

Armed Groups in Afghan Adjudications

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Presented by RAIO

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Goals and Expectations

- ✓ **EPO 1:**
Officers will understand the historical context that gave rise to the armed groups dominating Afghanistan over the past 40+ years.
- ✓ **EPO 2:**
Officers receive an overview of prominent armed groups in Afghanistan and where they operate.

This presentation is recommended for a 2-hour slot, with at least one 15-minute break in the middle and buffer time for practical exercises.



We will be asking questions after the country conditions section; be prepared to respond in the chat.



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Guiding Principle

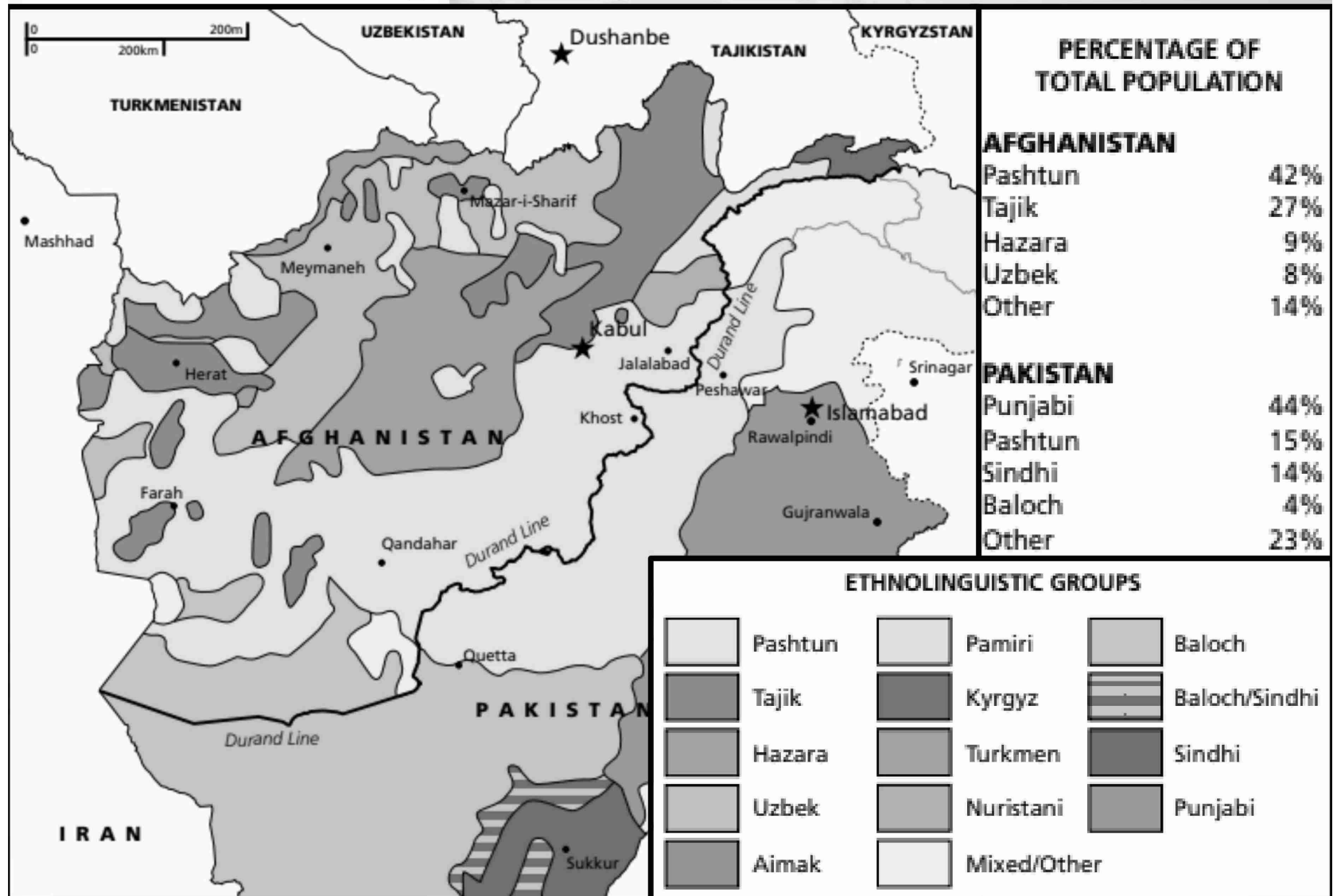
“A discussion of the Afghan insurgency should start from its causes, not from who its actors are.

Causes define actors.”

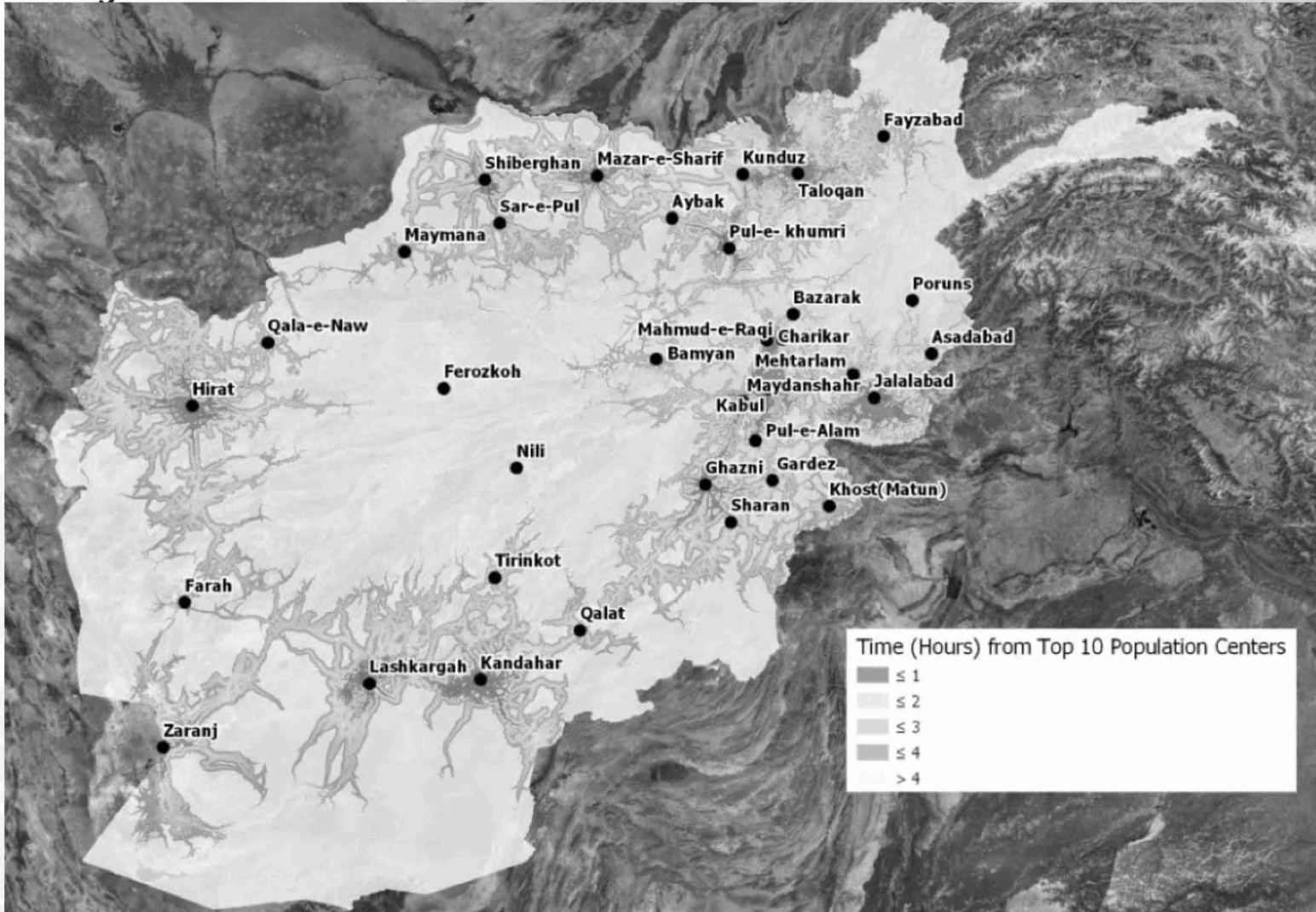
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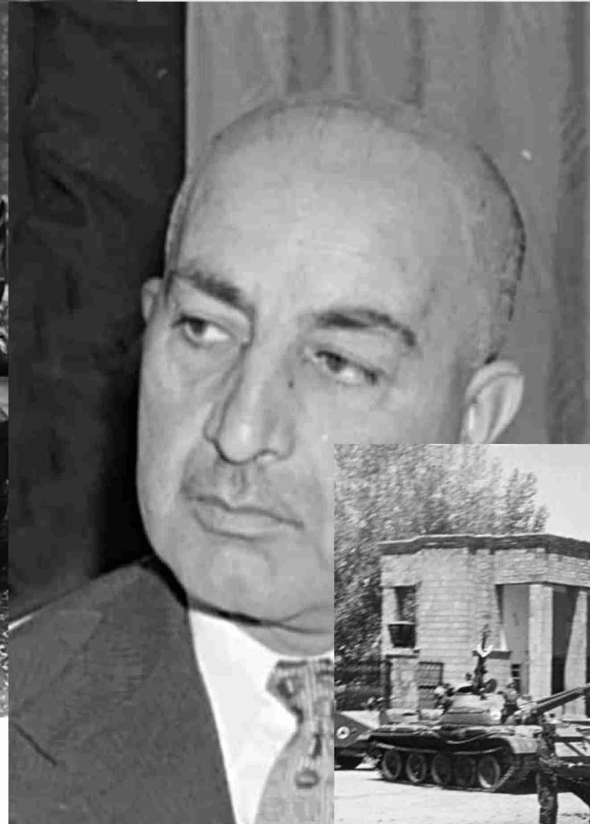
Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan (and Pakistan)



City vs. Rural



Before the Soviet Invasion...



