

How do the three major ethnic groups in Afghanistan perceive the conflict led by the U.S. and NATO, their future in Afghanistan, and their courses of action?

Dan Sheets

Dr. Jonathan Lockwood  
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## **American Military University**

Charleston, West Virginia

**“When Allah had made the rest of the world, He saw that there was a lot of rubbish left over, bits and pieces and things that did not fit anywhere else. He collected them all together and threw them down on to the Earth. That was Afghanistan.”**

- Unnamed Afghan Mujahed

**“We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master.”**

- Unnamed Pashtun Elder

**“Unlike other wars, Afghan wars become serious only when they are over”**

- Sir Olaf Caroe

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## **Abstract**

The current situation in Afghanistan is a highly dynamic and volatile one that hinges on many different variables. The most important and prominent of those variables is the effect that the different ethnic groups have on the entire stability of Afghanistan. There are numerous ethnic groups, each with its own unique views and opinions on the current state of Afghanistan. Each ethnic group also has differing motives that will drive the behavior of that particular ethnic group and potentially the behavior of the other ethnicities. Understanding how these ethnicities either work together or work against each other is vital for the analyst to be able to properly gauge the situation in Afghanistan. This report attempts to breakdown the three largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan and how they each have the possibility to drastically change the future of Afghanistan.

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## **Introduction:**

On September 11, 2001, an international terrorist group, al Qaeda (meaning, “the Base”), executed an attack on the United States that changed the course of world history. At the time of the attack, al Qaeda was based in the worn-torn country of Afghanistan, being harbored and provided safe haven by the Taliban (meaning, the “Students”), an extremist Islamic group that controlled approximately 95% of Afghanistan. Following the attack, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan with aims on apprehending the leader and founder of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and deterring further terrorist attacks. As in many of their military endeavors, the U.S. successfully recruited the help of their NATO allies in providing support for the U.S. invasion and subsequent occupation. Within a few short months of fighting, the Taliban’s government had been shattered and the Taliban found themselves retreating into the shadows and across the border to the south-east into neighboring Pakistan. In the nine years following the invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. and her NATO allies have been bogged down by an ever-increasingly dangerous insurgency. Additionally, the U.S. has thus far been unsuccessful in capturing Osama bin Laden. Furthermore, this insurgency is inherently different and more complex than the insurgency encountered by the U.S. in their invasion of Iraq. There are numerous factors that all contribute to the quagmire that makes up this insurgency.

Historically, Afghanistan has been a crossroads between cultures, languages, and empires. Ahmed Rashid, in the 2010 edition of his book, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* wrote, “Afghanistan’s geo-strategic location on the crossroads between Iran, the Arabian Sea and India and between Central Asia and

South Asia has given its territory and mountain passes a significance since the earliest Aryan invasions 6,000 years ago” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 7). In the past two hundred years alone, Afghanistan has been able to successfully stave off three invasions by England (three successive wars from 1839-1919), Soviet Union (1979-1989), and now the U.S. (2001-current) (Jones, 2009, pg. xxvi), “Afghanistan’s rough, rugged, deserted and arid terrain has produced some of the best fighters the world has ever seen” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 7). Three generations of Afghans have been directly involved in war since the Soviet Union’s invasion in 1979. Thirty years of hard fighting, occupations, and civil war have taken their toll on the country. Virtually little infrastructure remains of the once commercially vital trade junction as a result of the constant bombardment from the wrath poured out by those engaging in the hostilities.

Out of all of the factors contributing to Afghanistan’s diverse and complex nature, ethnic diversity is arguably the greatest. Understanding the ethnic breakdown of Afghanistan is crucial to any political or military success there. Conversely, lack of cultural and ethnic understanding will result in certain failure, as seen by the British and Soviet empires. With more than six primary languages spoken in Afghanistan and much bilingualism throughout, it can be a daunting undertaking to begin to analyze and understand Afghanistan (CIA World Factbook, 2010). There are also seven main ethnic groups, Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, Turkmen, and Baloch, which form the vast majority of the composition of the Afghani people (CIA World Factbook, 2010). Each ethnicity has its own background, history, experience, and unique perception of the situation in their country. Every one of the many different ethnicities will contribute to the end state of Afghanistan.

Theoretically, had the U.S. not invaded and were the Taliban not a factor, Afghanistan would still be a highly complex and dynamic situation. Add to the equation the variables of a U.S. led invasion, the Taliban, and malign actors like Iran and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the situation in Afghanistan becomes even more complex, and to some degree, impossible to accurately forecast. This analytical report will focus on how the three major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, the Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras, perceive the U.S. led invasion and their future in Afghanistan. It will also spell out numerous courses of action for each ethnicity. Due to the extreme complexity of the nature of the situation in Afghanistan, this will not attempt to be a comprehensive review, nor will it attempt to form a “how to win in Afghanistan” strategy.

### **Literature Review:**

Prior to September 11, 2001, there was not a large amount of literature that existed regarding Afghanistan, let alone literature that focused on the differences in the ethnic groups that inhabited the country. It appears that within the ten years since the terrorist attack against the U.S., the sheer amount of literature about Afghanistan exploded. Suddenly, there were massive amounts of interest about this mysterious and oppressive government, the Taliban. Similarly, people wanted to know more about al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and Islamic extremism in the Middle East. What literature that did exist prior to the attack was generally provided by the British, most likely as a result of their three wars there and their involvement in the “Great Game” with Russia. Some literature about Afghanistan and the Taliban has also come from Pakistan.

At present, it is difficult to throw in a book in a bookstore without hitting a book about Afghanistan, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, or U.S. policy concerning

Afghanistan. It has become a hot topic and a hotbed for discussion ripe with emotion. This burst of literary material on the subject of Afghanistan is a double-edged sword however. It takes years of study and a lot of personal experience to become so intimately familiar with a subject that someone could be considered an expert. Were all of the authors of these books studying Afghanistan and its cultures for years prior to 9/11 and just so happened to publish them all around the same time after the attack? Or are we dealing with a lot of self-proclaimed experts on Afghanistan who have experienced Afghanistan a little and have studied even less?

Even now, although it is easy to find literature about Afghanistan, it is more difficult to find literature that deals solely with the ethnic issues that plague the worn-torn country. Despite this difficulty, there are glimpses of the cultural issues in just about every book regarding Afghanistan. It is through studying these books that much of the analysis and conclusions about these ethnic issues has come from. Following is a short literature review describing some of the knowledge that existed publicly prior to this report. Each book explained below is a representation of a unique perspective on the issue.

Ahmed Rashid is often acclaimed to be the world's leading expert of the Taliban. He has spent years in Afghanistan as a reporter following the troubles and strife of the country. A native of Pakistan, Rashid has had an intimate look into how Afghanistan has been ruled for the past three decades. He is surely not a self-proclaimed expert on the subject because he has read a few books and visited Afghanistan. His research has been conducted through years of conducting interviews and having first-hand experiences. His most famous book, and by far one of the greatest resources for this

analysis was, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. The first edition of this book was published in the year 2000. Since the invasion of Afghanistan, Rashid has updated his book with a chapter at the end that has covered the time from the publishing of the first edition to 2010, this makes up the second edition.

This book is a very matter-of-fact account of where and how the Taliban got its start. It goes in depth into the recent history of Afghanistan, concisely explaining why Afghanistan is the way it is. Rashid does not go into too much detail regarding the ancient history, but bits and pieces of it can be found throughout the book. Similarly, he does not go into terrible detail about the different ethnic groups, but the reader can pull lots of important details through reading what the Pashtun-dominated Taliban has done to the other ethnic groups. It is from those parts of history and those actions taken on part of the Taliban that an analyst can start to form potential courses of action for the differing ethnic groups. Despite Rashid being a local to the geographic region, he is able to describe the situation and Islam in general terms, which allow anyone with the most basic understanding of Afghanistan to comprehend and conceptualize the situation at hand.

Rashid also wrote an additional book that has played a great role in this report. This book, however, focuses more so on the U.S.'s involvement in Afghanistan, versus singling out the Taliban or Afghanistan's ethnic groups. The information gleaned from this book is similar to how it was gleaned from his previous book. While the book does not focus on any particular ethnicity, there is a plethora of information spread throughout regarding the behavior of each ethnic group.



