significant logistical problems as well as opening up the elections to the possibility of widespread fraud.

The lack of a voter registry also created logistical and financial challenges to the administration of the elections. For example, without knowing how many voters were assigned to a polling station, election authorities had to print millions of extra ballots, positioned in central areas throughout the country, to respond to the possibility of high turn out in certain areas.

Candidate Registration and Vetting

From April 30 to May 26, 2005, the JEMB conducted a nationwide candidate nomination process. The JEMB collected and processed applications from over 6,000 prospective candidates. According to JEMB's report on the candidate nomination process, a total of 2,835 people had nominated themselves as Wolesi Jirga candidates, including 66 Kuchis and 344 women. A total of 3,201 Afghans had come forward as candidates for the 34 Provincial Councils, including 285 women. The candidate nomination period was extended beyond its original May 19 deadline after security problems forced the closure of several provincial candidate nomination offices. The deadline was extended by three days in all provinces except Nangarhar, where the deadline was extended by six days to make up for the longer closure of the office in that province.⁴

Candidates were required to submit a list of signatures of registered voters (300 signatures for Wolesi Jirga candidates; 200 for Provincial Council candidates) who supported their candidacy and a cash deposit of 10,000 Afghanis (\$200 USD) for Wolesi Jirga candidates and 4,000 Afghanis (\$80) for provincial councils candidates. In addition, each candidate was required to sign the code of conduct for candidates, as well as a declaration of compliance with the candidate eligibility criteria as defined in the constitution and the electoral law. Although there were complaints concerning the fees required from some of the independent candidates, the overwhelming numbers of candidates demonstrated that the "barriers to entry" for these elections were not exclusionary; in fact, some believe the criteria should have been more rigorous, an issue currently being considered by those involved in post-election planning.

Although JEMB regulations provided for a candidate vetting process, many believed this process to be flawed and politically influenced. The JEMB provisionally disqualified 208 candidates suspected of having ties to illegally armed groups. In order to avoid disqualification, these candidates were given approximately two weeks to disarm or

⁴ JEMB, Report on the Candidate Nomination Process - Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections 30 April – 26 May 2005, prepared by the Joint Electoral Management Body 30/05/2005

provide evidence that the alleged ties to illegally-armed groups had been severed. The list of candidates suspected of having ties to illegally armed groups was prepared by the Joint Secretariat on Disarmament and Reintegration, based on recommendations by the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), ISAF and the Ministry of Interior. Numerous observers stated that provisionally disqualified candidates comprised only a small fraction of those who could have been disqualified because of links to illegally-armed groups.

Further, Afghanistan's constitution prohibits those convicted of certain human rights abuses from standing for election.⁵ However, in the absence of a functioning judicial system, few, if any, human rights violators have been convicted of crimes. Many expressed concern that this apparent contradiction allowed individuals who should not be qualified as candidates to run for office. While the JEMB did undertake a candidate vetting process prior to the elections, the JEMB was not able to block the candidacies of numerous candidates with alleged ties to illegally armed groups. Nevertheless, many question the legitimacy of the Wolesi Jirga that includes major human rights abusers and leaders of armed factions who, under the spirit of the law, should have been disqualified.

Campaign Period

The campaign period, while energetic, did not revolve around candidate platforms or policies. Rather, the majority of the campaign materials used by the candidates focused on themselves, as individuals. Independent candidates focused on the need for recognition of candidate symbols and pictures; very little effort was made to address specific issues. Parties focused on strategically dividing their support base to achieve the maximum number of seats. When candidates did venture out to engage the public, they appeared to remain in local neighborhoods; candidates covering the entire province during the campaign were rare. Approximately 60 percent of the candidates—mostly in urban areas and of those a high proportion of women—took advantage of the Media Commission's initiative to provide candidate with free (or sponsored) TV and radio advertisements. Data from the Media Commission shows that of those who used the sponsored ads, independent candidates made up 85 percent of this figure, while 15 percent were affiliated with political parties. These percentages roughly correspond to the breakdown of independent and party candidates overall. Interestingly, female candidates used the sponsored advertisement program far more than did men—76 percent of all women candidates used the sponsored ads, while only 55 percent of male candidates did so. Many women candidates saw these radio and TV ads as a way of compensating for their lack of mobility and other factors affecting their ability to reach out to communities and voters.

⁵Under Article 85 of the Constitution, "a person who is nominated or appointed as a member of the National Assembly should ...not have been convicted by a court for committing crimes against humanity, other crimes, or deprivation of civil rights."

V. Balloting and the Vote Count

Due to logistical and financial constraints, the JEMB mobilized the vast majority of its 200,000 polling officials only a week before election day, limiting the time available for their training. Many of the complaints of election irregularities recorded on election day were caused by this lack of long-term training for polling officials. While the JEMB carefully hired and extensively trained senior election officials, such as Field Coordinators, these officials were not deployed in large enough numbers to monitor polling activities thoroughly. In Balkh province, for instance, 24 Field Coordinators were hired to recruit local staff and manage approximately 1,000 polling stations; their ability to remedy electoral disputes requiring immediate attention was therefore limited.

Voter Turnout

According to the JEMB, a total of 6.4 million registered voters cast votes in the 2005 elections. This figure was significantly lower than the 7.3 million votes recorded in the 2004 presidential election, but the decrease in voter turnout was not as large as many media outlets initially reported. In addition, the percentage-based voter turnout figures (see the table below) may have been understated due to instances of citizens holding multiple voter cards, which artificially inflated the total number of registered voters.

