

Victoria Shanghai Academy Model United Nations XI

Security Council (SC)

Topic: Addressing the Situation in Afghanistan

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To the esteemed Delegates of the Security Council,

Welcome! We are Brendon and Lorraine, your chairs in the Security Council for VSAMUN's 11th Conference. Brendon is a Y10 at Victoria Shanghai Academy while Lorraine is a Form 5 at St. Stephen's College, we are very honoured to act as your chairs for VSAMUN and can't wait to hear all the fascinating and engaging debates and crisis notes you all will be churning out during the weekend of the 27-28th of November.

As chairs, we hope that understanding this ever-changing event in Afghanistan and its consequences on the wider world will lead you to a greater understanding of the operations of the Security Council and we hope that it will grant you an understanding of the United Nations as a whole.

The following background guide is intended as an introduction to the important context of the situation in Afghanistan and its current effects on the wider Middle East. To prepare you for making your position papers and plan for your crisis arcs. However, this guide is not meant as a substitute for individual research. Position Papers are required for consideration of awards. The position paper should explain your background research, policy agenda, and political aspirations, with 2-3 paragraphs or one A4 size page.

Feel free to email us at s2017109@stu.ssc.edu.hk & ps20123108@student.vsa.edu.hk for any questions you may have about the content of the guide or the general conference. We look forward to meeting everyone in November.

Regards,

Lorraine Chau

Brendon Mak

Victoria Shanghai Academy Model United Nations 2021 Security Council



Important Rules of Procedure

1. Veto Power

As this is the Security Council, there will be the P5 nations that will have veto power over resolutions passed during the committee (Note: Veto power does not extend to private crisis notes). These P5 Nations include the United Kingdom, France, the United States, the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. The veto powers allow for resolutions to be rejected. A negative vote by any P5 nation towards a resolution will cause a session between the P5 nations in which the nation who voted has a 30-second speech to explain their reasoning for the veto, other P5 nations may try to convince the nation to halt their veto vote during this time but they cannot stop a veto from happening. A veto vote will immediately cause the resolution to be tabled, with the floor becoming open for new resolutions to be introduced.

2. Cutoff Date

As the situation in Afghanistan is ever-changing, the cut-off date for all events will be **October 15th, 2021**. Events before the cut-off date can be referenced, though specific events happening after the cut-off date cannot be mentioned.

Further information on ROP and Crisis Updates:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1r3iLoYp9SjSuZ5SC-KNQ-6DiWgGaWn9q_SDxSBCjIc/edit

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Background Information

Afghanistan has long been home to those of different ethnicities and cultures, from the ancient Greek settlements and cities founded by the conquests of Alexander the Great to the Muslim mosques brought by Arab preachers that once stood side by side. Afghanistan has had a vibrant history acting as the crossroads between East and West, especially during the era of the Silk Road in which Afghanistan served as one of the few crossroads on the Silk Road in which merchants from East and West would interact with trade.

Even though Afghanistan has often been at the boundaries of civilization, from both Eastern and Western perspectives, the idea of a unified Afghan state never emerged until the Hotaki and Durrani dynasties; native Afghan Pashtuns ruled these dynasties. The Durrani Empire, and its most famous ruler, Ahmad Shah Durrani, has often been credited to form a unified Afghan identity. The Durrani Empire took part in campaigns against Iran and the Mughal Empire in India. The Durrani Empire and its skilled horsemen would be a significant factor in destroying the Mughal Empire and creating the British Raj in India, Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan and the Durrani Empire would soon fall into a spiral of chaos and succession crises in the years after Ahmad Shah's death. While the region now known as Afghanistan was gripped by instability and chaos, the powers of the Russian and British Empires would compete, taking part in the Victorian Great Game. This game would define the future of Central Asia. The Great Game would last from 1830 to 1891 and be a diplomatic, military and economic test of power projection by both powers in Central Asia. The Great Game was a clash between the interests of Britain to have a series of buffer states in Central Asia in the form of Afghanistan, Persia and modern-day Turkmenistan against Russian ambitions of expanding her territory and creating a buffer zone for the Russian heartland.

