

AFGHANISTAN CRISIS - A DESTABILIZING FACTOR ON THE SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE EURO-ATLANTIC AREA

*Lieutenant Claudiu-Florin NISTOR **

Abstract: *The sphere of states affected by the crisis in Afghanistan, related to the last 5 decades. The framework of the response by the Soviet forces, from the extremist groups on the Afghan territory, in the context of the Afghan-Soviet war. The consequences of the failures of military interventions on the states participating in the armed conflicts on the territory of the Afghan state, which manifested themselves in the form of billions of dollars, terrorist attacks by extremist groups, respectively their repercussions. The risks to which the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, namely the Soviet Union, have been subjected in the course of their fighting on Afghan territory. The consequences of military actions on the generations of a people crushed by international conflicts, simultaneously with the animosity of the main directions of influence. Achieve an international strategy, with the withdrawal of all Allied peacekeeping troops from Afghan territory, leading to the end of crises, both humanitarian in nature, in terms of refugees and the Taliban threat.*

Keywords: *Afghan-Soviet war, terrorist threat, Euro-Atlantic area, military actions, democratic regime, Islamic regime.*

The historical framework of influence over the Afghan state, depending on the direction of the great powers

In order to establish the current context and determine the possible solutions to the crisis generated by the history of conflicts in the Afghan region, a minimal analysis of recent history is necessary, starting from the Second World War, respectively the period of monarchy and reaching the current situation with spheres of influence.

Thus, looking back on the situation during World War II, when the Islamic Emirate Afghanistan, by decision of the monarchical authorities, declared neutrality in 1939. For the next 3 decades, the monarchy is still maintained as the main form of government, but In 1973, King Myhammad Zahir Shah was killed in order to abolish the monarchy and establish a democratic regime, so the state in question was transformed into the

* Romanian Land Forces Staff, nistor_claudiu@yahoo.ro.

Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, passing into the sphere of democratic states.¹

Considering the historical situation of several states, respectively the orientation of the states according to the influence of the U.R.S.S. or the U.S., one can point to the aversion between the two antithetical directions, communism to democracy. Thus, Afghanistan did not address this issue, as the democratic regime was drastically tested by the communist regime, according to the trends of the 1950s.

The apparent calm, however, was shaken by a coup, so that the Communist-led People's Democratic Party took control of the state in 1978. However, the newly established Kabul regime did not benefit from a government. quiet, a fact caused by the rebellion of the mujahideen, known as fighters for the faith. In this regard, the leadership of the Soviet Union considers it appropriate to provide military support in fighting the rebels to maintain the communist system in as many countries around the world.

The invasion of the Red Army in a country divided by a number of factors, predominantly religious, political and social, has proved over time, from 1979 to 1989, to be unable to achieve the goals set by Moscow, not only because of the factors of social division, but also because of the relief of the country. The civil war resulting from rival factions of the state leadership, civil society riots, big cities, and mass desertions in the Afghan army, proved to be another obstacle to the implementation and stability of the new communist leadership.

In this context of fighting insurgents, outside the borders of the Soviet Union, through swampy relief, respectively through desert areas, the Russian technique proved to be problematic, but not only this aspect represented the vulnerability of the Red Army. Considering the fighting against Nazi Germany, from Soviet territory and in the immediate vicinity of its borders, to Berlin, to be a sufficient experience to fight the mujahideen, the Moscow authorities rightly believed that this invasion would also be a real success. that communist influence in the region will continue to expand.

¹ Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The Soviet-Afghan War, 1979–1989*, Great Britain, 2012, pp. 2-9.

This military campaign directly led to military casualties of tens of thousands of Soviets, hundreds of aircraft, artillery destroyed, and thousands of trucks destroyed. On the other side of the barricade, the situation is much gloomier, with about 100,000 casualties among the Mujahideen and Pakistanis. However, an important defining factor for the Afghan-Soviet war is the number of civilian casualties, which could never be officially established, so estimates range from 550,000 to as many as 2,000,000. among the Afghan citizens, dead, either in direct confrontations between Soviet troops and mujahideen, as collateral victims, or because of the diseases of that time or dead because of the wounds suffered.