Summary of Regimes / Conflict Periods

Years	Regime	Opposed by
1978-1979	PDPA	Various mujahideen factions
1979-1989	PDPA (Soviet occupation period)	Various mujahideen factions
1989-1992	PDPA (post-Soviet withdrawal)	Various mujahideen factions
1992-1996	Rabbani government	Various mujahideen factions + Taliban
1996-2001	Taliban rule*	Northern Alliance
2001-2021	Karzai/Ghani democracy	Taliban, other insurgent groups
2021	Taliban rule*	

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1973 – 1978: From coup to coup

Context

- **Ongoing activism:**
Communist and Islamist groups
- **1973:** Mohammed Daud takes power from King Zahir Shah, who has ruled since 1933
- **1975:** Panjshir Uprising
- **1978:** Daud overthrown in “Saur” revolution
 - Creates “Democratic Republic of Afghanistan” (DRA)
 - Ruled by the People’s Democratic Party (PDPA)

Relevant Groups

- **PDPA:** operated since 1965; helped facilitate 1973 coup, then led 1978 coup. See next slide.
- **Muslim Youth Organization:** Operated since mid-1960s; began in Kabul University. Targeted by govt after 1973 coup. Many members later lead in resistance movements of the 1980s.

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People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)



Common Groups

- Soviet-oriented, Communist; took over in coup in 1978.
- Arrested / tortured / killed former government officials, political opponents.
- Brutality / perceived radical and/or un-Islamic policies spurred anti-Communist *Mujahideen* resistance groups.
- Soviets invade in 1979 to install more compliant PDPA leadership and suppress rising instability.
- At Soviet withdraw (1989), renamed “*Watan* Party,” ruled until 1992 under Najibullah.
- Felled by combined anti-Communist *Mujahideen* groups who took Kabul in April 1992.
- Key factions (rivals)
 - **Khalq:** mainly Pashtuns, mainly outside of Kabul; dominated party prior to Soviet invasion. Many later joined Taliban.
 - **Parcham:** more ethnically diverse and dominated by Kabulis – supported by USSR

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1978-1979: From coup to Soviet invasion

Context

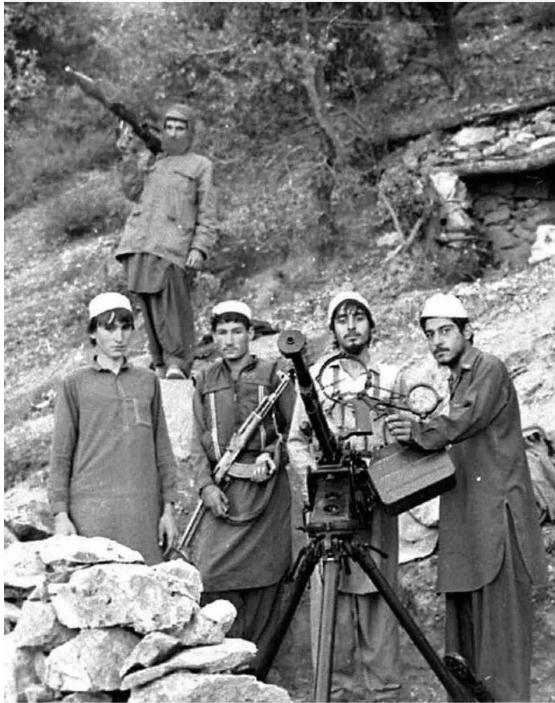
- **Opposition to and within new government grows;** outside resistance broadly labeled “mujahideen”
- **July 1979:** U.S. President Carter authorizes CIA covert support to anti-Soviet Afghan resistance
- **Dec 1979:** Soviets invade Afghanistan

Relevant Groups

- **Govt intelligence entities:** Dept. for the Protection of Afghanistan’s Interests; Workers Intelligence Agency (KAM); Workers Intelligence Agency (KHAD/WAD)
- **“Mujahideen”:** Numerous groups fought against the Soviets.

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“MUJAHIDEEN”



- Generally refers to **different, loosely affiliated groups** of fighters who resisted the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989), many of whom went on to fight one another for control of Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal.
- May refer to fighters working for any of the innumerable **warlords** whose alliances shifted during and after the Soviet War.
- Organized in **Afghanistan and Pakistan**. Depended on Pakistan for arms, training, funding and sanctuary.
- **U.S., Saudi Arabia (and other Arab countries) supported** many such groups; **Iran** supported some Shia-aligned groups.
- **Names of group leaders** particularly relevant to differentiate groups (rather than only name).
- Most groups were **ethnically-based** (see next slide).
- Many continued to exist past 1992 fall of Communist government; some operated into recent history. Many **participated in the government** (1992-1996, 2001+).

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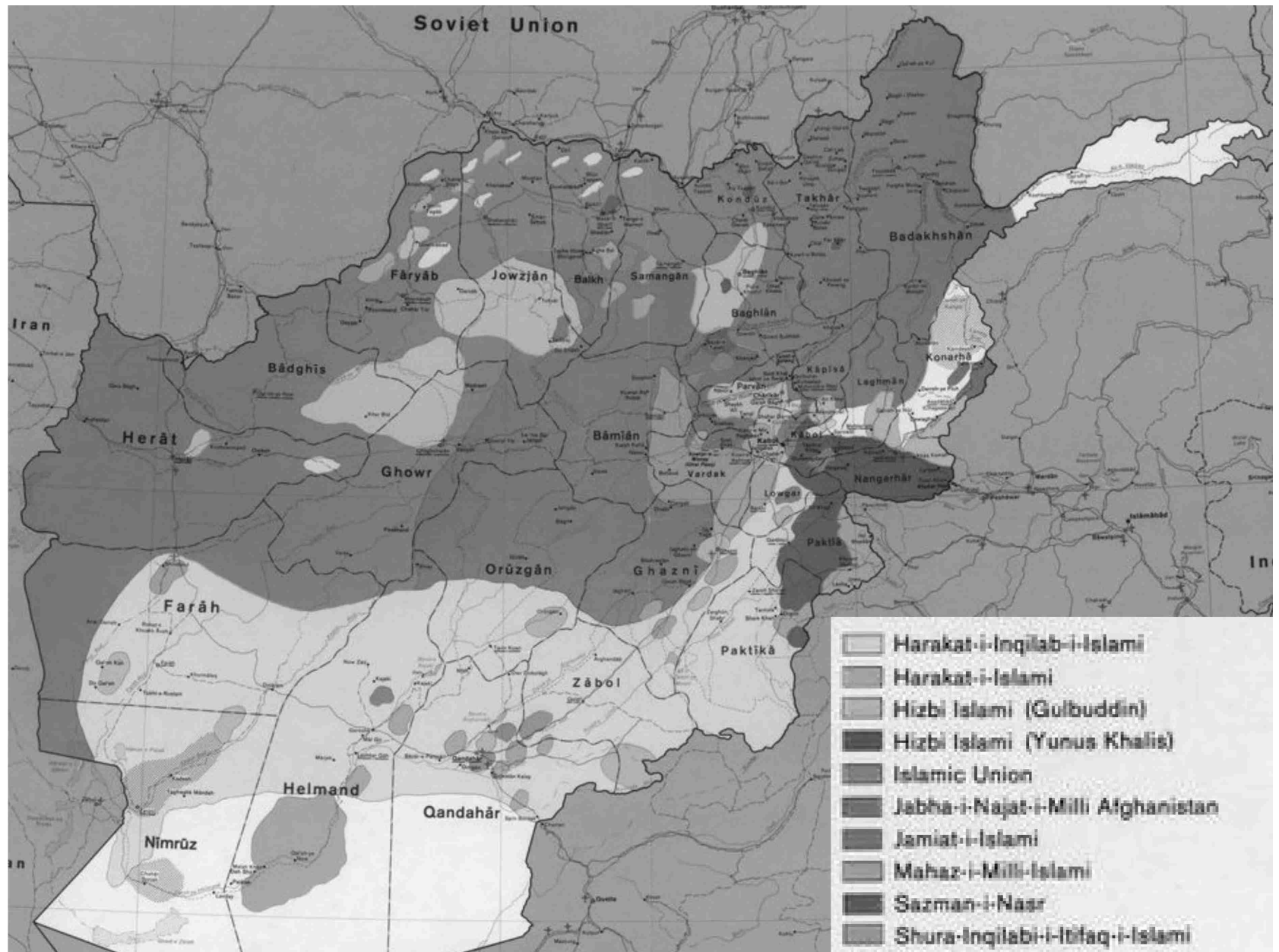
Major Afghan Resistance Groups

*active from 1978-2001**

Pashtun-dominated groups	Tajik-dominated groups	Hazara and Shia-dominated groups
Hezb-e Islami (HIG) (Hekmatyar)	Jamiat-i Islami (Rabbani)	Hezb-e Wahdat
Hezb-e Islami (HIK/HIA) (Khaless)	Shura-e Nazar (Massoud)	Hezb-e Wahdat (Akbari)
Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami (Nabi)	Uzbek/Turkmen-dominated groups	Shura-e-Itifaq (Beheshti)
Ittehad e Islami (Sayyaf)	Jombesh-e Melli Islami (Dostum)	Sazman-i Nasr
Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli (Mojadeddi)	Alliances	Harakat-i-Islami
Mahaz-e-Melli (NIFA) (Gailani)	Peshawar Seven (Alliance of Seven) Afghan Mujahideen Government (1992-96)	Nahzat-e Islami
Taliban Movement (from 1994) (Omar)	Northern Alliance	Da'wat-e Islami
		Shu'la-e-jawed

***Note that groups may have been active outside of this timeframe, and/or may not have been active during this entire period. Many but not all of these groups are referred to as “mujahideen.”**

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An Armed Afghanistan

Regime

- Extensive foreign backing
- Govt troops (and military hardware) at least triple in less than 10 years to 329,000
- Ground forces expand from 10 to 22 divisions
- Regime recruited tribal and local militias
- 14 Border Guard brigades and the National Guard Corps created

Against Regime

- Extensive foreign backing
- Local militias → nationwide guerrilla force
- Backed by millions of armed / unarmed opponents of the regime and occupation
- Sophisticated weapons (e.g., Stinger and Blowpipe anti-aircraft missiles)

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Framing the Soviet invasion as a “war against Islam”

- The U.S. largely outsourced its recruiting and distribution of arms and funding to Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), which favored fighters who characterized the battle against the Soviets as a holy war.
- Key players for Pakistan during this period:
 - Zia ul Haq
 - Hamid Gul
- This morphed into a self-declared “jihad” that attracted all nationalities.
- Once the Soviets pulled out in 1989, many of these fighters returned to their own countries.
- One of these was a wealthy Saudi citizen of Yemeni extraction named Osama Bin Laden.