Conflicts between the European powers and the native Turkmen, Uzbek, Afghan and Pashtun peoples of Afghanistan would continue to ratchet up to another notch in the following Anglo-Afghan Wars between the British Empire and the Emirate of Afghanistan (not to be confused by the Taliban-controlled Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) in which British forces would invade Afghanistan throughout three wars to further their goals in the Great Game. These wars would often end in a bloody stalemate for both sides. ("Anglo-Afghan Wars | History, Significance, & Facts | Britannica")



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Afghanistan would stay largely neutral in the period after the Anglo-Afghan Wars, serving as an undeveloped nation that was largely rural and non-industrialized, with brief periods of unrest and instability marking the relatively unchanging landscape of Afghanistan. The last monarch of Afghanistan, King Zahir, would rule with the regency and assistance of his uncle until 1946. King Zahir's reign would be marked by an incredible balancing act between the United States of America and the Soviet Union in which both powers would compete for influence within the nation. This jockeying for influence would be an eerie re-enactment of the Great Game between the two premier superpowers in the region, Russia and Britain just a century prior, with instead the superpowers focusing on the economic power to lure Afghanistan into their camps instead of using brute force.

The Soviet Union and the United States of America would focus on the donation and funding of projects involved in the modernization and improvement of Afghan infrastructure, agriculture, industry and civilian life. A notable example of American involvement in Afghan modernization projects is the Helmand Valley Project in which American equipment and experts were used to build dams and water treatment plants that significantly boosted local agricultural output in the region. Another notable example of Soviet involvement in Afghan modernization projects is the Salang Tunnel which connected Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan to Northern Afghanistan. (Stewart) The monarchy would continue to have friendly relations with both superpowers.

In 1973, taking advantage of King Zahir's absence from the nation, King Zahir's cousin, Mohammed Daoud Khan would stage a coup against him and become the first president of the newly formed Republic of Afghanistan. Mohammed Daoud Khan would soon begin to seek ever-closer ties with the Soviet Union, with many of the young officers of the Afghan army being sent to the Soviet Union to learn tactics, many of these young officers would be indoctrinated into Marxist thought. This communist cadre of young officers in the Afghan Army led to the Saur Revolution as communist forces within the army and the Communist Party of Afghanistan staged a bloody coup against Mohammed Daoud Khan, forming the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

The ensuing chaos caused by the Saur Revolution and the insurgencies launched against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan caused the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan under the pretences of peacekeeping and ensuring regional stability in the region on December 25th, 1979. The



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Soviet-Afghan War would be a bloody affair for both the Soviet Union and the Mujahadeen Guerillas, untold atrocities were committed during the war by both sides, with a major example being the Soviet Union's Gorbachev policy of using scorched earth tactics to herd Afghan civilians into cities controlled by Soviet troops. This combination of atrocities and the scorching of much of Afghanistan's rural land caused the women and children to flee to surrounding nations (notably Pakistan) as the men stayed behind to join the Mujahideen and fight against the Soviet invaders. The Taliban would be formed from the children that fled into surrounding nations as a result of the conflict. ("What Is the Taliban?")

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, the victorious factions in the Mujahadeen that were once united against a common enemy now dissolved into chaos and warlordism with Afghanistan ruled by a patchwork of regional militias and former Mujahadeen forces. It was not until 1994 when a mysterious group emerged from the Pakistani border and seized major checkpoints, using organized tactics to quickly overwhelm the squabbling factions of Afghanistan, seizing the capital of Kabul after two years into the conflict. The Taliban would emerge victorious over much of Afghanistan, with only the North-Western corner of the nation bordering Uzbekistan and China would resist the Taliban, this resistance would be dubbed the "Northern Alliance". An estimated 400,000 Afghan civilians have died in internal conflicts in the span of 10 years. ("Afghan Civilians | Costs of War")

Following the 2001 September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States, the leader of the terrorist group that committed the attacks, Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, would be granted "visitor" status in Afghanistan and acting as a guest of the Taliban. The United States, refusing to negotiate with terrorists, worked with the Northern Alliance resistance in swiftly destroying Taliban targets.

Taliban control in Afghanistan would fall in the span of a month with the combined weight of the Northern Alliance, the United States and NATO as a whole. An interim government was formed, with NATO troops remaining in Afghanistan to combat insurgent attacks and to advise and secure the new government. The September 2014 Afghan Presidential Elections was the first time in Afghan history that executive power was peacefully and democratically transferred, with Ashraf Ghani becoming the president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In 2020, the Doha Agreement, or the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan was signed between the United States and the Taliban in which US



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forces would withdraw from Afghanistan within 14 months. (“Doha Agreement: What Is the Taliban Peace Deal Signed by Donald Trump’s Administration?”)