In the late 1989s, when most countries in the communist bloc changed their regime to a democratic one, the Soviet Union faced a global trend of rejecting communism, and military action in Afghanistan failed. of both human and economic losses for the union, was a subset in the process of its disintegration.²

Despite the Afghan-Soviet conflict, the most affected element in this area of conflict was certainly Afghan civil society, namely ordinary citizens, who were neutral to the two opposing camps. In this sense, we are talking about a massive migration in the post-conflict period, this translating into 3,000,000 wounded and implicitly 5,000,000 Afghan refugees, who later emigrated to neighboring countries, respectively European ones.

These civilian crises have pushed the Afghan state more towards the condition of an underdeveloped state, to the detriment of the direction of a developing state, given the Afghan-Soviet war, the state leadership at the end of the war, the unstable situation of the rebels in Afghan territory, have turned Afghanistan into a region conducive to terrorist factions around the world.

Development of terrorist networks against the background of destabilizing a state

After the Afghan-Soviet war, which ended with the victory of the Mujahideen in 1989, a new conflict arose in Afghan territory, namely a civil war. However, an element of novelty brought in this context is the Taliban

² Military Magazine. Security and Defense Studies, Cătălin Gorincioi Viorel Bolduma - *The War in Afghanistan: The Memory of a Hero* Bibliography, pp. 136-137.

group, a new ultra-conservative movement that begins with small but sure steps to capture the population and much of the region. This group of Islamic militants has made its presence felt since the 1980s, but after the Afghan civil war, which ended in 1992, the laws, education, and daily life were governed by the religious doctrines of Islam.

In this sense, if before the 1980s, in schools, basic subjects such as mathematics or literature, the educational situation imposed by the Taliban, had as its starting point the Koran, so religious dogmas occupied not only the political sector but also the educational one.³

Despite all these radical changes, most of the citizens had to reorient their lifestyle, but the most affected people were women, who had, even now, major restrictions, criticized over time by the international communities and human rights organizations.

After all these events, the Taliban movement enjoyed in the middle of 1995 about 25,000 active members, who had conquered in the first instance, much of the Afghan territory, having control over the most important administrative areas in the state. Thus, Afghanistan had become at an accelerated pace, a country ruled by a fanatical religious movement, ultra-conservative, with laws that were not based on the principles of morality and human freedoms, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but on discriminatory religious dogmas. From an economic point of view, the authorities responsible for economic growth were non-existent, so a plan for economic recovery and development was not on the horizon.

In these favorable circumstances, the coexistence and cooperation of terrorist factions with the Taliban movement was inevitable and beneficial to both sides. Numerous terrorist organizations have found refuge in Afghanistan, but one that has stood out in the worst possible way is Al Qaeda, whose leader was Osama bin Laden.

In 1998, the Al Qaeda leader expressed his outrage and objections to the United States caused by foreign policies towards Israel and the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia motivated by the Gulf War. In this sense, Osama bin Laden promotes the teachings of the Koran, according to

³ *Quran*, available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran>

which pagans must be killed, and by pagans is meant any person who does not belong to their religion.

Through a combination of factors, namely terrorist threats, the considerable number of members and supporters of Al Qaeda, the novice status of international communities to the phenomenon of terrorism and security measures at airports, have created the ideal framework for terrorist attacks.

This exemplifies the situation of September 11, 2001, well known for the terrorist attacks in the US, when 4 planes were hijacked in order to crash them in strategic and symbolic places to create as many victims and cause panic. Thus, 2 planes were flown to the twin towers of the World Trade Center, one to the Pentagon, and the latter, due to the retaliation of passengers and flight personnel, crashed near Shanksville, with no other victims besides passengers.

The total number of victims of the attacks rose to almost 3,000, and all the actions were claimed by the terrorist group Al Qaeda, thus, the leader, Osama bin Laden, realizing his threats against the American people.

At this turning point, the United States declares war on the Al Qaeda terrorist group and decides on military action against the Afghan state, which hosted and provided support to the group. Following the attacks, the international community reconsidered the terrorist threat as a priority that must be combated, thus taking a lesson from the American people.

However, a positive aspect due to the attacks was represented by the new security measures taken at the level of airports, not only at the American ones, but all over the world and implicitly the increase of all traffic rules and crossing borders at interstate level, terrorism being thus declared the main enemy of most states.

Drawing a parallel between the United States and the current Russian Federation, the former Soviet Union, a particular similarity can be observed, namely, following their military actions either in Afghanistan or in the immediate regions, dominated by the Taliban, theoretical groups or allies of both state entities were the target of several terrorist attacks, which were later claimed by terrorist groups that are either established in Afghanistan or are in close cooperation with the Taliban.