Table 1.1 Percentage of 2005 Election Turnout in Selected Provinces

Province	Est. % Turnout
<i>Top Five</i>	
Bamyan	72
Paktika	72
Samangan	67
Ghor	67
Takhar	66
<i>Bottom Five</i>	
Parwan	36
Kabul	34
Kandahar	25
Uruzgon	25
Zabul	22
National Average	49

Various reasons have been cited for the lower turnout in the 2005 elections:

- With approximately 6,000 candidates, many Afghans were overwhelmed by the choices and instead chose not to participate in the elections;

- With known warlords, commanders and those with obvious drug links on the ballot, many Afghans found it difficult to find legitimate candidates.
- Many Afghans were confused about why elections were being held again, less than one year after the presidential election; many believed that the civic education efforts did not properly address this issue.
- These elections represented a “referendum” on President Karzai’s performance in office over the last year; many claim that his inability to improve the lives of Afghans, strengthen the economy or improve the security situation discouraged Afghans from participating.

It is likely that the low turnout is a result of a combination of factors. However, other explanations are possible as well. Focusing on the provinces with the lowest turnout, it is likely that voter security was a factor, as Kandahar, Uruzgon and Zabul represent some of the more dangerous areas in the country. Low turnout in Kabul province however, suggests that some of factors listed above were influential as well.

Counting Process

With almost 13 million voters and 6,000 candidates, it was inevitable that the counting process would be long and complicated. Further, the count was expected to be hotly contested and controversial given the potential for narrow margins of victory produced by the SNTV system.

According to the JEMB’s final report, “it was decided by the JEMB that the count would be conducted at the provincial level, rather than in polling stations. This ensured greater protection against electoral fraud and guarded the secrecy of the community vote, which thus protected against intimidation.” This decision was criticized throughout the campaign by several prominent candidates, including Younis Qanooni, the leader of the National Understanding Front (and eventually Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga). He argued that the chances of electoral fraud would be lessened by an immediate count at the polling station, claiming that the widespread fraud committed in the presidential election robbed him of the position of president. Nevertheless, electoral authorities were concerned about possible retribution toward voters if the count was made public at the local level.

As a result, votes were counted at counting centers in the provincial capital, with the exception of Nuristan and Kunar, where security and logistical challenges prevented the establishment of count centers and for which the ballots were counted in separate count centers in Jalalabad.

The JEMB report detailed the process further: “Over 10,000 staff were trained for the count. Data entry clerks were trained and deployed to the counting centres to set up the necessary IT infrastructure to keep track of the polling stations and ballot boxes and to upload result forms. Large ballots and the need to mix ballots from different districts into batches to protect the secrecy of the community vote necessitated complicated and multilayered counting procedures. The count process was divided into three parts: the

intake of materials, the reconciliation of the ballots from polling stations and the count itself. In addition, extensive and detailed audit and quarantine procedures were developed to identify instances of fraud in polling stations and to isolate these polling stations from the count”.

Counting began a few days after election day, and by November 12 final results for all provinces were released. The prolonged delay (counting was expected to be complete by October 22) was primarily due to the necessity of quarantining the results from entire polling stations, re-checking the ballots from the stations in question, and then deciding whether or not to reject all ballots from quarantined stations.

Irregularities and Complaints

There are serious concerns about the influence of provincial and local government officials in the administration of the elections. Reports indicate that local government officials, particularly certain governors, actively interfered in the electoral process. These authorities reportedly showed preference to particular candidates, including: pressuring government employees, such as teachers, to vote for preferred candidates; providing security only for preferred candidates; and funding meetings for preferred candidates using government resources. For example, a recent report by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) noted that the district administrator of Shahr-i-Buzurg, in the Badakshan province, confiscated hundreds of voter registration cards and threatened fines to punish campaign activities taking place without his authorization. The report also noted that the Governor of the Helmand province limited the political rights of his opponents and pressured rival candidates to withdraw.⁶ Although the president issued a decree requiring local government officials to refrain from activities that favor particular parties or candidates, government authorities did not sufficiently enforce or publicize this decree in a manner that could significantly curtail these incidents of direct interference.

Another source of irregularities and fraud was the re-registration process, which led to problems of proxy voting on election day. As JEMB states in its final elections report:

The lack of protection against multiple registration was an inherent weakness of the 2005 registration. Without accurate personal documentation existing or a comparison of biometric data, there were no mechanisms to protect against multiple registration...the absence of a reliable voter registry and the resulting absence of an exact voter list for each polling station was one of the most significant weaknesses of the electoral process, seriously affecting...the election administration’s ability to protect against electoral fraud⁷.

⁶ For the full report, see AIHRC-UNAMA Joint Verification of Political Rights, Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections First Report, 19 April – 3 June, 2005.

⁷ JEMB, JEMB Final Report, p.14.

The percentage of women who registered during the JEMB's Voter Registration Update Period (June 25 – July 21, 2005) was “higher nationally than the percentage that registered last year (during the comparable period), and the number of women registering in more traditional areas of Afghanistan was considerably higher, particularly in the South and Southeastern regions.”⁸ This struck many observers as highly suspicious; however without an official voter's registry there was no way to investigate the extent of possible abuse. The weakness in the system led to widespread proxy voting in some provinces in the South and Southeast, particularly in Paktika and Paktia provinces. In the Southeast region, polling staff noted that men often arrived at polling stations with dozens of voter registration cards for women, insisting that they be allowed to vote on their behalf.⁹

The other most commonly reported irregularity was ballot stuffing, mostly for community or tribal leaders who, because of their positions, were not challenged. In several cases, NDI staff observed groups of 20 – 40 already-bundled ballots for a single candidate before the ballot boxes were opened.