As soon as NATO Forces were beginning to withdraw from Afghanistan as part of a comprehensive plan on freeing up forces for other fronts, the Taliban, relegated to pockets in mountains dotted around the country, launched an offensive against the Afghan National Army. The last vestiges of NATO forces would depart from Afghanistan on the 30th of August from Kabul Airport as Taliban forces reached the presidential palace in Kabul and restored the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan after 20 years of fighting.

This committee shall be concerned with evaluating and dealing with the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and the rise of regional insurgencies such as ISIS-K.



Key Terms

Term	Definition
Military Withdrawal	A type of military operation, or retreating defensive action, generally means that retreating forces drawback while maintaining contact with the enemy.
Taliban	An ultrafundamentalist political and religious faction emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. They originated from Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and have been accused of committing atrocities against civilians. The Taliban currently controls the capital of Afghanistan.
Government in Exile	A political group that claims to be a country or semi-sovereign state's legitimate government, however, is unable to exercise legal power and instead resides in another state or foreign country.
International sanctions	International sanctions are imposed by the international community on a specific country that violates human rights, international security, or other mandates with the objective of punishing the state for its unjust, immoral acts. Regional militias were an important force in the Afghanistan conflict, acting as security forces against insurgents such as the Taliban or ISIS-K.
Pashtun	An Iranic ethnic group native to Central and South Asia, otherwise historically known as Afghans. Their native language is Pashto, an Eastern Iranian language.
The War on Terror	Referring to an ongoing but subsiding international military campaign launched by the United States government following the 9/11 attacks.



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Mujahideen	Literally meaning, those engaged in Jihad, the Mujahideen are Islamic guerrillas who fight on the behalf of God, religion, and their community. Can be compared to the Muslim version of International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. Emerged out of the Soviet Afghan War. (“Mujahideen Definition, Meaning, History, & Facts Britannica”)
Panjshir Valley	A valley near the Hindu Kush mountain range, and is the heart of the new Panjshir Province. It is divided by the Panjshir river and home to more than 100,000 people and houses Afghanistan’s largest concentration of ethnic Tajiks.
ISIS-Khorasan	A self-proclaimed affiliate of the Islamic state and are active in South Asia and Central Asia. Mainly comprised of Islamists that defected from the Taliban due to its reconciliatory stance towards the West. (Gardner)
Militia	A militia is a group of civilians / untrained soldiers that serve as an army in times of need. It is demarcated from a nation’s military by its unprofessional and part-time nature.
Northern Alliance	Known as the United Islamic National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, they were a military alliance of groups that operated between late 1996 to 2001 after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan took over Kabul.
United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA)	A UN Special Political Mission established to assist the state and people of Afghanistan to lay down the foundations for sustainable peace and development of the country
Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI)	The Inter-Services Intelligence is the premiere



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	intelligence agency of Pakistan and is operationally responsible for gathering, processing, and analysing information relevant for national security from around the world.
Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (for the Afghanistan Compact) (JCMB)	The board provides a platform for strategic coordination, joint policy formulation and problem solving in Afghanistan. Ensuring the mutual accountability of the government and its development partners.
Doha Agreement	Known as the Agreement for Bringing peace to Afghanistan, is a peace agreement signed by the United States and the Taliban on February 29th 2020 in order to bring an end to the Afghan war. The agreement was signed at the Sheraton Grand Doha and was negotiated by Zalmay Khalilzad.

Key Clashes

The Recognition of the Taliban state	As of October 2021, no country has officially recognized the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Taliban government as legitimate. Although nations have not recognized the Taliban government, countries such as China, Russia and Pakistan have met with the Taliban though no official recognition has been given. The current seat of Afghanistan in the United Nations is occupied by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Economic Crisis in Afghanistan, the loss of Gold Reserves and crucial foreign aid	The swift retreat of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Taliban caused the former government to evacuate the gold and foreign currency reserves of the treasury. The already teetering state of the Afghan economy was pushed over the edge by the Taliban's ascension to power. A humanitarian crisis is looming over Afghanistan as the taliban government is not internationally recognized, the previous humanitarian shipments from the international community into Afghanistan have halted and crucial supplies have not been able to reach the Afghani people in the looming winter that has been dubbed to be "hell on Earth" if international aid is not sent. (Simpson)



