

Afghan Government Throughout History

Research Unit

USCIS, Refugee, Asylum & International Operations

February 2022



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Overview

- Soviet Invasion
- Wars (1980s – 2000s)
- US Invasion
- Gov't of Islamic Republic
- Gov't of Islamic Emirate



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Key Terms

People's Democratic Party

Soviets

Mujahideen

Invasions

Taliban

Al-Qaeda

bin Laden

Bonn

International Security

Assistance Force

Islamic Republic

Karzai

Ghani

Doha

Islamic Emirate

Akhundzada



From the Beginning

~April 1978

- Bloody coup d'état by People's Democratic Party
 - New era in country's long history
- PDP ruled with oppressive reforms
- Significant intra-party fighting
- Soviets backed PDP leaders until December 1979



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Mujahideen

- Mujahideen/mujahidin
- Literal: those doing jihad
- General term used for centuries
- Started in Afghanistan in 1970s
- Anti-Soviet rebels



Soviet-Afghan War

1979-1989

- Soviet Union v. rebels (with help)
- Mujahideen rebels base resistance in NW Pakistan
- US responsible for heavily arming mujahideen
- As many as 2 million Afghan deaths
- ~50% Afghan population displaced
- Society becomes more militarized



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Civil War

1989-2001

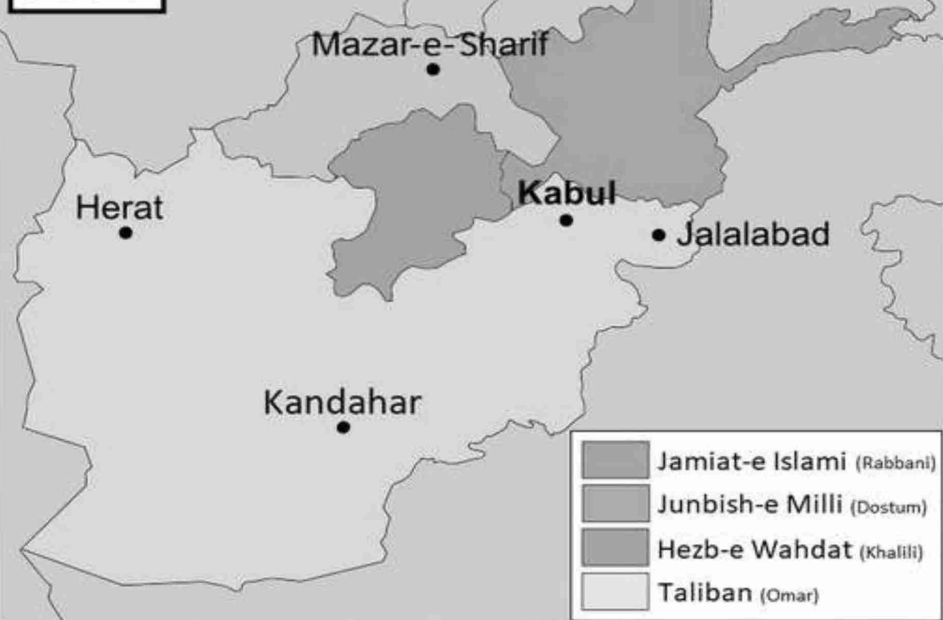
- Civil war continues even after Soviet withdrawal
 - Najibullah (Soviet) remains in power until '92
- Taliban emerge in '94; take Kabul in '96
 - Enact gov't ruled by Islamic fundamentalism
- From 1998-2001, US takes baby steps
- Assassination of main opposition leader tips scales