Another common allegation was that JEMB staff were involved in corrupt practices, although it is difficult to estimate how widespread this really was. In Afghanistan, where tribal and community ties are strong, problems emerged due to fielding polling staff in their home constituencies. While it appeared that the 200,000 election officials received adequate training on polling procedures, tribal, clan and community loyalties often trumped this training.

In total, the JEMB excluded 703 polling stations and 74 ballot boxes (equivalent to just over 2.5 percent of polling stations) from the count because of clear indications of fraud. Although this represents a substantial number (and, according to most observers, understates the true size of the irregularities), it was considered insufficient to challenge the integrity of the elections as a whole.

Grievance Process and the Election Complaints Commission

To address the complaints and challenges arising from the registration, campaign, voting and counting processes, an Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) was established under Article 52 of the Electoral Law. Composed of three international commissioners and two Afghan commissioners, the commission received submissions on the following issues:

- The registration of, or refusal to register, specific persons as voters;
- The nomination of candidates and their eligibility;
- Financial disclosures by political entities, their candidates, and independent candidates;
- Alleged violations of the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Candidates and their Agents;

⁸ JEMB, JEMB End of Registration Report, 21 July 05, p. 3.

⁹ JEMB, JEMB Final Report, p.16.

- Errors or dishonesty in polling or the counting of votes; and,
- Any other matter that goes to the substantive right to vote and to participate in the election.

The sanctions available to the ECC included the following:

- Issuing a warning to, or order, the offending individual or organization to take remedial action;
- Imposing a fine of up to 100,000 Afghanis;
- Ordering a recount of ballots or a repeat of polling;
- Removing a candidate from the Candidate List; and,
- Prohibiting the offending individual from serving in the JEMB or its Secretariat for a period not exceeding 10 years.¹⁰

The ECC was a target for much criticism throughout the entire election period, largely due to outsized expectation regarding what the ECC could accomplish with available resources. Following the candidate registration period in early summer, the ECC disqualified approximately one dozen candidates for having and retaining links to illegal armed groups; this figure was greeted with astonishment by the general public, as there were expected to be many more disqualifications. Later in the process, the ECC provisionally disqualified 208 candidates for links to illegal armed groups; again, only a small percent of those on the list were actually disqualified.

A common complaint about the ECC was focused on the relatively poor performance of its Provincial Election Commissioners (PECs). The PECs were designed to expedite the grievance process by acting as a first point of contact for citizens; the PECs were charged with making an initial assessment of a given complaint and then submitting reports to ECC headquarters in Kabul. Wherever possible, the PEC was to try to resolve complaints at the local level through discussions with parties involved. Unfortunately, it appeared that the PECs were poorly trained and generally unqualified or unwilling to make those initial assessments; as a result, the ECC in Kabul was inundated with complaints from around the country. Further, there was a lack of timely information about the status complaints, which fed a general dissatisfaction and mistrust about the process and its effectiveness.

By election day, 28 disqualifications were made to the candidate list; 21 for retaining links to illegal armed groups, and six for retaining government employment (under the election regulations those holding government positions of a certain level of seniority were required to quit prior to registering as a candidate).

Throughout the voting and counting processes, the ECC received over 2,800 complaints (adding to the 2,600 filed during the campaign period). To streamline its work, the ECC identified 575 priority cases, which it believed could affect the election results; these cases were ruled on by the time the JEMB was ready to issue the final results. Before its

¹⁰ ECC Fact Sheet, Election Complaints Commission of Afghanistan, May 2005

dissolution at the end of November, the ECC had imposed fines (which ranged up to 100,000 Afghanis) in 22 cases, banned nine electoral officials from working in future elections, and disqualified a final total of 37 candidates.

One of the lingering public criticisms of the ECC was the general lack of sanctions it issued for intimidation of voters and candidates. According to most anecdotal evidence, these irregularities began well before the candidate nomination process and continued through the campaign, voting, and counting periods.

VI. Election Results and Implications

Political Parties

Given that parties were not officially recognized in the elections, it is difficult to predict the political dynamics of the parliament at this time; the large number of independents means that the balance of votes may shift from issue to issue. However, based on unofficial party affiliations, a preliminary and approximate prediction of the emergence of larger potential political groupings can be made. The chart below outlines anticipated party strength in the Wolesi Jirga.