Position of Key Parties

Key Party	Explanation
China	<p>China has always publicly expressed their support for Afghanistan and has adhered to a non-interference policy when it comes to Afghan affairs and continues to maintain a steady relationship with Afghanistan. China claims to respect the Afghan people's rights to decide on their own future independently without influence from outside parties.</p> <p>Regarding the current situation in Afghanistan, China has also expressed their will to maintain steady communication with the Taliban government.</p>
India	<p>India and Afghanistan have had strong historical and cultural links, having played a significant role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan in 2001. They are also main players in aiding the US combat the Taliban before they came to power in Afghanistan.</p>
United States	<p>The United States of America was the first to land troops into Taliban-controlled Afghanistan in 2001 and the last country in NATO to withdraw troops from Afghanistan in 2021.</p> <p>Before America's final withdrawal, American & NATO forces in the Kabul airport would conduct an airlift of Afghan civilians that aided NATO. Although the American government has not ruled out recognizing the Taliban government, the United States still takes a firm stance against the Taliban which they allege that the Taliban has perpetrated human rights abuses and erased the reforms put in place by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.</p>



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Pakistan	As Pakistan and Afghanistan border with one another, their relations have been strained since 1947, when Pakistan gained independence and Afghanistan was the sole country to vote against Pakistan's admission into the UN. Pakistan has stated their want for an all inclusive state that respects the rights of all Afghans and can ensure that Afghan soil is not used for terrorism against any country.
Iran	Iran and Afghanistan share an extensive border region, and as such are major trading partners. With the Taliban seizing power in Afghanistan, the Iranian authorities have cautiously welcomed Afghanistan's new rulers and have stressed that Tehran will base its policy on the Taliban's behaviour.

Timeline of Events

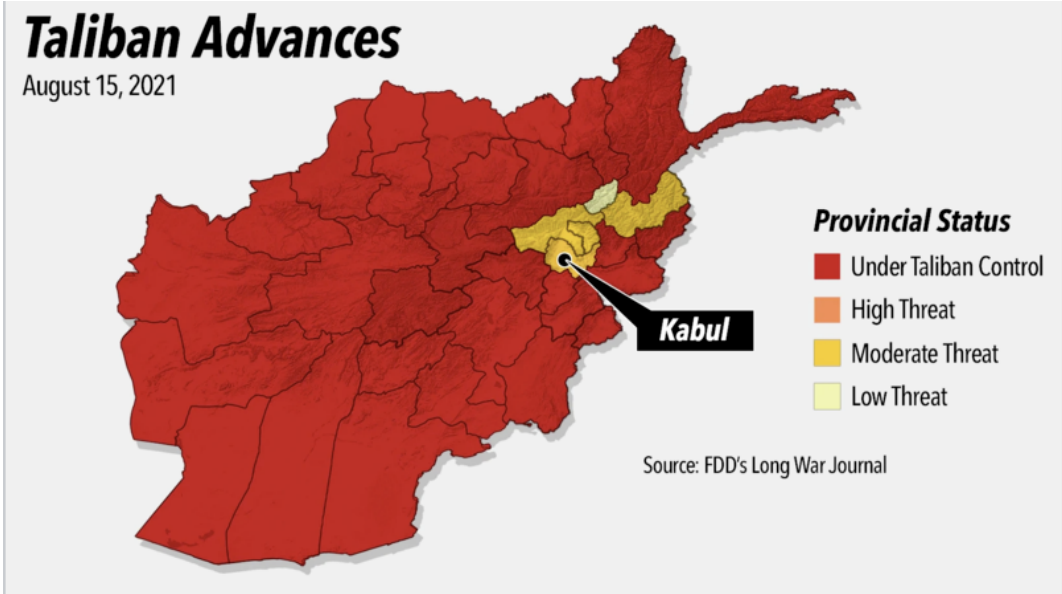
Quick Summary

Year	Event
1973	The Afghan monarchy is dissolved, the Republic of Afghanistan is formed. Mohammed Daoud Khan becomes the pro-Soviet Prime Minister.
1978	A communist coup is launched against the Republic of Afghanistan, killing Khan, with the new Communist government signing a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union.
June 1978	Mujahadeen guerillas rise up across the country against the Soviet-backed Afghan government.
1979	The American Ambassador to Afghanistan, Adolph Dubs is killed, US aid to Afghanistan halts, pushing the Democratic Republic further into Soviet hands. A power struggle within the communist hierarchy occurs with the Deputy Prime Minister and his supporters overthrowing and killing the previous Prime Minister.
December	The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. This marks the beginning of the 10 year long