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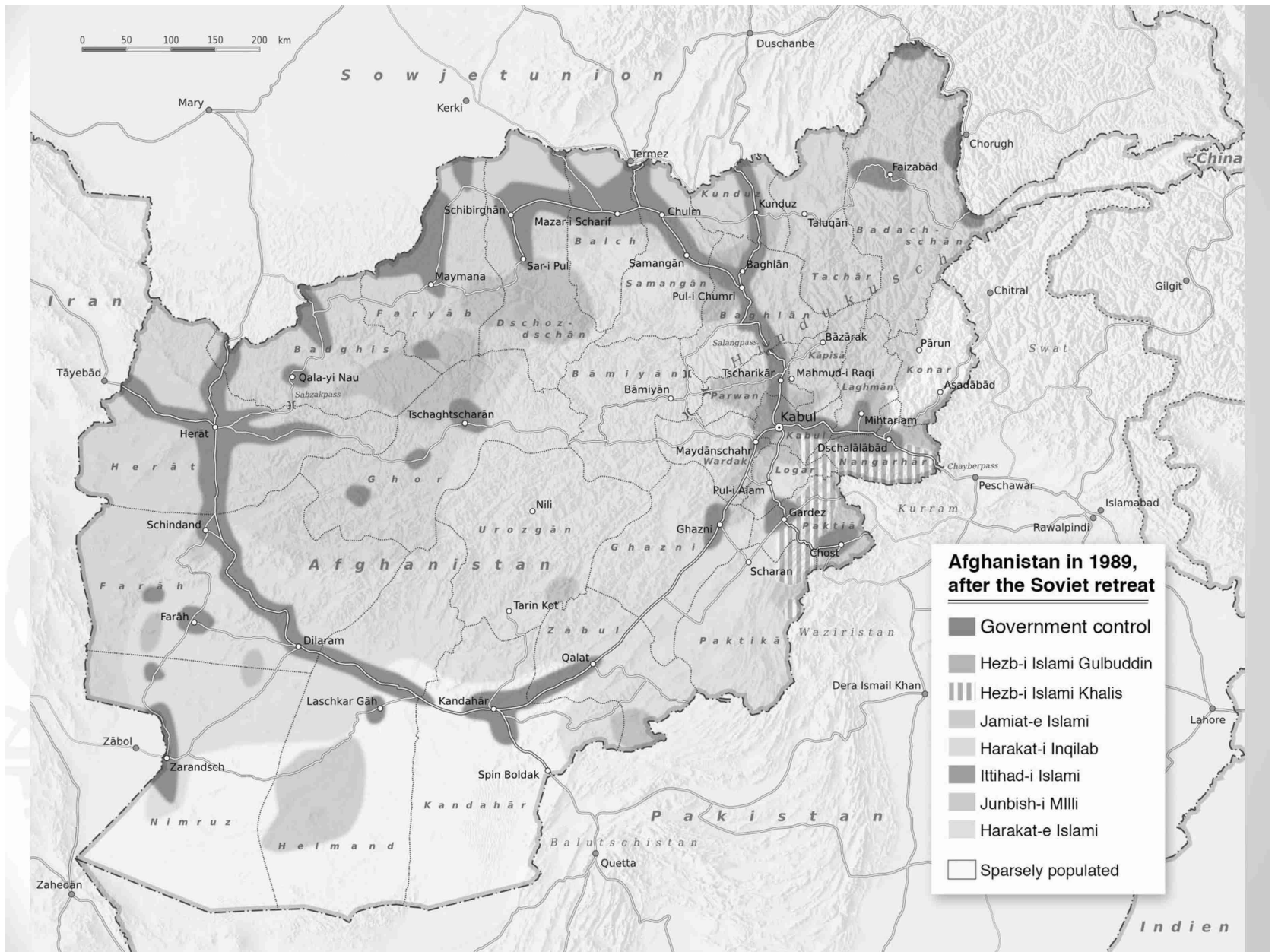
1979-1992: Afghan-Soviet War and its Aftermath

Context

- **1979:** Resistance continues with internal/external support, Soviets invade.
- **Internal/External flight:** refugees flee to provincial cities (e.g., Kabul), or across borders (e.g., Pakistan)
- **1985-1986:** Fighting peaks
- **1989:** Soviets withdraw, leaving PDPA in power
- **1992:** Collapse of Soviet Union precipitates collapse of PDPA

Relevant Groups

- **PDPA:** recruited in areas of control (e.g., Kabul), offered incentives like food/fuel discounts. Hostile rivalry between Parcham and Khalq factions. Parcham group further fragmented.
- **National Fatherland Front (NFF):** PDPA-created local units to recruit regime supporters; affiliates offered incentives
- **Mujahideen** (various groups)



1992-1996: Afghan Civil War

Context

- **April 1992:** transitional government laid out by Peshawar Accord (President Rabbani)
- **1994:** Taliban emerges as military force
- Fighting between militias, general breakdown of law and order, Taliban rises
- **September 1996:** Taliban conquers Kabul

Relevant Groups

- **In Govt (various times)**
- **Jamiat I Islami (Rabbani); Ittehad e Islami (Sayyaf); Hezb e Wahdat (Mazari and Khalili); Jombesh-e Melli Islami (Dostum); Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar)**
- **Withdrew from Govt**
- **Hezb-e Islami (Khales); Mahaz-e-Melli (Gailani); Harakat-e-Inqilabi-Islami (Nabi); Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan (Mojaddedi)**
- **Opposed Govt (various times)**
- **Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar); Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan (Mojadeddi); Jombesh-e Melli Islami (Dostum); Taliban**

TALIBAN



- **Heartland:** S. & E. Afghanistan, predominantly Pashtun regions bordering Pakistan, stronghold in Kandahar province
- **Take over [most of the country] from Nov 1994 - Sept 1996**, establish “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan” in November 1996.
- **Ousted after U.S. October 2001 invasion.**
- **“Shadow Govt”:** Taliban gradually regained influence/control in all Afghan provinces. In some areas, it operated as a parallel government.
 - Taxation system (checkpoints, wheat, import of perfume/cigarettes)
 - Governors, judges, police, intelligence

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1996-2001: Taliban vs. Northern Alliance

Context

- **May 1996:** Al Qaeda moves HQ to Afghanistan, militarily supports Taliban
- **September 1996:** Taliban establishes Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan
- **October 1996:** Northern Alliance formed by leaders from earlier movements to fight Taliban; later forced into progressively smaller part of NE Afghanistan
- **October 2001:** U.S. supports Northern Alliance
- **December 2001:** Taliban driven out, new government established

Relevant Groups

- **Northern Alliance (aka Northern United Front)**
- **Taliban**
- **Haqqani Network (allied with Taliban)**
- **Al Qaeda (AQ)**
- **Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar) (fighting Taliban)**
- **Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU, aka Jundullah)**

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Who's in Control?

“The militia formations they [the Taliban and the Northern United Front] command are composed of **odd assortments** of armed groups with **varying level of loyalties, political commitment, professional skills, and organizational integrity.**

Many of them feel free to **switch sides**, shift loyalties, and join or leave the group spontaneously. The country suffers from the absence of a top political layer capable of controlling individual and group violence.

Force is not a state monopoly.”

-Ali A. Jalali, “Afghanistan: The Anatomy of an Ongoing Conflict”, Spring 2001

2001-2010

International/Local forces vs. Opposition

Context

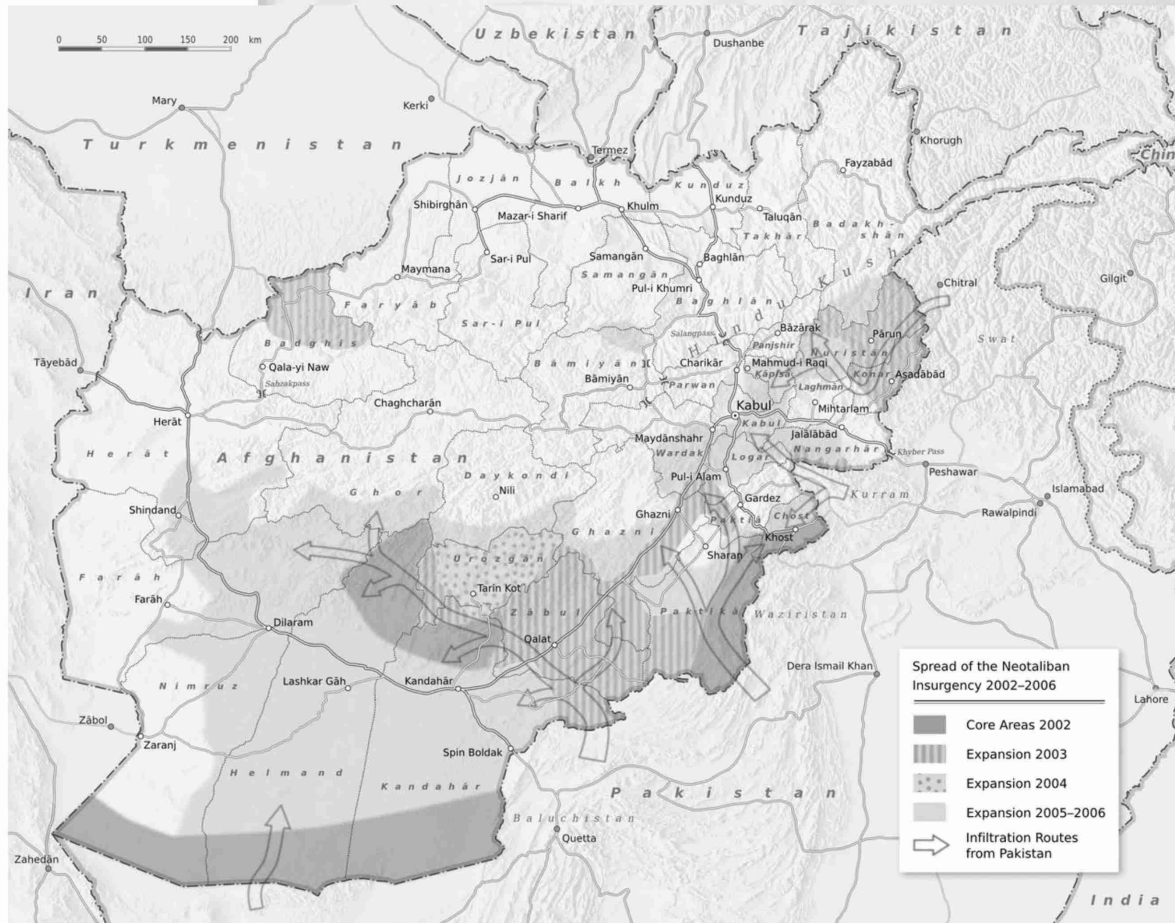
- **2001:** Taliban (and AQ, IMU) flees to Pakistan after U.S. defeat, interim government formed (Karzai)
- **2005-2006:** Taliban escalation of Afghan insurgency, expands to Wardak, Logar, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces, W. of Kabul province
- **2009:** 80% of Afghanistan subject to significant operational activity by Taliban (+17% subject to “substantial activity”)

