

Forum: Security Council (SC)
Question of: The Situation in Afghanistan
Student Officer: Glenn Lee, President

Introduction

Historical Overview and Causes of Issue:

Many of Afghanistan's future conflicts, current problems and destabilization can be traced back to the Soviet-Afghan War of 1979. While the decision for the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan in 1979 has hurt Afghanistan, the “years of occupation and war that followed the invasion took an enormous toll, adding to the economic exhaustion and strain of empire from which the Soviet Union was beginning to buckle,”¹ showing its geopolitical implications for many states.

The first inklings of a major brewing conflict first began to show in 1978 when the Communist Party of Afghanistan, the PDPA, overthrew Afghan president Mohammed Daoud Khan, who was unpopular due to his authoritarian rule. This is known as the Saur Revolution or the April Coup and was believed to have been supported, or at least tolerated by the communist Soviet Union.² While the new communist regime was supposed to have instilled peace and competency in the country, the installation of the new regime left the country in a similar shape with infighting within the PDPA and chaos in policies. While the PDPA, who were now in power, had two majority factions, the Khalqists and Parchamites, it was the Khalqists under Nur Mohammad Taraki who assumed the first leadership positions. Opposition faction leaders from the Parchamites such as Babrak Kamal and his allies were exiled out of Afghanistan by the majority, almost mirroring the totalitarian government that was to be overthrown in the past. This was ironic in contrast to the country's new name, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), “with political enemies of the regime [being hunted] by the ruthless secret police, KHAD.”

To make matters worse, there was also infighting within the Khalqi faction, with the second-in-command, Hafizullah Amin successfully taking control of power, killing Taraki after various

¹ "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, 1979," in *Blinders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn* (n.p.: RAND, 2014), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287m9t.18>.

² Liz Dee, "The Saur Revolution: Prelude to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," *Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*, last modified 2016, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://adst.org/2016/04/the-saur-revolution-prelude-to-the-soviet-invasion-of-afghanistan/>.

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assassination attempts between the pair.³ This instability, combined with failed policies of the government such as the “the Qur’an being substituted with secular textbooks,” an apparent a clear violation of Islam as viewed by the people, left the initial backers (Soviet Union) of the government nervous and on alert for what they could do with Afghanistan.

Over the next subsequent months, Afghanistan fell further into chaos, while the Hafizullah Amin government seemed to slip further towards the West amid the backdrop of the Cold War.⁴ First, Government mismanagement with the active rebellious tribes of Afghanistan meant that by “by the fall of 1979, vast regions of Afghanistan had slipped from PDPA control [and] the rebellion spread like wildfire across the country.” Losing Afghanistan as a key socialist ally risked Soviet hegemonic influence under the Brezhnev doctrine which argued that a threat to socialism in one country was a threat to all socialist parties in the Eastern Bloc.⁵ This is similar to NATO’s Article 5, but is a more loose and discretionary policy in which the Soviet Union could choose to invade or not. This worry of Afghanistan slipping into full chaos meant that the USSR was prepared to invade the country, not to protect the current leader Amin, but to replace him with the opposition and take control of the situation.⁶ The lack of trust by the Soviet Union caused Amin to drift towards the West, attempting to build positive relations with the United States. He initiated talks with the American chargé in Kabul, J. Bruce Amstutz as well as chargé-designate Archer Blood was remarked as impressive with it being the “lead item on both the English and Dari language news,” publicizing Amin’s shift towards the Americans.⁷

December 24th 1979 marked the last day of the Hafizullah Amin regime, as the 40th Army (with over 5000 soldiers) of the Soviet Union swiftly entered Kabul, killing Amin and installing a Soviet Regime.⁸ The significant rebel and opposition forces, were called the *mujahideen*, and had begun consolidating support and gaining political power as they were against the Soviet Union. While the Russian occupation had led to over 80,000 soviet troops⁹, the resistance were now backed by a large

³ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Nur Mohammad Taraki," Britannica, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nur-Mohammad-Taraki>.

⁴ Peter Baker, "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, 1979: Not Trump's Terrorists, Nor Zbig's Warm Water Ports," National Security Archive, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/afghanistan-russia-programs/2019-01-29/soviet-invasion-afghanistan-1979-not-trumps-terrorists-nor-zbigs-warm-water-ports>.

⁵ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538931>

⁶ Baker, "The Soviet," National Security Archive.

⁷ Idi Amin, "AmEmbassy Kabul cable 7502 to SecStat," National Security Archive, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/18113-document-1-amembassy-kabul-cable-7502>.

⁸ Gilles Kepel, "Jihad : the trail of political Islam," Internet Archive, accessed July 17, 2022, https://archive.org/details/jihad00gill_0.

⁹ Hella Pick, "From the archive, 19 June 1980: Soviets find Afghan rebels no pushover," The Guardian, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2013/jun/19/afghanistan-russia-heavy-cost>.