It was through a combination of both of these books by Rashid that a lot of the following information came from. However, it is imperative to remember that no book or author is completely free from bias. Being from Pakistan, he might be somewhat sympathetic to Islam, or the Taliban, although it does not appear so in either book.

Bruce Riedel is also one of the world's leading analysts on the Middle East and the U.S.'s current situation in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2008, he wrote, *The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future*. This book is undoubtedly the most important book for any analyst to read on the current situation in the Middle East. He breaks down Islamic extremism and explains how leaders of al Qaeda and the Taliban got their start. Knowing the history of the leaders of these extremist groups was vitally important for this report, seeing as how these leaders can guide their extremist organizations down different paths. In *Obama's Wars*, Bob Woodward describes the circumstances of how the Obama administration made the decisions they did regarding Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010. At one point, Riedel was brought in to help determine the best course of action for the U.S., "Riedel could answer the questions Obama and his national security team might have about al Qaeda, the Taliban, Afghanistan and Pakistan with three simple words: 'Read my book'" (Woodward, 2010, pg. 89) referring to *The Search for Al Qaeda*. Woodward continued, "It was clear to him that the president would get a cut-and-paste from Riedel's book" (Woodward, 2010, pg. 90).

Riedel's many years of analyzing and predicting in the Middle East have given way for him to write one of the most informed books on the matter. So informed, that his book was used as the backbone of a review requested by President Obama. Which review, was crucial in determining the current U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Knowing

the background information that the U.S. leadership was privy to in their decision making process was important to this report because it helped to form the major scenarios for analysis.

Additionally, *Obama's Wars*, by Woodward provided a unique insight into how the actual decisions were made regarding the U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Furthermore, knowing a great deal of the information that U.S. decision makers had before them, and then knowing how the actual decisions were made when they made the decisions provides the analyst with another piece of the puzzle. This information allows for accurate scenarios to be made by extremely important variables in the situation. For example, knowing what the U.S. might do, will aid in determining how the different ethnicities in Afghanistan could possibly perceive the U.S. led invasion and what these groups might do in response.

Woodward provides a meeting-by-meeting account of how the decisions were made. This step-by-step approach makes putting the information gathered in other books in a chronological order much easier. With a chronology established, the analyst can be a better judge at responses and response timelines in relation to the other actors in the situation.

As previously mentioned, a substantial amount of the information about Afghanistan comes from the British. This is true in the case of *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics*, by Martin Ewans. This book's primary focus is the history of Afghanistan. This history goes long before the oppressive rule of the Taliban or the Soviets. Knowing even more of the ancient history and how each ethnicity came about is crucial to being able to form ideas on how they would behave now. What

seems like a logical and rational move by many western standards may be irrational and out of the question to Afghans. Furthermore, events that occurred 300 years ago still divide different tribes and ethnicities and give them reason to harbor feelings of hate and resentment and a strong desire for revenge for the wrong-doings that they have suffered in the past. Ewans provides many of those details in his book. It can be said that the history of Afghanistan revolves around its people and this book appears to be a leading work in explaining the people.

With the extremist, cultural, historical, and political aspects of Afghanistan fairly well covered in the previously described texts, next it is important to understand the feeling of being in Afghanistan, from someone with similar thinking, point of views, and understanding as the reader. Who better to bring that understanding than a U.S. soldier? Lt Col Anthony Shaffer wrote, in 2010, *Operation Dark Heart*. This book is particularly helpful because of the perspective of the author. Shaffer is a U.S. Army intelligence officer who writes about his experiences in Afghanistan performing intelligence collection duties.

It is equally important to know that despite his best efforts at portraying the situation for what it is, his perception and perspective is still limited to just what he knows and has experienced. He has not been to every part of Afghanistan. Likewise, he has not necessarily had extremely close and intimate contact with every ethnicity in Afghanistan. However, his view is unique seeing as how it comes from someone who is already in the intelligence mindset. He is an analyst, and thinks and writes like an analyst.

Overall, there are large amounts of detailed literature available publicly that are great assets for an analyst to use in conjunction with the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction (LAMP). This analytical methodology combined with the research performed in the above books and many others, aid in this report's accuracy. Such a broad base of literature is a valuable asset. At the same time, it appeared as if there was a lack of literature regarding the individual ethnic groups. Each group easily has enough of a complex history that would provide more than enough information for a detailed book or report. This detailed book or report could contain even higher fidelity information regarding possible courses of action and alternate futures for each individual ethnicity, as opposed to lumping the three largest ethnicities together in this report.

## **Analysis Methodology: Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction (LAMP)**

### **Step 1. Define the issue for which you are trying to determine the most likely future**

As previously mentioned, an all encompassing review of Afghanistan is outside of the scope of this analysis and that the purpose of this analysis will be considerably narrower. The issue at hand can be simply put as an exploration into the perspectives of the three major ethnic groups and their most likely course of action following a withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO occupation forces. This focus does have one major intelligence gap that is impossible to foresee, which is, the exact timetable and date of

the withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO occupation forces. However, a rough timetable does exist, and this will provide the foundation for the analysis. Another critical aspect of this problem is the nature of ethnic boundaries in that they rarely follow country borders. This is the case with the ethnic groups in Afghanistan, see Figure 1. for an ethnic group map of Afghanistan.

**Figure 1. Ethnic Group Map of Afghanistan**



**Step 2. Specify the national “actors” involved**

There are three primary ethnic actors in this analysis that alternative futures will be discussed for. Each ethnic group will be briefly dissected and explained. The three ethnic actors are:

- **Pashtuns**

- **Tajiks**
- **Hazaras**

### **Pashtuns-**

The Pashtuns make up the largest of all of the ethnic groups that form the composition of Afghanistan's ethnic picture. Despite the fact that Pashtuns do not form an overwhelming majority at only 42% of the population, they have still always been the major player in Afghanistan. In fact, it has been the Pashtuns who have primarily ruled Afghanistan over the past 250-300 years (Rashid, 2008, pg. 4). Pashtu (Pashto), an Indo-Persian mixed language is the primary language spoken by all Pashtuns as well as one of the two official languages of Afghanistan (Rashid, 2010, pg. 10). Pashtun culture rests on *Pushtunwali*, a legal and moral code that determines social order and responsibilities (Countrystudies, 2010).

The ethnic homeland of the Pashtuns is in the south-eastern corner of Afghanistan, encompassing Helmand and Kandahar, through the border area with Pakistan well into the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and the Northwestern Frontier Province (NWFP). "The Pashtuns trace their genealogy to Qais, a companion of the Prophet Mohammed. As such they consider themselves a Semitic race although anthropologists consider them to be Indo-Europeans, who have assimilated numerous ethnic groups over the course of history" (Rashid, 2010, pg. 10). Modern Pashtuns can be generally divided into two primary tribes, the Ghilzai tribe and the Durrani (Abdali) tribe, with the Durrani tribe being the larger of the two. The division of the two tribes lies in which son of Qais each tribe traces their roots. Rashid explains, "It was the southern Pashtuns who were to form the modern state of Afghanistan at the historical

conjuncture when the Persian Safavid dynasty in the west, the Moguls in India and the Uzbek Janid dynasty were all in a period of decline in the eighteenth century” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 10).

The many tribes of the Pashtun people tended to be in a perpetual state of conflict with each other, only to agree on a temporary cessation of hostilities only to unite and fight against a common enemy, then quickly return to the previous in-fighting. This tribal warfare typically revolved around the control of the Pashtun people as well as for control of Afghanistan. The Pashtuns also found themselves in constant contention with the other major ethnic groups in Afghanistan. At the same time, there have been times when they have worked together with other ethnicities to work towards a common goal when it was convenient for the Pashtuns.