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1979	Soviet-Afghan War.
1988	Osama Bin Laden and a band of fanatic Islamists form the radical terrorist group Al-Qaeda with the immediate goal of defeating Soviet forces in Afghanistan.
1989	The Soviet Union, following a peace deal signed with Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States, withdrew from Afghanistan. This marks the end of direct Soviet military involvement in the Afghan War.
1992	Mujahideen forces enter Kabul, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan collapses. Afghanistan falls into chaos as differing Mujahideen factions brawl.
1994	The Taliban emerges from the Pakistani border, swiftly seizing crucial border crossings and the vital city of Kandahar.
1996	After a long a bloody campaign involving rape, genocide and draconian punishments, the Taliban captured the national capital of Kabul though ethnic minorities in the North of Afghanistan continue to resist Taliban occupation.
October 2001	Following the terrorist attacks made on US soil, an elite group of American military personnel is dispatched to Afghanistan to assist the Northern Alliance and other rebel groups against the Taliban.
December 2001	The Taliban central government in Kabul and Kandahar falls to the combined might of NATO airpower and Northern Alliance guerillas. The government-in-exile of Afghanistan is sworn in.
2004	Democratic presidential elections are held, with 10.5 million Afghans arriving to vote.
2006	NATO peace-keeping duties in Afghanistan are expanded to include much of the Southern portion of the nation in the light of ever-increasing Taliban attacks.
2014	The Obama Administration introduces a plan for significantly reducing US troop commitments in Afghanistan. Later in the year all NATO combat operations would be halted.
2015	The plan to reduce US troop commitments in Afghanistan is cancelled.

2019	Peace talks between the United States and the Taliban occur in Qatar. These talks would result in the Doha Agreement in which the US would commit to withdrawing her military presence from Afghanistan.
April 2021	The newly inaugurated president Joe Biden delays the withdrawal, promising to withdraw from Afghanistan by September 11th 2021.
1st May 2021	The 2021 Taliban Offensive begins as attacks by the Taliban against civilians and government targets begin to intensify. The Taliban would seize 50/370 of Afghanistan's districts in three months.
5th July 2021	American forces withdraw from Bagram Airfield without informing the Afghan National Army, crucial equipment looted.
9th July 2021	The Battle of Kandahar begins as Taliban forces encroach on the city that was the beginning of Taliban victories in 1994. Rural districts begin to fall to the Taliban as crucial cities such as Herat, Lashkar Gah and Kabul are surrounded by the Taliban, relying on air to keep the troops supplied.
12th August 2021	The Taliban seizes the regional capitals of Ghazni and Kandahar, with the Taliban controlling 13/34 of Afghanistan's regional capitals, with many more being surrounded and falling to the Taliban in the following days.
15th August 2021	<p>Taliban Advances August 15, 2021</p>  <p>Provincial Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under Taliban Control High Threat Moderate Threat Low Threat <p>Source: FDD's Long War Journal</p>



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	<p><i>Fig 1:</i> The provinces of Afghanistan on August 15th 2021. Note that Kabul has been surrounded on all sides.</p> <p>Kabul is captured by Taliban forces as the president of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani flees the country.</p>
17th August 2021	The Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Amrullah Saleh declares himself president and announces the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan based in the Panjshir Valley.
26th August 2021	A suicide bombing by a member of the Islamic State Khorosan Province in Kabul airport kills 200 Afghani Civillians and 13 American service members in the chaotic evacuation.
30th August 2021	The last NATO forces in Afghanistan withdrew after an evacuation campaign in Kabul airport to escort civilians that helped the alliance out of Afghanistan. The Taliban celebrate the “true independence” of Afghanistan.
6th September 2021	The Taliban claimed victory over the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan in Panjshir Valley.

