

BACKGROUND REPORT

PRAGUEPRAŽSKÝ
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SUMMIT



NATO

**NATO role in post - 2014
Afghanistan**



NATO role in post - 2014 Afghanistan

1 Introduction

Thousands of NATO troops have spent the past 10 years fighting for stability of Afghanistan. Nonetheless, increasing budget constraints of NATO countries struck by financial crisis together with high, long-lasting expenses of troop deployment have created political pressure to conclude the mission and invest in domestic economies instead. Starting from 1st January 2015, all combat units will be withdrawn, and the security of a country of 31 million people¹ will be handed over to the national security forces. Still, the country is far from being stable, time is running out, and NATO needs to plan thoroughly its role in and after the transition. Some of the main questions the Ambassadors should be concerned about are:

- **How many assistance and advisory teams should stay deployed in Afghanistan? What role should they assume?**
- **What other measures can NATO take to support security and stability of Afghan government? What should be the form of cooperation?**

Many factors play their role that might affect decision-making in the future Afghanistan, the most notable in favour of higher involvement being the influence of Taliban and terrorism, instability of the government, economic sustainability, preparedness of Afghan National Security Forces etc. The strongest arguments against high involvement are the costs and geopolitical impact of NATO presence in the region. Moreover, other players in the region have to be taken into account, as their actions affect the situation in Afghanistan.

2 History and current state of play

2.1 Historical background

"*The Graveyard of Empires*" is the unofficial title of Afghanistan, as two great world powers have managed to bury their armies there. First the British Empire during three Anglo-Afghan wars (1839-43, 1878-1880 and 1919) when it was opposing the Russian empire and Iranian intrigues in Afghanistan. Second, during the last decade of the Cold War, Afghanistan was under Soviet occupation that transformed into a war between USSR troops and insurgents (most notably supported by the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan).² USSR could not economically and politically sustain the war and eventually withdrew from Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Soviets kept the established communist government alive until the eventual fall of USSR. With ongoing economic crisis and no Soviet support, the government could not maintain power over the fragmented state³. When in 1992 Burhanuddin Rabbani replaced the communist government as the president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in order to establish a **democratic system**⁴, the **opposition militia** led by

¹July 2013 estimate. *The World Factbook Afghanistan* [online]. CIA [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>.

²BARLETT, Donald L, STEELE, James B. The Oily Americans. *TIME Magazine* [online]. 13. 05. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,450997-92,00.html>.

³Ibid.

⁴Although forming the government was not as simple as it seems. Three political courses emerged that exist until today - the Islamic, the communists and the nationalistic ethnic groups. First course was split into the Sunni Mujahedin 'Peshawar Seven', based in Pakistan, and the Shia Mujahedin group 'Tehran Eight' with roots in Iran. Rabbani was more of a *de iure* leader, core powers remained in the hands of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.



Abdul Rashid Dostum were occupying the north of Afghanistan with the support of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the south was falling under the influence of **Taliban** linked to Al-Qaeda.

Figure 1: Map of Afghanistan showing support for different political actors in 1992. *CNN.com* [online]. CNN [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9610/12/afghanistan/map.lg.jpg>.



International support, especially from the U.S. and the UN, has decreased dramatically for variety of reasons.⁵ Taliban managed to capture the capital city and was *de facto* ruling and terrorizing most of the country until the end of the millennium. Despite their former enmity, Massoud with the help of Rabbani formed a coalition with Dostum called the **Northern Alliance** (or the **United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan**) to maintain influence in the northern part of the country.