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anti-communist coalition which included Arab and Islamic states of the Middle East and North Africa such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Western Europe, China, and the United States. This included more than \$10 billion in aid¹⁰, weapons, missiles and anti-aircraft materials,¹¹ showing the reaction from the West. Diplomatically, the United States, who were still in a cold-war standoff with the Soviet, turned extremely negative with them, going as far as boycotting the 1980 Summer Olympics and recalling Ambassadors.¹² Retrospectively, the support from the west was due to their goal to entrap the Soviet Union in a Vietnam-level disaster for their government and lead to the downfall of the Soviets.

1989 marked the end of the Soviet-Afghan war, with the Russians planning to leave the country, leaving the current Afghan government to fall with no serious expectation to hold against the rebels. While this would have been considered a victory for the West, “the apparent victory in Afghanistan had [also] emboldened many of the foreign guerillas among the Arab Afghans,” and the proxy war they were waging had become tiresome. The lack of any foreign support or common enemy for the *mujahideen* led to chaos within the country, and in five years, the Taliban had been born.¹³ It was this Taliban, and the refusal of them to hand over Osama Bin Laden after the September 11 attacks that led the United States, along with a broad coalition, to invade Afghanistan.¹⁴ George Bush and his British counterpart, Tony Blair, issued a 5 point ultimatum which included the demands to “close immediately every terrorist training camp, hand over every terrorist and their supporters, and give the United States full access to terrorist training camps for inspection.”¹⁵

Over the next 20 years, the United States and their coalition partners would oversee a democratic transfer of power in 2014, the retaking of the country from the Taliban, and increases in human development. More well known would be the “22,000 military casualties (including about 2,400 fatalities) in Afghanistan, mostly at the hands of the robust and growing Taliban insurgency”¹⁶, and the \$140 billion

¹⁰ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005)

¹¹ Kinsella, Warren. "Unholy Alliances", Lester Publishing, 1992

¹² "President Carter announces Olympic boycott," History, last modified July 1980, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/carter-announces-olympic-boycott>.

¹³ Evan Kohlmann, "A Bitter Harvest: The Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan and its Effects on Afghan Political Movements," UPenn Law, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070614165958/http://law.upenn.edu/~ekohlman/afghanistan.pdf>.

¹⁴ Ivo H. Daalder, "The Bush Revolution: The Remaking of America's Foreign Policy," Brookings, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20030425.pdf>.

¹⁵ John Ware, "The US refuses to negotiate with the Taliban," BBC - History, accessed July 17, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20181203142713/http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/the_us_refuses_to_negotiate_wit_h_the_taliban.

¹⁶ Clayton Thomas, "Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy: In Brief," Congressional Research Service, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R45122.pdf>.

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spent by Congress in the war. By 2018, Donald Trump was leading negotiations to pull the US and coalition troops of Afghanistan by 2021, although this deal was seen as shaky as terms were claimed to have not been met. Nevertheless, by the promised 2021, President Joe Biden oversaw the tumultuous evacuation of “over 120,000 individuals, including U.S. and international diplomatic personnel and Afghan partners,”¹⁷ and the government was quickly taken by the Taliban, much faster than forecasts by the West. With this Taliban takeover, there have been numerous issues to be resolved and discussed which will be outlined below.

Current Issues, Problems Faced, and Direct Impacts on World:

One of the largest issues that have stemmed from the coalition withdrawal from Afghanistan and the subsequent Taliban takeover has been malnutrition and food insecurity. The World Food Program or WFP “reported in June 2022 that 92% of Afghans reported not having enough to eat,” leading to over 3.2 million children being at risk from acute malnutrition. Even worse, only 2% of Afghans actually have enough to eat and have enough to meet bare nutritional standards.¹⁸ Furthermore, Human Rights Watch came to the grim conclusion that “Afghan children are starving to death nearly every day,” and how the deaths from the crisis after the war has potential to be greater than deaths from the war. Droughts, inflation, and crushed infrastructure due to the 50 years of conflicts in the region have created a situation in which the population is struggling for any sense of nutrition. If the negative factors all combine and continue to get worse, there is a “very real famine risk in 2022 unless immediate large-scale support to protect these people and their livelihoods arrives very soon.” The impact for the future is ten-fold as every single citizen in the country could slip into poverty due to the lackluster aid and response from the Taliban government. This is an issue that must be resolved and addressed as soon as possible.

Even before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, population concerns such as refugees and internally displaced people were at the forefront of issues to tackle. Due to the last 50 years of conflict, millions of people (4 million plus)¹⁹ were displaced in Afghanistan, but has been made worse due to the current humanitarian issues within the country. The dire nature of the country in all sectors has led to

¹⁷ Clayton Thomas, "Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy: In Brief," Congressional Research Service

¹⁸ Lindsay Maizland, "Look at Afghanistan's Humanitarian Crisis," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/article/afghanistan-humanitarian-crisis-famine-foreign-aid-taliban>.