Table 1.2 Largest Political Parties in Wolesi Jirga

Political Party	Party Leader	Est. # of Seats
Hezb-e-Jamiat Islami Afghanistan	Burhanuddin Rabbani	25 – 30
Hezb-e-Junbesh-e-Milli Islami Afghanistan	Abdul Rashid Dostum	23 – 25
Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami-e-Mardum Afghanistan	Mohammad Mohaqiq	20 – 25
Hezb-e-Afghanistan Naveen	Mohammad Younis Qanooni	22 – 26
Hezb-e-Tanzim-e-Dawat Islami Afghanistan	Abdul Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf	10 – 12
Hezb-e-Mutahed Milli Afghanistan	Nur al-Haq Ulemi	10 – 12
Hezb-e-Afghan Milat	Anwar al-Haq Ahadi	7 – 8
Hezb-e-Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan	Sayyed Ahmad Gailani	6 – 8
Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami	Mohammad Karim Khalili	5 – 6
Hezb-e-Eqtedare Islami	Seyyed Mustafa Kazemi	5 – 6

(NOTE: The spelling above is consistent with the spelling found in newspapers and other written documents)

As expected, the north of Afghanistan was divided up rather evenly by the three parties that dominate the region: Junbesh under Abdul Rashid Dostum (although Dostum did not run as a candidate); Jamiat under Burhanuddin Rabbani (initially serious candidate for the position of Speaker); and, Wahdat under Mohammad Mohaqeq (who ran in Kabul province rather than in the north). Indeed, compared to the rest of the country, the north had virtually no independent candidates.

In the rest of the country (the large west-south-east crescent which comprised the majority of support for President Karzai in last year's presidential elections) the largest parties entering the Wolesi Jirga will be Abdul Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf's Tanzim-e-Dawat and Afghan Millat (lead by the current Finance Minister Ahadi). In the Kandahar area and in Kabul, the former Communists under Nur al-Haq Uleми's Mutahed Milli managed to win an estimated 10 to 12 seats.

The National Understanding Front

The most significant coalition will likely be the National Understand Front (NUF), a loose grouping of 11 parties, under the leadership of Mohaqeq and Qanooni. This new political alliance includes the following parties:

- Hezb-e-Afghanistan Naween led by Muhammad Yunus Qanooni
- Wahdat-e-Mardum Afghanistan led by Haji Mohammad Mohaqeq
- Hezb-e-Iqtedar Islam led by Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai
- Hezb-e-Harakat Islami led by Sayed Mohammad Lia Jawed
- Wahdat Milli led by Mohammad Akbari
- Hezb-e-Isteqlal Milli Afghanistan led by Taj Mohammad Wardak
- Hezb-e-Harakat Enqelab Islami led by Ahmad Nabi Ahmad
- Hezb-e-Wahdat Aqwami Milli Afghanistan led by Nasrullah Barakzai
- Hezb-e-Eqtedar Islami Afghanistan led by Qara Beig Ezedyar
- Hezb-e-Islami Jawan Afghanistan led by Sayed Jawad Husseini
- Hezb-e-Sulh wa Wahdat-e-Milli Afghanistan led by Emami Ghori

Qanooni's campaign strategy—choosing a personality-based platform with relatively little promotion of his party's allied candidates—proved less effective than many expected. His party is poised to have only 22 to 26 seats in the Wolesi Jirga. Mohaqeq, using the organizational strength of his Wahdat party, and effectively mobilizing the Haraza community in Kabul's west end, was more successful than his NUF rival, while at the same time distributing his support more strategically to ensure he has between 20 and 25 of his party colleagues in the Wolesi Jirga. This could upset the balance of power within the NUF, with Mohaqeq emerging as the leader in the lower chamber and Qanooni forced to accept the position of Speaker. In addition, it is important to note that the NUF itself will not constitute a working majority in the Wolesi Jirga, and that a serious effort will have to be made by its leadership to reach out to both smaller parties and independents if it to become the major opposition group in the lower chamber. Junbesh will also play a critical role, given its strong showing of approximately 23 to 25 seats.

Independents

Though the electoral system produced thousands of independent candidates, it remains unknown how many of these independents are informally affiliated with political parties. For example, the candidates of Jamiat in the north almost exclusively ran as independents while still maintaining party ties and receiving full support from the party during the campaign. Junbesh candidates did likewise.

In the end, the majority of independents elected to the National Assembly were from the Pashtun areas of the South and Southeast, most of whom can be categorized as broadly pro-Karzai in outlook. The decision of the president not to formally establish his own political party or endorse a particular party, meant that a large proportion of his supporters ran as independents.

When parliamentary groupings start to register with the Speaker's office—a process likely to begin in April 2006—it will be possible to determine how many of the independent National Assembly members are truly independent. Since the elections, many nominal independents have revealed their party affiliations. Many others have responded to the invitations of the larger political party to join their parliamentary groupings. It is estimated that there will remain only a handful of independents (between 35 to 45 out of the 249 seat Wolesi Jirga) once the process for registering as a parliamentary group has begun.

One likely grouping of independents promises to be the “National Assembly,” a collection of pro-Karzai independents, backed by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intellectuals and small businessmen active in the Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Jalalabad areas. Another potential group is being formed by Daoud Sultanzai, a pro-Karzai Pashtun originally from Ghazni who returned from living abroad to run as a candidate for the Wolesi Jirga. The ultimate size and strength of these coalitions will depend on the success of political recruiting efforts in the first months of the National Assembly.

Women

The Afghan Constitution guarantees that “from each province on average at least two female delegates shall have membership to the Wolesi Jirga,” therefore guaranteeing women 68 seats (27 percent) in the 249 member Wolesi Jirga (Afghanistan's lower house). Similarly, the Afghan election law contains a provision that at least 25 percent of seats in the Provincial Councils must be reserved for women.

Overall, the performance of women in these elections was surprisingly strong, both in the Wolesi Jirga and the provincial councils. The number of women who were elected to the Wolesi Jirga (Afghanistan's lower house) without requiring the quota was approximately 30 percent of the total number of women's seats (68). This will likely enhance the overall standing of women in the new parliament and indeed alleviates fears that women would lack credibility in the new parliament if they had to rely wholly on quotas to enter. In addition, most of the women who gained seats through the quota system won seats with vote totals that did not differ dramatically from those of their male competitors.