Relevant Groups

- **Al Qaeda**
- **Taliban**
- **Haqqani Network**
(allied with Taliban)
- **Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar)**
(fighting govt)
- **IMU (aka Jundullah)**
- **Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**
- **Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LeT)**
- **Laskar-e Jhangvi (LeJ)**

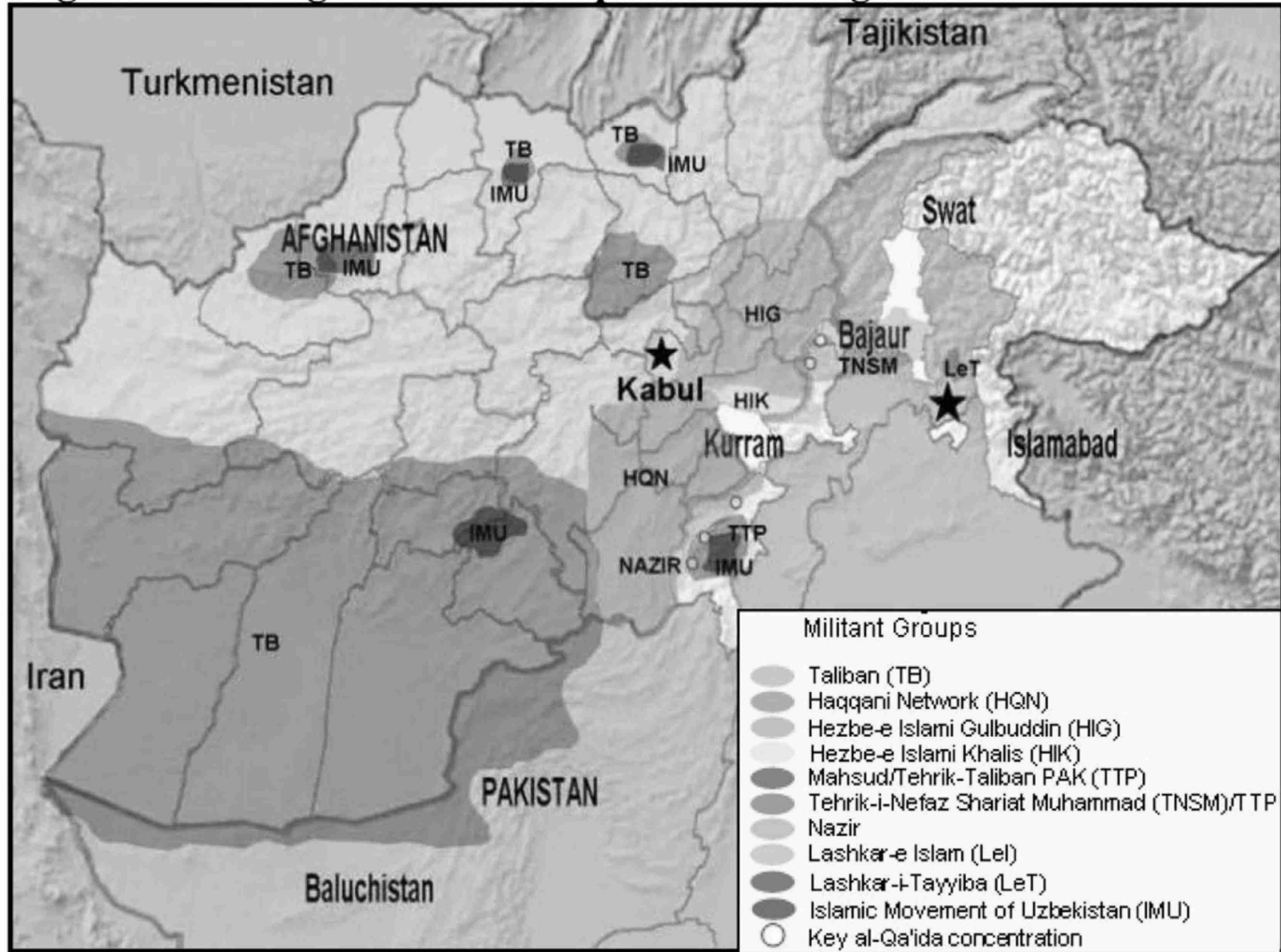
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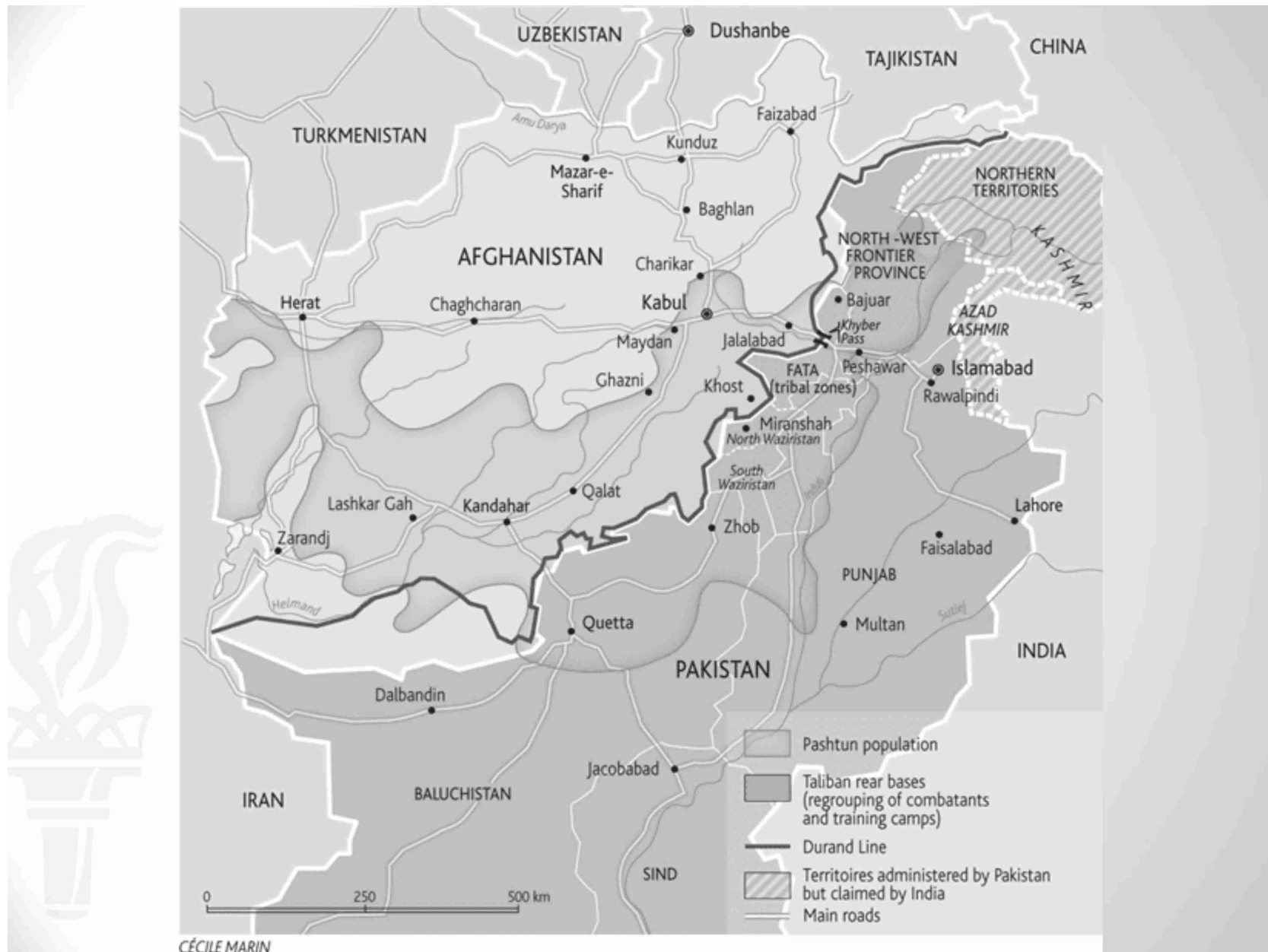
Taliban Insurgency - 2002 - 2006



