General Assembly 1

The Situation in Afghanistan

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Introduction

Afghanistan is a country located in central Asia, its capital is Kabul and it borders with countries such as Iran and Pakistan. It is a landlocked country with a great geo-economic, geostrategic and geopolitical position which made it very appealing to other countries for strategic purposes. Due to this Afghanistan has remained in a constant state of instability ever since the country's creation in 1709. In 1919, after the Third Anglo-Afghan War, Afghanistan signed the Treaty of Rawalpindi and achieved full independence. However, the country continued to face tragic circumstances and great conflict.

After the British were expelled from Afghanistan the country hand minor issues with ethnically charged conflict and violent warlords. However, the event that sent Afghanistan in the continuing cycle of war was the deposition of the last King by a coup that took place in 1973. After that Afghanistan was invaded in 1973 by the Soviet Union (USSR) , who tried to implement a communist system in the country. The Soviet government faced great challenges due to the retaliation of the Muslim people and the Mujahideen (conservative rebel fighters). The USA then began to back the Mujahideen in an attempt to combat the Soviet aggression. After 10 years, and at the cost of millions of lives and dollars, the USSR withdrew in an act that foresaw the fall of the Soviet Union. Once the USSR left Afghanistan, it was left in disarray, without an established government and forced to cope with the wars remnants.

A premier historian of Afghanistan, Louis Dupree, once said that "four factors contributed to the British disaster: the occupation of Afghan territory by foreign troops, the placing of an unpopular emir on the throne, the harsh acts of the British-supported Afghans against their local enemies, and the reduction of the subsidies paid to the tribal chiefs by British political agents. The British would repeat these mistakes in the second Afghan War (1878-81), as would the Soviets a century later; the United States of America (USA) would be wise to consider them today." This is vitally important as it highlights several foreseeable problems that the USA would faced during its time in Afghanistan.[1]

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[1] Bearden, Milton. "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 6, 2001, p. 17., https://doi.org/https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/fa/fa_novdec01/fa_novdec01b.html.

The Taliban were an Islamic group that believed in the implementation of an Islamic government and society that complied to an extremist interpretation of the Sharia or Islamic law. They enforced the oppression of most ethnic and religious minorities and then seized the opportunity to use Afghanistan as base from which they could operate their terrorist initiatives. They increased their power and influence during the 1990's, and remained unchecked for the greater part of the decade.

After 9/11 the USA and other NATO members entered Afghanistan and reclaimed the majority of Afghanistan as well as the capital city of Kabul. The USA and the United Nations (UN) then tried to cooperatively reinstate stability and peace in the region. However, the USA's mission failed, and after 20 years of being in Afghanistan the USA fully left Afghanistan on 30th August 2021. The Taliban rapidly regained control over the country and remains in power to this day. They are now urging to be internationally recognised as the official government of Afghanistan, which is necessary for them to then be allowed access to their loans, funding and assets as well as other economic support from member states.

The tumultuous events that took place after the USA left, have once again left Afghanistan in a state of disarray and violence. Afghanistan is currently facing many issues such as the opression of ethinc and religious minorities, gender discrimination, high internal displacement, deadly conflict and violence. As well as, high levels of political corruption and economic mismanagement. It is thought as to whether Afghanistan will ever manage to become a stable country without human rights violations. The next steps to combating the issue in Afghanistan are complex, as the USA has shown that the 20 years of rehabilitation it tried to implement in Afghanistan it turned out to be minimally effective.

Definition of Key Terms

Taliban
The Taliban are an ultraconservative political and religious faction that emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s following the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the collapse of Afghanistan's communist regime, and the subsequent breakdown in civil order. The faction took its name from its membership, which consisted largely of students trained in madrasahs (Islamic religious schools) that had been established for Afghan refugees in the 1980s in northern Pakistan.[2]

Terrorist Organisation
Is an organisation which utilizes the calculated use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective.[3]

Jihad
Jihad is an Arabic word which literally means "striving" or "struggling", especially with a praiseworthy aim, such as efforts toward the moral betterment of the Muslim community, though it is most frequently associated with war. In classical Islamic law (sharia), the term refers to armed struggle against unbelievers. It is a term used by various Islamic extremist individuals and organizations whose ideology is based on the Islamic notion of jihad. For example, the retaliation against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistanit was considered an

[2]Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Taliban". Encyclopedia Britannica, 24 Sep. 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Taliban.
[3] "Terrorism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., https://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism.

individual obligation for all able bodied Muslims because it was a defensive jihad to repel invaders. It then became a jihad purpose to repel unbelievers from many countries.[4]