The breaking point was September 2001 – the terrorist attack against the US that was accompanied by the assassinations of the defence minister Massoud and the president. Once it had been determined that the attacks came from abroad⁶, NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time and launched the **Operation Enduring Freedom**. In the meantime, the UN Security Council agreed on the deployment of the **International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)**⁷ that cooperated with Hamid Karzai's interim government on reconstruction of the country and stabilizing Kabul. Taliban had already been toppled, certain members of Al-Qaeda captured and the power of insurgents pushed on lower political level or abroad to Pakistan. However, Taliban found the environment in Pakistan more favourable and started to emerge from the south of Afghanistan in 2003. It resorted to strategically more successful asymmetric warfare, such as sabotage, raids, terrorism, provocations etc. Danger of asymmetric war lies in the knowledge of terrain and "hit and run" attacks that are undemanding in terms of training and equipment. What is more, impact is long-term, and the attacks can hardly be prevented in the mountain

⁵Afghanistan in the 90s. *Diplomatic Discourse* [online]. 13. 03. 2010 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.diplomaticdiscourse.com/2010/03/afghanistan-in-90s.html>.

⁶On 4th October 2001.

⁷ISAF has a peace-enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and NATO assumed its leadership for better coordination in 2003. *ISAF's mission in Afghanistan* [online]. NATO [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-B0F282C2-7201F104/natolive/topics_69366.htm.



2.2 Transition process (Integral)

¹²The 5 tranches were announced on: 22nd March 2011, 27th November 2011, 13th May 2012, 31st December 2012 and most recently on 18th June 2013. The implementation can take up to 18 months for each area, depending on conditions on the ground. *Inteqal: Transition to Afghan lead* [online]. NATO [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-B0F282C2-7201F104/natolive/topics_87183.htm.



providing technical assistance and building the capacity of provincial governments, will have handed over their functions to the Afghan government.¹³

Further transition support takes the form of cooperation in training with thirty-seven contributing countries involved¹⁴ in the **NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A)**. It was established in 2009 in order to enable ANSF to take over responsibility for Afghan security by the end of 2014. Aligned body is the **ISAF Joint Command (IJC)**, which is responsible for the operational training of ANSF units in the field through the so called Security Force Assistance Teams.¹⁵

2.3 Post-ISAF Afghanistan

The main goal of ISAF is now to provide conditions for the Afghan government to be functional, stable and sustainable with the support of ANSF. After 2014 the support of NATO will be deprived of the combat troops, however, it still has to be decided how many advisory and assistance team members will arrive to replace them. NATO will need the approval of the Afghan government to confirm the number. At this point, it seems that it would be about 9,000 of U.S. troops and 6,000 of its allies (current number is around 100,000 troops)¹⁶. It is still necessary to perfectly clarify the scope of their power and deployment.

The Enduring Peace Partnership guarantees post-2014 cooperation of NATO countries¹⁷ in the areas of mentoring and financial support for institutions and high military and police levels, fight against corruption, development of civil aviation, connectivity and internet access or disaster preparedness. At the 2012 Tokyo conference, Afghan government in return made commitments to hold transparent elections in 2014, fight corruption, improve public financial management, endorse the constitution, rule of law and human rights.

The question remains, whether the government will be feasible enough to fulfil its commitments and sustainably steer the country out of humanitarian, economic and social crisis. It is necessary to realize that key pillars for reconstruction include long list of humanitarian and social tasks, such as: demining, delivery of basic foods and medicine, refugee support, medical and psychological care for those affected by the fighting, drinkable water and electricity supply or development of educational institutions. Economic and infrastructural reconstruction accompanies the social dimension by protecting the establishment of new enterprises, banks, farms and agricultural production. Last but not least, forming a functioning system of law and order, dealing with past violence, establishment of institutions and expelling corruption are long-term essential tasks for sustainable Afghanistan that have to be taken into consideration during decision-making process.¹⁸

¹³ *NATO and Afghanistan* [online]. NATO [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm.

¹⁴ More specifically, it is focused on the initial training of the Afghan National Security Forces and support to the Afghan National Army (ANA) institutional training base (including air support, medical evacuation, intelligence and 'train the trainer' programs) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) reform. Further information and contributing countries available at: *NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan* [online]. Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/nato-training-mission-afghanistan/index.php>.

¹⁵ *ISAF Joint Command* [online]. Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/isaf-joint-command/index.php>.