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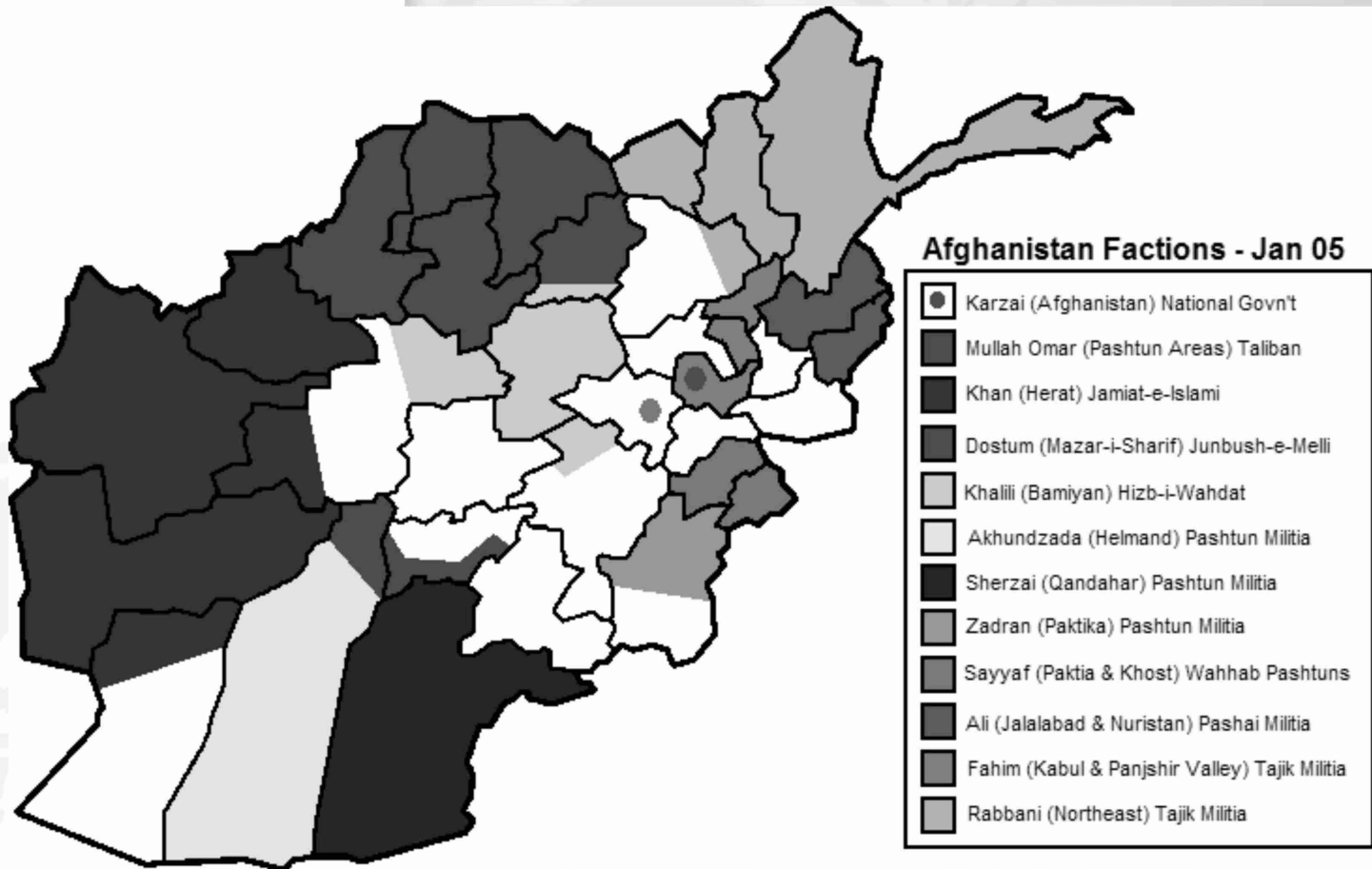
Figure 3 - Insurgent Areas of Operation in Afghanistan





CÉCILE MARIN

Warlords – friend or foe?



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2010-2021

Taliban resurgence

Context

- **2010:** Taliban-led insurgency spreads from S. to country-wide.
- **2012:** Iran (IRGC) begins sending Afghan refugees to fight in Syria (Fatemiyoun Division)
- **2014:** International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) transfers security responsibility to Afghan National Defense and Security forces (ANDSF)
 - Ongoing NATO support: “Mission Resolute Support”
 - Taliban expands presence post-ISAF drawdown
- **August 2021:** U.S. withdraws, Taliban takes Kabul

Relevant Groups

- **Taliban**
- **IS-K**
- **Haqqani Network**
- **Al Qaeda**
- **IMU (aka Jundullah)**
- **Islamic Jihad Union**
- **LeT**
- **Jaysh Muhammed**
- **IRGC**

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PROVINCE STATUS

None or insignificant



Minimal Taliban Influence (-25%)



Moderate Taliban Influence (+/-50%)



High Taliban Influence (+75%)

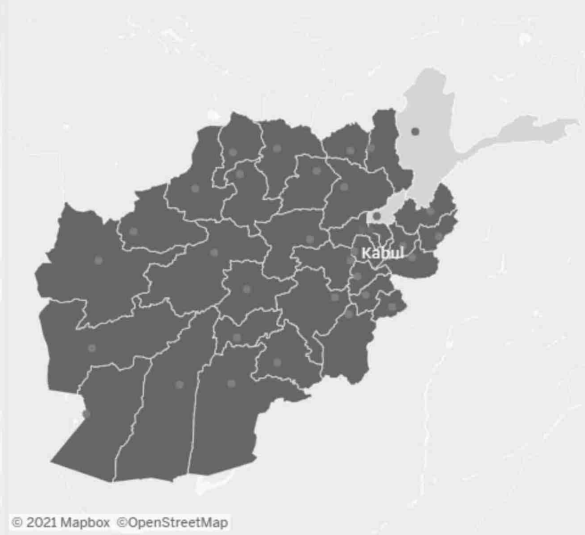


Taliban Control



Pre-9/11 | 2000

The Taliban controls nearly the entirety of 32 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Only Panjshir and Badakhshan, as well as small areas of neighboring provinces (not shown) are controlled by the Northern Alliance.



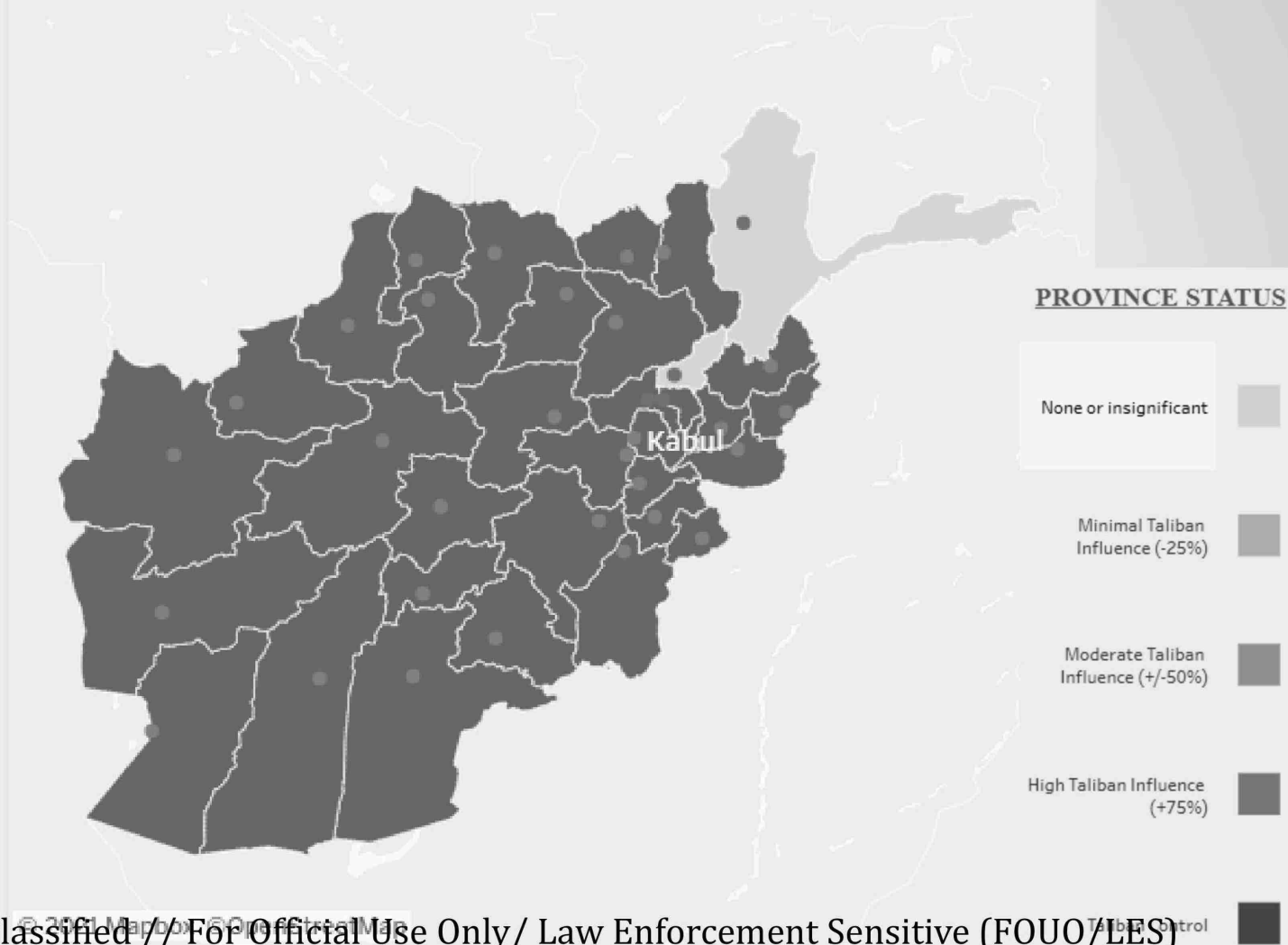
Review of Taliban Control from Pre-9/11 until 2021

Observe the key on the right – darker colors on the map indicate higher levels of Taliban control. We'll begin in 2000 and progress to 2021.