The significance of ethnic Pashtuns is that they are the ethnic group that formed the Taliban. The Taliban got their start from Madrassas, or Islamic schools (hence the meaning of the name Taliban, “talib” means student and “an” makes the word plural) in Pakistan. The Taliban, incorporating many of the traits of being Pashtun, including Pashtunwali, would find themselves occasionally working with other ethnicities when a common goal could be found. Rashid gives an example of this from the 1995 Afghani Civil War,

“In desperation the Hazaras cut a deal with the advancing Taliban, yielding their heavy weapons and positions to them. But in the ensuing handover and melee, the Hazara leader Abdul Ali Mazari was killed while in Taliban custody. The Hazaras subsequently claimed that Mazari was pushed out of a helicopter to his death by the Taliban, because he tried to seize a rifle while he was being taken to Kandahar as a prisoner. The death of Mazari, accidental or intentional, was to forever condemn the Taliban in the eyes of the Afghan Shias and their main patron Iran. The Hazaras were never to forgive the Taliban for Mazari’s death and took their



revenge two years later, when the Hazaras massacred thousands of Taliban in the north. A bloody ethnic and sectarian divide, between Pashtun and Hazara, Sunni and Shia bubbling just below the surface now came into the open” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 35).

Due to the connection between the Pashtun people and the Taliban, many people often refer to the U.S.’s conflict in Afghanistan as a Pashtun-led insurgency. This is primarily from the support that Pakistani Pashtuns give to Afghani Pashtuns, “The Taliban fostered Pashtun nationalism, albeit of an Islamic character and it began to affect Pakistani Pashtuns” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 187). The Pashtun tribes have enjoyed long periods of power and are assessed to want to continue ruling greater Afghanistan.

### **Tajiks –**

The Tajik people make up the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. They comprise of 27% of the 29 million Afghans (CIA World Factbook, 2010). The Tajiks have also enjoyed short periods of time when they ruled Afghanistan, although for not very long in any instance, and it generally was to the dismay of many Pashtuns, “Pashtuns leaders resented the handover of power to other ethnic groups, especially Tajiks and Uzbeks” (Jones, 2009, pg. 45). Dari, an Iranian language, is the primary language of the Tajik people.

The Tajik heartland encompasses the northern region of Afghanistan as well the majority of Tajikistan. However, there are some disconnects between Afghanistan’s Tajiks and Tajikistan’s Tajiks. This disconnect stems from the fact that the tribal structure that is predominant in the Pashtun ethnicity is not as prevalent with ethnic Tajiks, “Tajik are not organized by tribe and refer to themselves most often by the name of the valley or region they inhabit, such as Panjsheri, Andarabi, Samangani, and

Badakhshi” (Countrystudies, 2010) with the exception of Tajiks who live in predominantly non-Tajik areas, in that case they refer to themselves as simply as Tajiks (Countrystudies, 2010). The majority of Tajiks however, do share their religious preference of being Sunni Muslims with the Pashtuns, with only a few Tajik clans being aligned with Shia Muslims. This Shia influence has been bled over into Afghanistan from neighboring Iran.

Throughout their history, the Tajiks have found themselves engaged in less war-like activities than their Pashtun neighbors. At the same time, they are still often at odds with other ethnicities and other Tajik clans. They have a tendency to mistrust other ethnic groups, particularly the Pashtuns as well as the Uzbeks.

### **Hazaras –**

Estimates on how much for the population of Afghanistan that the Hazaras make up can vary from 9-15%. The Hazara traditionally have lived in the mountainous central most region of land-locked Afghanistan, called the Hazarajat (land of the Hazara) (Countrystudies, 2010). Ewans writes about the origination of the Hazaras, “A more probably theory is that they are one of the aboriginal peoples of Afghanistan, who were pushed into their remote valleys by later migrants” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 11). Hazaras can be lighter-skinned and lighter-eyed than their Pashtun neighbors to the south and east, but also incorporate many mongol-like features. These features were supposedly introduced into the Hazara gene pool when Genghis Khan’s armies interbred with the native people of Afghanistan. Their primary language is Hazaragi, a language that is mostly of Persian descent but incorporates some Mongol words as well (Countrystudies, 2010).

The Hazara people have had a mixed history between dealing with the numerous invaders, as well as constant persecution from the other, larger ethnicities in Afghanistan. The Hazaras also formed an integral part of the Northern Alliance (NA) along with the Tajiks and Uzbeks, but this was not without its own problems, “Dostum’s Uzbeks, Ismael Khan’s Heratis, and the Hazara Shias were barely represented, which led to profound resentment among these groups” (Rashid, 2008, pg. 103). However, there was still a great deal of mistrust in this alliance. Due to being a hybrid people, of sorts, and a smaller ethnicity, they were often treated by the Pashtun majority as second-class citizens. Another large source of the persecution they face is due to their religious preference. Hazaras are predominantly Shia Muslim. Rashid writes about the contention between the Hazaras and the Pashtuns, “The sectarian enmity between the Sunni Pashtuns and the Shia Hazaras went back a long way, but the Taliban had brought a new edge to the conflict for they treated all Shias as *munafaqeen* or hypocrites and beyond the pale of true Islam (Rashid, 2010, pg. 69). Jones writes similarly, “While in power, the Taliban massacred thousands of ethnic Hazaras, who are predominantly Shi’ite” (Jones, 2009, pg. 62).

According to the CIA, these three ethnic groups account for more than 75% of all Afghans (CIA World Factbook, 2010). According to similar reports, the Uzbeks comprise of less than 10% of the total population of Afghanistan, but still can play somewhat of an important role in the future of Afghanistan. However, historically speaking, the Uzbeks share many of the same histories, and traits as the Tajiks and the Hazaras. Due to the overlap and redundancy of including such a small and similar ethnic group, the Uzbeks have been omitted from this analysis.

### **Step 3. Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question**

The perception of the U.S.'s war against al Qaeda and the Pashtun Taliban by each of these three ethnicities carries certain implications that offer unique insights to each ethnicity and their potential courses of action. These perceptions can be understood through studying the history of Afghanistan and how these groups have behaved in the past. However, past event precedent is not always an indicator of future events. The human system is a highly dynamic variable that cannot always be easily predicted. This in-depth study into ethnic perceptions of the situation will attempt to shed light on the most likely future. This step is crucial to the overall analysis because the perceptions of the evaluator become reality. In this case, each ethnicity is the evaluator. Each evaluator only knows what it has perceived. Therefore, their perceptions are their only reality. These evaluators will then act only upon the reality they have, which is their perception of events to date as well as the events before them.

The idiom commonly used among English speakers, "It's not what you know, but who you know" similarly applies in Afghanistan, explains Greg Mortenson, as he quotes an Afghani in his book, *Stones into Schools*, "Like everywhere else in Afghanistan, he intoned, geography is far less important than relationships" (Mortenson, 2009, pg. 58). This mentality is also what has led to widespread and rampant corruption in Afghanistan, especially in the Hamid Karzai regime. These relationships, as previously discussed, also spread across borders writes Anthony Shaffer, in his book *Operation Dark Heart*, "The Pashtu tribe saddles the border, and there is no such thing as an

Afghan-Pakistan border for either the Taliban or al Qaeda—or what remains of it—as well as for the Pashtun people who inhabit the area. There is only the land that indigenous Pashtun population—including members of the Taliban—has known for thousands of years” (Shaffer, 2010, pg. 278).

Each group shares certain traits. All three of the ethnicities adhere to some type of Muslim beliefs, “Despite the bonds of Islam, a sense of national unity has thus always been weak, except when an unusually strong leader has appeared or the nation has come together when threatened by an external enemy” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 11). The three groups have also been heavily involved in all of the conflicts that have plagued Afghanistan over the past three decades. Each group is vying for some type of physical control in Afghanistan, whether it is regional control or control of the entire country is varying. All of the ethnic groups have been known for their brutality and mistrust of other neighboring ethnic groups. Lastly, all of the people of each ethnic group desire security. They want to be able to feel safe in the living of their daily lives. Although many of the people, even many Pashtuns, did not completely agree with Taliban governance, it did bring some level of security, and Afghans on a whole will generally accept whoever can bring safety and security. However, the degree in which these people will tolerate the harsh standard of living that the Taliban present is debatable.