Al-Qaeda
Al-Qaeda is a broad-based militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. It began as a logistical network to support Muslims fighting against the Soviet Union during the Afghan War with its members being recruited throughout the Islamic world. Based in Sudan for a period in the early 1990s, the group eventually reestablished its headquarters in Afghanistan under the observation of the Taliban. The organizations agents engaged in numerous terrorist attacks, including the 9/11 attacks. Many branches of Al-Qaeda have attempted to capture territory and establish a caliphate in the Middle East, one of which being ISIS. Overall, it is quite clear that Al Qaeda despises Western influence and action in the Middle East, especially from the U.S.[5]

Warlord
A warlord is a person who exercises military, economic, and political control over a region in a country without a strong national government; largely because of coercive control over the armed forces and citizens. The USA military occasionally engaged with warlords in negotiations as the central government in Kabul was relatively incapable of extending its power and control to much of the country.[6]

General Overview

The situation in Afghanistan is not an issue with no background or context. The issue began back in the early 1970s and has carried out up until today. To be more specific, everything started off with the overthrow of the king of Afghanistan in 1973 in a coup. Since the 1930s, Afghanistan has been a monarchy led by Muhammad Zahir Shah. Zahir Shah, up until his was deposed by his cousin Mohammad Daoud Khan in a coup in 1973. Khan is reported to have declared that the coup would bring in democracy and separate Afghanistan from the Soviet Union.

The following event was the beginning of the Civil war in 1978. Daoud Khan was assassinated in a coup d'état in 1978, when the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a communist political party, assumed power in Afghanistan. With communist party head Nur Muhammad Taraki gaining power, the coup became known as the Saur Revolution. According to historians Elisabeth Armstrong and Vijay Prashad, the administration established Marxist regulations that included abolishing the dowry for women and allowing them to work. However, the communist administration was infamous for its violence, which included the imprisonment and execution of tens of thousands of people.

Next is the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. On December 24, 1979, the Red Army invaded Afghanistan by airlifting troops into the nation. Babrak Karmal, an exiled leader of one of the country's communist party factions, was installed as the country's new leader. Meanwhile, the Carter administration in the United States began supporting Afghan mujaheddin, or anti-Soviet guerrilla forces. Pakistan was the conduit for much of the mujaheddin's support.

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[4] "Jihad." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad.
[5] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "al-Qaeda". Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 Feb. 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda.
[6] "Warlord." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warlord#Afghanistan_2.

Furthermore, the guerilla war and Cold War proxy war between the Soviets and Afghan mujaheddin resulted in the Red Army's defeat and withdrawal from the region. The United States and the Soviet Union agreed in the 1988 Geneva Accords to respect the sovereign rights of Afghanistan and Pakistan and to refrain from intervening. As violence between the government and the mujaheddin persisted, the Soviets continued to back the communist government in Afghanistan until 1992.

Further down the timeline, between 1996 and 2001 we had the occupation of Afghanistan by the Taliban. In September 1996, the Taliban, an extremist group backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, captured Kabul. The Taliban sought to implement an Islamic government that complied to an extremist interpretation of the Sharia or Islamic law. Women and girls were banned from attending school and working under Taliban control. According to Amnesty International, they were not allowed to leave the house without a man or show any skin. Failure to follow the stringent restrictions resulted in harsh penalties. They also gave al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, a Saudi jihadist, permission to operate in Afghanistan. The USA struck three training bases utilized by Bin Laden in response to three embassy strikes In 1999, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on the Taliban, demanding that they hand over Bin Laden. An arms embargo was imposed in 2000 when the Taliban refused to comply. Al-Qaeda assassinated anti-Taliban leader Ahmad Shah Massoud on September 9, 2001, in what many now see as a foreshadowing of the attacks on New York and Washington.

It is important to note that international military forces had not entered afghanistan until 2001 despite the Talibans numerous human rights violations. However, on the 9th of September 2001 Al-Qaeda carried out attacks attacks on the World Trade Center, New York, and the Pentagon, Washington D.C, killing over 3,000 people and causing a major shift in events. The search, according to USA President George W. Bush was "underway for those who are behind these evil acts. "We shall not distinguish between those who perpetrated these acts and those who harbor them." President Bush authorized the use of force against the perpetrators of the attacks a few days later. Airstrikes by USA and other NATO members began on October 7, 2001, and were primarily directed at Taliban targets. In cooperation with additional Afghan warlords the USA then attacked the country capital of Kabul which then forced the Taliban to flee. Though this attack had not been authorized by the UN Security Council it had been in compliance with the UN charter which understands and to some extent permits the use of force in self-defense.[7]

With the Taliban losing a great part of their influence over Afghanistan the country immediately saw an increase in the peoples personal freedoms and particularly womens rights and opportunities. Drone strikes and violence against Taliban members continued, however, the violence had diminished greatly in contrast to the prior situation, and democratic elections were finally held for the first time ever in 2004.