¹⁶ Exactly 97 813 troops as of 1 June 2013. *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures* [online]. International Security Assistance Force [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/Placemats/2013-06-01-ISAF-ANA%20Placemat-final.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ten partner countries have expressed an interest to participate in the training mission. *NATO and Afghanistan* [online]. NATO [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm.

¹⁸ EICHLER, Jan, HYNEK, Nik. *Obnova Afghánistánu: bezpečnostní kontext české účasti*. In: DRULÁK, Petr, STŘÍTECKÝ, Vít. *Hledání českých zájmů: Mezinárodní bezpečnost*. Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2010. Available online at: http://www.okumenty-iir.cz/Knihy/zajmy_Mbezpecnost.pdf#page=54.



3 Parties and factors involved in transition

Deciding factors in transition are not limited to internal insecurity, influence is partly international. Currently, ISAF troop contributors include twenty-one partner countries, from Australia to Latin America. Key actors from the region have their political and geo-economic interests in Afghanistan. Countries are far from being the only players in the transition, however essential they might be. The Alliance works in close cooperation with various international organizations, including:

- **United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan** - political mission, helping at request of Afghan government, e.g. with organizing elections or assisting local institutions.
- **World Bank** (via Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund) - financing variety of projects from rural development, public management to gender rights protection
- **European Union** - mostly using development and humanitarian assistance
- **Development and humanitarian aid** - humanitarian aid reflects emergency needs, such as food, shelter or medical appliances. Development aid focuses on long-term projects to build infrastructure, support agriculture, healthcare, education or civil society. Hundreds of organizations provide such help, more information can be found via OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Reconstruction and support for Afghanistan must take into account factors that might affect the stability of democratic government. Afghanistan is fighting a social and humanitarian crisis, the economy belongs to one of the poorest and worst performing in the world and both neighbouring and world powers are highly conscious of its strategic importance in the region, acting accordingly.

3.1 Countries with vested interests

Pakistan

Current relations with Pakistan have been formed by a very complex historical process involving the 1893 Durand Line separating these territories. Pakistani militants took part in the war in Afghanistan (some 8000 troops after 1996, some of them belonging to Taliban) against the United Islamic Front and NATO forces.¹⁹ Alleged link between Pakistani and Afghan Taliban is accompanied by the link of Pakistani intelligence services. Pakistan is perceived as a source for terroristic ambitions in Afghanistan.²⁰ At the same time it is a strategic transition point for NATO supplies, even though NATO and UN are in search for safer alternatives.²¹ Pakistani government fears the cooperation of Afghanistan with India, because the latter two would "squeeze" Pakistan in between.

¹⁹RASHID, Ahmed. Afghanistan resistance leader feared dead in blast. *The Telegraph* [online]. 11. 09. 2001 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1340244/Afghanistan-resistance-leader-feared-dead-in-blast.html>.

²⁰ELIAS, Barbara. Pakistan: 'The Taliban's Godfather?' *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 227* [online]. 14. 08. 2007 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB227/index.htm>.

²¹In 2008, 90 % of military supplies were transported via port Karachi in southern Pakistan. Later on NATO and UN diversified the distribution over the route in Central Asia due to increasing Taliban attacks. *Pakistan and Afghanistan* [online]. Institute for the Study of War [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.understandingwar.org/pakistan-and-afghanistan#Political_Interests.



India

*"India and Pakistan can play a crucial role in bringing peace back in Afghanistan."*²² India enjoys cordial relations with Kabul, providing over USD 2 billion of development and reconstruction aid to Afghanistan. Most recently, Afghanistan has lobbied for military support for post-2014 as well.²³ Pakistani generals fear being squeezed between massive Indian presence to their south and a pro-Indian regime to the north in Afghanistan.²⁴ Not to forget that both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers with long-lasting disputes, mostly over Kashmir territory.