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Pre-9/11 | 2000

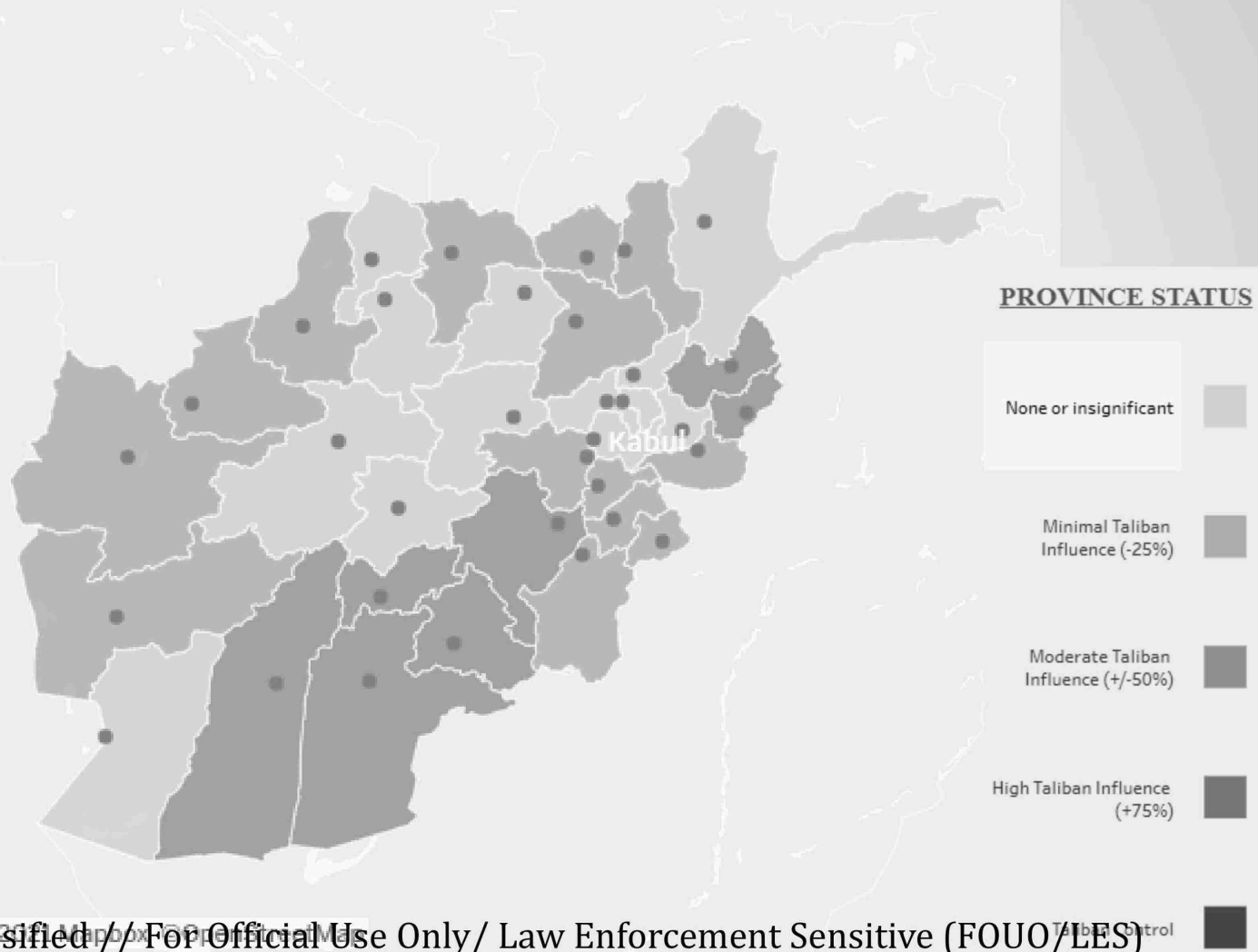
The Taliban controls nearly the entirety of 32 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Only Panjshir and Badakhshan, as well as small areas of neighboring provinces (not shown) are controlled by the Northern Alliance.



© 2001 Map by SIPRI, Office of International Monitoring
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Post-U.S. Invasion | Early 2002

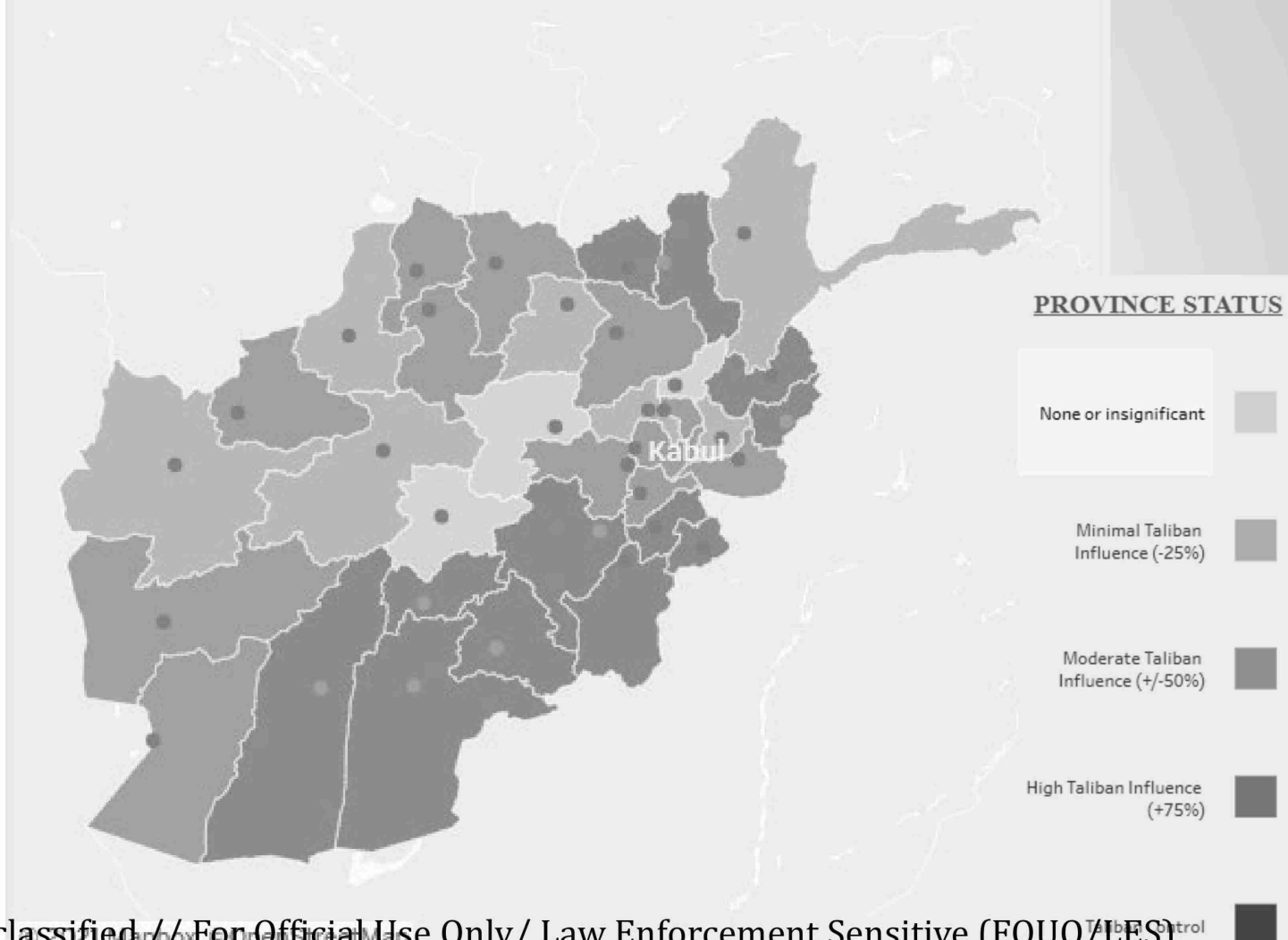
The Taliban is driven from power by the U.S. with the help of the northern Alliance and other militias. The Taliban lose control of all provincial capitals, but maintain varying degrees of presence in the provinces.



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Pre-Surge | Early 2009

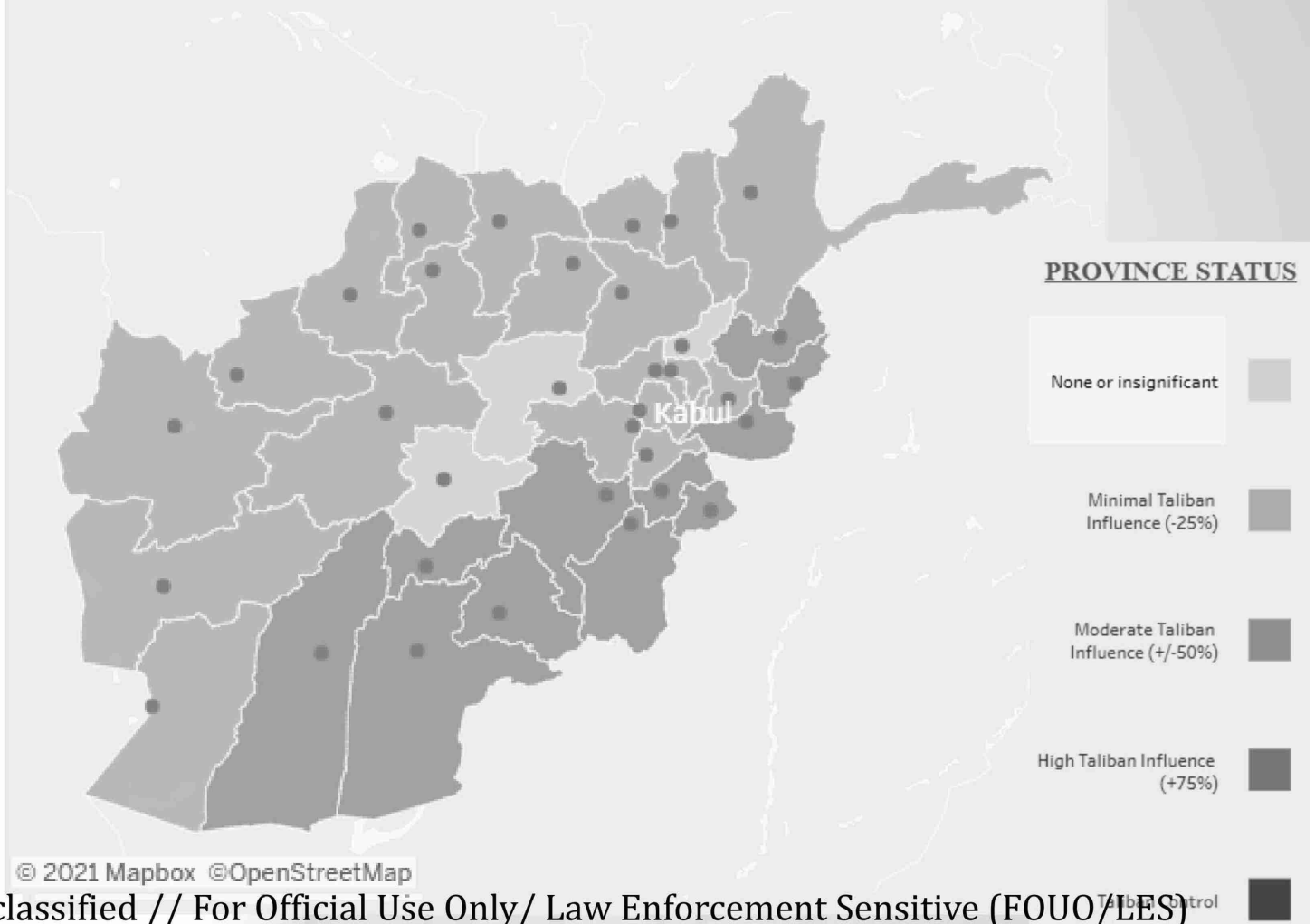
The Taliban reinitiated its bid to retake the country from its safe havens in Pakistan and its influence expanded in the south, east and north. Several provincial capitals were under Taliban threat.