Terrorist threat to the integrity and security of the Euro-Atlantic area in the post-conflict period in Afghanistan

The war waged by the U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan, from 2001 to 2021, had enormous economic, political and especially social consequences for all participating states. Thus, taking into account only the expenditures of the United States, it reaches an amount of over 2.3 trillion dollars. Initial calculations showed 815 billion dollars, but only the costs of operations, food, fuel, etc. were included, excluding veterans' assistance, humanitarian spending, losses, and so on.⁴

On the side of personnel involved in these actions, only within the American army, 800,000 soldiers took part in this conflict, but 2,400 died as a result of the fighting. In the opposing camp, about 51,000 Taliban, nearly 70,000 Afghan police and military and 47,000 Afghan citizens lost their lives in conflicts across Afghan territory.⁵

One of the main aims of the intervention in the state in question was to combat the phenomenon of terrorism and to repress the main place of terrorist groups, in order to establish a democratic government, respectively to put the Afghan state in a western direction. The imposition of a democratic regime was attempted by training the authorities, namely the Afghan police, establishing a governing government and lifting religious restrictions on women.

However, throughout the military actions in the area, many countries that were involved were the targets of several attacks, some suicidal, later claimed by terrorist groups. The names of the terrorist groups that claimed responsibility for the attacks were varied, but the name of Al Qaeda was easily replaced by the Islamic State terrorist group, which in time proved to be more numerous, dangerous and more diverse than the one mentioned above, not only for Afghan citizens, but also for all countries participating in the theater of operations in Afghanistan.

⁴ Deirdre Shesgreen - 'War rarely goes as planned': New report tallies trillions US spent in Afghanistan, Iraq, available at: <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/01/how-much-did-war-afghanistan-cost-how-many-people-died/5669656001/>

⁵ Daniel Contescu - Afghan war costs U.S.A. 2.131 billions dollars, weapons, deaths available at: <https://www.mediafax.ro/economic/razboiul-din-afghanistan-a-costat-sua-2-313-miliarde-de-dolari-arme-morti-datorii-20250621>

Mentioning the above-mentioned Afghan refugees, respectively, it should be noted that among the millions of people who have left the state in order to protect their families and find security and stability in their daily lives, there are and individuals radicalized in time, who have legally infiltrated various states of the Euro-Atlantic area, who after a period of several years, have committed terrorist attacks, claimed by the largest group of its kind, since today, namely, the Islamic State,

In this regard, we identify only some of the bloodiest attacks on the coalition of states participating in the war in Afghanistan.⁶

Table 1. The situation of terrorist attacks in the last two decades on states that have intervened militarily on Afghan territory⁷

Location	Date	Victims / injured	Terrorist organization
Turkey - Istanbul	15.11.2003	28/300	Al Qaeda
Turkey - Istanbul	20.11.2003	31/450	Al Qaeda
Spain - Madrid	11.03.2004	192/2057	Al Qaeda
France – Paris	13.11.2015	137/413	Islamic State
Turkey - Istanbul	12.01.2016	14/9	Islamic State
Belgium - Brussels	22.03.2016	35/340	Islamic State
Turkey - Istanbul	07.06.2016	13/51	Islamic State
Turkey - Istanbul	28.06.2016	44/230	Islamic State

⁶ Global Terrorism Index 2016, Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism, University of Maryland Pag. 41-44

⁷ *Terrorism in Europe*, available at: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorismul_%C3%AEn_Europa

*AFGHANISTAN CRISIS - A DESTABILIZING FACTOR ON THE SECURITY AND
INTEGRITY OF THE EURO-ATLANTIC AREA*

France - Nice	14.07.2016	86/458	Islamic State
Germany - Berlin	19.12.2016	12/56	Islamic State
Turkey - Istanbul	01.01.2017	39/70	Islamic State
Russia - Sankt Petersburg	03.04.2017	14/64	Islamic State
United Kingdom - Manchester	22.05.2017	23/119	Islamic State

According to the previous table, the predominant tendency of the Islamic State to commit harsh attacks on most states that intervened in the territory of the Afghan state, including the Russian Federation, which although it fought an Afghan-Soviet war ended in 1989, was the target of an attack, in 2017.

