

## خدمات تحقیقاتی کانگرس

آگاهی دهنده مباحث قانونگذاری از سال 1914

# U.S. Military Withdrawal and Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan: Frequently Asked Questions

(عقب نشینی اردوی ایالات متحده و تصاحب قدرت توسط طالبان در افغانستان: سوالات رایج)

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#### خلاصه

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# عقب نشینی اردوی ایالات متحده و تصاحب قدرت توسط طالبان در افغانستان: سوالات رایج

در 15 آگست 2021، طالبان وارد كابل پایتخت افغانستان شد و تسلط بر كشور را با سر عتى تكمیل كرد كه بسیاری از افغان ها و امریكایی ها را به یک اندازه شگفت زده كرد. پیشروی طالبان زمانی اتفاق افتاد كه ایالات متحده در حال كامل كردن عقب نشینی نظامی بود كه در موافقتنامهٔ فبروری 2020 ایالات متحده و طالبان حاصل شده بود. عملیات عقب نشینی و تخلیه نظامی و دیپلوماتیک ایالات متحده در 30 آگست 2021 با خروج قوای امریكایی از افغانستان به پایان رسید.

سقوط دولت منتخب افغانستان که در طول نزدیک به دو دهه با میلیار دها دالر کمک ایالات متحده حمایت شده بود، سؤالات مهمی را درباره سیاست های گذشته، حال و آینده ایالات متحده برای اعضای کانگرس ایجاد کرد. این راپور مطالب مربوط با سوالات منتخب در حصهٔ سیاست ایالات متحده در افغانستان را ارائه می دهد، از جمله دربارهٔ موضوعات ذیل:

- معلومات پیشینه ای برای درک وضعیت فعلی در افغانستان؟
  - تسلط طالبان و فروپاشي دولت سابق افغانستان؛
- بیامدهای سیاسی بر ای ایالات متحده ناشی از تسلط طالبان؛
  - بیامدهای اجتماعی و اقتصادی تسلط طالبان؟
    - و اکنش های منطقه ای به تسلط طالبان؛
      - عمليات نظامي ايالات متحده؛
  - و تخلیه اتباع ایالات متحده و بعضی از افغان ها؛ و
    - بیامدهای بو دیجه ای خروج ایالات متحده.

بعضی از حصه های اضافی تحقیق که کانگرس ممکن است بخواهد با بخش اجرایی بررسی کند، در کنار موضوعات خاص، در صورت ضرورت گنجانده شده است. این راپور با در نظرداشت ملاحظات استراتیژیک ختم میشود که ممکن است کانگرس بخواهد در ارزیابی وضعیت افغانستان و بیامدهای آن بر ای آینده، آنر ا در نظر بگیر د.