¹⁹ "Afghanistan: Country's four million internally displaced need urgent support amid pandemic," Amnesty International, last modified 2021, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/afghanistan-countrys-four-million-internally-displaced-need-urgent-support-amid-pandemic/>.

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hundreds of thousands more fleeing, especially to countries such as Pakistan and Iran,²⁰ who also face challenges due to the conflict in Afghanistan. Access to hygiene supplies are also short, hurting women the most. These transitions especially hurt women and minorities in the country as Taliban rule has led to stricter rules and a rollback of more liberal policies. These new rules include “having a male family member escort them to work and even throughout the workday, requiring that women be escorted to health appointments by male family members” and “bans on male healthcare professionals treating women,” are all part of a broader cultural shift within the country.

The final issue to be covered in this report is the looming economic crisis of Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan was not a rich country by any standard, with “49.4% of the population living below the national poverty line in 2020,”²¹ the lack of international funding due to the Taliban takeover has only further crushed the economy. The Congressional Research Service reported that the United States and allies “financed over half of its \$6 billion annual budget and as much as 80% of total public expenditures.²² Without this funding, the economy has been in a freefall, contracting by over 1/3rd over the past year which has not only hurt the Taliban, but the ordinary citizen. Furthermore, even if the country is able to resolve its food crisis, without a robust economic system or even money, people will not be able to purchase foods or other goods without farming it themselves. The central bank is almost non-existent in the country, and there is a severe liquidity crisis when it comes to cash within the country.²³ Because of the limited ability to print cash in a responsible and regulated manner, it is hard to function the country for its ordinary citizens. Finally, there are still sanctions present on the country dating back to 1999, and although it is hard to tell what the effects of them are, they are a point to consider.²⁴ A solution must be found to balance funding the Taliban and saving the population from a total economic collapse that will be unsustainable for the country.

²⁰ The Visual Journalism Team, "Afghanistan: How many refugees are there and where will they go?," BBC, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58283177>.

²¹ "Afghanistan and ADB," Asian Development Bank, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.adb.org/countries/afghanistan/poverty#:~:text=In%20Afghanistan%2C%2049.4%25%20of%20the,day%20is%2035.4%25%20in%202021..>

²² Roxanna Shapour, “Realpolitik and the 2021 National Budget: The toxic struggle for money and power that undermined Afghanistan’s republic,” Afghanistan Analysts Network, December 21, 2021.

²³ ICG, "Afghanistan: the humanitarian crisis and U.S. response," ReliefWeb Int, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-crisis-and-us-response>.

²⁴ ICG, "Afghanistan: the humanitarian," ReliefWeb Int.

Definition of Key Terms

Mujahideen

For the issue of Afghanistan, mujahideen represent the rebel guerrilla militant groups who fought in opposition to the Soviet Union during the Soviet-Afghan war.²⁵ They were extremely important in countering the takeover of Afghanistan, but also had much infighting between the groups as factions emerged between the fighters. This further caused the 1992–1996 Afghan Civil War as the various mujahideen groups went to war as a government could not be formed.²⁶

Coup d'état (coup)

A coup d'état, more colloquially known as a cuop, is an illegal, aggressive action by a particular country's military or other major parties to overthrow its existing government or ruling power. They may often have support from outside governments (proxy wars), or be a grassroots movement discontent with the people in power. Afghanistan is a perfect example of a country where coups have happened, without much peaceful or democratic transfer of power. This includes the 1973 coup by Mohammed Daoud Khan establishing his totalitarian rule, the aforementioned Saur Revolution of 1978, multiple attempts in 1979 during the infighting of the PDPA and the failed coup of April 2002.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)

SALW's have been used in most modern wars and in conflicts as they are easy to import, utilize for soldiers, and pack enough firepower to be effective. Because of its ease-of-use and ease-of-access, they are favored by civilians, governments and non-state actor groups alike.²⁷ Small Arms and Light Weapons have been the preferred choice of weapon in the Afghanistan conflict by a long shot as “thousands of American-made weapons and tons of military equipment were seized by the militants,” during the withdrawal.²⁸ Dealers have sold dozens “of American-made pistols, rifles, ammunition and two-way radios,” as they have either been abandoned or sold off by Afghan security forces to earn some extra money.²⁹ In general, the United Nations estimates that around 600 million light weapons are in

²⁵ "Mujahideen," Britannica, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mujahideen-Islam>.

²⁶ "Blood-Stained Hands," Human Rights Watch, last modified 2005, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2005/07/06/blood-stained-hands/past-atrocities-kabul-and-afghanistans-legacy-impunity#96a8e1>.

²⁷ "Libya: The Proliferation of Small Arms Post-Gaddafi," Springer, accessed July 11, 2022, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-62183-4_35.