According to a report published by the Afghan Results and Evaluation Unit (AREU), “another surprising aspect of this strong performance was that it was not as geographically focused as expected...women won seats in their own right in 18 provinces representing every region of Afghanistan. Even in the more conservative Pashtun

provinces of the east, southeast and south, some female candidates were able to win non-quota seats, although these were fewer in number than in other regions”¹¹

Among the emerging women leaders of the National Assembly, the most prominent will likely include:

Malali Joya: Born in Farah province and educated in Pakistan, Joya is a member of the Revolutionary Afghan Women Association (RAWA). Not very well known outside of her home province, she gained recognition (and notoriety) by vocally attacking Jihadi groups and their leaders during the Constitutional Loya Jirga. She has continued to draw extensive domestic and international attention for her outspoken criticisms of representatives with past and current ties to armed militias. It is not clear whether she will join a parliamentary grouping, although if she were to do so, she would likely join a more moderate democratic coalition in the Wolesi Jirga.

Shukria Barakzai: Born in Kandahar and raised and educated in Kabul, Barakzai is a well-known journalist who also served as a delegate to the Emergency Loya Jirga and on the Constitutional Drafting Committee of the Constitutional Loya Jirga. She is expected to be a pro-government member of parliament.

Fauzia Kofi: Born in Badakhshan, Kofi was active in NGO and international community organizations, working with UNAMA before beginning law studies at Kabul University. She ran as an independent, but is affiliated with Rabbani’s Jamiat party and was elected as Vice Speaker of the Meshrano Jirga in December 2005.

Within the Wolesi Jirga, women representatives can be divided to three major political categories: 1) over half of women MPs are identified as political party delegates; 2) approximately 25 percent of female MPs are backed by civil society groups, the majority of which were formed to advocate for strengthened women’s rights; 3) the final 25 percent of women MPs are acting as independents, with no clear organizational backing (these women were elected largely on the basis of family or clan affiliations, and tend to have relatively low levels of literacy and education).

Women Political Party Delegates

Over 50 percent of women MPs have formal or informal affiliations with political parties in the National Assembly. Under Afghanistan’s electoral system all political parties—including religious and conservative groups opposed to equal rights for women—had a strong incentive to field women candidates in the September elections. As a result, female MPs represent the full spectrum of Afghan politics, including the most conservative segments of Afghan society. It may be unrealistic to expect the voting records of party-affiliated women MPs to differ markedly from the platforms of their respective parties, even on “women’s rights” issues likely to come before the legislature. Nevertheless, with party organizations still developing, women MPs will have some flexibility in how strongly they choose to back their political parties on major issues. An

¹¹ “A House Divided? Analyzing the 2005 Afghan Elections”, AREU, December 2005, p.13.

analysis of the approximate number of women MPs affiliated with each party is presented in the following table.

Table 1.2 Political Party Affiliations of Women MPs

Political Party	Party Leader	Est. # of Women MPs
Hezb-e-Junbesh-e-Milli Islami Afghanistan	Abdul Rashid Dostum	6
Hezb-e-Afghanistan Naveen	Mohammad Younis Qanooni	6
Hezb-e-Jamiat Islami Afghanistan	Burhanuddin Rabbani	5
Hezb-e-Afghan Milat	Anwar al-Haq Ahadi	5
Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami-e-Mardum Afghanistan	Mohammad Mohaqiq	4
Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami	Mohammad Karim Khalili	3
Hezb-e-Tanzim-e-Dawat Islami Afghanistan	Abdul Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf	2
Hezb-e-Mutahed Milli Afghanistan	Nur al-Haq Ulemi	2
Other Parties	N/A	6

Former Taliban

Of the six former Taliban officials who ran in Afghanistan’s September parliamentary and provincial-council elections, two won seats in the Wolesi Jirga: Mullah Abdul Salam Racketi (former Taliban commander in Nangarhar Province) and Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi (former Taliban governor of Bamiyan Province). Of significant note is that the Taliban did not attempt to form a distinct party as a ‘political wing’ of their larger movement, but rather chose to run under the labels of existing conservative Pashtun parties. All of those who ran stressed their credentials as mujahedin prior to switching allegiance to the Taliban, downplaying, but not denying, their Taliban past.

Ethnic Groupings and Tribal Parties

As mentioned earlier, election results indicate that citizens voted predominantly along ethnic lines. One of the biggest challenges to the new legislative institutions will be to avoid becoming a battleground for Afghanistan’s distinct ethnic groups, each vying for scarce regional development resources, government appointments and other benefits which each believe they have been denied.

Although a wide variety of interests and ideas are represented in the new Wolesi Jirga, it appears as though the majority of members will be conservative, either tribal elders or former Jihadis; a much smaller proportion will be of a slightly more moderate, democratic outlook. The key challenge facing the moderate parties will be how quickly and effectively they can coalesce. Similarly, the NUF will also have the possibility of forming a multi-ethnic alliance in opposition to the government.