### فهرست مطالب

1	فچه	تاريذ
1	منشاء طالبان از كجاست و سياست ايالات متحده قبل از 11 سيتمبر نسبت به طالبان چي قسم بوده است؟	
3	جرا در ابتدا ایالات متحده قوای نظامی به افغانستان اعزام کرد؟	
3	مأموريت قوای امريكايي در افغانستان بعد از سال 2001 چه بود؟	
5	DOD چقدر برای جنگ در افغانستان مصرف کرده است؟	
6	کدام وقت و چرا عقب نشینی نظامی ایالات متحده شروع شد؟ 	
9	، طلبل و سقوط دولت افغانستان	سلطه
q	. بی رکانی و چی قسم طالبان بر قوای دولت افغانستان غلبه کرد؟	
12	وضعیت دولت سابق افغانستان چی قسم است؟	
14	طالبان از زمان در اختیار گرفتن قدرت چی قسم عمل کرده اند	
	اگر ایالات متحده و جامعه جهانی طالبان را بعنوان دولت رسمی افغانستان به رسمیت بشناسند، کدام نتایجی خواهد	
1	داشت؟	
18	ر سياست ايالات متحده از تسلط طالبان <u> </u>	نتايج
18	چی قسم تسلط طالبان بر حضور دیپلوماتیک ایالات متحده در افغانستان تأثیر می گذارد؟	
1	وضعیت تخلیه از افغانستان چی قسم است؟	
١	وضعیت تلاش های ایالات متحده برای ارائه کمک های مهاجرتی به افغان هایی که به دولت ایالات متحده در مبارزه	
2	با طالبان و سایر قوا کمک کرده اند، چی قسم است؟	
$\frac{2}{2}$	استقرار مجدد طالبان در قدرت چی قسم ممکن است بالای گروههای تروریستی در افغانستان تأثیر بگذارد؟	
_	چسم اندار ادامه همک های غیرنضامی آیا دک منحده به افغانستان چیست: کدام انتخاب های سیاسی ایالات متحده بر ای ارتقای حقوق بشر در افغانستان و پاسخ به نقض حقوق بشر در دسترس	
2	ست؟ است؟	
3	تسلط طالبان برای همکاری امنیتی منحیث ابزار امنیت ملی کدام معنایی می تواند داشته باشد؟	
3	اجتماعي و اقتصادي تسلط طالبان	نتايج
3	تسلط طالبان برای زنان و دختران افغان کدام نتایجی می تواند داشته باشد؟	_
3	پیشروی طالبان چی قسم بالای وضعیت بشر دوستانه در افغانستان تأثیر گذاشته است؟	
3	نتایج تسلط طالبان برای مبارزه با مواد مخدر چیست؟	
3	چی قسم ممکن است تسلط طالبان بالای روابط افغانستان با نهادهای مالی بینالمللی (IFI) تِأثیر بگذارد؟	
4	دولت بایدن کدام دار ایی های بانک مرکزی افغانستان را توقیف کرده است و نتایج بالقوه آن چیست؟	
,	وضعیت شیوع کووید-19 در افغانستان چی قسم است و تسلط طالبان برای کنترول و توزیع واکسین کووید-19 کدام نتار میدادد؟	
	نتایجی دارد؟	*:<1
	ش ساير كشور ها به تسلط طالبان چي قسم بوده است؟	واحتم
	واکنش کشور های منطقه به تسلط طالبان چی قسم بوده است؟	
	ات نظامی ایالات متحده: خلاصه ای از کوشش های تخلیه و نتایج بودیجه ای	عمليا
	كدام عمليات نظامي ايالات متحده در جريان خروج از افغانستان أنجام شد؟	
	چى قسم ايالات متحده تخليه هوايي را انجام داد؟	
	نقش قراردادی ها و عملیات قراردادی ایالات متحده در افغانستان کدام بود؟	
	$\nabla \nabla $	

	کدام اتفاقی بر ای تجهیز ات نظامی و سایر اموال شخصیی ایالات متحده افتاده است که بر ای قوای ایالات متحده در افغانستا
<mark>65</mark> .	
68.	وُزُارت دفاع امریکا چقدر برای خروج نظامیان و پرسونل غیرنظامی ایالات متحده از افغانستان مصروف کرده است؟
<mark>69</mark> .	خروج پرسونل نظامی ایالات متحده از افغانستان کدام تأثیری بالای بودیجه خواهد داشت؟
<mark>70</mark>	سؤ الات و ملاحظات احتمالي كانگرس در سطح استر اتيژيک
	<mark>شکل ها</mark>
1 1	شكل 1. كنترول مراكز ولايت ها توسط طالبان، 6 الى 15 أگست 2021
1 1	
<mark>60</mark>	شكل 2. مقايسه طيارهٔ 130-C-6، C-17 و C-17
	<mark>تماس</mark>
72	معلو مات مؤلفان