Iran

Iran's mixed approach to Afghanistan results from cultural proximity of part of Afghans, most notably the Tajiks and the Hazaras (see below, subchapter 2.2, part "Ethnicity"), and geopolitical relations to Taliban and the US. Even though Iran has almost gone into war with Taliban in 2001, it is not fond of the military deployment of foreign troops that fight Taliban.²⁵ Despite the cultural ties, Iran has used Afghan refugees as a negotiating leverage.²⁶

Russia

Russia is facilitating the transit of non-military equipment from Europe via Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to Afghanistan. The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) is an active body in counter-narcotics, technician training or technical support. Russia is concerned about the stability of the region after withdrawal, especially in relation to narcotics, terrorism and Islamic radicalism. President Putin urged NATO to leave the forces beyond planned withdrawal²⁷ and even considers own troops deployment at the Tajik-Afghan border.²⁸ Further steps of Russia should be monitored closely; it has undisputable interest in the region, preserves former Soviet contacts and will have impact on development of the country.

Partner countries in Central Asia

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan provide support to ISAF, including over-flight rights, support for supply routes and the leasing of military bases to individual Allies.²⁹

Japan

Top partner as for development, peace efforts and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Japan runs programs for insurgent reintegration, finances assistance and reconstruction teams and contributes to the trust funds of the Afghan National Army, Afghan police and NATO Partnership.

Players in the region

Exercise their power using unofficial means, not refraining from supporting and gaining from arms trafficking, drug trade and the strategic location of Afghanistan.³⁰

²²As claimed by David Cameron for Asian Lite newspaper, 18 July 2013. Cameron: Better Indo-Pak ties crucial for Afghan peace. *Asian Lite* [online]. 18. 07. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.asianlite.com/beta/index.php/component/k2/item/1100-cameron-better-indo-pak-ties-crucial-for-afghan-peace>.

²³Karzai's wishlist. *The Indian Express* [online]. 23. 05. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/karzai-s-wishlist/1119306/>.

²⁴*Pakistan and Afghanistan* [online]. Institute for the Study of War [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.understandingwar.org/pakistan-and-afghanistan>.

²⁵Iran warns of US stay in Afghanistan. In: *PressTV* [online]. 25.11.2011 [cit. 2013-11-20]. Dostupné z: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/212002.html>.

²⁶Afghan refugees in Iran currently amount to 800 000 people. <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486f96&submit=G0>.

²⁷BRYANSKI, Gleb, BACZYNSKA, Gabriela. Russia's Putin says NATO should stay in Afghanistan. *Reuters* [online]. 01. 08. 2012 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/01/us-russia-nato-afghanistan-idUSBRE8700R020120801>.

²⁸FERRIS-ROTMAN, Amie. Fearing Afghan instability, Russia mulls border troops. *Reuters* [online]. 17. 05. 2013, [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/17/russia-deploy-troops-afghan-border_n_3290864.html.

²⁹One year on: ISAF's trans-European supply routes are a success. *NATO News* [online]. 26. 05. 2011, [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_74763.htm?selectedLocale=en.

³⁰GOODSON, Larry P. *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban*. Washington:



3.2 Factors

Few lines are far from enough to grasp the complexity of relevant factors that will form NATO role in Afghanistan, and so the list below is merely indicative:

Economic costs for NATO

Deployment of soldiers and military equipment in the past is costly, as well as funding the ANSF training and support for after 2015.³¹ Withdrawal is burdening NATO budget and the faster it is, the more expensive it becomes and consequently affects domestic political will as well. *"The Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, taken together, will be the most expensive wars in US history—totalling somewhere between USD 4 trillion and USD 6 trillion"*³²

*"It is estimated that the cost of deploying one (American) soldier for one year in this war amounts to USD 1 million"*³³

Causalities and humanitarian issue

According to a Brown University project Costs of War, at least 16,725 Afghan civilians have been killed directly and many more indirectly as a result of poor living standards, illnesses and other factors related to the war. Casualties of Afghan security forces were four times higher in 2012 than in 2007 and the desertion rate closes up to 50,000 men per year.³⁴ Ammunition that has been left on the Afghan soil since Soviet occupation is being enriched by dangerous military equipment of departing NATO troops, especially mines or grenades.³⁵ These are responsible for several hundred civilian deaths each year and should be addressed with logistic and financial solution during transition.