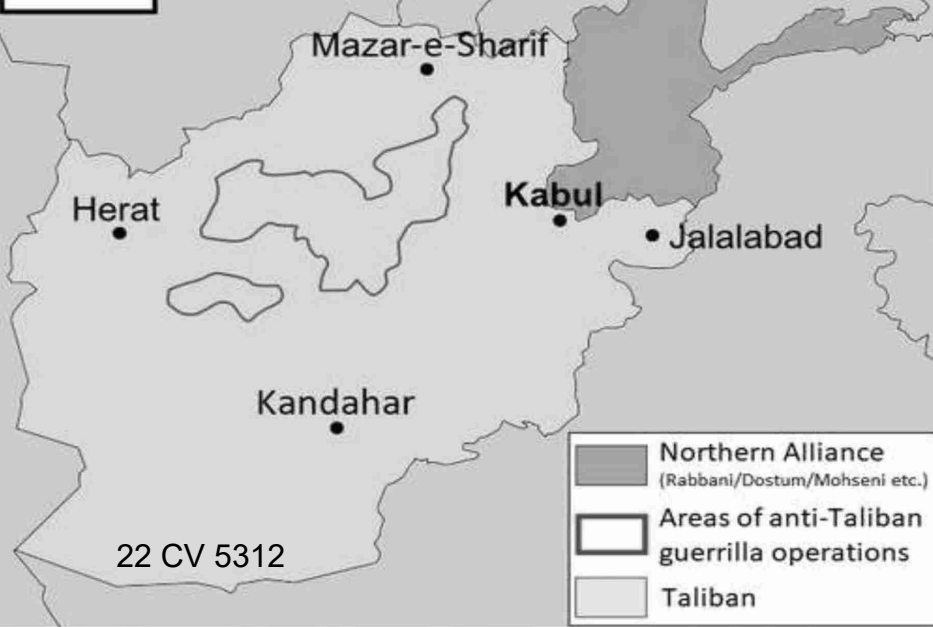
1992



1996

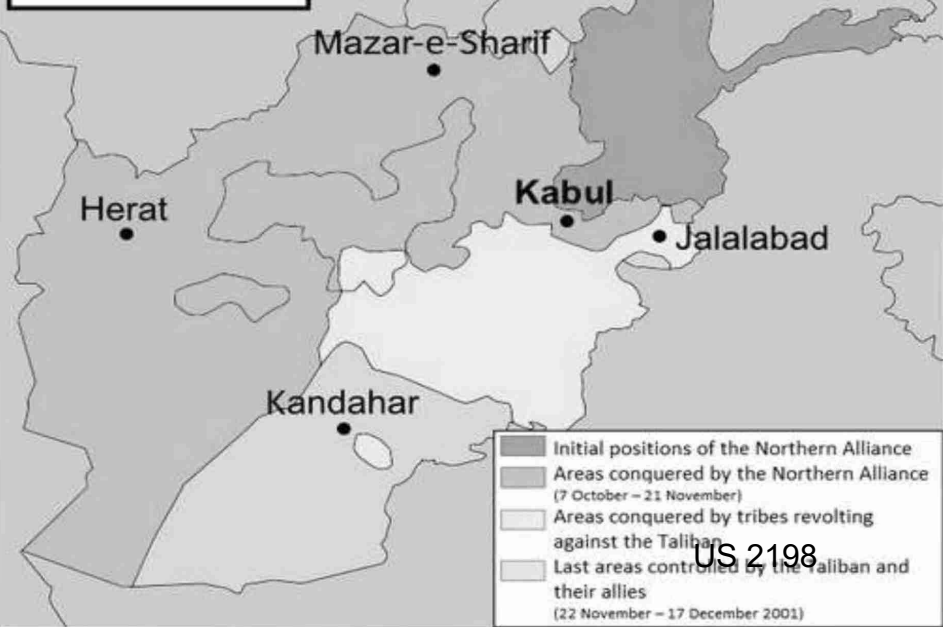


2001



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End 2001



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US Invasion

- September 11th attacks
- US invades in October
- Taliban overthrown
- Interim government est'd
- NATO, ISAF, UNSC



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Re-building

- US ends major combat operations by May 2003
- Shocking number of repatriations
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in January 2004
- Fall 2004: Presidential elections
- Fall 2005: First Parliamentary elections in ~30 yrs





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Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Government Structure

- President (*disbanded August 2021*)
 - Karzai, then Ashraf Ghani
 - Resides in the presidential palace – the *Arg*
 - Muslim, at least 40 years old, 2-term limit
 - Largely un-checked powers



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Government Structure, cont.

- Legislature (*disbanded August 2021*)
 - Weak bi-cameral National Assembly
 - House of Elders (Meshrano Jirga)
 - Upper House – 102 seats
 - House of the People (Wolesi Jirga)
 - Lower House – 250 seats





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Government Structure, cont.

- Judiciary
 - Supreme Court of Afghanistan
 - 9 justices appointed for 10-year terms
 - Current Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Ishaqzai
 - National Security Court
 - Capital Punishment



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Karzai Administration

2001-2014

- Initially seen as a consensus builder
- Charismatic but corrupt
- Won election in 2004 and 2009
- Attempted outreach to Taliban
- Soured relations with the US



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Ghani Administration

2014-2021

- Rose to power with US intervention
- Bilateral Security Agreement
- Regional Cooperation
- More Outreach to Taliban
- Flight from Afghanistan



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US Withdrawal

- Doha Agreement signed
- Gradual drawn-down in forces/sanctions
- Taliban takes control without consequence
- Islamic Republic is abolished
- Islamic *Emirate* of Afghanistan is reinstated



Taliban Resurgent

- Doha Agreement timetable not met
- Taliban begins takeover everywhere
- Resurgence snowballs until August 15, 2021
- Two weeks of evacuations
- September seals the deal





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May 5

August 14



■ Taliban

■ Contested

□ Government

● Major cities seized by Taliban

Life under Taliban Rule

- Humanitarian crisis
- Foreign assistance has dried up
- Mental health issues largely untreated
- Massive economic struggles on all levels
- Taliban reverts to discrimination



Islamic *Emirate* of Afghanistan

- Currently run by the 1964 Constitution
- De facto leader Hibatullah Akhundzada
- Country run by Leadership Council
- Council of Ministers
- No apparent Legislative Branch



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Islamic Emirate & Sharia Law

- Judicial Branch enforces strict Sharia Law
- Heavily criticized by international actors
- Local courts heavily influenced by Supreme Court
- Sharia implementation still highly variable
- Taliban perhaps looking to win over population



Resources – part 1

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Questions?



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