#### تاريخچه

# منشاء طالبان از کجاست و سیاست ایالات متحده قبل از 11 سپتمبر نسبت به طالبان چی قسم بوده است<sup>1</sup>

در سالهای 1994-1993، روحانیون و شاگردان مسلمان افغان، که عمدتاً از قریه جات و پشتون بودند، طالبان را شکل دادند. بسیاری از آنها جنگجویان سابق ضد شوروی، معروف به مجاهدین بودند که از جنگ داخلی بین احزاب مجاهدین که بعد از خروج شوروی در سال 1989 آغاز شد، ناامید شده بودند. بسیاری از اعضای این تحریک در سال 1992 در مدارس علوم دینی در پاکستان تحصیل کرده بودند و نام طالبان (جمع طالب، متعلمین اسلام) را برای فاصله گرفتن از مجاهدین انتخاب کردند. پاکستان از طالبان حمایت می کرد، چراکه این گروه پتنسیل ایجاد نظم در افغانستان آشوب زده و تبدیل آن به یک متحد همراه" را داشت، که در نتیجه به پاکستان "امنیت بیشتر در یکی از چندین سرحد خود را می داد که افسران اردوی پاکستان به آنچیزی که "عمق استراتیژیک" می نامیدند، امید داشتند." و عقاید و اعمال طالبان با سنت های قبیلوی محافظه کار آنه پشتون ها مطابقت داشت و تا حدی از آن ناشی میشد، که خود نماینده تعدد (البته اعمال طالبان با سنت های قبیلوی محافظه کار آنه پشتون ها مطابقت داشت و تا حدی از آن ناشی میشد، که خود نماینده تعدد (البته نه اکثریت) ترکیب قومی پیچیده افغانستان و کسانی است که به شکل سنتی بالای افغانستان حکومت کرده اند. 4

طالبان دولت پرزیدنت برهان الدین ربانی را بعد از شوروی دولتی ضعیف، فاسد و ضد پشتون می دانست. چهار سال جنگ داخلی بین گروههای مجاهدین (1996-1992) باعث ایجاد حمایت مردمی از طالبان شد، چراکه آنها فساد کمتری داشتند و توانایی بیشتری برای ایجاد ثبات در آنها دیده می شد؛ قسمیکه زلمی خلیل زاد، که بعداً منحیث نماینده خاص ایالات متحده برای صلح در افغانستان خدمت کرد، در خاطرات خود در سال 2016 نوشت: "من مانند بسیاری از اشخاص در ابتدا به طالبان خوشبین بودم". طالبان در نومبر 1994 کنترول شهر جنوبی قندهار را به دست گرفتند و یک سلسله عملیات نظامی را در سراسر کشور راه اندازی کردند که با تصرف کابل در 27 سپتمبر 1996 به اوج خود رسید.

طالبان به سرعت، حمایت بین المللی و داخلی را از دست داد چراکه این گروه به شکل سختگیرانه ای به تفسیر خود از اسلام پایبند بود و در مناطق تحت کنترول خود آنرا تحمیل کرد و برای اجرای احکام خود بشمول ممنو عیت پخش تلویزیون، موسیقی غربی و رقص، مجازات های سختی از جمله اعدام در انظار عامه را تطبیق کرد. این قانون زنان را از حضور در مکاتب یا محل کار در خارج از خانه، به استثنای مراکز صحی، منع می کرد و زنان را به اتهام زنا در انظار عامه اعدام می کرد. در ماه مارچ 2001، اقدام طالبان به تخریب مجسمه های تاریخی بودا با قدمت شش-قرن که در تپه های بالای شهر بامیان کنده کاری شده بودند، محکومیت بین المللی را به دنبال داشت چراکه طالبان آن را سیمبول بت پرستی و در مغایرت با شریعت اسلامی می دانستند.

ایالات متحده نقش مهمی در حمایت از مجاهدین بر ضد شوروی داشت، اما توجه ایالات متحده به افغانستان با خروج قوای شوروی بعد از موافقتنامه جنیوا در سال 1988 کاهش یافت. در جنوری 1989 سفارت ایالات متحده در کابل به دلایل امنیتی تخلیه شد و تا سال 2001 بسته باقی بود. ایالات متحده بعضی از کمک های نظامی به گروههای مجاهدین را ادامه داد که به مبارزه با دولت مورد حمایت شوروی افغانستان ادامه می دادند.