### **Pashtuns –**

The Pashtuns, due to the past 300 years of ruling Afghanistan and being the primary ethnicity of Afghanistan, feel a certain degree of entitlement to continue ruling Afghanistan. They, out of all of the ethnicities in Afghanistan, are more likely to identify themselves as Afghans, as explained, “Even today, the Pushtoons (Pashtuns) refer to

themselves as ‘Afghans’ and their language as ‘Afghani,’ while the remainder of the country’s people refer to themselves primarily as Tajiks, Usbeks (Uzbeks) or whatever, and as Afghans only secondarily, if at all” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 4). In this situation, the Taliban are merely a vessel to carry them to the throne of government in Afghanistan. This became extremely apparent in the Afghani Civil War in the 1990s. The Taliban are ingraining this sense of entitlement with a religious spin, preaching that Afghanistan should be ruled by a Sunni executing Sharia Law, the ultra-conservative and extremist view of Islam, “We want to live a life like the Prophet lived 1,400 years ago and jihad is our right” said Mullah Wakil, aide to Mullah Mohammed Omar (Rashid, 2010, pg. 43). However, often times the Pashtun tribes are too busy fighting each other to present a coordinated and combined effort against other entities, stated one Taliban leader, “We can love our enemies but only after we have defeated them” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 43). The Taliban seeks to unite the Pashtun tribes to give them the momentum the Taliban need in order to control greater Afghanistan.

The best example of this is the Afghani Civil War in which the Pashtun Taliban found themselves pitted against the other ethnicities, primarily the Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Heratis. This civil war was unique in that it was not an “A” versus “B” scenario. Each group was fighting for control, and alliances shifted throughout the war. Alliances and cease-fires were based on convenience for each party to the alliance.

This sense of entitlement has also been a contributing factor to any measure of success the U.S. and NATO allies have been able to achieve. The Pashtuns want to rule Afghanistan. This being said, the current Hamid Karzai government in place in Kabul is dominated by Pashtuns, “The Taliban, in other words, are highly unlikely to

overthrow the government by force of arms. A much more likely failure mechanism might occur if northern ethnic groups—Uzbeks, Tajiks, Hazaras—should, in frustration at lack of progress, withdraw their support for the Pashtun-dominated Kabul government and take matters into their own hands in fighting the Pashtun Taliban,” writes author David Kilcullen in *The Accidental Guerrilla* (Kilcullen, 2009, pg. 52). Similarly, the majority of the Pashtun population, who currently support the Karzai government, could possibly throw their hands in the air with frustration and find themselves increasingly aligned with the Taliban. The U.S. has seen this shift to some degree already in Afghanistan as a lack of progress has disheartened many Pashtuns who initially welcomed the U.S. and its NATO allies.

### **Tajiks –**

“Non-Pushtoon peoples have been less influential in the country’s history. The next most numerous, at around a fifth of the population are the Tajiks” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 9). Due to the sheer number of ethnic Tajiks compared to the number of ethnic Hazaras and Uzbeks, the Tajiks were considered to be the backbone of the Northern Alliance, the primary opposition to the Pashtun-led Taliban and a substantial presence in key areas of Afghanistan, “About half of the capital’s population was Tajik” (Coll, 2004, pg. 499). The Northern Alliance was formed out of a common hatred for Pashtuns and the Taliban, “The Tajiks, the Hazaras and the Nuristanis have all in the past been victims of Pushtoon expansionism, and these and other antagonisms persist to the present day” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 11). One benefit the Tajiks enjoy over the Pashtuns is that they are willing to look beyond the tribal society and be able to look toward a central Tajik identity. This became apparent during the beginning of the

Afghani Civil War, “Much of Afghanistan’s subsequent civil war was to be determined by the fact that Kabul fell, not to the well-armed and bickering Pashtun parties based in Peshawar, but to the better organized and more united Tajik forces” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 21). Further explaining the mistrust between the Tajiks and the Pashtun dominated Taliban, Bob Woodward, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and author of *Obama’s Wars* wrote,

“The ANSF (Afghan National Security Force) target was flawed; the insurgency wasn’t on a national scale. It was mostly limited to an area of the country nicknamed Pashtunistan. Only about 42 percent of the Afghan populace was Pashtun. So for example, they would not have to worry about the Taliban in Tajik areas—at least 27 percent of the total population—because the Taliban would not survive in those areas given the deep hostility the Tajiks felt for them” (Woodward, 2010, pg. 264).

Additionally, the Tajiks often form clans, which formation then takes the form of warlordism. This is further explained when comparing the Uzbeks and Tajiks to the Pashtuns, “Like the Tajiks, they have these days mostly lost whatever tribal affiliations they may have had, and, by and large, neither group share the aggressive instincts of their Pushtoon compatriots” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 9). Ewans continues to write along the same line, “There has in past been little love lost between them and the other Afghans, who despise them on both religious and racial grounds, while they themselves have a particular hatred of the Pushtoons, whom they see as exploiters and oppressors” (Ewans, 2002, pg. 10). The joining of these different feuding warlords helped form the Northern Alliance, along with warlords and clans from the Uzbeks and Hazaras.

### **Hazaras –**

Perhaps the most strained relationship between any two ethnic groups comes from the Hazara-Pashtun relationship. There has always been a large amount of



animosity between the two ethnicities, particularly since the conversion of the Hazaras to Shia Islam. This contention was ultra-prevalent during the Afghani Civil War, writes Riedel, “Tajiks and Uzbeks loyal to Dostam or other Northern Alliance leaders were rounded up and many summarily executed. But the Taliban reserved its greatest enmity for Afghanistan’s Shia minority, the Hazara, who were killed by the hundreds in the massacre that followed the fall of the city. The next month, the Taliban entered the Hazara stronghold of Bamian and killed thousands more Hazara civilians” (Riedel, 2006, pg. 66) and again by Rashid, “The Hazaras had always been at the short end of the Pashtun stick” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 68). It can be assessed that because of the troubled relationship between ethnic Hazaras and Pashtuns, that the Hazara would view the U.S. conflict with the Taliban as a positive turn of events for them, especially when the U.S. “bring” with them the ideal and prospect of a democracy that would partially empower the Hazara with limited regional autonomy.

Like the other major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, the Hazara embody a fighting spirit, “We will die but we will never surrender” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 69). But besides fighting, the Hazara were also more progressive than other ethnicities, “Even more irksome for the Taliban, was that Hazara women were playing a significant political, social, and even military role in the region’s defence. The 80-member Central Council of the Hazara’s Hizb-e-Wahadat party had 12 women members, many of them educated professionals” (Rashid, 2010, pg. 69). Being slightly more progressive than some of the other ethnic groups, allows a different school a thought than what can be found in most of Afghanistan.

#### **Step 4. Specify all possible courses of action for each actor**

All three of the actors have similar and partially overlapping courses of action. The reasoning behind this is because there are multiple extremely important dynamic variables in this situation that are not being included because they are 1. not an ethnic group or 2. outside the scope of this analysis. Examples of these variables are the U.S., NATO, Iran, Pakistan, and the Taliban. The Taliban is included in the list of external variables because not all Pashtuns are Taliban and not all Taliban are Pashtuns. However, the Taliban is the fulcrum on which this whole situation and analysis pivot on.

##### **Pashtuns –**

a) Seeing as how the insurgency in Afghanistan is a primarily Pashtun-led insurgency, being backed by the Taliban, the Pashtuns are in a unique situation of being able to fully back the Taliban.

b) The Pashtuns could disassociate themselves from the Taliban completely and support the U.S. backed government in Kabul, even after the withdrawal of foreign combat troops.

c) The Pashtuns could disassociate themselves completely from the Taliban and the political process embrace a type of isolationism as they fight each other.

##### **Tajiks –**

a) The Tajiks could become overly frustrated with the lack of progress accomplished by the U.S. backed government in Kabul and revert back to a predominantly warlordistic society and take matters into their own hands to fight the Taliban.

b) After being disappointed in the lack of progress from the U.S. backed government in Kabul, the Tajiks could once again change their allegiance to the “winning” side, in this case the Taliban, and fight against the U.S. and NATO. This option might seem appealing to the Tajiks if the Taliban were able to successfully offer a place in the Taliban government.

c) The Tajiks would continue to stand by the current government despite frustrations and complications in the progress of the country.

