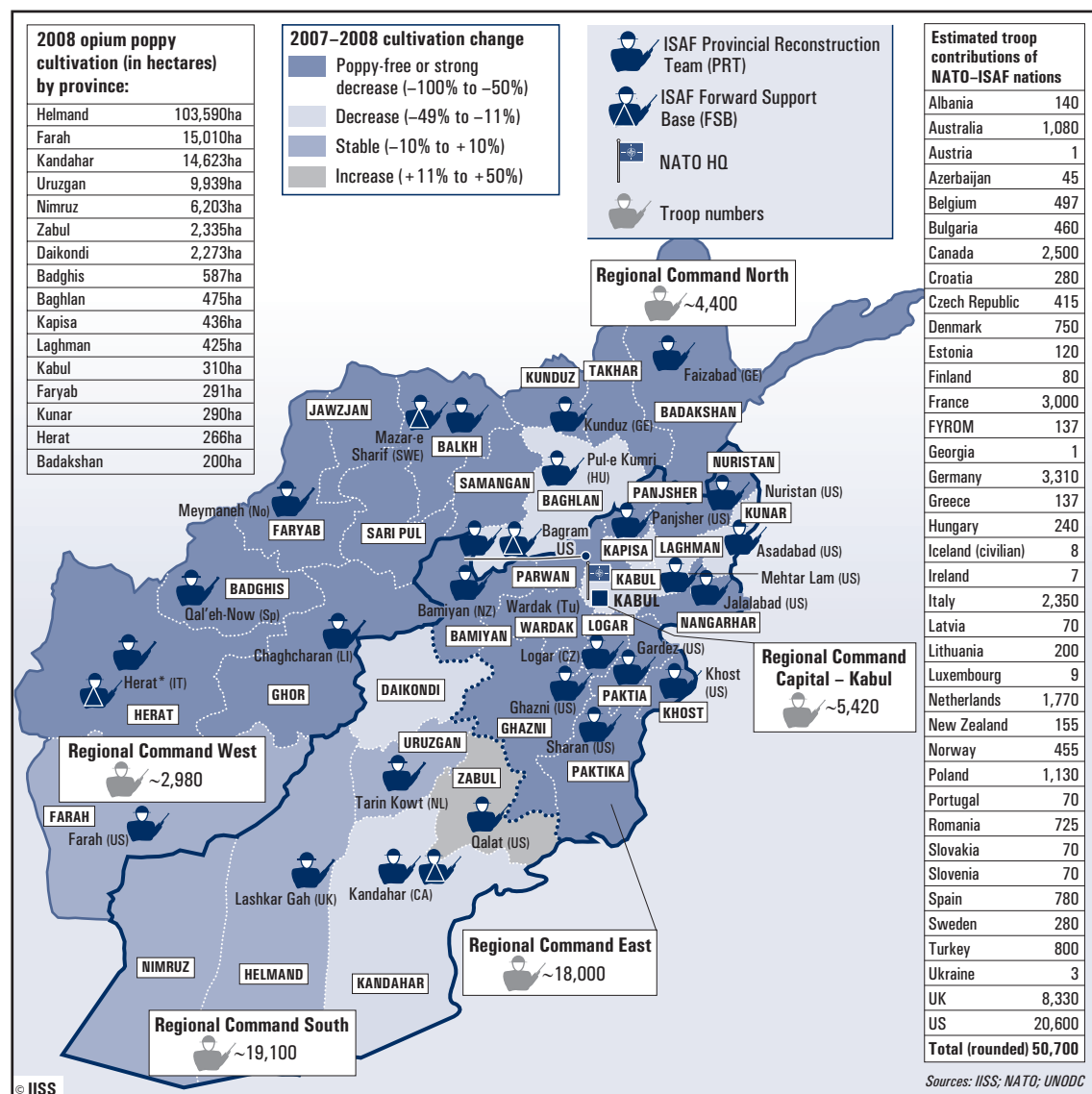


Map 5 Afghanistan



remained heavily engaged in combat and stabilisation operations across the country. Insurgents have moved into previously quiet provinces, increased their use of suicide bombing and of improvised explosive devices, and launched attacks on a number of high-value targets, including President Hamid Karzai and local government and security officials. The suicide attacks on the Serena Hotel in January 2008 and on the Indian Embassy showed the relative ease with which insurgents move within Kabul. According to some reports, there was evidence that explosively formed projectiles (EFP), similar to those employed in Iraq, had been found in Afghanistan.

(Allegations of Iranian involvement in this, and the degree and nature of Iran's involvement in the insurgency, remained subject to debate.) After suffering a series of defeats in open combat with international forces in the heartland areas of Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan, insurgents established bases in areas where government and ISAF forces were fewer in number, such as the southwestern provinces of Nimruz and Farah, while becoming more active in the north, especially in Badghis, Faryab, Faizabad and Badakhshan. There were also reports of significant Taliban presence in provinces near Kabul, such as Wardak.