<sup>1</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاور میانه، تهیه شده است.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> رک. احمد رشید (طالبان: اسلام شبه نظامی، نفت و بنیادگرایی در آسیای مرکزی) (پوهنتون بیل، 2000).

<sup>3</sup> کمیسیون ملی در مورد حملات تروریستی علیه ایالات متحده، *راپور کمیسیون 11 سپتمبر: راپور نهایی کمیسیون ملی در مورد حملات* تروریستی علیه ایالات متحده، (2004) ص. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> مانند ملا عمر، بنیانگذار طالبان، اکثر شخصیت های ارشد رژیم طالبان، پشتون های غلجایی، یکی از جمعیت های اصلی قبایلی پشتون بودند. اکثر حاکمان مدرن افغانستان از جمعیت قبایلی پشتون در انی بوده اند.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> زلمي خليل زاد، ( فرستاده: از كابل تا كاخ سفيد، سفر من در جهاني متلاطم) (انتشارات سنت مارتين، 2016)، ص. 84.

بعد از سقوط آن دولت در سال 1992، اشتیاق کمی بر ای حفظ تعامل با ایالات متحده وجو د داشت<sup>. 6</sup>

زمانی که طالبان در سال 1996 کنترول کابل را به دست گرفت، سیاست ایالات متحده در مقابل این گروه نامشخص بود، به گفته یکی از ناظران، "مقامات امریکایی بیانیه های پر سر و صدایی صادر کردند - بعضی بدبینانه، بعضی ظاهراً حمایتی - که نمی شد از آنها یک موضع خاص را استنباط کرد." آفزایش توجه بین المللی و مردم ایالات متحده به وضعیت اسفبار زنان افغان، و تمرکز مجدد بالای حقوق بشر در زمان وزارت امور خارجه مادلین آلبرایت، باعث تغییر سیاست ایالات متحده علیه طالبان در سال 1997 شد. این تغییر علیر غم حمایت شریک ایالات متحده، عربستان سعودی از این گروه اتفاق افتاد (یکی از سه کشور بهمراه پاکستان و امارات متحده عربی که طالبان را منحیث دولت افغانستان به رسمیت شناخته بودند).

پناه دادن طالبان به اسامه بن لادن، رهبر القاعده (AQ)، در نهایت به موضوع اصلی تبدیل شد که بالای نظریات و روابط ایالات متحده با طالبان تأثیر گذاشت. در سال 1996، بن لادن از سودان به افغانستان نقل مکان کرد، جایی که در سابق به حیث تمویل کنندهٔ مالی عمده و ساز مان دهندهٔ تلاش ها برای کمک به مجاهدین، اکثر دههٔ 1980 را گذرانده بود. راپور داده شده است که افسران استخباراتی پاکستان بن لادن را به رهبران طالبان در قندهار معرفی کردند؛  $^8$  بن لادن با طالبان یک ائتلاف ایجاد کرد که ذریعهٔ آن ملیون ها دالر کمک مالی به این گروه کرد (و همچنین حمایت نظامی از کوشش های طالبان جهت تکمیل فتح کشور) و در مقابل طالبان هم پناهگاه امن برای سربازگیری AQ و کمپ های تعلیمی به او فراهم کردند. ممکن است بیشتر از 10000 جنگجوی AQ در کمپ های AQ در افغانستان تعلیم دیده باشند.  $^9$  بیل ریچاردسون سفیر ایالات متحده در ساز مان ملل متحد در اپریل 1998 از کابل بازدید کرد، که بلندر تبه ترین مقام امریکایی بود که در چند دهه اخیر چنین کاری می کرد. در جواب به در خواست ریچاردسون مبنی بر اخراج بن لادن توسط طالبان، این گروه "جواب داد اخیر خدواست ریچاردسون مبنی بر اخراج بن لادن توسط طالبان، این گروه "جواب داد که از محل حضور او خبر ندارد. در هر حالت، طالبان گفتند که [بن لادن] تهدیدی برای ایالات متحده نیست.  $^{100}$ 