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Post-U.S. troop surge | 2012

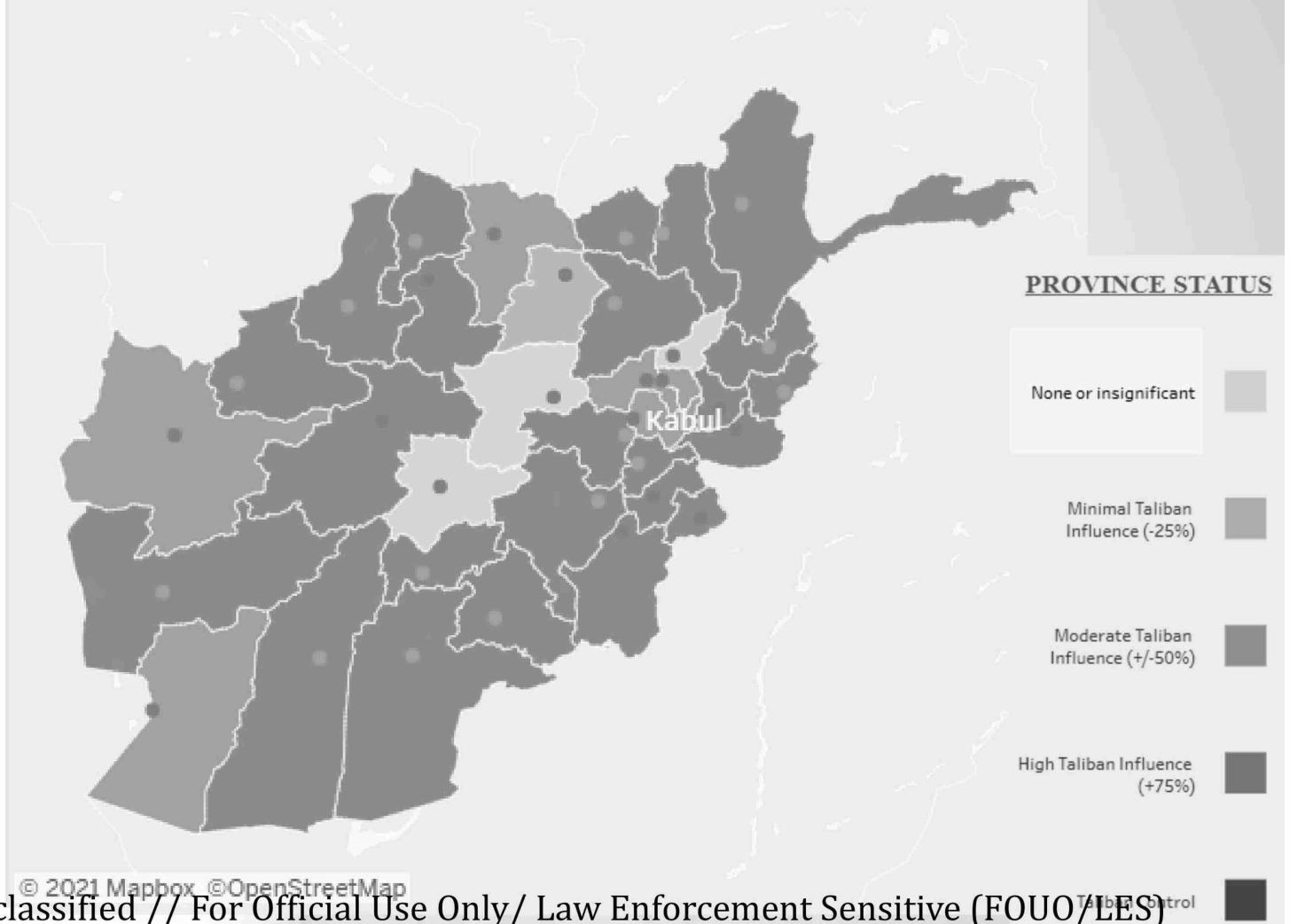
The 'Surge' was successful in relieving the pressure on the provincial capitals and driving the Taliban from key areas in the south, east, and north. However, the success of the surge was short lived. The Obama Administration was clear that the increased U.S. presence would be limited to two years. The Taliban went underground and waited for U.S. forces to leave.



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Withdrawal | June 20, 2021

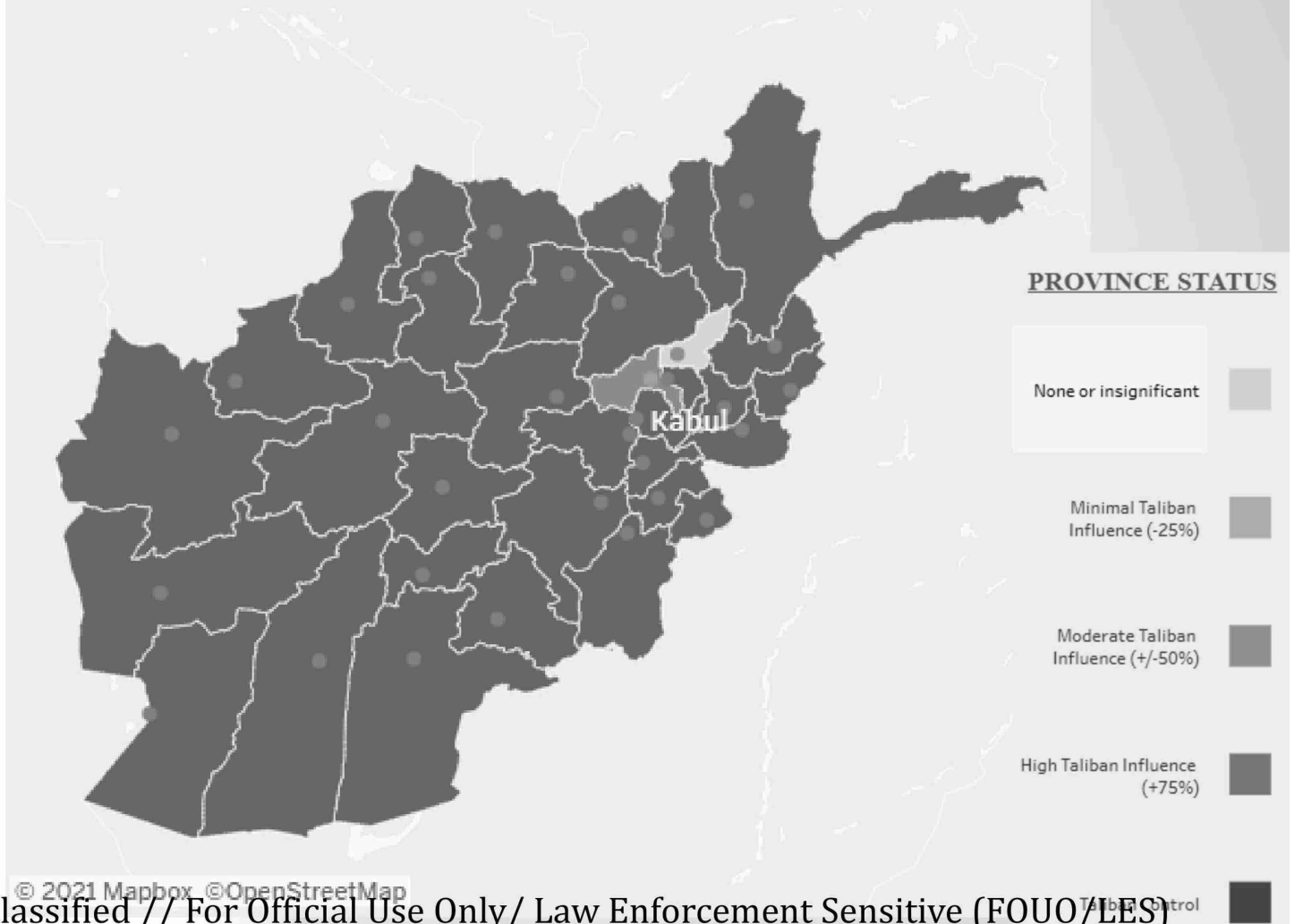
By 2014, the U.S. military turned over security to the Afghan military. The Taliban began to move back into traditional strongholds and take the fight to the Afghan military. By mid-June 2021, the Taliban was predominant in provinces throughout the country.