### **Hazaras –**

a) Being frustrated by lack of adequate protection from the government in Kabul, the Hazaras would take matters into their own hands and look to ethnic militias to provide security. This would essentially create warlordism and isolationism.

b) The Hazaras would maintain their support for the U.S. backed government in Kabul and continue to resist against any Pashtun oppression.

c) After being persecuted for too long, the Hazaras could disregard any previous allegiance to the Kabuli government and seek to establish themselves as the ruling party in Afghanistan.

## **Step 5. Determine the major scenarios within which you compare the alternate futures**

### **Major Scenario #1:**

The U.S. backed government in Kabul will continue to maintain power and control of Afghanistan for the foreseeable future.

### **Major Scenario #2:**

The U.S. backed government in Kabul succumbs to the Taliban and the Taliban retakes control of the central government.

**Major Scenario #3:**

The U.S. backed government in Kabul fails and in the power vacuum, a non-Taliban entity steps up to fill the void of power and successfully controls Afghanistan's central government.

**Step 6. Calculate the total number of permutations of possible**

**“alternative futures” for each scenario**

In order to complete this step, a mathematical formula is required. The formula used in this step is:

$$X^Y=Z$$

In this formula, variable “X” is the number of courses of action available to each of the actors. In this case,  $X = 3$ , since each actor has three possible courses of action. The variable “Y” is equal to the number of actors in this situation. This situation has three actors, so  $Y = 3$ . The variable “Z” represents the total number of alternative futures for this situation, which is 27, so  $Z = 27$ . See Table 1. for a list of all of the alternate future permutations.

**Table 1. Alternative Future Permutations**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras
1	a	a	a
2	a	a	b
3	a	a	c
4	a	b	a
5	a	c	a
6	a	b	b
7	a	b	c
8	a	c	c
9	a	c	b
10	b	a	a
11	b	a	b
12	b	a	c
13	b	b	b
14	b	b	a
15	b	b	c
16	b	c	a
17	b	c	b
18	b	c	c
19	c	a	a
20	c	a	b
21	c	a	c
22	c	b	a
23	c	b	b
24	c	b	c
25	c	c	a
26	c	c	b
27	c	c	c

**Step 7. Perform a “pair-wise comparison” of all alternative futures within the scenario to determine their relative probability**

This step uses pair-wise comparisons to determine the likelihood of each alternate future. Only two alternate futures can be compared at any given time. Out of the two compared alternate futures, one is more likely to occur than the other. The alternate future that is more likely to occur is awarded one vote. Once all alternate futures have been compared against all other alternate futures in that same scenario, there will be a broad scale from 0 points to 26 points in this case. This step also follows a formula shown below.

$$X = \frac{n(n-1)}{2}$$

In this formula, variable “n” is equal to the number of alternate futures that need to be analyzed, in this case, n = 27. Whereas variable “X” is equal to the total number of the pair-wise comparisons that need to be completed against in each scenario, in this case, X = 351.

The respective tables for the three different major scenarios can be found below.

**Table 2. Alternative Future Table for Major Scenario 1. U.S. Backed Government Remains**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras	Votes
1	a	a	a	20
2	a	a	b	15
3	a	a	c	12
4	a	b	a	11
5	a	c	a	19
6	a	b	b	13
7	a	b	c	19
8	a	c	c	3
9	a	c	b	22
10	b	a	a	10
11	b	a	b	20
12	b	a	c	13
13	b	b	b	1
14	b	b	a	8
15	b	b	c	1
16	b	c	a	24
17	b	c	b	26
18	b	c	c	2
19	c	a	a	15
20	c	a	b	13
21	c	a	c	18
22	c	b	a	0
23	c	b	b	10
24	c	b	c	6
25	c	c	a	21
26	c	c	b	23
27	c	c	c	6

**Total: 351**

**Table 3. Alternative Future Table for Major Scenario 2. Taliban Central Government**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras	Votes
1	a	a	a	26
2	a	a	b	20
3	a	a	c	15
4	a	b	a	19
5	a	c	a	15
6	a	b	b	11
7	a	b	c	13
8	a	c	c	8
9	a	c	b	25
10	b	a	a	23
11	b	a	b	21
12	b	a	c	8
13	b	b	b	1
14	b	b	a	5
15	b	b	c	0
16	b	c	a	21
17	b	c	b	24
18	b	c	c	5
19	c	a	a	15
20	c	a	b	10
21	c	a	c	11
22	c	b	a	5
23	c	b	b	7
24	c	b	c	10
25	c	c	a	17
26	c	c	b	15
27	c	c	c	1

**Total: 351**



**Table 4. Alternative Future Table for Major Scenario 3. Separate Government Takeover**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras	Votes
1	a	a	a	25
2	a	a	b	12
3	a	a	c	23
4	a	b	a	9
5	a	c	a	18
6	a	b	b	4
7	a	b	c	10
8	a	c	c	22
9	a	c	b	23
10	b	a	a	14
11	b	a	b	8
12	b	a	c	19
13	b	b	b	2
14	b	b	a	3
15	b	b	c	2
16	b	c	a	15
17	b	c	b	0
18	b	c	c	10
19	c	a	a	26
20	c	a	b	23
21	c	a	c	21
22	c	b	a	3
23	c	b	b	5
24	c	b	c	6
25	c	c	a	17
26	c	c	b	15
27	c	c	c	16

**Total: 351**

**Step 8. Rank the alternative futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received**

This step takes the data from step seven and re-organizes it into a product that makes it significantly easier to determine which alternate futures would be most likely to occur per each major scenario. The respective tables are shown below.

**Table 5. Ranked Alternative Future Table for Major Scenario 1.**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras	Votes
17	b	c	b	26
16	b	c	a	24
26	c	c	b	23
9	a	c	b	22
25	c	c	a	21
1	a	a	a	20
11	b	a	b	20
5	a	c	a	19
7	a	b	c	19
21	c	a	c	18
2	a	a	b	15
19	c	a	a	15
6	a	b	b	13
12	b	a	c	13
20	c	a	b	13
3	a	a	c	12
4	a	b	a	11
10	b	a	a	10
23	c	b	b	10
14	b	b	a	8
24	c	b	c	6
27	c	c	c	6
8	a	c	c	3
18	b	c	c	2
13	b	b	b	1
15	b	b	c	1
22	c	b	a	0

**Total: 351**

**Table 6. Ranked Alternative Future Table for Major Scenario 2.**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras	Votes
1	a	a	a	26
9	a	c	b	25
17	b	c	b	24
10	b	a	a	23
11	b	a	b	21
16	b	c	a	21
2	a	a	b	20
4	a	b	a	19
25	c	c	a	17
3	a	a	c	15
5	a	b	b	15
19	c	a	a	15
26	c	c	b	15
7	a	b	c	13
6	a	b	b	11
21	c	a	c	11
20	c	a	b	10
24	c	b	c	10
8	a	c	c	8
12	b	a	c	8
23	c	b	b	7
14	b	b	a	5
18	b	c	c	5
22	c	b	a	5
13	b	b	b	1
27	c	c	c	1
15	b	b	c	0

**Total: 351**

**Table 7. Ranked Alternative Future Table for Major Scenario 3.**

Possible Futures	Pashtuns	Tajiks	Hazaras	Votes
19	c	a	a	26
1	a	a	a	25
3	a	a	c	23
20	c	a	b	23
9	a	c	b	23
8	a	c	c	22
21	c	a	c	21
12	b	a	c	19
5	a	c	a	18
25	c	c	a	17
27	c	c	c	16
26	c	c	b	15
16	b	c	a	15
10	a	b	c	14
2	a	a	b	12
7	a	c	c	10
18	b	c	c	10
4	a	b	a	9
11	b	a	b	8
24	c	b	c	6
23	c	b	b	5
6	a	b	b	4
14	b	b	a	3
22	c	b	a	3
15	b	b	c	2
13	b	b	b	2
17	b	c	b	0

**Total: 351**

**Step 9. Assuming each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms for its consequence for the issue in question**

This step is an analysis of second and third order events given that each alternate future actually occurs for each scenario. However, due to the unlikelihood of some of the futures actually happening, only the first three futures of each scenario are analyzed. It is also worth noting that despite some futures having the same amount of “votes” there can still be a rather large disparity between the likelihood of the two alternate futures actually occurring.

