

An Analysis of the Conflict in Afghanistan

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Abstract. *The conflict in Afghanistan is very complex, with multiple implications, and it can be analyzed, like every type of conflict, by using multiple tools and considering various aspects. This conflict is ongoing since 2001, making it one of the longest so far, and the reasons of its prolongation are numerous; some of them will be presented in the following paragraphs. We will go through the conflict history in the Afghan area as early as the British dominance in the 19th century, to the Russian intervention and through the American intervention in 2001. The important reasons and stages of this conflict will be emphasized in this paper, but the main focus will be on the most recent conflict started after the US intervention targeted to cut down a terrorist base located in Afghanistan. We will try to emphasize the most important causes for which the conflict emerged, the main actors, and the trigger causes that led to an ongoing complicated and unsecure situation in Afghanistan. The latest conflict will be correlated with other similar conflicts that the country passed through in the 20th century.*

Keywords: *Afghanistan, Pashtun, British Empire, Soviet Union, United States, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen.*

Overview

Afghanistan is situated in the southern part of central Asia, having Tajikistan, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China as neighbors. This particular area from the Asian continent has proved to be a problematic one during the years, as many – typically internal – conflicts emerged. The capital city of the country is Kabul, and the official languages are Pashto and Dari (Persian). The country has few mineral resources; agriculture is also difficult and can be done in few places in the lowlands, where underground fresh water makes irrigation possible. Only about 15 percent

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of the land is suitable for farming. The rest of the country is dominated by highlands, with about one-half of the land over 2,000 meters in elevation; small glaciers and year-round snowfields are also common. Afghanistan is a country known for the multitude of ethnic groups that live inside its borders, like Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, and Turkmen. The majority of the people have a very low quality of life due to the poor development of the country's economy. The country's independence was granted after World War One in 1919, after a long run for influence between Great Britain and Russia. Current Afghan boundaries were determined in 1893 in a treaty with Britain and the main idea was to split the Pashtun ethnic group between Afghanistan and British India, a separation which would create some issues in the future years. This separation is based onto the 1893 Durand Line Agreement concluded after the second Anglo-Afghan war of 1878-1881. This would later emerge as a permanent factor between Afghanistan and Pakistan relations. The independence agreement was signed in 1919 and it is known as the Treaty of Rawalpindi. After this treaty, the country was in a relatively stable period with Great Britain, maintaining its influence until 1947, after Pakistan and India gained independence. It was after this period that the country knew its most tumultuous period, with numerous internal conflicts.

The country has known throughout its history a great number of conflicts, which had different internal or external sources. One of the first was during the 19th century, when Great Britain attacked the country in order to establish their influence in the area. The war was fought between 1838 and 1842, when the British forces invaded and appointed King Shah Shujah to lead the country. Before this, the country had known a period of stability which turned immediately into war. After this invasion, the king was assassinated in 1842, and the conflict got in the phase of unstable peace again when British and Indian troops were massacred during their retreat from Kabul. The tensions got high again between 1878 and 1880, when the second Afghan-British war started and the situation escalated from unstable peace to war again. After this war, a treaty was signed with the British, which gave them the control over the external affairs of Afghanistan, and the situation went back to a stable peace until 1919, a period when the British gained the control of the country's external policies. In 1919, Emir Amanullah Khan declared independence from British influence, and tried to introduce a series of social reforms, but this created civil unrest, and a civil war started. The situation perpetuated until 1933, when Zahir Shah became king and Afghanistan remained a monarchy for the following four decades, while the situation went back to a stable peace. The most peaceful period in the Afghanistan modern history was between the years 1933 and 1973, but in 1973 former Prime minister General Mohammed Daud overthrew the Shah in a relatively peaceful coup and declared Afghanistan a republic and so the situation evolved again into an unstable peace.