تهدید بن لادن در 7 آگست 1998 آشکارتر شد، زمانی که عوامل القاعده به شکل همزمان سفار تخانه های ایالات متحده در کنیا و تانزانیا را بم بارد کردند و بیشتر از 200 نفر را کشتند. در جواب این عمل، ایالات متحده حملات با موشک های کروز را به اهداف AQ در افغانستان انجام داد که هم در کشتن بن لادن و هم متقاعد کردن طالبان برای اخراج او ناموفق بود. فشار های ایالات متحده بالای سعودی ها و پاکستانی ها برای استفاده از نفوذ خود برای متقاعد کردن طالبان در اخراج ر هبر القاعده نیز به همان اندازه ناموفق بود. در جو لای 1999، پرزیدنت بیل کلینتون تحریم هایی را علیه طالبان وضع کرد که معادل تحریم هایی بود که بالای دولت های حامی تروریسم وضع می شد (13129 .CO. 13129). تحریم های مسافرتی و اقتصادی شور ای امنیت سازمان ملل متحد علیه طالبان در ماه اکتوبر با قطعنامه 1267 شورای امنیت سازمان ملل متحد (UNSCR) اضافه شد و با قطعنامه 1333 که به شمول تحریم تسلیحاتی علیه طالبان در دسمبر 2000 بود، گسترش یافت. ر هبری طالبان در مقابل این تهدیدها بی اقدام بود. بر اساس راپور کمیسیون 11 سپنمبر، روابط آنها با بن لادن "بعضی اوقات پرتنش"، اما "بنیاد آن عمیق و شخصی بود". 11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> نمایندهٔ خاص برای مقاومت افغانستان (1992-1989) پیتر تامسن، نقل شده در استیو کال، جنگ های ارواح: (تاریخ سری سیا، افغانستان و بن لادن، از حمله شوروی تا 10 سیتمبر 2001) (ینگوئن، 2005)، ص. 239.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> کال، جنگ های ارواح، ص. 338.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> رايور كميسيون 11 سيتمبر، ص. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> رايور كميسيون 11 سيتمبر، صص. 67-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> راپور كميسيون 11 سيتمبر، ص. 111.

<sup>11</sup> راپور كميسيون 11 سپتمبر، ص. 125.

#### چرا در ابتدا ایالات متحده قوای نظامی به افغانستان اعزام کرد<sup>12</sup>?

در 11 سپتمبر 2001، عوامل AQ مجموعه ای از حملات تروریستی را در ایالات متحده انجام دادند که در جریان آنها نزدیک به 3000 نفر کشته شدند. جورج دبلیو بوش، رئیس جمهور امریکا، در یک سخنرانی عمومی قبل از جلسه مشترک کانگرس در 20 سپتمبر 2001، از طالبان خواست که رهبران القاعده را تحویل بدهد، کمپ های تعلیمی تروریست ها را برای همیشه بسته کند و به ایالات متحده اجازه دهد تا به این کمپ ها دسترسی داشته باشد، و اضافه کرد که طالبان "باید تروریست ها را تحویل دهد، در غیر این حالت در سرنوشت آنها شریک خواهد شد. " <sup>13</sup> رهبران طالبان با استناد به اینکه بن لادن مهمان آنهاست این درخواست را قبول نکرده اند. 14

بر اساس جواز استفاده از قوای نظامی (AUMF) که در 18 سپتمبر 2001 (P.L. 107-40) تصویب شد، عملیات نظامی ایالات متحده در 7 اکتوبر 2001 با حملات هوایی به اهداف طالبان در سراسر کشور و حمایت هوایی نزدیک از قوای ضدطالبان در شمال افغانستان شروع شد. کمتر از دو هفته بعد تعداد محدودی از قوای خاص اردوی ایالات متحده، قوای شبه نظامی آژانس استخبارات مرکزی (سیا) و بعضی از قوای زمینی عمومی در افغانستان مستقر شدند. <sup>15</sup> در 13 نومبر، طالبان کابل را تخلیه کردند که به زودی توسط قوای افغان (معروف به اتحاد شمال) پس گرفته شد.