**Major Scenario #1: The U.S. backed government in Kabul remains in power following an ISAF troop withdrawal**

In this scenario, ISAF, U.S., and NATO forces withdraw from Afghanistan around the year 2014. There would be some residual presence of support and enabling forces to remain in the country to provide security and training to indigenous Afghan forces. The current Karzai government would continue to receive financial aid from the international community. The Taliban would still exist in some fashion, primarily as a beat-down group resembling more of a rebel group or out-spoken political party disenfranchised from the rest of the political system primarily operating out of Pakistan through exiled leadership. The situation between the legitimate government would somewhat resemble how the IRA operated in Ireland during the 1990s.

**Alternate Future #17 (26 votes)**

Progress would most likely be made in the primary concern for Afghans, security. The major cities in Afghanistan, where the majority of Afghans live, would most likely be secured by Afghani security forces. With the security improving, Afghans would be

able to slowly open up the doors for more business. This business would also include a certain degree of foreign investments centered on raw materials naturally found in Afghanistan. China would most likely be a heavy investor in the safer Afghanistan.

The Pashtuns, being the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, would most likely still maintain a strong presence in the government of Afghanistan. This would also fulfill their ethnic desire to rule Afghanistan. They would have less need for the Taliban because they are getting that self-fulfillment from the legitimate government and the progress that it has made. The Pashtuns would still harbor a lot of resentment towards the other ethnic groups, especially the Shia Hazara. However, the violence would generally be contained.

The Tajiks, due to their strong presence in Kabul, would also be able to aid in the facilitation of the government in their favor. The mainstream Tajiks would support the legitimate government. However, there would most likely still be a few fringe groups of Tajiks who would be left out of the political picture due to a few reasons. The reasons could be that these clans or warlords refuse to participate peacefully in the infant peaceful process. Another reason as to why these warlords would not participate in the political process is that there would be too many other incentives gained through corrupt means.

The Hazaras would most likely be the most stubborn to conforming. Old habits die hard and there would still be a lot of contention between the Hazaras and the Pashtuns. This contention would likely lead to many set-backs and walk-outs in the political process, but the government would be able to continue to progress albeit at a much slower pace.

### **Alternate Future #16 (24 votes)**

This future would be similar to the aforementioned future, with a few slight differences. These slight differences would lead this future in a different direction. The Pashtuns and Tajiks would behave the same as they would in the previous future. The difference in behavior would stem from the Hazaras.

Despite the added security that the legitimate government would provide to the entire country, the Pashtun dominated government would be likely to occasionally turn a blind eye to violent acts carried out by Pashtun terrorist groups against the Hazara minority. If this were to occur too often or with too great of severity, the Hazaras would believe that the government had failed the Hazara people once again. The Hazara can have a tendency to be violent. This tendency could very well lead to isolation from the government and a desire to protect themselves through the means of their choosing. Their means of protection would either be warlords or street militias. The overall security in the country would not suffer to a large degree. The country, despite these set backs would still progress, but again, at a much slower rate.

Iran would also have a role in the security situation in Afghanistan. The more the Shia Hazaras are to be persecuted, the more Iran would be likely to support Hazara militants through material support or other covert means.

### **Alternate Future #26 (23 votes)**

This future, similar to the second future, would be closely related to the first future. The difference in this future from the first future would be the actions of the Pashtuns. The Tajiks and Hazaras would behave according to the first future in that



they would continue to support the legitimate government in Kabul because they would still be represented in this fledgling and sometimes struggling democracy.

The self-entitlement of the Pashtuns to rule Afghanistan would be the fulcrum on which their behavior would pivot. The Pashtuns, despite having the majority of the control in the government in Afghanistan, would not be satisfied. They also would align themselves from the Taliban to their tribal affiliations. This would leave them in a state of disorganization. They would resort to continued in-fighting amongst the different tribes to rule the Pashtun people. There would undoubtedly still be a heavy Pashtun representation in the legitimate government, but the Pashtun people on a whole would not support the government. Violence in the Pashtun regions would increase. The Taliban would most likely try to exploit the violence and chaos for their gain by placing the blame on the government. All the while, the Taliban would continue their attempt at establishing local shadow governments.

**Major Scenario #2: Shortly after the withdrawal of foreign combat troops, the Karzai government would fall and the Taliban would successfully regain control of Afghanistan's central government**

The international community would feel that they have done all they could reasonably do in a quagmire situation like Afghanistan. Combat troops would pull out as scheduled. The support troops and enablers would withdraw shortly thereafter once the accelerated withdrawal schedule was complete. The international community would perform a "sight of hand" maneuver and convince themselves and each other that Afghanistan had the troop levels, support, training, infrastructure, and logistical capability to successfully maintain the security of Afghanistan. This alibi would allow the

international players to withdraw under the banner of victory despite leaving the country in a fragile state. Foreign interests in Afghanistan would decrease, and investors would most likely cut their losses and move on to develop parts of Africa and South America.

### **Alternate Future #1 (26 votes)**

In the event that the Taliban were to successfully retake Afghanistan's central government, each of the courses of action from the three major ethnic groups would be significant for the country on a whole. The Pashtuns would generally continue to fight amongst themselves, however, their political support would go to the Taliban. This would allow this ethnic group to still maintain some sort of control in Afghanistan. Besides the tribal warfare, the Pashtuns would most likely take their fight to the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, most likely focusing their efforts on the Shia Hazara.

The Tajiks formed a major component of the Northern Alliance, the Taliban's primary opposition in the 1990s. The Tajiks would revert back to a Northern Alliance and warlordistic society. The Taliban would most likely not include the Tajiks in their government. The Taliban did not include Tajiks in their previous government and there are no indicators pointing to the Taliban desiring to include them this time. Additionally, the Taliban would most likely have had to fight their way into power again this time, and the Tajiks would have been the primary opponent in this conflict.

The future for the Hazaras would be similar to that of the Tajiks. The Taliban would not include the Shia Hazara into their regime. The Taliban would most likely continue to fight, oppress, and commit acts of genocide against the Hazara. This would turn the Hazara back towards their former Northern Alliance counter-parts, giving way to warlordism. Being at the end of the Taliban violence, the Hazara would also look

towards Shia Iran for help to combat the Taliban and preserve any remnant of safety that they have thus been able to achieve. This would result in a more isolated and turned off Hazara.

### **Alternate Future #9 (25 votes)**

In this future, the Pashtuns, as a whole, would embrace the Taliban government and the Sharia way of life. This would embolden the Taliban and give them the momentum needed in order to oppress and fight the remaining ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The Taliban would continue to see large amounts of support come from the FATA and NWFP in Pakistan, along with support given from the Pakistani ISI. This emboldened Pashtun Taliban resurgence would only serve to push the Tajiks and the Hazaras to their state of warlordism much faster. Once the Taliban gained control of the majority of the country, this future would be accelerated. Atrocities against the other ethnicities, especially the Hazara would be committed while the majority of the international community would either turn a blind eye or condemn the Taliban's actions and then turn a blind eye. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) presence in Afghanistan would be minimal at most. The Taliban would say that they are open to other religions and outside organizations to provide aid and relief, but their edicts and words would be the end of their faux support.

The other major dynamics in this future is how the Tajiks and Hazaras would react to having a central government run by the Taliban. These two groups would not support the Taliban government. Rather, they would continue to support a parallel government that remained from the previous legitimate government.

With Tajik and Hazara support behind the democratic government and Pashtun support behind the Taliban, a bloody civil war would erupt. The winner of this conflict is beyond the scope of this analysis due to the amount that other, outside factors would play in this future. This war would result in Afghanistan becoming a hotbed for proxy wars between regional powers trying to exert a greater influence in Afghanistan and the region.

### **Alternate Future #17 (24 votes)**

This future assumes that all three of the major ethnic groups decide to generally support the failed Karzai government. The Pashtuns could support this government because it allowed them to have the greatest say in the running of Afghanistan, all the while it did not oppress the people and force them to obey the strict confines of Sharia law. Many Pashtuns currently enjoy some of the freedoms that they are granted under a democracy. And many would turn against the Taliban to ensure they that continue to profit from the freedoms they enjoy.