After 1973, Daud tried to implement a series of reforms in order to try to modernize the state, and Afghanistan got aid from the USSR in terms of arms procurement and

infrastructure development, and the United States provided development assistance. This new type of politics turned the tribal leaders and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan against the regime turning the situation again into unstable peace and then to crisis in 1978, when General Daud and his family were assassinated in the Saur Revolution. After the revolution, Nur Mohammad Taraki formed the first Marxist government of Afghanistan with the help of USSR and a collective agreement was signed providing aid and security from the soviets. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan lead by Taraki imposed a series of radical reforms after they got to power, which collided with the Islamist points of view. The so-called *mujahedeen* declared themselves against the "imposing of radical socialist changes on a traditional society, in part by redistributing land and bringing more women into government". The situation went again to the state of unstable peace with a possible armed conflict between the two sides. Between 1979 and 1989 the situation went from crisis to war when the USSR invaded Afghanistan in order to prevent the mujahedeen from taking over power. The Soviet Union deployed about 120,000 troops in the country but they did not manage to control the situation in the entire country, and most of the areas remained in the control of the mujahedeen fighters. At the same time, the mujahedeen received money and ammunition from the US, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and they were allowed to train in Pakistan in order to prepare their moves. The war continued, and after the USSR had lost about 14,000 troops they decided to pull out from Afghanistan after they signed an Accord in Geneva in 1989. The withdrawal ended in February 1989, leaving the country under the leadership of President Mohammed Najibullah. During the war with the soviets, a huge number of Afghans fled across the border into neighboring countries; the refugee number was as big as 6.2 million in 1990, and the conflict also made 1 million civilian deaths.

After 1989, the situation went back again to an unstable peace, as the mujahedeen went to create a secular state going back to traditional norms and customs. This period was characterized as having tense confrontations between the many ethnic groups in the country. The most important factions in this conflict were led by Mohammad Najibullah, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ahmed Shah Massoud, Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. In 1992, Abdul Rashid Dostum alongside an Uzbek militia force managed to take over the city of Kabul, which consolidated the power for his side; but this was not the end, because the Peshawar Accord was to be signed in March 1992, which meant that power was temporarily assigned to a 51 person-body for two months. This accord set the grounds for the future Islamic State of Afghanistan. After this Burhanuddin Rabbani was elected president of the state in 1992, he ruled until 1996 even though conflicts for the city of Kabul continued maintaining the situation at the level of unstable peace or even crisis at times.

This was a period in which a new group of people, the Taliban, emerged as an important minority. The Taliban were an ethnic group composed mainly of Pashtuns belonging to

the Ghilzai tribes of eastern Afghanistan, and they began to rise under the leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar. During the period of unstable peace, the situation escalated to crisis when the Taliban peacefully captured Kandahar in 1994, followed by Ghazni and Herat in 1995, and finally Kabul in 1996. After the falling of the capital city, the Taliban established a new regime under the name of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Beginning from this period, the situation in the country got worse after the Taliban disbanded various militias and ruled according to the "Pashtun approach to Sharia law," imposing rigid and fundamental beliefs to the country. The crisis was obvious when they began to commit atrocities against women, girls, and minority groups particularly Shi'a Hazaras. These actions contributed negatively to a state of economic deprivation and malnourishment inside the borders. Also, these actions determined other leaders of ethnic groups to join their forces and form the Northern Alliance or The United Front (formed by Dostum, Rabbani, and Massoud) in order to oppose the Taliban regime. They even began to represent Afghanistan at the United Nations, but in the country the conflicts continued with the Northern Alliance succeeding in limiting Taliban progress northward in 1997. Even though in 1998 the city of Mazar-i-Sharif fell to the Taliban, marking their dominance across over 90 percent of the country. This event forced Abdul Rashid Dostum to find refuge in the neighboring Uzbekistan. On September 9th, after an attack, the Northern Alliance leader Massoud was assassinated by Al-Qaeda, thus removing a veteran and leader who represented a great enemy in their quest for power. All these conflicts, but especially the great influence of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization in the internal affairs of the country, and knowing that the Taliban were protecting them, forced the international community to turn their attention over to Afghanistan. But it was after September 11, 2001 that the situation got serious and determined the United States to act immediately in trying to eradicate the organization and to eliminate the Taliban who helped all these things propagating.

In the quest to make a chronology of this apparently never ending conflict, and to better understand its dimensions, I will use a conceptual model based on Michael Lund research. This kind of approach can help us better illustrate how a conflict evolves over a period of time, for what reasons, and the main actors involved. I will take into consideration both violent and non-violent aspects of the conflict, and more importantly how the use of force in this conflict tended to rise and fall over time. The curve of conflict also helps us organize terms and concepts used in conflict management by professionals, but it can also show how a conflict's different phases become inter-related and to identify various kinds of third-party interventions. The Afghan conflict, like any other conflict, has been a highly dynamic and volatile one over time, with relatively short periods of Durable Peace, characterized by a high level of cooperation. The durable peace was not able to last because of the internal fights of different ethnic groups, and also because the country was not capable to develop a high level of internal security.