با نزدیک شدن قوای افغان تحت حمایت ایالات متحده به شهر جنوبی قندهار، زادگاه تحریک طالبان و خانه رهبر طالبان، ملا محمد عمر، رهبر ان طالبان شرایط تسلیم را پیشنهاد کردند، از جمله عفو برای آنعده از جنگجویان طالبان که اسلحه های خود را بر زمین بگذارند. مقامات ایالات متحده چنین عفوی را رد کردند و در حالی که بسیاری از جنگجویان و رهبران طالبان توسط قوای امریکایی یا افغان کشته یا اسیر شده بودند، دیگران (از جمله ملا عمر) در مناطق دورافتاده یا قریه جات افغانستان پناه گرفتند یا به پاکستان فرار کردند.

#### مأموریت قوای امریکایی در افغانستان بعد از سال 2001 چه بود؟۱۵

در دسمبر 2001، نمایندگان افغانستان در بن، جرمنی، توسط ساز مان ملل متحد گرد هم آمدند و حامد کرزی را به حیث رئیس یک دولت ملی موقت انتخاب کردند و این شروع یک حکومت بعد از طالبان بود. به نظر می رسد که هیچ کوششی برای مشارکت دادن طالبان در این گفتگوها انجام نشد. <sup>17</sup> هیچ یک از اعضای طالبان در لویه جرگه اضطراری (مجمع مشورتی) 2002 که کرزی را به حیث رئیس جمهور انتخاب کرد، شرکت نکردند.

ایجاد دولت جدید افغانستان همچنین نشان دهنده آغاز یک مأموریت جدید بزرگ برای قوای ایالات متحده و شرکای بین المللی آنها بود: کمک به دفاع و توسعه این دولت و اردوی نوپای آن. کرزی در سخنرانی وضعیت کشور در جنوری سال 2002 اشتراک کرد که در آن پرزیدنت بوش این مأموریت وسیع را بررسی کرد و گفت که ایالات متحده و افغانستان "متحدین علیه تروریسم" هستند و "ما در حصهٔ بازسازی آن کشور شریک خواهیم بود."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاور میانه، تهیه شده است.

<sup>13 &</sup>quot;متن: بر زیدنت بوش خطاب به ملت،" *و اشنگتن بست،* 20 سینمبر 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> استیو کال، (مدیریت اس: جنگهای سری سیا و امریکا در افغانستان و پاکستان) (انتشارات پنگوئن، 2018)، ص. 69.

<sup>15</sup> جهت اخذ معلومات بیشتر درباره اولین سال عملیات های ایالات متحده در افغانستان، رک. والتر ال. پری و دیوید کاسینگ،

<sup>&</sup>quot;سر نگون کر دن طالبان: عملیات های هو ایی-ز مینی در افغانستان، اکتوبر 2001 – جون 2002"، کمپنی رند، 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاور میانه، تهیه شده است.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> خلیل زاد بعدتر نوشت، "من شک دارم که جامعه بین المللی می توانست طالبان را برای حضور در بن تشویق کند. " خلیل زاد، ص. 121.

<sup>18 &</sup>quot;سخنراني وضعيت كشور توسط رئيس جمهور،" كاخ سفيد (آرشيف)، 29 جنوري 2002.