²⁸ Ruhullah Khapalwak, "For Sale Now: U.S.-Supplied Weapons in Afghan Gun Shops," The New York Times, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/world/asia/us-weapons-afghanistan.html>.

²⁹ Khapalwak, "For Sale," The New York Times.

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circulation while they are responsible for 500,000 deaths per year.³⁰ These weapons are made harder to track because many facilities holding such weapons are weak and provide little security. After major wars, many countries may misplace such weapons without well documented sources making them hard to keep in control for nefarious actors.³¹

Cold War Proxy Conflicts

Proxy nations and by extension proxy conflicts can be defined as conflicts between nations at the interest of politically and militarily stronger nations, in order to indirectly attack their adversaries. The larger nations usually utilize the smaller nations as their pawns to fight other small nations that may have the backing of other large nations. While the concept may be confusing, nations will sponsor groups in order to fight other nation sponsored groups in order to exert power without directly declaring war. This is a way of countries “expressing” themselves because although they cannot fight directly, they can help other small groups to cripple the larger nations.³² This funding and support can be done through investing economically such as giving money and resources, or by supplying weapons and aid. The Soviet-Afghan war can be seen as a proxy war between the Soviet Union and the West, who were in deadlock during the cold war. The United States spent billions to cripple the Soviet’s goals, but eventually led to blowback for themselves.

Intrastate Conflict

Intrastate civil wars are different from proxy wars, with the main difference being that civil wars are intrastate and occur within the country. This type of conflict can happen as often or even more frequently than proxy wars as they can be undertaken without massive support like a proxy war.³³ Most frequently, the wars are between forces that either want to be liberated from the current government (a coup) or could just be an opposition party attempting to change the current policies that they deem unsatisfactory. However, in some cases, similar to proxy wars, intrastate wars can be influenced by outside powers who may fund countries or push them towards starting such a conflict. Countries may

³⁰ "Rare Moments of Unity on Aid to Afghanistan, Syria Punctuate Security Council Agenda in 2021, as Demands for Vaccine Equity Dominate Year's Discussions," The United Nations, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14763.doc.htm>.

³¹ Wisotzki, S. Efforts to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons: from persistent crisis to norm failure?. *Z Friedens und Konflforsch* 10, 247–271 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42597-022-00073-9>

³² Hamid, "Everyone says," Brookings.

³³ Jackson, Richard. "Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Intrastate War." *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 1 (2007): 121–28. doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2007.00215_1.x.

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have incentives to want a regime change with a study finding that “about 2/3rds of the 138 intrastate conflicts between the end of World War II and 2000 saw international intervention.”³⁴

Greater MENA (Middle East and North African Nations)

The MENA region is an acronym which refers to the countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The set of countries in the MENA region generally consists of 20 countries, which includes Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.³⁵ The area has a wide range of nations that differ in economic success, size, and religion. A large chunk of the world is concentrated in this space, as it has over 464 million inhabitants.³⁶ Afghanistan has long been a source of contention in terms of MENA classification, but is often accepted as a Greater MENA country due to their cultural ties to many other middle eastern nations.³⁷ This is important when it comes to regional leaders, or organizations such as the African Union who have been relatively helpful to the crippling country.³⁸

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

The Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index is one of the ways to track how corrupt a country is as graded by experts. The CPI was created in 1995 by Transparency International, a German Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that focuses specifically on issues relating to corruption in the world. They are one of the most recognized and reputable NGOs and their index is a collaboration through other various expert NGO's backed by The Economist, Freedom House, and the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Corruption Perception Index is special compared to other corruption indexes as they utilize both experts and businesspeople to measure the impact to the general population.³⁹ Furthermore, the generalized scale allows for easier comparisons between nations that is also indexable by time period. When looking at Afghanistan specifically, in 2021, the country scored 16/100, making them the 6th worst

³⁴ "Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict," Foreign Affairs, accessed July 11, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2000-07-01/civil-wars-and-foreign-powers-outside-intervention-intrastate>.

³⁵ UNICEF, accessed July 11, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/mena/where-we-work>.

³⁶ "Population, total - Middle East & North Africa," World Bank, accessed July 11, 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=ZQ>.

³⁷ Keddie, Nikki R. "Is There A Middle East?" International Journal of Middle East Studies 4, no. 3 (1973): 255–71. doi:10.1017/S0020743800031457

³⁸ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14763.doc.htm>

³⁹ "Corruption Perceptions Index: Afghanistan," Transparency International, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/afghanistan>.

country in the world in terms of corruption.⁴⁰ Compared to 2020, they have dropped 8 places which is understandable considering this issue is even being discussed as they face many concerns outlined above and a massive humanitarian crisis.⁴¹

Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

An improvised explosive device or an IED is a bomb that is unauthorized, and often, as the name suggests, improvised. They are not official bombs created, but unconventional weapons to detonate and attack. They are common in conflicts with terrorist groups, who use IEDs as a roadside bomb, and are lethal due to its effectiveness. Although they are improvised, they are often able to affect large groups of people, because they are not as recognizable. They are also cheap and relatively easy to make, unlike a conventional bomb, further making it an attractive proposition for warring factions. This complicates the process in tracking them down because they are able to use homemade ingredients, and ingredients that have practical applications outside of weapon/explosive device usage. The Taliban were known to use these guerilla tactics (especially IED's) when faced in challenging situations.⁴²

Internally Displaced People (IDP)

Internally Displaced People or IDPs are people who are forced to flee their homes, but remain in their country. As a result, IDPs are not technically or legally considered refugees, because they have not crossed a border into another country. This is a major problem in Afghanistan as the country has been war torn for the last 50 years. Amnesty International, a prominent NGO, estimates that there are 4 million internally displaced people in the country due to the unstable situation.⁴³

⁴⁰ "Corruption Perceptions Index: Afghanistan." Transparency International. Accessed July 17, 2022. <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/afghanistan>.

⁴¹ "Afghanistan drops 8 spots in Corruption Perceptions Index," Pajhwok Times, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://pajhwok.com/2022/01/26/afghanistan-drops-8-spots-in-corruption-perceptions-index/>.

⁴² "CIVILIAN CASUALTIES KEEP ON RISING, SAYS UN REPORT," UNAMA, last modified 2009, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://unama.unmissions.org/civilian-casualties-keep-rising-says-un-report>.

⁴³ "Afghanistan: Country's four million internally displaced need urgent support amid pandemic," Amnesty International, last modified 2021, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/afghanistan-countrys-four-million-internally-displaced-need-urgent-support-amid-pandemic/>.

Timeline of Key Events

October 7, 2001 - Coalition Invasion of Afghanistan

As mentioned previously, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, George Bush demanded the Taliban (de facto leaders of Afghanistan after the civil war), hand over Osama Bin Laden or face consequences. This is exemplified in the fact that Bush stated that “there is no timetable for the Taliban, just like there are no negotiations,” and to “turn him over,” for the bombings to stop. With no agreement, on October 7, 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom was launched alongside a dozen other countries building their coalition. They were further supported by the United Nations Security Council which imposed an arms embargo and NATO, who was integral to the central command of the operation.⁴⁴

January 26, 2004 - A New, Democratic Constitution is Adopted

On January 26th, through international support and domestic input, the 7th Afghanistan Constitution was ratified by the President at the Constitutional Loya Jirga.⁴⁵ It served as the supreme law and legal framework for the country until the dissolution in 2022 due to the Taliban. This event is significant because it received “input from nearly 500,000 Afghans, some of whom participate in public meetings in villages,” and lays the foundation for democratic institutions to finally begin in a country which has been marred by authoritarian figures.⁴⁶

April 5, 2014 - September 19, 2014 - 2014 Presidential Election

The 2014 Presidential Election was the first time that there was a peaceful transfer of power to a new President in Afghanistan, showing strides made in Democracy in the country.⁴⁷ The fragile nature of the country meant that any results had the risk of destabilizing whether through violence or political maneuvering. When allegations of fraud came out from the losing side, there had to be heavy international intervention to avoid a full blown conflict between the two candidates' sides. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry called on both sides to “eschew violence and prevailing on them to engage in internationally mediated negotiations to achieve a peaceful election outcome,” and

⁴⁴ Political Editors, "Canada in Afghanistan: 2001," The Long Road, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://archive.ph/20130615215843/http://afghanistan.nationalpost.com/canada-in-afghanistan-2001/>.

⁴⁵ "Afghanistan Constitution," The Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington DC, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120212211647/http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/constitution.html>.

⁴⁶ NewsDesk, "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan," PBS, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan>.

⁴⁷ William A. Byrd, "Understanding Afghanistan's 2014 Presidential Election," UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR370-Understanding-Afghanistan%E2%80%99s-2014-Presidential-Election.pdf>.

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also visited the countries to calm down tensions. The result was a peaceful transfer of power, but not a wholly democratic election process as there was bargaining between the two sides to make new positions such as the CEO of the country. Furthermore, the actual result of the election was never officially announced due to potential violence and was simply implied.⁴⁸

February 29, 2020 - September 12, 2020 - US & Taliban Peace Talks Lead to Agreement

In 2020, amid increasing violence in the region, the US Envoy and the Taliban sign an agreement in which the United States plans to withdraw a majority of the troops in the region in exchange for concessions by the Taliban. These include the “guarantee and enforcement that will prevent the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies,” as well as the “announcement of a timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan,” within the next 9.5 months per the official agreement.⁴⁹ These initial agreements to meet and discuss the withdrawal and protection of US interests in Afghanistan also lead to discussions between the Taliban and the Afghan government to ensure safety for all. In addition, prisoner swaps were also discussed between the three parties which showed positive results in terms of negotiations.⁵⁰

May 1, 2021- August 15, 2021 - Taliban Offensive on Kabul

The 2021 Taliban Offensive on Kabul was an operation by the Taliban to retake the country as the international coalition began drawing down its troops. By June of 2021, there were reports that “fighting taking place in 26 of the 34 provinces in the country,”⁵¹ and by August, the Taliban captured “Mazar-e-Sharif, a crucial part of northern Afghanistan where local militias and Afghan Army soldiers had pledged to fight for the city.”⁵² The situation severely deteriorated and eventually led to the capture of Kabul along with high profile killings such as the assassination of the Afghan media chief.