The USA initiated its exit strategy in 2008 as it sought to defeat Al-Qaeda and establish an Afghan government that was accepted by the Afghan people prior to leaving. In 2011 after the USA had suffered the greatest amount of casualties they ever had in Afghanistan, former USA President Obama had announced the beginning of the withdrawal of troops from Afghan soil. During his time in office President Obama failed to remove all the USA troops from Afghanistan, so by the end of former USA president Trumps time in office his administration reached an agreement with the Taliban, the USA- Taliban Peace Deal (2020),

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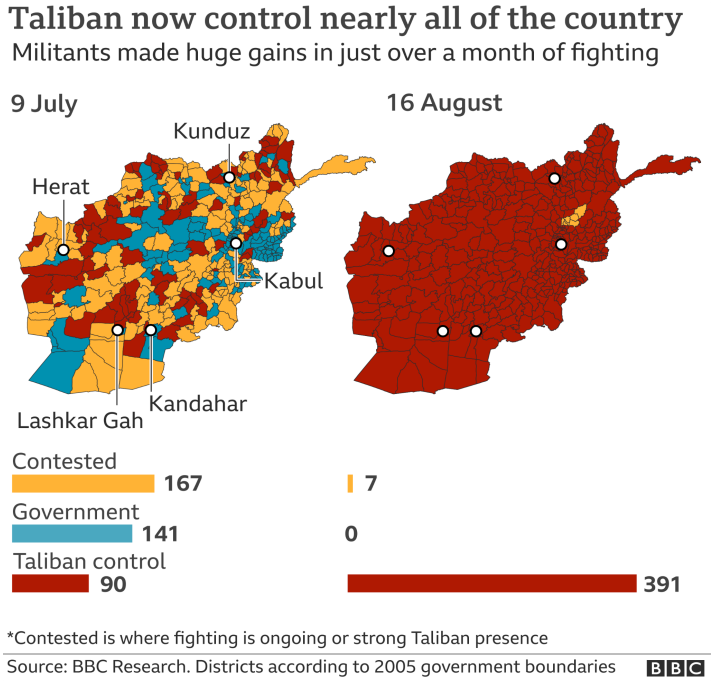
[7] "United Nations Charter" *United Nations*, United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text.

that sought to remove all USA troops. After admitting that the USA had failed in trying to establish a modern and stable democracy in Afghanistan, current USA President Biden decided to remove all USA troops remaining in Afghanistan by 30th August 2021. As the USA was leaving Afghanistan tensions rose in the country and the Taliban began reclaiming primarily rural areas. The Afghan government then collapsed after the Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, fled the country on the 15th August 2021 and in a matter of days the Taliban recaptured Kabul and the majority of the country.



Internal Displacement in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has always faced a great challenge with Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP's). Afghans have been displaced time and time again due to Soviet Occupation, the fall of the government and Taliban rule.

Each year hundreds of thousands of Afghans were displaced due to natural disasters as the country has faced great challenges combating food and water shortages due to drought, as well as earthquakes and floods. By itself the average expected number of displacements per year – for sudden-onset natural hazards was at 137 000 people, not taking into account IDPs affected by conflict.[8]

A greater and more obvious reason for afghanistan's high Internal Displacement is the people who are displaced by conflict. Afghanistan has always had an issue with internal displacement due to localized persecution by Taliban or Northern Alliance authorities, security concerns and the systematic destruction of homes and farmland. However, the greatest amounts of IDPs have been since the Afghan people began to fear for their lives due to foreign bomb threats and drone strikes. Just as recently as the 30 August 2021 there were 3,500 displaced due to an escalation in conflict in Baghlan Province, which forced these people to flee their homes flee to the Banu, Pul-e-Hisar, and Deh Salah districts.[9]

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[8] "Afghanistan." *IDMC*, https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan.

[9] "Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (30 August – 5 September 2021) - Afghanistan." *ReliefWeb*, OCHA , 10 Sept. 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-weekly-humanitarian-update-30-august-5-september-2021.