کانگرس از دولت بوش در اتخاذ این پالیسی حمایت کرد، و بودیجه هایی را برای مأموریت های نظامی وسیعتر و کمک های ملکی تأیید کرد و تخصیص داد (مثلاً، از طریق قانون حمایت از آزادی افغانستان، 2002، P.L. 107-327، که در اصلاحیههای قانون حمایت از آزادی افغانستان 2004 مجدداً تأیید و اضافه شد، بخش 7104 از 458-108. P.L. مقامات ایالات متحده در 1 می 2003 ختم عملیات جنگی اصلی را در افغانستان اعلام کردند، هرچند وزیر دفاع آنوقت، دونالد را مسفلد گفت که "جبهه های مقاومت در بخش های خاصی از کشور باقی می ماند." وا

تا سال 2005، قوای پراکنده طالبان در مراکز پشتون نشین شرق و جنوب افغانستان و همچنین در نواحی سرحدی پاکستان، جایی که بسیاری از ناظران گمان می کردند که سرویس های امنیتی و استخباراتی پاکستان اگر از طالبان حمایت فعالانه نمی کنند حداقل آنها را تحمل می کنند، شروع به تجدید قوا کرده بودند.<sup>20</sup> طالبان ادامه عملیات نظامی ایالات متحده و انتلاف را در افغانستان یک اشغالگری نظامی تشریح کردند و مخالفان خود در دولت افغانستان را دست نشانده قدرت های خارجی توصیف می کرد.<sup>21</sup>

در واكنش به افزایش فعالیت های طالبان، ایالات متحده به ندریج قوای خود را تا حدود 30000 نفر در ختم دولت جورج دبلیو بوش افزایش داد. در دولت اوباما، ایالات متحده و متحدانش میزان قوای بین المللی را منحیث بخشی از یک "موج" افزایش دادند که به 130000 سرباز در سال 11-2010 رسید (که حدود 100000 سرباز آن امریکایی بودند)، اما هدفی هم برای پایان دادن به عملیات نظامی الی ختم سال 2014 تعیین شد.

#### گفتگوهای ایالات متحده-طالبان در دوره دولت اوباما

مذاکرات محرمانه بین یکی از نمایندگان طالبان و بعضی مقامات ایالات متحده در اواخر سال 2010 شروع شد. هیلاری کلینتون، وزیر امور خارجه، در اوایل سال 2011 در سخنرانی خود این گفتگوها را به این شکل بیان کرد که جدایی طالبان از القاعده، چشم پوشی از خشونت، و مراعات قانون اساسی افغانستان "نتایج ضروری" مذاکرات احتمالی است و نه "پیش شرطا".<sup>22</sup> این گفتگوها عمدتاً بالای اقدامات اعتمادسازی، بخصوص موضوع تبادلهٔ محبوسین و افتتاح دفتر سیاسی طالبان در دوحه قطر متمرکز بود. عوامل متعددی، از جمله مخالفت رئیس جمهور وقت کرزی، باعث شد که گفتگوها در اوایل سال 2012 بی نتیجه رها شود. میانجیگری قطر و پاکستان باعث یک توافق در سال 2013 شد که به طالبان اجازه داد یک دفتر در دوحه افتتاح کنند. با اینحال، طالبان این دفتر را در جون 2013 با ظاهر یک سفارت رسمی افتتاح کردند که صریحاً مفادات موافقنامه را نقض می کرد؛ دولت قطر کمتر از یک ماه بعد با بستن این دفتر عکس العمل نشان داد. <sup>23</sup> در جون 2014، قطر آزادی محبوس امریکایی بوو برگدال را بعوض پنج مقام بلندپایه طالبان که در خلیج گوانتانامو حبس بودند، هماهنگ کرد - چهار نفر از آنها در دولت اعلامی طالبان در تعوض پنج مقام بلندپایه طالبان که در خلیج گوانتانامو حبس بودند، هماهنگ کرد در جولت اوباما اتفاق نیفتاد.