April 14, 2021 - August, 30 2021 - The United States Exits Afghanistan

In April of 2021, President Joe Biden “concluded that it’s time to end America’s longest war... It’s time for American troops to come home,” in remarks to the American people, signaling his real desire

⁴⁸ Byrd, "Understanding Afghanistan's," UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE.

⁴⁹“Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America,” State Department, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>.

⁵⁰Center for Preventive Action, "What to Know About the Afghan Peace Negotiations," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/article/what-know-about-afghan-peace-negotiations>.

⁵¹ "Timeline of Taliban offensive in Afghanistan," UK Parliament, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/timeline-of-taliban-offensive-in-afghanistan/>.

⁵² "Taliban Forces Continue Their Offensive As They Approach Kabul," NPR, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/14/1027708783/taliban-afghanistan-offensive-kabul-capital>.

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to send the remaining 3,500 troops home. He further called to “end the forever war,” and fully committed to finally pulling the United States out. The withdrawal of the final phase of troops is seen as messy and chaotic as the Taliban gain momentum in the country and converge on Kabul much faster than expected. Events such as the 2021 Kabul airport attack, where 183 people were killed by a terrorist attack cause international condemnation. The chaos and terrorist activity near evacuation points causes the United States and its allies to deploy upwards of 5000 troops back to the region to successfully evacuate the country and troops.⁵³ U.S. Army Major General Chris Donahue is the last American soldier to board a plane home and leave Afghanistan, beginning a new chapter in the country.

Position of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies

People’s Republic of China

The People’s Republic of China has had a friendly relationship with Afghanistan in recent years, although they had been hostile to the Soviet-led government at the time. China has shown that it had been willing to support the Taliban government as they would “respect the choices” of the people. They have also contributed millions of dollars directly to the government in wake of the recent Earthquake as well as support from the Ambassador. China has invested heavily in the country, as they look to target the country’s abundant coal supply, rare earth materials, and Afghan pine nuts they can gain from a positive relationship with the country.

United States of America

As mentioned above, the United States of America has been a global leader in the fight and subsequent pullout of Afghanistan. Their chaotic process of leaving the country left thousands at risk, and eventually led to the Taliban taking over the country. While the United States has fully exited the country and no longer has a meaningful military presence in Afghanistan, they still have contributed to the country to deal with the humanitarian crisis, bringing total “humanitarian assistance to over \$774 million in the last year,” according to the State Department.⁵⁴

France

During the Taliban administration of Afghanistan, France has often been vocal of their disapproval of certain laws or statements by the government. Most recently, they have stated that “France

⁵³ Karen DeYoung, "Biden authorizes additional troops to Kabul as Taliban closes in on capital," The Washington Post, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/14/afghanistan-taliban-advance-humanitarian/>.

⁵⁴ Antony Blinken, "Assistance for Afghanistan to Respond to June 22 Earthquake," State Department, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/assistance-for-afghanistan-to-respond-to-june-22-earthquake/>.

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condemns the Taliban decision to require women to wear head-to-toe coverings in public spaces,⁵⁵ and further highlighted that they condemned the Taliban decision in the strongest possible terms. They have also condemned the “Taliban’s decision to bar girls ages 12 and older from attending school.” However, they have also participated in joint operations with countries such as Qatar to bring humanitarian assistance to the country, most recently in December of 2021. Since then, there has not been much action from the French.

Russian Federation

As exemplified by the history of Afghanistan and the major Soviet-Afghanistan war that eventually led to the country being in disarray, Russia and Afghanistan have had rocky relations. Yet, most recently, Russia has begun to recognize the Taliban government, signaling their strong support for them and legitimize their rule of the country. Afghanistan’s Chambers of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) and Russia’s Business Council for Cooperation with Afghanistan (BCCA) worked to improve bilateral trade relations, when many other countries would not provide direct economic relief to the country. Their special envoy has suggested that “Moscow may recognize the interim Taliban government,” in a break to the rest of the world, and also have their consulate still open.⁵⁶ Russia could become a key ally to the Taliban government as they look to destabilize the West and take heat off their invasion of Ukraine.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom had been a key ally to the United States in their War in Afghanistan, as Tony Blair followed George Bush in bringing some troops in the country. While a majority of the troops left in 2014, 200 more were deployed in 2022, and were a major part of the evacuation of Kabul. Recently, similar to other Western Security Council countries, they have condemned the “Taliban’s decision not to re-open secondary schools to Afghan girls,” and have refused to recognize the Taliban government as legitimate. Yet, Britain, along with Secretary Liz Truss, was one of the co-hosts of a UN Aid Summit to raise 4.4 billion dollars for Afghanistan and their ongoing humanitarian crisis. The