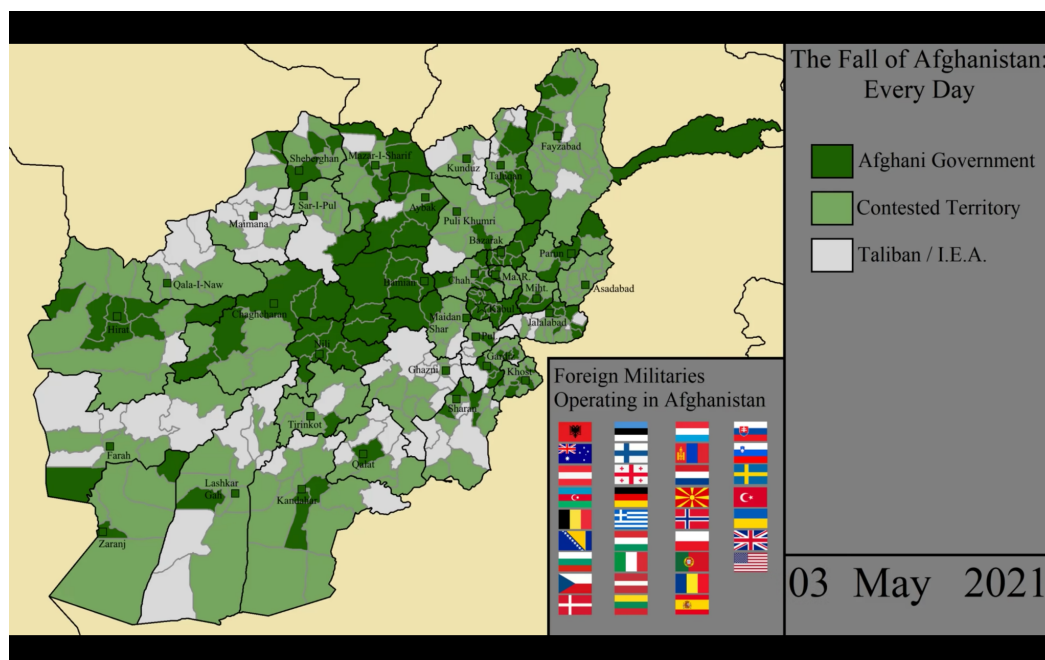


Fig 2: A map of districts controlled by the Afghani Government (Green) and the Taliban (White) on the 3rd of May 2021, a few days into the Taliban offensive. (EmperorTigerstar)

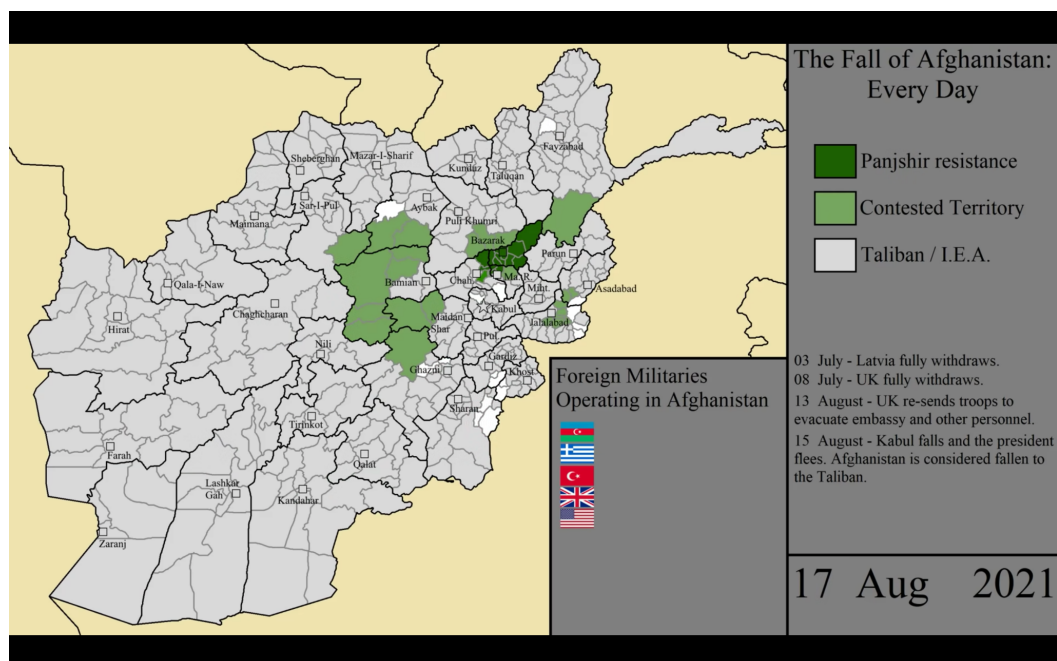


Fig 3: : A map of districts controlled by the Afghani Government (Green) and the Taliban (White) on the 17th of August 2021, two months after the Taliban offensive. (EmperorTigerstar)



Guiding Questions

1. Should military action be taken against the Taliban to ensure human rights in Afghanistan are properly respected?
2. Has the Taliban followed their side of the treaties and promises to improve human rights in Afghanistan?
3. What is the future of peacekeeping forces (if needed) in Afghanistan?
4. What are the implications of the Taliban takeover and American withdrawal in Afghanistan?
What can be done to ensure security and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorist forces?

Recommended Further Research

- Descent into Chaos: The US and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia - Ahmed Rashid
- All the Shah's Men - Stephen Kinzer
- Taliban - Ahmed Rashid
- CIA World Factbook - Afghanistan
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9N6L5mT9W8>
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