Table 1.3 The Ethnic Composition of the Wolesi Jirga

Ethnic Group	# of WJ Members	% of Total WJ Members
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Pashtun	108	43
Tajik	73	29
Hazara	39	16
Uzbek and Turkmen	26	10
Balochi	2	.8
Nooristani	1	.4
Total	249	100

The newly established parliament will have the following ethnic distribution:

Pashtuns – 108 Members

Pashtuns, many of whom ran as independents, will constitute the largest group in the Wolesi Jirga. They are likely to belong to the following major groups:

- ***Pashtun tribal elders:*** This group will likely be the largest Pashtun group within the Wolesi Jirga. While they appear to support the government's agenda, they may oppose the government's practice of placing non-Pastuns into key government positions. This group is estimated to have up to 35 members, including Kuchis.
- ***Hizb-e-Islami group:*** This would likely form the second largest Pashtun group, consisting of 12 to 15 former Hizb-e-Islami members. Highly unified, their support of President Karzai's government may be issue specific. For example, they would be likely to join other Pastun conservatives, such as the Jihadi parties, to oppose the government on issues dealing with the traditional application of Islam to Afghan society.
- ***Pashtun Jihadi Parties:*** Jihadi parties would form another significant group amongst Pashtun Wolesi Jirga members, with approximately 25 – 30 members. Prominent jihadi leaders such as Sayyaf, Gailiani, Mujadedi and Muhamadi, will most likely coalesce on a variety of issues, however their estimated unity will not be terribly strong. On the whole however, they are expected to be generally pro-government in outlook. Although greater in numbers, they are expected to be less influential than the Hizb-e-Islami group described above due to their limited cohesion.
- ***Afghan Millat and Nationalist Intellectual Pashtuns:*** Afghan Millat (Social Democrat Party) with its seven members is expected to attract a significant number of those urban independents that form part of the Afghan intellectual movement but have remained Pashtun nationalists. They are expected to be general supporters of government policy in the new National Assembly.
- ***Pashtun Leftist and former Communist group:*** Another Pashtun group likely to be significant in the Wolesi Jirga would comprise leftists and former communist members. They are expected to be a constructive opposition to the government.

- ***Educated, Liberal and Democratic Pashtuns:*** Should these groups coalesce, they would comprise a smaller Pashtun group and act as a loyal opposition to the government. They may seek to cooperate with similar non-Pashtun groups rather than operate solely on ethnic allegiance. The number of legislators in this group would not be adequate to form a meaningful political grouping in parliament.

Tajiks – 73 Members

Tajiks comprise the second largest ethnic group in the Wolesi Jirga (73 members) and can be divided into three groups, as follows:

- ***Jamiat-e-Islami:*** Although the basis of this group is the political party Jamiat, this group actually represents a relatively loose arrangement among a number of Tajiks in the Wolesi Jirga; Jamiat has historically been prone to factionalism, which could very well occur in the new parliament. Burhanudin Rabbani, leader of Jamiat, will likely face difficulties in holding this group together. Although he contested the election for Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga, he lost by one vote. Other than supporting Hamid Karzai in last year's presidential election, there is no clear indication whether he or his followers would support or oppose the government's agenda in parliament. On issues relating to safeguarding the interests of Tajiks as a whole there will likely be unity within this coalition.
- ***Afghanistan Naween Party:*** Although not the strongest party in parliament, Afghanistan Naween, in coalition with its NUF partners and other large parties such as Junbesh, currently represents the most likely official opposition in parliament. Led by Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga, Younus Qanooni, this party has approximately 20 to 25 members and has the possibility of attracting members from the Jamiat group should the latter fail to coalesce in the initial stages of the parliament.
- ***Educated, Leftist, and Independent Intellectual Tajiks:*** The third grouping among Tajik members consists of educated, liberal, and democratic Tajiks. With only six to 10 members, they will be distinct from the Jamiat and Naween groups; although remote, this group could possibly cooperate with other non-Tajik intellectuals to form a recognized parliamentary grouping.

Hazaras – 39 Members

Traditionally Hazaras have taken an anti-government stand due to their general exclusion from significant government posts and the state of neglect of the regions populated by the Hazara people. While this will likely remain true for some groups, at least one of the groups may be pro-government. The Hazaras will likely divide along three major groups:

- ***Mohaqeq Group:*** Mohaqeq leads perhaps the most organized party in parliament and has the relative unity of the Hazara people; as a demonstration of his

organizational capacity, Mohaqeq was the single largest vote-getter in the entire country in the last elections, and placed a surprising third in the presidential election. Should the NUF continue to hold together, and with support from Junbesh, he will emerge as the leader of the largest political grouping within parliament. His core group will consist of 22 supporters with the possibility expanding to include additional independents.

- ***Pro-government Group:*** Another five to 10 Hazara members will likely come together to support the government; however on issues relating to the Hazarajat, they are likely to stand unified with other Hazaras in criticizing the government's neglect of the region. This group would mainly consist of Vice-president Khalili's Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami Party and Kazemi's Aqtedare Islami Party.
- ***Policy-oriented Independents:*** An energetic, active group of five to seven Hazaras in the parliament will likely attempt to put forward a national agenda, not confining itself to an ethnic or regional focus. They will possibly find some level of cooperation amongst other ethnic groups, however will most likely not be able to gather the minimum 21 seats required to officially form a parliamentary group. Former Planning Minister and populist candidate Bashar Dost would be the most prominent leader in this group.

Uzbeks and Turkmen – 26 Members.