The Tajiks would also be satisfied with a certain degree of power sharing with the other ethnic groups despite differences and the occasional setback. Some warlords would decide not to participate in the government, but those would be fewer and more far between. These few warlords would operate on a system of corruption. With the Taliban in control of the majority of the country, the Tajiks would rise up and continue to oppose the Taliban while trying to helplessly support the former government.

The Hazaras, for once, would also have enjoyed relative safety and some participation in a government that was able to provide basic amenities and security. This is not saying that an occasional international incident between the Pashtun majority

would not occur, but they would occur with relative insignificance. With the Taliban running the country, mass murders, genocides, and other atrocities will occur with increased frequency. Due to the time, money, and troops that the international community had already exhausted in Afghanistan, the Taliban would continue to “get away” with some of their actions. Iran would most likely covertly support the rebel Hazaras as they continued to hold onto some power that they had in the former Kabul government.

**Major Scenario #3: Following the withdrawal of foreign combat and support forces, the Karzai government, due to widespread corruption, would fall and a separate non-Taliban/non-U.S. backed entity would successfully take control**

This scenario is the least likely to occur out of the three major scenarios. In this scenario, the Karzai government would go bankrupt despite large amounts of international support. The civil war with the legitimate government and the Taliban would continue to bleed the country dry of any resource, leaving the country even more destitute than its present state. This destitution would be the primary cause for the failure of the Karzai government. However, at the same time, there would have been significant progress made in the fight against the Taliban. The government would have been able to continue to maintain some of the support and success in their operations against the Taliban after the withdrawal of foreign troops. This would leave the Taliban in a weakened state. The Taliban, being so far degraded, would not be able to successfully muster the strength and support to retake control of Afghanistan’s central government. Foreign interest in Afghanistan would continue to decrease after the pullout.

The rise of a new government (referred to as “X” government) would be fairly sudden, but not entirely unexpected. International support would be wary for X government. However, the majority of the international community, being fatigued on the Afghanistan issue, would settle for this new government so long as there were not large-scale atrocities such as genocide or mass murder. The mindset of the international community would be, “anything is better than the Taliban at this point.”

This government could stem from one of the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, such as the Tajiks, Hazaras, or Uzbeks. This government could be Sunni, Shia, or even communist. Due to the many different potential sources and types of this X government, exact analysis for precise courses of action is difficult. Despite this difficulty, the following alternate futures will provide a guide for possible alternate futures. For this scenario, it is assumed that X government is not aligned with any of the three main ethnic groups.

#### **Alternate Future #19 (26 votes)**

The Pashtuns would largely be disappointed that both of their prospects at ruling Afghanistan had failed with the Karzai government going bankrupt and the Taliban being too weak to gain control. This would allow the Pashtuns to put even more focus on internal and tribal events. Fighting would continue amongst the feuding Pashtun tribes. Depending upon the security provided by X government, the Pashtuns could eventually seek to support a consolidated movement to either remove X government from power, or to have more of a say in X government.

The Tajiks and Hazaras would be the greatest variable. X government would certainly have large effects on these two ethnic groups. X government could either

provide these two minority groups a lot of security or infract a lot of offenses. If the government is not able to provide adequate security or governance, these two ethnicities would most likely turn back to their warlords and political isolation.

Returning to their local clans and warlords would certainly decrease the capabilities of X government. Progress would be slowed without the cooperation of the major ethnic groups. Iran and India would seek to exert its influence either over the newly established government or in the country in general, vicariously through the Shia Hazaras.

### **Alternate Future #1 (25 votes)**

This future will somewhat resemble alternate future #1 from major scenario two. The only differences being that instead of the Taliban taking control, it would be X government. The Pashtuns will still continue to fight amongst the different tribes. Besides the tribal warfare, the Pashtuns would most likely take their fight to the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, most likely focusing their efforts on the Shia Hazara. It would be up to X government to be able to prevent and mitigate ethnic warfare between the Pashtuns and the Hazara.

The way the Tajiks would react to this government would largely depend on how this government treated them and their way of life. The Tajiks would most likely though, resort to their fallback, which is forming warring clans to protect their illicit activities and corruption.

The Hazaras would react to X government in much of the same way as the Tajiks with the exception that the Hazara would look inward and focus on self preservation. This self preservation would be best accomplished by X government, but this new

government would most likely not be able to initially provide adequate security.

Consequently, the Hazaras would provide their own security with additional help from Iran.

### **Alternate Future #3 (23 votes)**

This future most resembles alternate future #1. The large difference would be in the behavior of the Hazaras. They would realize that their best chances for survival and safety is through aligning itself with whatever government is in power, as long as it was not the Taliban or another government like the Taliban. The Hazara would work with the newly established government to work themselves into control of at least their region. This would take considerable support from Iran and possibly a few other actors. If the Shia Hazara were able to gain enough control in the government, this would most likely upset the Pashtuns. A civil war could be the result of the Hazaras having considerable power in Afghanistan. This civil war could also lead toward reverse persecution, where the Hazaras would persecute and take their revenge on the Pashtuns. The Hazara, have in times past, carried out acts of revenge against the Pashtuns and the Taliban for acts previously committed against the Hazara.

### **Step 10. Determine the “focal events” that must occur in our present in order to bring about a given alternate future**

This step allows the analyst to determine what events, outside of the actions of the actors, need to occur in order for a specific alternate future to transpire. These events are called “focal events.” Focal events allow the analyst to occasionally determine which alternate future is most likely to occur. These focal events could serve



as a checklist for the analyst. Many of the same focal events can be found in the same future or in the same scenario. This is possible because the exact course of action that the actors will actually choose is impossible to determine without the occurrence of focal events. For this reason, focal events are needed to help determine which courses of action are most likely to be chosen by the actors in a given scenario. The more likely an alternate future is to occur, the fewer amounts of focal events that are needed in order for that particular future to occur. Conversely, the less likely an alternate future is to occur, the more focal events are needed to change the present into a reasonable situation for that future to occur. The focal events for the above listed alternate futures are listed below.

### **Major Scenario #1**

#### **Alternate Future #17**

This alternate future requires no additional future events. The current situation in Afghanistan is that the U.S. and NATO are slowly reversing gains made by the Taliban. At the same time, the Karzai government is slowly strengthening and building up its own security forces' numbers. The course of present events is most suited for this scenario and this future.

#### **Alternate Future #16**

This alternate future has one focal event. The Karzai government is slowly building its security forces. There is some skepticism on if Afghanistan will be able to meet the desired end state of its forces by the time the U.S. and NATO complete their withdrawal. The focal event is the Afghani government failing at providing enough

security forces to protect all of Afghanistan. This would then lead to the Hazaras being the victim of atrocities that would force them to a state of isolation and warlordism.

### **Alternate Future #26**

This alternate future, similar to those above it, does not require many focal events. The focal event required for this future is that the Pashtuns need to somehow be turned off from participating in the current political structure. This event could originate in Pakistan, from the Pashtun community there, or from the actual Afghani government. But somehow the Pashtuns need to feel that their cultural needs are not being met.

### **Major Scenario #2**

#### **Alternate Future #1**

This future requires more focal events in order to increase its likelihood. The current progress being made in Afghanistan by the U.S. would either need to be stopped or reversed again. This would put the Taliban in a position to wait out foreign troops. Once the withdrawal is complete, the Taliban would be primed to launch its counter-offensive against the Karzai government. However, the Taliban cannot simply pull out and cease all operations in Afghanistan while they wait for the foreigners to pullout. If they were to cease all of their operations, the current Afghani government would become too strong too quickly for the Taliban to reasonably assault it in the future.

#### **Alternate Future #9**

This future, again, only has one focal point. There could, however, be numerous sources for this focal point, but the most likely source is in the actions of the Taliban.

The Taliban's base is Pashtun. So any grounds that they would make or any support that they would gain will most likely also be from the Pashtun community. The focal event is that if the Taliban were able to rally enough of the Pashtun community to their cause, that majority of the rest would also follow, thus creating an almost Pashtun insurgency versus the current Taliban insurgency.