Refugees

There is an estimated number of 2.7 million of Afghans living in exile in neighbouring countries as a result of instability. International efforts have helped to repatriate some 5.7 million refugees in the past 10 years³⁶, however, the rest refuse to return because of problematic reintegration and instable situation. Many Afghans that returned home were forced to move from rural to urban areas in search of sustainable jobs and lives, thus becoming part of the estimated 450,000 internally displaced people in Afghanistan.³⁷ Some seek asylum in industrialized countries, primarily in Germany and Turkey, but their placement is temporary.³⁸

University of Washington Press, 2001.

³¹The controversial destruction of military equipment sometimes being the cheaper option, as reportedly, the U.S. military has destroyed one fifth (worth over US 7 billion) of all vehicles and other military equipment. LONDOÑO, Ernesto. Scrapping equipment key to Afghan drawdown. *Washington Post* [online]. 20. 06. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/scrapping-equipment-key-to-afghan-drawdown/2013/06/19/9d435258-d83f-11e2-b418-9dfa095e125d_story.html.

³²AUKEN, Bill Van. The Most Expensive War in World History: Costs of Iraq, Afghanistan wars could rise to \$ 6 trillion. Global Research [online]. 02. 04. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-most-expensive-war-in-world-history-costs-of-iraq-afghanistan-wars-could-rise-to-6-trillion/5329432>.

³³Ibid.

³⁴LYON, David. Afghan National Army counts cost of war. *BBC New Asia* [online]. 14. 06. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22886263>.

³⁵Po vojácích NATO v Afghánistánu zůstává nevybuchlá munice. *IHned.cz* [online]. 22. 07. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://zpravy.ihned.cz/svet-asie-a-pacifik/c1-60290260-po-vojacich-nato-v-afghanistanu-zustava-nevybuchla-munice>.

³⁶2013 UNHCR country operations profile – Afghanistan [online]. UNHCR [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486eb6>.

³⁷As of January 2012. UNHCR. *Afghanistan*. In: UNHCR. *Global Report 2011*. 06. 2011. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4fc880b20.html>.

³⁸There was 30 % increase in applications from Afghans from 2010 to 2011 in industrialized countries. In the past, Germany has already began their return.



Figure 3: Refugees in neighbouring countries Afghan refugees [online]. *Costs of war* [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://costsofwar.org/article/afghan-refugees>.



Instability of Afghan authorities

It would be more than misleading to state that Afghan official authorities are ready to sustainably govern the country and lead it out of current crisis. ANSF forces are slowly gaining experience in their role, but the process is to be finished. Their men need training to increase effectiveness and ensure the security of citizens. Taliban, insurgents, warlords, opium-related violence and foreign influence are considerable challenges to tackle. Security forces will require funding for logistical and military equipment. The manpower itself also needs reinforcement and uplift in morale and discipline. If NATO wants to stand up to its commitments, it cannot afford to leave the power solely in the hands of government and president, who depend on armed, partly trained and disputably loyal forces that might be exploited by opposition or other vested interests.

Warlords³⁹

a power structure existing along the official government and communicating together. Their power is stronger on local and regional level, where *"these commanders do actually represent the government."*⁴⁰ It may include control over agricultural production, infrastructure and opium trade; moreover, warlords do not refrain from taking over the land or using violence, force or threats against farmers. It is not possible to simply eliminate the warlords, because many are maintaining official governmental posts, strong unofficial local power and Taliban relations at the same time. Gaining their sympathies might be a complicated task, it would weaken the government, and the loyalty of warlords is linked more to power and economic benefits than international politics.⁴¹ On the other hand, freezing all communication could seriously undermine other current efforts.

Ethnicity

Afghanistan is not ethnically united country, its nation is divided into Pashtun (42 %), Tajik (27 %), Hazara (9 %), Uzbek (9 %) and other ethnic groups. *"Today the Tajiks (...) make up 70 % of the officers in*

³⁹The term "warlord" refers in general to „a military commander, especially an aggressive regional commander with individual autonomy“.