⁵⁵ "Afghanistan – France condemns the Taliban's decision to bar girls ages 12 and older from attending school (24 Mar. 2022)," France Diplomacy, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/afghanistan/news/article/afghanistan-france-condemns-the-taliban-s-decision-to-bar-girls-ages-12-and>.

⁵⁶ Dmitri Chirciu, "Russia signals it may recognize interim Taliban administration," Anadolu Ajansı, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/russia-signals-it-may-recognize-interim-taliban-administration/2613790>.

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conference was somewhat unsuccessful as it raised 2.44 billion dollars, short of its lofty goal which was the largest in UN history.⁵⁷

Albania

Albania has played a surprising role in the Afghanistan conflict and subsequent humanitarian crisis as they sheltered thousands of refugees from the Fall of Kabul. While they were supported for months, over the past few weeks, there has been growing concern for the “1,800 refugees that are waiting to leave,” as the US and Canada process visa requests. However, the refugees have been at risk of eviction and deportation from their living accommodations as the Albanian government has begun to dwindle their support for the refugees, hoping to speed up the process of getting them visas.⁵⁸

Brazil

Brazil has not played a major role in the issue of Afghanistan over the last few months, but has provided 1,237 visas for Afghanistan citizens hoping to evacuate from the Taliban controlled country.⁵⁹ There is little information about Brazil's involvement in the issue other than their visa project.

Gabon

Similar to Brazil, Gabon has not played an active role in the issue of Afghanistan. While the Ambassador of Gabon, Allegra Pamela R. Bongo, “called for the achievement of peace and sustainable development in Afghanistan and the whole region,” the country has not taken any action or has indicated they will contribute to a humanitarian fund.⁶⁰

Ghana

While Ghana has shown little movement in the issue of Afghanistan, in the latest round of humanitarian talks, their ambassador stated that Ghana will focus on a framework that ensures the protection of civilians, minorities and vulnerable persons, such as the rights of women, girls and children, showing their focus on human rights. They have also taken the liberty to discuss economic and social issues within the countries, 6 months after the Taliban takeover.

⁵⁷ Andrew MacAskill, "Britain to co-host Afghanistan aid summit, hoping to raise \$4.4 billion," Reuters, accessed July 17, 2022,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-co-host-afghanistan-aid-summit-hoping-raise-44-billion-2022-02-15/>.

⁵⁸ Fjori Sinoruka, "Over 200 Afghan Refugees Leave Albania for US," Balkan Insight, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/03/22/over-200-afghan-refugees-leave-albania-for-us/>.

⁵⁹ "UK FM Truss floats Turkey as candidate to join Rwanda scheme," Arab News, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2123371/world>.

⁶⁰ "Amid Plummeting Humanitarian Conditions in Afghanistan, Women, Girls 'Are Being Written Out of Society' by De Facto Authorities, Briefers Warn Security Council," The United Nations, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14946.doc.htm>.

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India

India, like China, has shown interest in having ties with the Taliban ran government, and provides the country with an alternative to the PRC. In June of 2022, J. P. Singh, joint secretary in India's foreign ministry, met with the Taliban Foreign Secretary to discuss aid and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. However, there is analysis that India is attempting to rival Pakistan in their battle for control in the MENA region. For now, India has established a diplomatic presence in the country but has not fully reopened their Kabul embassy yet.⁶¹

Ireland

Ireland has created a special program for Afghanistan refugees and citizens as they “offer temporary Irish residence to people whose freedom or safety is at risk, whether resident in Afghanistan or certain neighboring countries having fled,” but only for those who have ties to Ireland. Other than that, they have also contributed €3.25 million in Irish Aid funding for the country, with payments increasing five-fold over the past few months.⁶²

Kenya

Kenya has had little involvement pertaining to the issue of Afghanistan. In fact, Kenya has had drought and famine issues of their own as the The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) listed Kenya as a country at risk of drought emergencies in the next year, a list that Afghanistan is also a part of.⁶³

Mexico

Mexico was often helpful in assisting allies to evacuate Afghanistan during the chaos, as they helped 24 families of various news agencies such the New York Times and the Washington Post leave the country, providing visas.⁶⁴ They have also provided hundreds of visas for refugees during the height of the crisis.

⁶¹ Anjana Pasricha, "India Returns to Afghanistan with Small Diplomatic Presence," VOA News, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/india-returns-to-afghanistan-with-small-diplomatic-presence/6648776.html>.