Due to the large increase in violence in the country many Afghan civilians have been placed in overflowing refugee camps and shelters which have sub-par conditions. In these camps conditions are unsanitary and unorganised whilst children are being married off, trafficked, and abducted by Afghan soldiers.

Human Rights Violations

There have been numerous human rights violations in Afghanistan from both the Taliban and the Afghan government, as well as international forces. During battles the international forces have been unable to differentiate between terrorists and civilians which has resulted in the largest cause of civil casualties in Afghanistan. This result helped the Taliban as they commonly blended in with civilians in attempt to disguise themselves, a tactic also known as Guerilla warfare. However, the Taliban have also engaged in numerous human rights violations which include using: Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's), suicide killings, and targeted killings. In addition, the Taliban discriminate greatly against women, allowing them no agency over their actions nor much financial self-sufficiency. The Taliban has also killed women based of just accusations of fornication and adultery, as well as any other act that they may find "immoral". Finally, as a direct result of conflict there is a lack of basic human rights for children, due to their inability to access education and healthcare facilities.

Major Parties Involved

United States of America

The USA primarily became involved with Afghanistan when it supported mujahideen militias with funding and arms during the USSR's occupation. After Al-Qaeda orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, the USA then infiltrated Afghanistan and sought to established a stable and democratic government whilst maintaining peace and exonerating the Taliban. The USA invested billions of dollars and military in Afghanistan in order to rehabilitate the country. Significant progress seemed to have been made, until the USA departed Afghanistan and ultimately lead to the immediate collapse of a stable Afghan state.

Russian Federation

Since the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan Russia has not been thoroughly involved in the area. However, Russia has been an active coordinator of ongoing peace talks and has expressed interest in Afghanistan due to its regional proximity and the threats that may emerge from the instability within Afghanistan. With the departure of the USA, Russia may now be looking to exert increased influence over Afghanistan.

Pakistan

Pakistan has had fluctuating relations with Afghanistan. Pakistan currently hosts the greatest number of Afghan refugees which has placed an economic burden on the country. It has attempted to avoid the establishment of a strong Afghan government with close ties to India, in order to avoid the encirclement of the country, and maintain a portion of regional dominance. Pakistan was also amongst the only 3 member states that recognised the Taliban as Afghanistan's "government", and was the last one to break diplomatic ties. Pakistan has faced its own troubles with radical groups, with groups such as the Pakistan Taliban (TTP) which evolved from the Afghan Taliban.

China

Though China and Afghanistan only share a mere 74 km of their respective borders China

has particular concerns about the current and future situation in Afghanistan. In the past China has aided thorough means of economic aid but has avoided sending military troops. Primarily, China is rightfully worried about the possible spillover of violence from Afghanistan into its majority Muslim region of Xinjiang, which could in turn create instability in the region. Secondly, China aims to foster good relations with Afghanistan due to its geographical location, as Afghanistan plays a great role in establishing greater regional security in Asia. Finally, from an economic perspective Afghanistan is plentiful in natural resources and is situated in the greater region where China is planing to pursue its One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative.

Timeline of Events

1839-42 & 1878-81	First and Second Afghan civil wars
1917-1919	Third Afghan civil war
1919	Afghanistan achieved full independence
1946	Admission of Afghanistan to the United Nations
17 July 1973	The king of Afghanistan is overthrown in a coup to establish the republic of Afghanistan
27 August 1978	The civil war in Afghanistan occured
28 August 1978	Daoud Khan was killed in a coupe d'état
24 December 1979	Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviet Union and establishment of communist government
14 April 1988	The United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union signed the Geneva Accords
1992	Fall of Afghanistan government
27 September 1996	Taliban (an extremist organization) assumed power over Afghanistan
9 September 2001	The attacks on the World Trade Center and pentagon by Al-Qaeda
28 September 2001	Resolution 1373 was adopted by the United Nations Security Council
7 October 2001	Air Strike attacks aimed at the Taliban occurred in Afghanistan
September 2005	Parliamentary elections are held and warlords claim most of the seats
October 2006	US forces hand over Afghan security and command to NATO

27 August 2007	UN reports high opium production in Afghanistan
April 2009	NATO troops sent to Afghanistan to aid with training and rural reconstruction
September 2014	Taliban resurgence in rural areas
December 2015	End of NATO mission in Afghanistan and replacement by "Resolute Support" Mission.
20 February 2020	US begins plans to fully depart Afghanistan
August 15 2021	Taliban recapture the capital of Kabul and Afghan president Ashraf Ghani fleeds the country
August 30 2021	USA fully departs Afghanistan ending a 20 year war with the country