Periods of Stable Peace characterized by limited cooperation and a low level of violence were also frequent in the country's history, like was the case with the Unstable Peace situation in which the country now stands. For the last 11 years Afghanistan has found itself in a situation in which tension and suspicion among parties run high, and every now and then some of these situations can turn into an internal crisis. The Afghan crisis shows a high level of tense confrontation between armed forces that are mobilized and ready to fight. These forces usually engage in threats and occasional low-level skirmishes, but do not use a significant amount of force. In a period of crisis, the probability of the outbreak of war is high. An example of crisis is provided by the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis between the USA and the Soviet Union.

And the last term to be explained is War, which is defined as sustained fighting between organized armed forces. Once significant use of violence or armed force occurs, conflicts are very susceptible to entering a spiral of escalating violence, because either side feels justified to increase violence. This is exactly what happened with the Afghan conflict since 2001 American intervention, and even before this action. The country was in a continuous internal battle between the different ethnic groups fighting to gain influence and authority. These ethnic groups are just one type of actors that engaged in the conflict; when it comes to defining the actors in this conflict, we have to take into consideration the impact that this has had in time. Not only Afghan groups are important in this analysis, but also the allied countries that joined the US efforts to stabilize the country. After 2001, the number of states participating with military forces in Afghanistan grew up to more than 10 (with more than 50 contributing in other areas), all of them allied to the United States and the British in an effort to put the conflict to an end as soon as possible. Among the most important actors are the NATO coalition troops, led by the United States, which participates in the conflict with more than 60,000 troops. Other important actors are the contributing states allied to the US, states like Great Britain, Germany, Spain, France (who pulled out the troops), Romania, Georgia, Turkey, Canada, and Italy. On the other side, the Afghanistan local forces that have participated in the conflict are the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, as the most important ones, and some small networks or factions like HI-Gulbuddin, HI-Khalis, the Haqqani network, and Lashkar-e-Toiba. When it comes to important leaders, we can name David Petraeus, Stanley McChrystal, David D. McKiernan, Karl W. Eikenberry, Nick Parker, David Richards, Mauro del Vecchio, Goetz Gliemeroth, as commanders for the allied forces, many of them being American or British. On the other side, as Afghan leaders, we have Osama bin Laden, Mohammed Omar, Jalaluddin Haqqani and Ayman al-Zawahiri – many of whom have been killed during the war by the coalition forces.

The NATO-led troops are by far the more evolved and equipped; they are provided with modern equipment of war and modern tactics. Also, the allied force is better trained than the local Afghan forces but the locals have had the advantage of better knowing

the surroundings and the guerrilla tactics. The participating states' governments can also be considered as active actors in the conflict, with many of them providing not only armed forces but also economic aid. When it comes to conflict goals, positions or relationships, there are some differences on each side. For example, the main goal for the allied states in Afghanistan, and for the US, mainly, is the eradication of possible threats represented by terrorist organizations, and the elimination of the Taliban from the country's leadership. When it comes to important interests, they are represented by the idea of implementing a new constitution in trying to put Afghanistan on a more stable democratic path, with respect of human rights and political pluralism.

The Taliban group, on the other hand, have been fighting in order to keep its influence and control over the country, and mainly in order to keep the state in its Islamic form implemented years earlier. Even though the state that they were controlling was insecure and had a very low level of development, they found some people to support them. The Taliban were driven mainly by religious views, when it came to war, and by questions of keeping their identity intact. But as time passed, the allies managed to impose some control over the state when they managed to agree on the naming of a new president Hamid Karzai in 2001 and on a new constitution in 2004. Under his leadership and with the protection of NATO, Afghanistan has made great progress towards modernization, state security, and democratization. There are also organizations and actors that are defined as spoilers in this conflict, represented mainly by the ones that use opium in order to fund their war. Afghanistan is the world's largest opium producer, the raw material for heroin, with its farmers harvesting about 80 percent of the world supply. Large quantities of Afghan heroin are exported to Russia, Iran, and Europe. Many of these crops are owned by Taliban leaders and the profits are used to fund their military actions with no effective efforts made by the Afghan government in trying to eradicate it and to offer better alternatives for the people. In the past years since Hamid Karzai was named the reelected president of the state, the international community has been able to keep a well-connected dialogue regarding the future of the country. This has been done through conferences held by the UN or NATO, or by meetings between Karzai and important leaders, like the US president Barack Obama. All these efforts have helped in providing a path for the new Afghan state and have helped in the way of building new relations with important states than can help Afghanistan in economic terms for the future. These meetings have also helped in terms of conflict mediation and have provided some alternatives in order to end it.