With one or two exceptions, all Uzbek and Turkmen members are part of Abdul Rashid Dostom's Junbesh party; with 23 to 25 members they will play an important role in influencing the dynamics of the new parliament. Should they support the NUF, collectively they will almost certainly become the official opposition to the government. Although not terribly close to Qanooni's Tajik supporters, there is a history of cooperation with Mohaqeq and his Hazara supporters, as both Hazaras and Uzbeks share the same underdevelopment in the northern and central regions of the country.

VII. Provincial Councils

Preparations for the establishment of the National Assembly have overshadowed the work done to prepare for the provincial councils. In Mazar-i-Sharif, for example, neither the governor, UNAMA officials, JEMB representatives, nor candidates were aware of any preparations being conducted for these bodies. Although the constitution stipulates that the provincial councils are to elect members from among themselves for the Meshrano Jirga, the Provincial Council Law provides little guidance as to the powers and authority of the councils. As a result, there is little understanding of how power will be distributed among local government institutions, such as provincial councils, the governor's office, local shuras and community development committees. Unless these powers are more clearly defined by law and powers devolved to the provincial councils, there is a great risk that councilors will be ineffective in carrying out their mandates.

While it is still difficult to ascertain the party affiliation of provincial council members, it appears as though a majority of councilors are independents. As a general approach, political parties ran less qualified and less well-known candidates in the provincial council elections; they were also provided with fewer resources and campaign support.

The provincial councils convened in November 2005 to elect council delegates to the Meshrano Jirga. This process proceeded relatively smoothly and allowed for the full constitution of the National Assembly in December.

Nevertheless, councilors have already begun to demonstrate a growing feeling of frustration in their new positions. First, councilors still lack a substantial mandate, as outlined in the Law on Provincial Councils. Second, councilors have received little support from the government in terms of equipment and office space. Finally, councilors remain dependent on provincial governors to define the boundaries of their work and influence.

VIII. The Meshrano Jirga

Distribution of Seats in the Meshrano Jirga

The National Assembly consists of two houses: the Wolesi Jirga (lower house) and the Meshrano Jirga (upper house). Members of the Wolesi Jirga, along with members of the country's 34 provincial councils were elected during the September 18 elections.

According to Afghanistan's constitution, members of the Meshrano Jirga come from three sources: 1) 34 members are elected from amongst the provincial councils; 2) 34 members are elected from district councils; 3) and the remaining 34 members are appointed by the President. The Meshrano Jirga is considerably less powerful than the Wolesi Jirga. For example, while both houses will have the authority to approve or reject legislation, a majority vote in the Wolesi Jirga will override decisions in the upper house if the positions of the two houses cannot be resolved by a joint legislative committee.

In the absence of district council elections (which have been postponed until 2007 or later) the required quorum for convening the Meshrano Jirga was in doubt. To solve this problem, the Supreme Court considered two options: 1) the president, in the absence of any district councils, would appoint only half of his 34 appointees; or, 2) provisional members would be chosen from the newly constituted provincial councils, to serve in the Meshranno Jirga until such time as the district councils were established and members could be chosen from their ranks. On October 27, 2005, the Cabinet passed a decree in which two Meshrano Jirga members were elected from each provincial council during their elections in early November 2005. On December 11, 2005 President Karzai made public his 34 appointees to the Meshrano Jirga.

The Meshrano Jirga will have roughly the same ethnic distribution of seats as the Wolesi Jirga:

Table 1.3 The Ethnic Composition of the Meshrano Jirga

Ethnic Group	# of MJ Members	% of Total MJ Members
Pashtun	35	35
Tajik	31	31
Hazara	17	17
Uzbek and Turkmen	8	8
Balochi	3	3
Nooristani	3	3
Other	3	3
Total	100	100

As a result of the method for constituting the Meshrano Jirga, it is almost certain that the majority of its members will support President Karzai's agenda. Roughly one third is expected to be affiliated with political parties, of which the NUF should have the largest grouping.

The major political figures in Afghanistan chose to run for Wolesi Jirga seats. Consequently, the most recognized political figures within the Meshrano Jirga are President Karzai's appointments. There has been some speculation that the president will use the Meshrano Jirga as a mechanism to marginalize a number of controversial members of his government. Some notables in this list include:

- Marshal Qasim Fahim – Former Defense Minister
- Gulabudin Shirzoi – Current Governor of Nangarhar Province
- Shir Mohamad – Current Governor of Helmand
- Chief Justice Shinwari – Chief of the Supreme Court
- Ayatulla Mohseni – Former Leader of Harakat Islami
- Sebghatulla Mojaddedi – Current Leader of Rescue Front of Afghanistan

It is expected that Mojaddedi will receive President Karzai's support for the position of Speaker of the Meshrano Jirga; given the number of Karzai loyalists in the Meshrano Jirga, this will most likely secure the position for Mohaddedi.

IX. Looking Forward

Need for Continued International Support

Despite the significant progress that has been made, stability and democratic development in Afghanistan remain under severe threat. International support is essential to ensure that existing democratic gains are not undone. The results of the elections will depend upon the degree to which Afghans feel secure, with insecurity disadvantaging Afghans who wish to move the democratization process forward. Afghans fear “donor abandonment”—they remember how Western governments quickly exited Afghanistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many express fear that a substantial reduction in the role of the international community after the elections will result in a loss of momentum with respect to democratic development, as well as, perhaps, a return to instability.