Recently, after the withdrawal of all states from Afghan territory, the unstable situation in Kabul, with a fragile democratic government, took a radical turn, when the Taliban took control of the main areas of power in the state within a few weeks. People with high decision-making power, along with the country's president, have left the state, leaving power in the hands of the Taliban, who have already installed a leadership. Although the Afghan army and police were trained and trained by Allied troops, they were quickly defeated by the Taliban movement, which made it easier for them to seize power at an accelerated pace.

Conclusions

In the above, I have highlighted the efforts, on all fronts, to establish a lasting, peaceful regime in Afghanistan, which, after the withdrawal of troops, has been shot down at a rapid pace, which has destabilized not only the situation of the state concerned, but also globally.

In this regard, we identify in the near future, a number of factors that threaten not only the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, but also its integrity. Recent history has shown that repression of the Afghan state has led to

numerous terrorist attacks, with the infiltration of radicalized people into various states, who were committing terrorist attacks even after a few years. In these conditions, when the crisis in Afghanistan is still active and the number of people who have left the state is in the millions, there is a need for a reorientation of Western states, towards a strategy to combat this phenomenon.

Thus, at the level of European, Euro-Asian and American countries, the adoption of sets of measures to combat first-hand internalized radical migrants, the filtering at the borders of those who had or still have links with the Taliban movement or various terrorist groups. All these efforts must come from each state, in order to achieve a collective security, as the phenomenon of terrorism is of great complexity and can be combated only through collective involvement.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CONTESCU D. *Afghan war costs U.S.A. 2.131 billions dollars, weapons, deaths*, available at: <https://www.mediafax.ro/-economic/razboiul-din-afganistan-a-costat-sua-2-313-miliarde-de-dolari-arme-morti-datorii-20250621>;
- CORDESMAN A.H., *The Afghan War Creating the Economic Conditions and Civil-Military Aid Efforts Needed for Transition*, Burke Chair in Strategy with the Assistance of Bryan Gold and Sean T. Mann, 2012;
- ENDERS W. ,SANDLER T., *Transnational Terrorism in the Post-Cold War Era*, Iowa State University, 1998;
- FREMONT-BARNES G., *The Soviet-Afghan War, 1979–1989*, Great Britain, 2012;
- GANDER K. *Isis flag: What do the words mean and what are its origins?*, available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world-middle-east/isis-flag-what-do-words-mean-and-what-are-its-origins-10369601.html>;

- GORINCIOI C., BOLDUMA V. *The War in Afghanistan: The Memory of a Hero Bibliography* „Military Magazine. Security and Defense Studies”, 2018;
- KATZ M.N. *Lessons of the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, available at: <https://mepc.org/commentary/lessons-soviet-withdrawal-afghanistan>;
- Ruiz H.A.- *Afghanistan: conflict and displacement 1978 to 2001*, available at: <https://www.fmreview.org/september-11th-has-anything-changed/ruiz>;
- SHESGREEN D. 'War rarely goes as planned': New report tallies trillions US spent in Afghanistan, Iraq, available at: <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/01/how-much-did-war-afghanistan-cost-how-many-people-died/5669656001/>;
- WILLIFORD H. *The Cultural Politics of WMD Terrorism in Post-Cold War America*, 2011;
- Terrorism in Europe*, available at: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorismul_%C3%AEn_Europa;
- European Union Council's response to the terrorist threat*, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/fight-against-terrorism/>;
- Fight against terrorism: Council renews the designations on the EU terrorist list and adds two Iranian individuals and one Iranian entity in response to recent foiled attacks on European soil*, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2019/01/09/fight-against-terrorism-council-renews-the-designations-on-the-eu-terrorist-list-and-adds-two-iranian-individuals-and-one-iranian-entity-in-response-to-recent-foiled-attacks-on-european-soil/>.
- Global Terrorism Index 2016, *Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism*, University of Maryland, Institute for economics & Peace, 2016;
- Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction *What We Need To Learn: Lessons From Twenty Years Of Afghanistan Reconstruction*, 2021;

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica - *Afghan War 1978–1992* available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Afghan-War> ;
Quran, available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran> - 30.08.2021;
Afghan Civil War (1989–1992), available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Civil_War_\(1989%E2%80%931992\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Civil_War_(1989%E2%80%931992));
Afghan civilian deaths rise, insurgents responsible for most casualties – UN, available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/07/381572-afghan-civilian-deaths-rise-insurgents-responsible-most-casualties-un> - 07.09.2021;