It is a person operating in a (wartime) territory, usually along much weaker government. The legitimacy of warlord is limited by the ability to threaten or use violence. Afghan warlords are also defined by effectively using external and domestic support. "warlord". Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press. [cit. 31. 08. 2013]. Available online at: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/warlord>; HARPVIKEN, Kristian Berg. *Understanding Warlordism*. Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2010. ISBN 9788272883507. Available online at: [http://file.prio.no/Publication_files/Prio/Harpviken,%20KB%20\(2010\)%20Understanding%20warlordism.pdf](http://file.prio.no/Publication_files/Prio/Harpviken,%20KB%20(2010)%20Understanding%20warlordism.pdf).

⁴⁰QOBIL, Rustam. At the mercy of Afghanistan's warlords. *BBC News* [online]. 28. 11. 2012 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-19983266>.

⁴¹KATZMAN, Kenneth. Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance [CRS Report for Congress], Congressional Research Service, 08. 06. 2013. Available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf>.



the Afghan army and conversely many Pashtuns (...) support or at least feel residual sympathies for the Taliban”⁴² With relation to their significance in Afghan history and also current presence in Pakistan, the Pashtu majority is not to be overlooked.

Opium cultivation

Afghanistan is the world's top producer of opium and its derivatives, which accounts for 82 % of world production.⁴³ In regions with high concentration of drug fields, the economy is affected by production of poppy as opposed to regular crops, and in some provinces of Afghanistan the family income depends as much as 40 % on opium.⁴⁴ Earnings from drug trade are connected to organized crime, insurgencies, corruption and Taliban.

Taliban and terrorism

The complex Taliban-terrorism relations and widespread abuse of power, drugs and corruption are helping Taliban maintain their ties in Afghan high-level structures.⁴⁵ Moreover, western diplomats realize the need for peace-talks⁴⁶, so the temporarily suspended discussions between Taliban, Afghan government and partner countries have been restored in June 2013. The need to tackle terrorism has resulted in anti-Taliban Northern Alliance groups regrouping under the umbrella of the National Coalition of Afghanistan (political arm) and the National Front of Afghanistan (military arm).⁴⁷

Terrorism is not limited to Afghanistan, so the counterterrorism operations in South Asia that are the easiest to control from allied Afghanistan with strategic position are of grave importance.⁴⁸

4 Conclusions and options

The scale of currently discussed scenarios ranges from “**zero option**” to strong presence, leaving room for negotiation of the **realistic scenario** somewhere in between.

The “**zero option**” means leaving not a single NATO or any other official foreign troop in the country, not even for training. This option would provide Mr Karzai with “Afghan-led” peace talks and transformation, as he favours, and might increase his legitimacy as opposed to being a puppet under the U.S.⁴⁹ It is also the cheapest option that would be welcomed by domestic voters of NATO members. On the other hand,

⁴²DALRYMPLE, William. Forget NATO v the Taliban. The real Afghan fight is India v Pakistan. *The Guardian* [online]. 26. 03. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jun/26/nato-taliban-india-pakistan>.

⁴³United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). World Drug Report 2010 [Report]. Vienna: UNODC, 2010, pp 37-53. Available online at: http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/1.2_The_global_heroin_market.pdf.

⁴⁴As an average figure. Source: UNODC. Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2011 [Report]. Vienna: UNODC, December 2011, p. 99. Available online at: www.unodc.org/documents/cropmonitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_opium_survey_2011_web.pdf.

⁴⁵*Did the wars bring democracy to Afghanistan and Iraq?* [online]. Costs of War [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://costsofwar.org/article/did-wars-bring-democracy-afghanistan-and-iraq>.

⁴⁶WILLINGHAM, Kimberly, FITZGERALD, Jonna. Afghan Northern Allies Betrayed by Obama Administration. *Louie Gohmert* [Press release online]. 09. 01. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://gohmert.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=274224>.

⁴⁷BHADRAKUMAR, K. M. There's more to peace than Taliban. *Asia Times* [online]. 12. 01. 2012 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/NA12Df01.html.