The international community is supporting preparations for the National Assembly. However, the assistance has been largely on administrative and technical aspects of legislative development. Going forward, there will need to be more focused attention on how administrative arrangements – such as the method by which resources are provided to members for offices – will influence the political development of the Wolesi Jirga. For example, many parliaments would make such resources for offices available to parliamentary groups (consisting of parties, groups of parties, or groups of like-minded independents), rather than to members for individual offices. There will also need to be provision for political, in addition to nonpartisan, staff.

It is essential that the international community commit long-term support to aid the Afghan people in establishing a modern, democratic state. This commitment, if communicated properly to Afghan citizens, can help strengthen the resolve of those Afghans who are working courageously to advance their own democratic process.

Challenges Facing the National Assembly

In the absence of adequate preparation, there is a substantial risk that any momentum generated by a successful election for the Wolesi Jirga will quickly dissipate in the face of the enormous challenges facing the National Assembly. The Wolesi Jirga includes members that are viewed as illegitimate among segments of the population due to their association with the formerly warring factions and militias, limiting the institution’s credibility. None of the Wolesi Jirga members have previous experience in a democratically elected parliament. Former enemies are forced to interact with each other in a formal political institution for the first time. The SNTV system inhibited the development of strong political parties, which typically are the primary vehicles for organizing the work of parliament. Ordinarily, new or developing parliaments require several months to organize themselves – even with strong party structures.

Early in its initial session, the Wolesi Jirga elected a chairperson, vice chairpersons, and secretaries and adopted provisional rules of procedure. The Wolesi Jirga will also need to

review all legislation adopted by the president before the Wolesi Jirga was elected, review certain presidential appointments and make committee assignments. Under the constitution, the Wolesi Jirga cannot delay a bill for more than a month, placing an unrealistic burden on a new institution, which, in theory, needs to review hundreds of pieces of legislation in a one-month period. The Wolesi Jirga will also be faced with a review of the 2006 national budget. Issues of confidence in certain ministers will also likely be raised early in this first session.

In order for the Wolesi Jirga to meet these challenges, it must reach a level of internal organization based on the emergence of several large parliamentary groupings. Management of the short and mid-term agenda of the Wolesi Jirga requires the formation of these groups from amongst the relatively large number of disparate actors. As was discussed above, although some parties have sufficient seats to form their own parliamentary groups (the threshold has been tentatively set at 21 seats, to be reviewed by April 2006 in the course of approving final rules of procedure) there are a large number of parties with two or three seats each, as well as substantial numbers of independents.

Independents and members of small parties are likely to find that their influence and voice in the National Assembly is limited without joining a larger grouping. The Speaker will likely favor larger groupings, as he attempts to manage the affairs of the Wolesi Jirga and set the legislative agenda. Larger groupings will also likely be better positioned to meet the needs of their constituents and demonstrate progress in carrying out their mandates.

From the point of view of the president and his cabinet, the consolidation of parliamentary groupings is also critical. The majority of members associated with parties constitute what could be loosely described as the “opposition,” while the majority of independents and smaller parties appear to support the president. If the president is to expand support for his agenda in the Wolesi Jirga, he would be well served to play a more active role in organizing the independents in a parliamentary group. Although he will enjoy a majority of support in the upper chamber, the effectiveness of his administration will be hampered without a substantial voice in the Wolesi Jirga.

Continuing Threats by Armed Groups

Security remains a major concern in Afghanistan, threatening the stability and effectiveness of all central government activities. While President Karzai’s administration has begun to disarm militants and collect tax revenues withheld by warlords, the central government continues to struggle to bring the provinces outside Kabul under its control. This has in turn undermined the rule of law and contributed to a precarious security situation across the country.

There is widespread agreement that the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process has been largely successful in disarming the officially recognized militias operating in Afghanistan. In addition, most heavy weapons, such as tanks, artillery and rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs) have been put into cantonments. These

accomplishments and the continued presence of Coalition forces, have made valuable contributions to enhancing security in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, approximately 2,000 armed groups that have not been officially recognized as militias continue to operate throughout the country.¹² The armed groups are sometimes linked to former mujahedeen commanders, religious extremists, political parties and even government officials. These groups threaten to disrupt economic development, undermine the central government's attempt to extend its authority nationwide and, in some areas of the country, prevent political parties and civil society organizations from operating freely.

Many of these groups have also been linked to the illegal narcotics trade, which is now estimated to account for between 40 and 60 percent of Afghanistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As illicit money flows into the coffers of armed groups, they will only become more powerful. According to a recent report by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "drug-related corruption at the provincial and district levels is pervasive." Therefore, it seems likely that armed groups may forge new relationships with corrupt local officials—if they have not already—further threatening the nation's precarious democratic advances.

¹² See Isobelle Jaques, *Afghanistan Beyond Bonn*, Wilton Park Paper, May 2005.

X. Further Information and Resources

For further information on the 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections, please see the following publications:

1. European Union Election Observation Mission, *Afghanistan 2005 Parliamentary and Provincial Council Elections Final Report*, 2005.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/afghanistan/final_report.pdf
2. Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan, *General Report on the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections in Afghanistan*, 2005.
3. Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan, *Statement on the Meshrano Jirga Election*, November 13, 2005.
4. Joint Electoral Management Body, *Final Report: National Assembly and Provincial Council Elections*, 2005.
<http://www.jemb.org/pdf/JEMBS%20MGT%20Final%20Report%202005-12-12.pdf>
5. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Statement of the NDI Pre-Election Delegation to Afghanistan*, July 8, 2005.
http://www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1866_af_statement_070805.pdf