Trigger causes

The most important causes for the conflict in Afghanistan are related to the Taliban and their way of ruling the country. During the mid-90s and the early 2000's, the Taliban allowed Al-Qaeda, a well-known terrorist organization, to build bases in Afghanistan and to train there. These actions have attracted the attention of the international community

and the country was under the scrutiny of important states mainly because of its close relations with terrorists. Another aspect was the great international pressure on the Afghan leaders to hand over Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda; when the Taliban didn't do this, the United States decided they would use their armed forces. But the **trigger cause** of the conflict was the terrorist attack over the twin towers in New York in September 2001, an attack that was coordinated and implemented by Al-Qaeda and where more than 3000 people were killed. This was the last drop and in the same year, in October 2001, the USA began bombing Afghanistan, targeting bin Laden's Al-Qaeda fighters and also the Taliban. Other reasons for the armed attack may have been the Taliban leader's lack of collaboration with the international organizations, poor control and lack of security that has grown in the country and the threats that it posed to the democratic world.

Also, when it comes to conflict prolongation after 2001, we can mention the hard terrain of the country; it is mostly dominated by high altitudes and mountains with a great number of caves and areas which the Taliban used as hiding spots. Also, some of the population is pro-Taliban, so after the 2001 invasion, they joined the Taliban militia and helped the organization of improvised attacks over the allied soldiers. Even today, after more than ten years of conflict the situation in some areas of the country is still not settled. Moreover, the Taliban discourse over this conflict became radical, in an attempt to attract more followers. They tried to turn the conflict into some kind of sacred war in which the US would want to eliminate the Islamic culture from Afghanistan, but this approach did not meet with great success.

Actors

The main trigger of the conflict, as mentioned above, was the attack coordinated by Al-Qaeda on the twin towers in New York and on the Pentagon in 2001. This had determined the Bush administration to declare war on terrorism, and the first target was Afghanistan. The US had requested Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden and all the other terrorist organization leaders, but this did not happen. We can establish as **root causes** the insecure situation of the country, and, more importantly the threats posed by the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda that had a privileged status in the country, being protected by the Taliban in power but also the magnitude of the 9/11 attacks. This is when the US began Operation Enduring Freedom, an international armed response, on October 7, 2001. **The main actors in this conflict** were the Taliban militia, who held control over the country at that time, and the US-led forces of NATO and allied countries. The main roots of the conflict were represented by a highly unstable situation that was in the country over the years and by the security problem posed by the many terrorist organizations based in Afghanistan. In the first phase of the conflict, Special Operation Forces were set to provide support to the Northern Alliance by targeting positions

through air strikes and missile launches from US and British ships and submarines. A new war was in course in a country that since the 19th century had known few periods of peace. The forces led by Abdul Rashid Dostum and backed by the US and Great Britain managed to capture the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif on November 9th, 2001, from the hands of the Taliban, and soon the regime collapsed, culminating with the fall of Kabul in November and Kandahar in December 2001. Even though the Taliban regime was eliminated, the Al-Qaeda organization managed to maintain its positions in Afghanistan, and its leaders were safe. After these events some peacekeeping actions were started by the international community with the congress of Bonn, sponsored by the United Nations. In Bonn, various Afghan factions were brought together in an attempt to carve the path for political reconstruction, a new constitution, and presidential and National Assembly elections. The UN Security Council endorsed the resulting Bonn Agreements on December 6th, 2001, in Resolution no. 1383 (2001). The agreements established an Afghan Interim Authority with Hamid Karzai appointed Chairman on December 22nd, 2001, who is still in power today. As agreed, UN-mandated ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) troops began deploying in Afghanistan in January 2002, with NATO assuming control of ISAF forces on August 11th, 2003, and after October, the mission was expanded through the whole country in an attempt to eliminate terrorist threats and to provide Afghanistan a secure and democratic future. The war continued with many other states joining the NATO force, but it was to be a long and harsh guerilla war with the Taliban engaging in low level skirmishes making use of the rough mountain terrain in order to take shelter from the allied attacks. They also improvised attacks over allied convoys or bases and used suicidal attacks on a large scale, thus inflicting important casualties on NATO soldiers.