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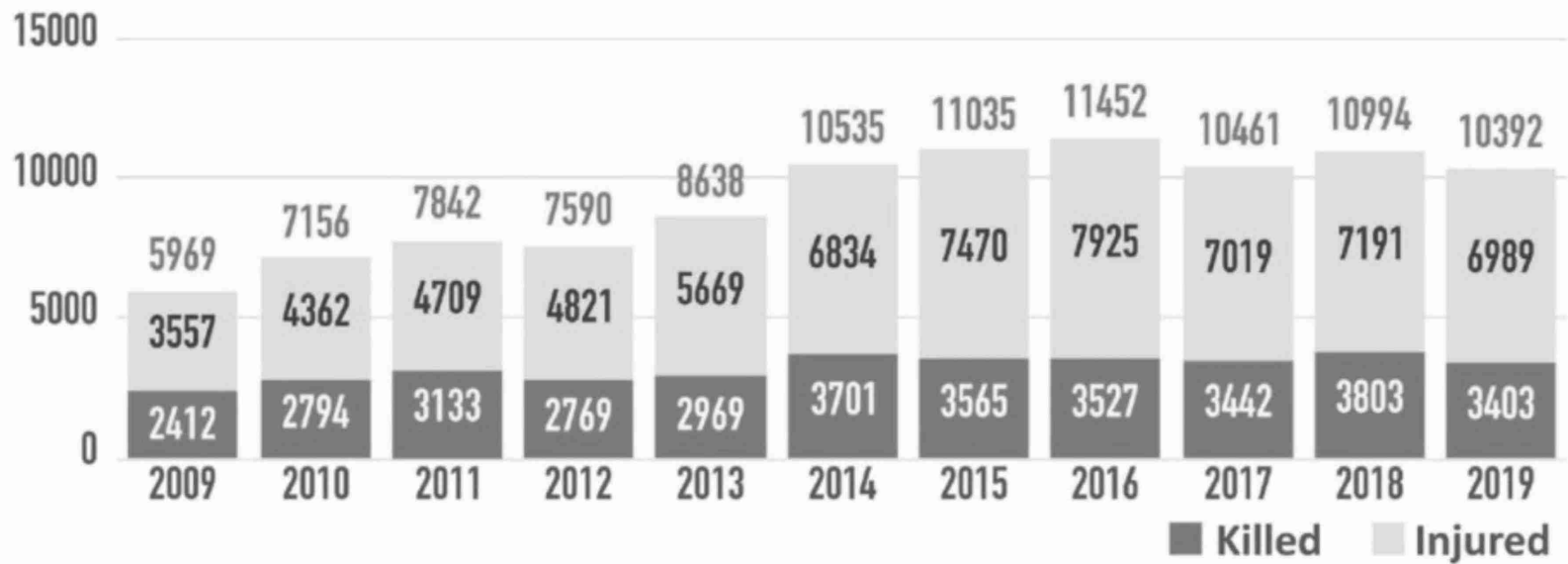
Endgame | August 15, 2021

The Taliban began taking control of capitals and provinces, Zaranj in Nimruz being the first, on Aug. 5. The north and west fell first, followed by the south, then the east. On Aug. 15, the Taliban entered Kabul.



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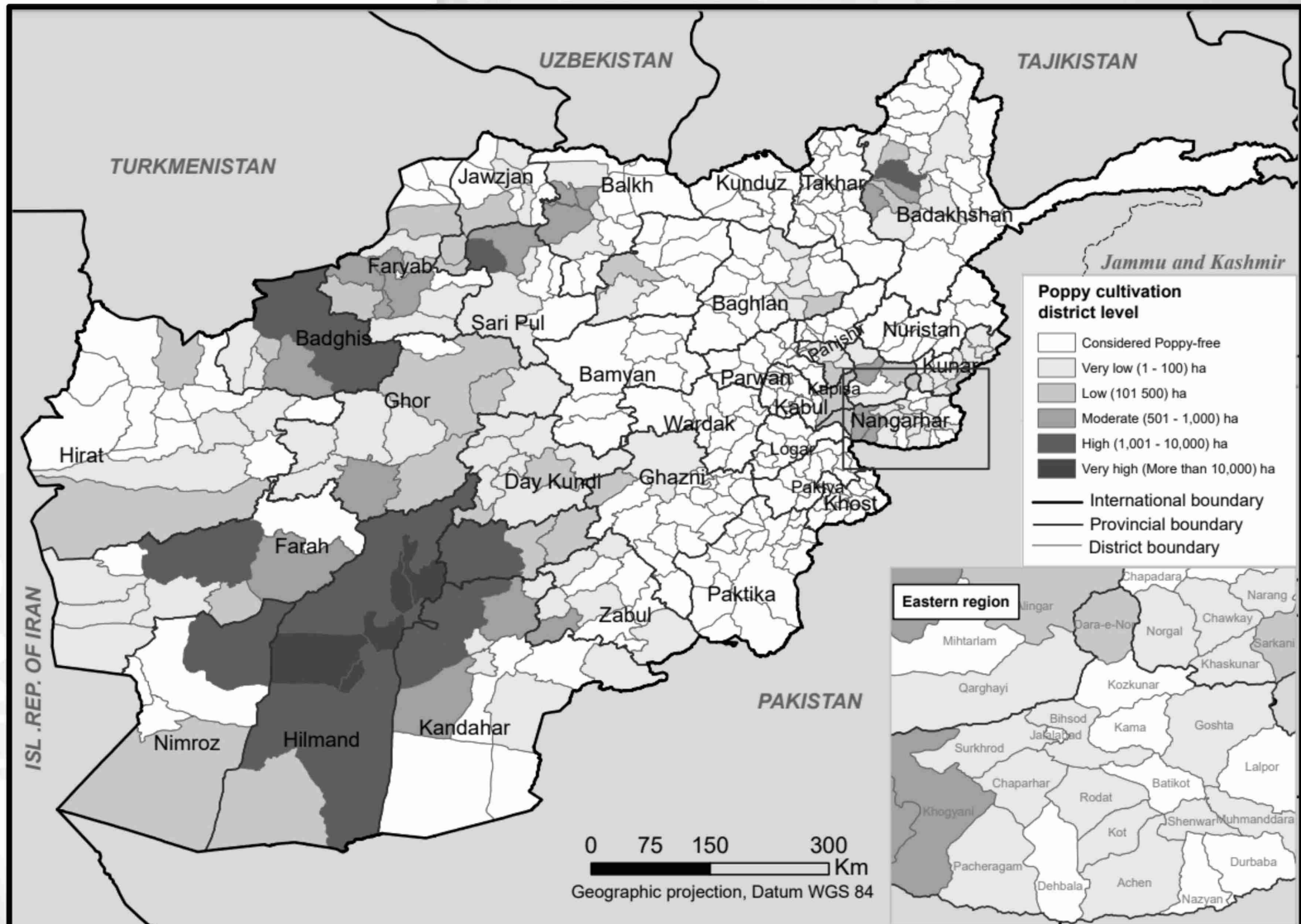
Total Civilian Casualties 2009-2019



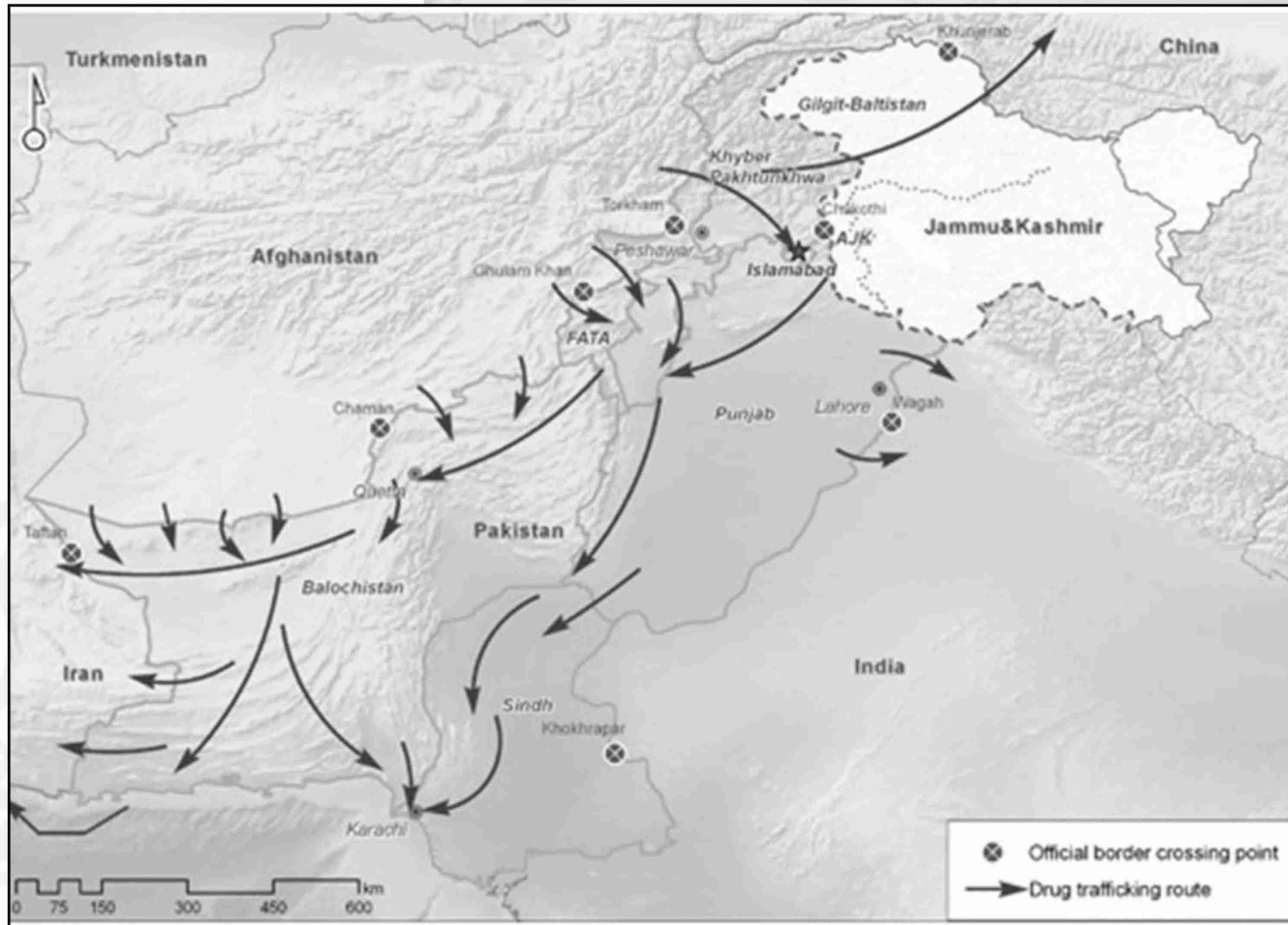
UNAMA | Ten year record of civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

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Opium Poppy Cultivation by District



Drugs Trafficking Routes



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Other funding sources – roads



TALIBAN CHECKPOINTS



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