⁴⁸KAGAN, Kimberley, KAGAN, Frederick W. Why U.S. troops must stay in Afghanistan. *Washington Post* [online]. 24. 11. 2012 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-us-troops-must-stay-in-afghanistan/2012/11/23/e452bb92-3287-11e2-9cfa-e41bac906cc9_story.html.

⁴⁹BHADRAKUMAR, K. M. There's more to peace than Taliban. *Asia Times* [online]. 12. 01. 2012 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/NA12Df01.html.



the objective should be to stabilize security for the Afghani people and depriving ANSF from help might damage the morale, while encouraging the Taliban.⁵⁰

Strong presence option would provide NATO with information and control over unsecured areas to a certain degree. Moreover, the influence in entire region would be maintained even from the point of view of surrounding countries. ANSF would have the possibility to receive training and strategic support and it would be easier to deliver physical help (for delivering equipment or infrastructure). On the other hand, support for NATO is not that strong in Afghanistan and Taliban might gain moral advantage over the government. It could also be considered a diplomatic signal by other countries, such as Russia, Pakistan, Iran or China, who would probably not react favourably on continuous foreign troop deployment in their area of interest.

The **realistic scenario**, nevertheless, is not likely to reach any of the above options and can be expected to follow a middle path. Main task is to decide the following:

Table 1: *How and to what extent the support will be provided to Afghanistan after 2014?*

Factors IN FAVOUR of presence:

- threat of terrorism,
- drug and arms trade,
- underdeveloped governmental structures,
- high number of refugees;

Factors AGAINST presence:

- budgets of partner countries decreasing,
- Hamid Karzai's authority undermined
- controversy over casualties,
- domestic governments of NATO members losing support of their voters.

The transition process must take into account the capability of ANSF to handle security tasks transferred from ISAF, the security of citizens, local governance and adjustments of ISAF role regarding ANSF possibilities. In order for the transition to be successful, ANSF need to develop effective authority that can sustain security in the long-term. Negotiations of the Ambassadors should cover the geopolitical implications of countries in the region as well. The task is both urgent and complicated; a true challenge for its negotiators.

5 Sources for comprehensive information and overviews

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7 Annex

Annex 1: Timeline of Afghanistan before the transition

1979	USSR occupation
-1989	US is arming opposition groups of mujahidin
1989	Soviet troops retreat, civil war begins
-1992	USSR maintains support for current communist government
1992	Fall of communism , Islamic State of Afghanistan is established by the Peshawar Accord Civil war continues, violent clashes in Kabul and elsewhere <i>North</i> : Hezb-e Islami (militia lead by G. Hekmatyar and funded by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran) and Abdul Rashid Dostum fight the official government (with A. Massoud as defence minister) <i>South</i> : Taliban is emerging in Kandahar
1994	Militia defeated in Kabul by Massoud, Taliban refuses to participate in democratic elections
-1996	Kabul captured by Taliban
1996	Taliban establishes the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (only recognized by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and UAE), its government is conducting massacres, torturing and suppresses human rights A. Massoud + A. Dostum create Northern Alliance (United Front) to fight Taliban and fight for republic
-2001	Massoud is assassinated, US attacked by terrorists two days later
2001 (Oct)	President of the US launches Operation Enduring Freedom , Northern Alliance cooperates. Taliban is forced to retreat to Pakistan
(Dec)	U.N. Security Council establishes the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and an interim government
2003	NATO assumes control and leadership over ISAF
2004	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is established (Hamid Karzai elected president)
2010	Peace efforts and transition talks begin, the Enduring Peace Partnership between NATO and Afghanistan is signed
-2011	Osama bin Laden killed, Taliban is enraged
2011 (Aug)	Transition begins

Annex II

Clear timeline of transition itself is available at:

NATO Headquarters. Transition to Afghan responsibility: Inteqal. *NATO* [online]. 18. 06. 2013 [cit. 31. 07. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/141193/Transition-to-Afghan-responsibility-Inteqal>.



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