In 2004, Hamid Karzai was reelected as president of Afghanistan, and in the same year a new democratic constitution was agreed upon. In 2006, NATO forces took control of security in the whole country, in an attempt to eliminate further threats. In 2008, the NATO troops were provided with 17,000 additional troops from the international allies, with the numbers continuing to rise over the years. The data provided in December 2012 showed that there were **about 120,000 troops from 50 contributing nations** in the International Security and Assistance Force, of which about 68,000 were US troops. After 2001, the situation in Afghanistan got from war to crisis and then again to what seemed an unstable peace, with each year having its important facts and with a hard guerilla war in place. In March 2009, the US President Barack Obama unveiled new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the decision to bring in an extra 4,000 US personnel that would train and bolster the Afghan army and police, providing support for civilians, also. In December the same year, another 30,000 US troops were sent to Afghanistan with General David Petraeus taking over the command. Also in 2010, at a NATO summit in Lisbon, an agreement was reached to hand over the control of the country to the Afghan forces by the end of 2014, which meant that the participating

countries would gradually retreat their forces based on a well set timeline. In 2011, the crisis escalated, when about 500 Taliban prisoners escaped from a prison, and in the same year the president's half-brother and Kandahar governor Ahmad Wali Karzai was killed in the Taliban campaign against prominent figures of the state. After more than 10 years of war and crisis, the country seems a more secure place and most importantly on its way to democracy and internal security with most of Taliban leaders and their strongholds eliminated, but some tension still persists. One of the most important successes of the US was the elimination of Osama bin Laden who was killed in a well-coordinated attack in Abbottabad Pakistan after years of data gathering, but by the time this happened, the organization was already weakened with many of its leaders having been eliminated. According to the US Department of State On May 2nd, 2012, the United States and Afghanistan signed the *Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America*, a 10-year strategic partnership agreement (SPA) that demonstrates the United States' enduring commitment to strengthen Afghanistan's sovereignty, stability, and prosperity, and continue cooperation to defeat Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. This agreement also signals the U.S. intent to designate Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally in an important peacekeeping attempt. As the conflict slowly began to decrease in 2012, the Taliban agreed to open an overseas office as a move towards peace talks with the US and the Afghan government even though low level encounters still take place in the country. Also in 2012, after Francois Hollande was elected as the new president of France, he decided that the country would bring its soldiers back home, signaling the beginning of the retreat for other forces as well, as the conflict seemed to settle down in some areas. At the same time, the newly formed Afghan military force is being trained by NATO soldiers in order to prepare them for the handover set for 2014. Also, the allied forces are helping the police forces in their training, in an attempt to leave the country on secure hands. But at the same time, Taliban attacks still occur in some areas, with casualties on the allied side and even on civilians and Afghan officials, which places the conflict in a stage of unstable peace in the near future.

When it comes to applying Lund's curve of conflict to the Afghan conflict, we have to take into consideration some aspects like the influence of terrorist organizations over the policy of the country that managed to bring it in a long and difficult war with the USA and then with its allies. Before 2001, the situation of the country could be defined as an unstable peace with few internal conflicts emerging because of the ethnic differences, but after the World Trade Center attacks, the situation escalated quickly. However, at the same time the United States had information regarding the presence of some important terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda there, including the presence of its leader Osama bin Laden. This status quo already placed the situation into a critical crisis because the US leaders were determined to eliminate him and his organization, and to put an end to further attacks like the one in 2001. In this way, President Bush demanded publicly

that the Afghan authorities deliver Osama bin Laden and his organization to justice. He stated that if this action would not be taken, the United States would intervene directly. Then, after this diplomacy crisis between the two nations, the conflict began on October 7th, 2001 when the US and British troops began night bombings targeting terrorist bases in Afghanistan. The bombings continued until December, when Kandahar, the last Taliban stronghold was abandoned. The US-led troops succeeded in eliminating the Taliban influence from the major cities, who in turn managed to take refuge in the high areas of the country, where they managed to take key positions and to attack the US and UK forces with improvised devices and through ambushes or suicide attacks.

