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Sommario/riassunto	Politically, the Afghan central government is relatively stable. The post-Taliban transition was completed with the convening of a parliament in December 2005; a new constitution was adopted in January 2004, successful presidential elections were held on October 9, 2004, and parliamentary elections took place on September 18, 2005. The parliament has become an arena for factions that have fought each other for nearly three decades to peacefully resolve differences, as well as a centre of political pressure on President Hamid Karzai, who is running for re-election in 2009. Major regional strongmen have been marginalised. Afghan citizens are enjoying personal freedoms forbidden by the Taliban, and women are participating in economic and political life. Presidential elections are to be held in the fall of 2009, with parliamentary and provincial elections to follow one year later. To help stabilise Afghanistan, the United States and partner countries are deploying a 53,000 troop NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that now commands peacekeeping throughout Afghanistan, including the restive south. Of those, over 23,000 of the 34,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan are part of ISAF. The U.S. and partner forces also run regional enclaves to secure reconstruction (Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs), and are building an Afghan National Army and National Police. The United States has given Afghanistan over

\$23 billion (appropriated, including FY2008 to date) since the fall of the Taliban, including funds to equip and train Afghan security forces
