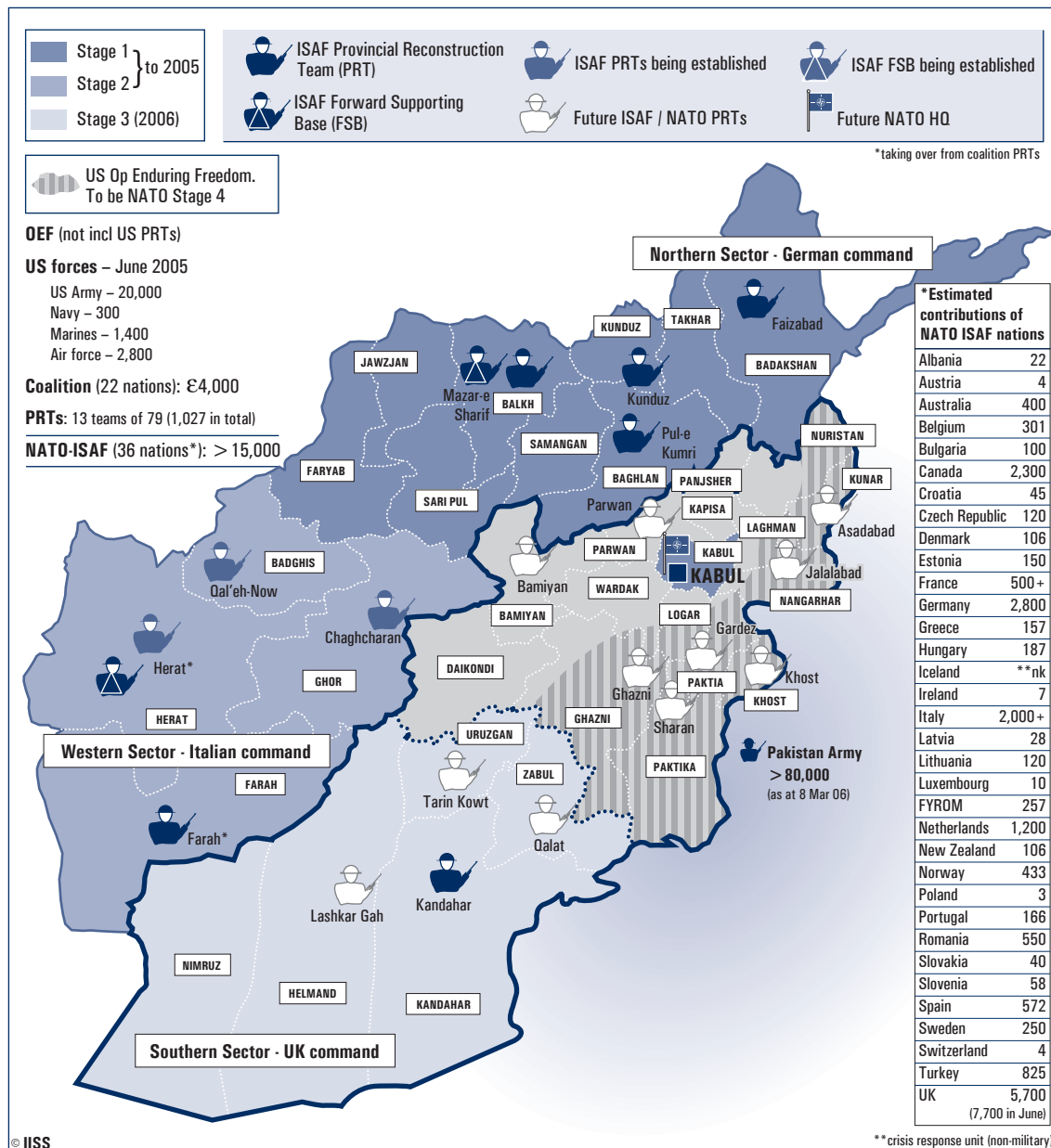


MAP 3 AFGHANISTAN



assemblies, with polling being carried out across the country in 28,250 locations. Predictably, voting was along ethnic rather than party lines – a fact reflected in the new parliament, which was inaugurated on 19 December.

Although real progress has been made in bringing democracy to the country, the ongoing Taliban-led insurgency, coupled with continuing concerns about the volume of illegal weaponry and the high rate of opium production combine to maintain general insta-

bility. The challenge now is for the Afghan government to deliver the reforms needed to bring prosperity and social change the electorate which waits to see what the newly elected representatives will deliver. Low levels of literacy, particularly in the southern provinces, and an inability to impose the rule of law are factors inhibiting progress.

The continuing insurgency seeks to strike at the symbols of government and supporting international efforts. The insurgency has sought to attack