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

A/61/326-S/2006/727 and A/61/799-S/2007/152

Reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Resolute Support Mission (RSM)

As part of the Bonn Agreement (2001) ISAF was sent to Afghanistan with the aim of "enabling the Afghan government to provide effective support for reconstruction across the country and developing new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorists".[10] When ISAF's mandate ended in 2014 it was replaced by the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). As outlined in a NATO documents mission statement for the RSM, its four key goals were:

- Supporting planning, programming and budgeting;
- Assuring transparency, accountability and oversight;
- Supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance;
- Supporting the establishment and sustainment of such processes as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel.[11]

The mission was terminated in early July, with NATO concluding that there was no military solution to the situation in Afghanistan.

USA-Taliban Peace Deal (2020)

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[10] Nato. "ISAF's Mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014) (Archived)." *NATO*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm.

[11] *NATO's Commitment to Afghanistan after 2014*. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_12/20141201_141201-Media-Backgrounder-Afghanistan_commitment_en.pdf.

On 29th February 2020 te US-Taliban Peace Deal was established. It was the result of direct negotiations between the USA and the Taliban, wholly excluding the Afghan government, laying the groundwork for US withdrawal from Afghanistan. It outlined four key terms that were to be accomplished:

1. Prevent the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies.
2. Announcement of a timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan.
3. After the announcement of guarantees for a complete withdrawal of foreign forces and timeline, Afghan soil will not be used against the security of the United States and its allies, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban will start intra-Afghan negotiations with Afghan sides on March 10, 2020.
4. A permanent and comprehensive ceasefire will be an item on the agenda of the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations.[12]

Challenges concerning the deal were plentiful. Primarily, the effective implementation of the peace deal with the Taliban and Afghan government to ensure that the terms and conditions were met. When the deal was implemented ,there had been valid concerns about ongoing violence and the USA's response to the Taliban resurfacing. Secondly, to set up viable intra-Afghan talks, fundamental issues such as ideology, justice, arming and the reintegration of the Taliban in Afghan forces must have been dealt with in order for the Peace Deal to be widely accepted. Finally, the deal partially depended on whether it would be able to achieve clauses to include women's rights and fundamental human rights, as well as, the implementation of an Afghan judiciary system.

Possible Solutions

Unfortunately as long as the Taliban are in control past issues that seemed necessary to be addressed will be harder to solve. However, certain goals may still be strongly suggested to the Taliban in the hopes that, as long as they do not violate any of the Talibans moral principles or threaten their sovereignty, may be implemented within the country.

Education

Children in Afghanistan have been severely deprived of proper education due to conflict and gender discrimination. Almost 50% of children in Afghanistan are currently not enrolled in school, with the majority being girls. It is imperative that children can be able to gain knowledge, critical thinking and skills in order for them to have intellectual agency over their actions. Education could also help them integrate into the formal economy and avoid being recruited by warlords. There is a tremendous lack in school infrastructure, including insufficient classrooms, seating, sanitation and access to the internet. In addition, schools may be difficult to access for many Afghans whether it is due to geographical location or natural disasters.

Though the Taliban seeks to influence education with their ideology, there is still hope for Afghans education. The Taliban will most probably enforce their ideological beliefs on schools, yet schools can still stress and offer an opportunity for children to learn concrete subjects such as Mathematics and the Sciences, which for the most part cannot be influenced by ideology. In addition, by offering Afghans access to the internet they can learn about

[12] *Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan as a State and ...* https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf.

different perspectives and global attitudes, which could promote discourse.
Member states could directly, in order to avoid corruption or mishandling, administer funds to building infrastructure for education and suggest that the Taliban promote going to school.

International relations
Afghanistan must attempt to mend its international relations in some form as its economy relies greatly on foreign aid. In addition, healthier international relations may offer security and a level of prosperity to the region. However it is possible that member states will demand for full transparency of the Taliban which is uncertain.

Judicial System
Afghanistan must attempt to fix its currently failing judicial system. Though it will probably not be following wholley western principals, the Taliban must focus on reforming their judicial system without human rights violations. It must focus on the high levels of nepotism, bribery, embezzlement and abuse of power in order to at least partially restore Afghanistan's economic and political stability.

The future of Afghanistan remains in shambles, and after numerous failed attempts at restoring stability and introducing a democracy in the region it is unclear what may truly be the solution to ending this country's history of conflict. The Talibans current control over the region only increases the uncertainty in Afghanistan's future and the next steps of the international community.

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