### **Alternate Future #17**

Once again, this future will rely heavily on the Taliban and the possible reactions of the Pashtun community. There is a fine line that any terrorist organization needs to be aware of. That line determines how many acts of terror they are able to perform and still rally local support. If they were to commit too many attacks, or too serious of attacks, the Pashtun people could turn against the Taliban, even though they are currently ruling Afghanistan. This focal event would need to be some act of terror that results in turning the support of the Pashtuns against the ruling Taliban to support the remnants of the parallel Karzai government.

### **Major Scenario #3**

#### **Alternate Future #19**

This alternate future has two focal events. One focal event is needed to turn the Pashtuns to isolate themselves from the political process from an X government, and another is needed to turn the Tajiks and Hazaras to return to the warlords. For the Pashtuns, the event would need to be something along the lines of the Pashtuns not having any say in the X government. Being ostracized from the X government would keep the Pashtuns torn from participating in the X government and from supporting the Taliban. The second focal event is like the first, but disenfranchising the Tajiks and

Hazaras. A similar event could trigger the Tajiks or Hazaras, but the likelihood of a single event triggering both ethnic groups simultaneously into warlordism is unlikely with the exception that the event is Pashtun or Taliban driven.

### **Alternate Future #1**

Only one focal event is needed in order to bring about this alternate future. However, this focal event may transpire as many seemingly unconnected events. X government would need to wholesale fail at providing security for Afghans. The focal event will not have to be one catastrophic event that turns the Pashtuns to the Taliban or the Tajiks and Hazaras to their warlords, but it could be a series of events leading up to greater and greater discontentment with the X government.

### **Alternate Future #3**

This alternate future is highly unlikely when compared the other futures. This can be gauged by the number and type of focal events necessary for this future to occur. This future is similar to Alternate Future #1, in that it will require a focal event (or a series of events leading to the grand focal event) to turn the Pashtuns to the Taliban and the Tajiks to their warlords. However, a separate and more unlikely focal event is necessary to turn the Hazaras to desire to dispose the X government and to attempt to establish their own central government. Such a focal event would undoubtedly involve Iran. Iran would have to somehow inspire and embolden the Hazara and instill in them a desire to overtake responsibilities of running the country. This would need to be a serious event.

## **Step 11. Develop indicators for the focal events**

This step lists the indications and warnings that will show that a particular event is close to occurring or has already occurred. Once a certain number of these indications and warnings have been met, it may be necessary to revote on the alternate futures to keep the analysis valid and relevant. Below is a list of indications and warnings for the different alternate futures described above.

## **Major Scenario #1**

### **Alternate Future #17**

- Continued progress made by either ISAF or the current government
- Cooperation from Pakistan to curb Islamic extremism in the FATA and NWFP
- Cessation from covert extremist support by Iran
- Success against Afghanistan's drug trade
- A decrease in the amount of civilian casualties and attacks

### **Alternate Future #16**

- Talk by NATO allies that a decreased number of Afghan security forces is needed to maintain security
- A slower than expected withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan
- Relative stalemate between the Karzai government and the Taliban

### **Alternate Future #26**

- Large-scale occurrence of fraudulent elections, voting many Pashtun leaders out of power
- Election of a non-Pashtun president
- Influx of recruits studying at Pakistani Madrassas and joining the Taliban

## **Major Scenario #2**

### **Alternate Future #1**

- Drastic increase in ISAF casualties
- Increase in failed ISAF and Afghan operations
- Sudden and abrupt cessation of major Taliban attacks
- Increase in Taliban shadow government activity

### **Alternate Future #9**

- Drastic increase in Taliban numbers despite steady flow of recruits from Pakistan
- Decrease in cooperation between ISAF and local Pashtun leaders
- Increase in civilian casualties amongst Pashtuns caused by the ISAF
- Drastic increase in base attacks against bases and forward operations bases in predominantly Pashtun areas

### **Alternate Future #17**

- Significant increase in acts of terror committed by the Taliban
- Increased cooperation between Pashtun leaders and ISAF
- Increase in civilian deaths related to Taliban actions in either Afghanistan or Pakistan

### **Major Scenario #3**

#### **Alternate Future #19**

- Lack of interest by Pashtuns to participate in the electoral process
- Election of many non-Pashtun leaders to the central government
- Lack of security being provided by the current Afghani government
- Increase in militia activities across the entire country
- Formation of death squads

#### **Alternate Future #1**

- Exclusion of Pashtuns from the government completely
- Increase in tribal fighting amongst Pashtuns
- Increase in Afghani drug trade
- Lack of security provided by current government in ethnic minority regions
- Formation of death squads

#### **Alternate Future #3**

- Large-scale genocide or mass murder events committed against the Hazaras
- Non-local leaders being placed in a position of responsibility over another ethnic group
- Lack of security across the entire country

**Step 12. State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future**

This final step of the LAMP allows the analyst to determine which futures could potentially transpose into other futures based on particular events. For example, should events “A” and “B” occur, alternate future “Y” could actually lead to alternate future “Z.” Transposition is an additional reason why constant assessments should be made as time passes and as events occur. These additional assessments should accompany any re-voting.

### **Major Scenario #1**

In the first major scenario, all three likely futures have the potential to transpose to any other of the top three alternate futures. The majority of the steam behind any transposition in this scenario rests with the Taliban. It will be impossible to know for sure the exact state of the Taliban. Taliban leadership may be removed, but the organization may still exist, other leaders may rise, or the organization may fall into the shadows temporarily. The status of the Taliban will largely determine the status and well-being of the government, for better or for worse.

### **Major Scenario #2**

The potential for alternate futures to transpose in this scenario are also largely determined by the state of the Taliban at the time of the conclusion of the foreign combat troop withdrawal. The state of the Taliban will drive future events which will prompt the three major ethnic groups in Afghanistan to react in the unique ways that they would. For example, if the Taliban were stronger than expected at the time of the troop pullout, the Taliban takeover of the central government could be quicker and easier. A quick and relatively easy takeover could mean that there would be less

bloodshed inflicted on the other ethnic groups. This would, in-turn, partially determine the response from these minority groups.

### **Major Scenario #3**

This scenario does not rely on the Taliban as the previous two scenarios did in order to determine transposition potential between the three most likely alternate futures. This scenario hinges on the actions of X government. Seeing as how they are impossible to determine at this time, this also makes a determination of the exact potential for transposition difficult. It can be assessed that the potential for transposition will react similarly to the potential for transposition as in the previous two scenarios. It can also be assessed that due to the slight differences between the three most likely alternate futures, they will have an inherently increased potential to transpose.

### **Conclusion:**

The situation in Afghanistan requires constant attention and reevaluation. Many of the variables in this equation can change without much notice. This report has attempted to break down the difficulty of the situation to a manageable level. The most complicated dynamic of the Afghanistan, its complex ethnic composition, is the crux in which the future of Afghanistan will reside. Each one of the ethnicities in Afghanistan shapes the outcome of the current situation. However, none of the ethnicities are as important as the Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras. These three ethnic groups not only have the potential to shape Afghanistan, but to absolutely flip the course of the country upside-down.



Overall, it can be said that most of the ethnic groups view the ISAF's actions as mostly positive, just so long as there is adequate security provided. For Afghans, security is paramount, and they will generally support anyone who can provide them with adequate security, whether that is ISAF, the Karzai government, or the Taliban. Afghans tend to care less about schools and roads and more about security. They have little interest in modernizing their life to mirror that of the West. But they will support whatever is working for them at the time.

Moreover, the courses of action available to the Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras will revolve around the security that they are provided. Further analysis is required to incorporate the remaining ethnicities. Additional analysis could be used in determining the possible courses of action for the nation-state actors such as the U.S., the Karzai government, Pakistan, Iran, India, and the Taliban (although not a nation-state). This report should be reviewed every six months to determine if any changes to the alternate futures, major scenarios, or courses of action are warranted. As events transpire, the dynamic variables or this equation, the individual people who make up these ethnicities, will be difficult to continue to predict their future for. This situation will require constant analysis and attention now and even after the completion of the withdrawal of foreign troops.

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