Final stage of conflict

After the conflict cooled down, the US government backed Hamid Karzai as the new leader of Afghanistan. Karzai was a tribal leader of an aristocratic lineage as he was named leader of an interim government of the country on December 22nd, 2001. Starting with this decision, the peacekeeping process slowly got under way. Later, in May 2003 Donald Rumsfeld, the US Secretary of Defense, announced the end of all the major combat operations. After this announcement, other nations came into the aid of the US efforts of restoring the country stability under a NATO command in August 2003. In the following years, more important steps were taken in the way of peace, like in 2004 when a new constitution was drafted, and then in 2005 when the first parliamentary elections in more than 30 years were held. In 2006, NATO took over the peacekeeping operations throughout the country from the United States troops. Following this decision, some important operations were launched in the following years, in order to gain control over some areas controlled by the Taliban. US government decided to send over 4,000 troops in Afghanistan, under President Bush, and then his successor Barack Obama sent more troops to help the operations. These would be the last important decisions, as a major troop pullout is expected by the end of 2014. An important step towards post conflict resolution was made in 2011, when the Afghan government signed a 10-year partnership with the US government for aid in order to stabilize the country. Furthermore, after the scheduled retreat there will still be US troops in Afghanistan to help train and prepare the new Afghan army force and the Afghan police as part of the post conflict process.

In the following paragraph, I will try to make a short analysis of the Afghan conflict dynamics after the 2001 invasion. Immediately after the intervention, the allied troops managed to gain control over the country relatively quickly, succeeding to overthrow the Taliban leaders in power at that time. After they gained control of the capital city of Kabul in 2001, things seemed to go as planned. In this first fights, the US were helped by the Northern Alliance Group. After 2001, the war with the Taliban continued in many of the country areas, but important progress was made with the

help of the international community and by the relatively calm situation on the Afghan political scene dominated by Hamid Karzai. For example, in 2004 he was reelected as president and the following year the Afghans voted for a new government in the first free elections in over 30 years. In 2006, NATO assumed the security for the whole Afghanistan, managing to secure some important areas in the country, and from 2008 to 2009 the number of troops sent by the US and the allied countries continue to grow. Then US President Obama decides to boost US troop numbers in Afghanistan by 30,000, bringing total to 100,000, mentioning that the United States would begin withdrawing its forces by 2011. At the following elections for a new parliament in 2010, Taliban violence and widespread fraud made a long delay in announcing results, but in the end the situations came under control. Another important decision was made in November 2010 at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, when the participants agreed over a timetable to withdraw the troops by the end of 2014. This was a major and important step to letting the Afghan authorities handle their situation at home. Then, slowly, the conflict began to de-escalate, as Afghan national police and new troops started to be trained by NATO soldiers in order to be prepared after 2014. Still in some areas of the country Taliban deployed some attacks over the allied soldiers; but they were few and did not have the force that they had in the past, as their resources were diminishing. After more than ten years of conflict, the situation in Afghanistan now seems more under control than it was at the start of the war, but there are still problems that need to be addressed by the future leaders. The United States have agreed to support Afghanistan even after their planned retreat and to offer solutions for internal problems. For the moment, the country has wide support when it comes to the international community, with many important countries interested in the development of a new democratic and secure Afghanistan and in the continuation of the progresses made in the past under these circumstances. On the other hand, there are some reports, like the one made by the International Crisis Group (ICG) that say the Afghan police and army are unprepared for security responsibility. These reports are based on an analysis of the capabilities and the equipment that the internal Afghan security forces have, but also on some information provided by Afghan politicians. In this way, the international support for the Afghan community is very important and the efforts made in these 10 years should continue at economic level, providing aid and support for the country's democratic leaders in an attempt to build a secure nation. This is obviously the best case scenario. On the other hand, **the worst case scenario** sounds more like a turn back in time with the possible system collapse after 2014 under a new internal battle for power and under a weak leadership. The Taliban could rise again to power, but this is not that probable having in mind that their resources are not that high and their position is very weak, as is the situation of the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda.

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