⁶² "Minister of State Brophy announces funding of €500,000 to Afghanistan Earthquake," Irish Aid, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.irishaid.ie/news-publications/press/pressreleasearchive/2022/june/minister-of-state-brophy-announces-funding-of-500000-to-afghanistan-earthquake.html>.

⁶³ Nizamuddin, "UN lists Afghanistan among drought-hit countries," Pajhwok Times, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://pajhwok.com/2022/05/15/un-lists-afghanistan-among-drought-hit-countries/>.

⁶⁴ Ben Smith, "How Mexico Helped The Times Get Its Journalists Out of Afghanistan," The New York Times, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/25/business/media/new-york-times-mexico-afghanistan.html>.

Norway

Norway has already budgeted “NOK 700 million (\$70 million) in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in 2022,” according to their Minister of Foreign Affairs and has also condemned various Taliban decisions such as France and the United States.⁶⁵ However, they were criticized for hosting talks with the Taliban as it could legitimize the government that others were not willing to do.

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates had pledged “AED 184 million (US\$50 million),” to Afghanistan in late 2021. Private companies within the UAE have had various business dealings with the country, most recently working to run the airports and airplanes in Afghanistan.⁶⁶ They have generally shown to be a partner for the country, rushing tens of tonnes of aid to the country after the June earthquakes and building field hospitals.

Suggested Solutions

Immediate Humanitarian Assistance

Afghanistan is facing serious humanitarian issues, and the Taliban have been unable to stop the internal bleeding of the country. As mentioned in the beginning of the report, The World Food Program or WFP “reported in June 2022 that 92% of Afghans reported not having enough to eat,” leading to over 3.2 million children being at risk from acute malnutrition. Even worse, only 2% of Afghans actually have enough to eat and have enough to meet bare nutritional standards. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch came to the grim conclusion that “Afghan children are starving to death nearly every day,” and how the deaths from the crisis after the war has potential to be greater than deaths from the war. Delegates must find solutions in order to either drive further humanitarian investment (only 2.44 billion raised from the 4.4 billion requested), get attention back on the issue of Afghanistan (overshadowed by Ukraine), as well as find deliverables to the country such as crop or food assistance. Creative measures such as GMO crops and new innovations, as well as collaborations with private companies may prove fruitful.

Taliban Government

There are many different philosophies when it comes to approaching the Taliban government and working with them. Some countries, like China and India have opened direct talks with the Taliban in

⁶⁵ "Norway to increase support for civilians in Afghanistan," Regjeringen, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-to-increase-support-for-civilians-in-afghanistan/id2906532/>.

⁶⁶Rahim Faiez, "Taliban say deal signed with UAE firm to manage airports," AP News, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-politics-abu-dhabi-united-arab-emirates-0ac72c95852ae6e302b3ff45f0b95808>.

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hopes of creating strong economic ties and taking advantage of the resources in the country. Others such as Norway have simply had some level of dialogue with the Taliban to discuss humanitarian issues. Finally, countries like the United States have refused to recognize the Taliban in any shape or form, leading to little dialogue as they have tapped Qatar to act as their mouthpiece. Undoubtedly, with any solution in humanitarian aid or for long term rebuilding of the country for the citizens, the Taliban will have to be involved. Thus delegates must find a way to deal with the government, through involving them or attempting to sidestep them through NGOs, which could prove to be unhelpful. Conferences or other international informal forums could be useful in getting countries to discuss the issues while confronting the Taliban directly to resolve any tensions. Neutral countries or countries with little alliances to negotiation sides could act as mediators such as Brazil, or other willing Security Council nations.

Long Term Rebuilding

Afghanistan has been one of the poorest countries in the world, and this fact has only been exacerbated by their 30 years of conflicts within the country. CNN reported that the World Food Programme (WFP) has been handing out \$40 a month which will “help them (the civilians) make it through the month.”⁶⁷ Almost 50% of the country lives below the poverty line and their agriculture focused economy has been heavily disrupted by the fighting and droughts in the region. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction has laid out a 140 page report on mistakes made by the United States and how they can be resolved in the future. These include spending patterns, monitoring issues, weaknesses in personnel and local struggles that were not taken into account. For instance, corruption was an issue highlighted, and the inspector general discusses that “by legitimizing warlords with political and financial support, the United States helped empower a class of strongmen at the local and national levels who had conflicted allegiances between their own power networks and the Afghan state. Indirectly, the United States helped to lay a foundation for continued impunity.” **The full report can be [found here](#), and is recommended for delegates to take a look in order to familiarize themselves with some issues that the United States found in Afghanistan, and how it can be improved in the future.**

⁶⁷Jo Shelley, "Afghanistan's new poor line up for aid to survive as food crisis bites," CNN, accessed July 17, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/22/asia/afghanistan-hunger-new-poor-intl-cmd/index.html>.

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