اگرچه آن "موج" احتمالاً در تضعیف پیشروی های طالبان موفق بود، اما در سال 2010 دولت اوباما قسمی ارزیابی کرده بود که عملیات نظامی به تنهایی نمی تواند این مناقشات را حل کند. <sup>25</sup>

<sup>19 &</sup>quot;رامسفلد: جنگ بزرگ در افغانستان تمام شد،" سی ان ان، 1 می 2003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>رک. برای مثال، مت والدمن، "خورشید در آسمان: رابطه میان آی اس آی پاکستان و شورشیان افغان"، مرکز پژوهش بحران کشور، جون . 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>رک. متیو کالوین، "استفاده از تبلیغات اینترنتی انگلیسی زبان توسط شورشیان طالبان در افغانستان، 2007-2010"، *تزها و مونوگراف های الکترونیکی*، جون 2011، موجود در https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/108؛ توماس روتیگ، "طالبان چقدر قبیلوی است؟" شبکه تحلیلگران افغانستان، 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> هیلاری کلینتون، انتخاب های سخت (سایمون و شوستر، 2014)، ص. 152.

<sup>23</sup> رک. کال، مدیریت، صص. 508-503، 585-578، 646-636.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> این پنج شخصیت و منصب های آنها در دوره حکومت طالبان عبارت بودند از ملا محمد فضل، ستر درستیز اردوی طالبان؛ نورالله نوری، قومندان طالبان در شمال افغانستان؛ خیرالله خیرخواه، وزیر داخله رژیم طالبان؛ محمدنبی عمری، یکی از مقامات طالبان؛ و عبدالحق واثق، معاون اداره امنیت رژیم طالبان. مجیب مشعل، "زمانی در گوانتانامو حبس بودند، حالا 5 طالب با امریکا در میز مذاکره رو در رو هستند"، نیریورک تابمز، 26 مارچ 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>ر اد نور دلند، "موج نظامیان در افغانستان با نتایج متناقضی خاتمه یافت،" *نیو بورک تایمز*، 21 سبتمبر 2012.

مذاکرات مقدماتی ایالات متحده و طالبان به علت سیاست ایالات متحده برای مشارکت دولت افغانستان، که طالبان از ملاقات با آن امتناع کردند، به هر شکلی در مضیقه قرار گرفت (به چوکات متن فوق مراجعه کنید).<sup>26</sup> با کاهش تعداد قوای بین المللی قبل از زمان پلانگذاری شده در سال 2014، ناتو از سال 2011 شروع به انتقال تدریجی وظایف امنیتی به قوای افغان کرد. قوای افغان در ختم سال 2014، با ختم ماموریت قوای بین المللی کمک به امنیت (ISAF) و شروع ماموریت حمایت قاطع قوای فغان در ختم سال 2014، با ختم ماموریت مانیت قوای (RSM) غیرمحاربوی که در 1 جنوری 2015 آغاز شد، مسئولیت کامل امنیت در سراسر کشور را به عهده گرفتند. قوای ایالات متحده در افغانستان علاوه بر تعلیم، مشاوره و کمک به قوای افغان منحیث قسمتی از RSM، همچنین عملیات ضد تروریستی انجام می دادند؛ این دو "ماموریت مکمل" ایجاد کننده عملیات نگهبان آز ادی بود.

#### $^{27}$ چقدر برای جنگ در افغانستان مصرف کرده است $^{27}$

براساس آخرین راپور سه ماهه مصرف جنگ DOD، از 11 سپتمبر 2001 الی 31 مارچ 2021، این وزارتخانه در مجموع 837.3 میلیارد دالر با نرخ دالر فعلی برای عملیات نظامی در افغانستان (یعنی عملیات آزادی پایدار و عملیات نگهبان آزادی<sup>29</sup> و فعالیت های بازسازی، متعهد شده است.<sup>20</sup> (تعهد برای پرداخت مصارف اجناس و خدمات است.<sup>30</sup> براساس راپور DOD، تعهدات سالانه وزارت به نرخ دالر فعلی برای فعالیت ها در افغانستان با 98 میلیارد دالر در سال مالی 2012 به اوج خود رسید و در سال مالی 2020، آخرین سال مالی کاملی که دیتاها برای آن موجود است، به 40 میلیارد دالر کاهش یافت.<sup>31</sup>

بر اساس آخرین راپور سه ماهه SIGAR به کانگرس، از 1 اکتوبر 2001 الی 30 جون 2021، از طریق تخصیص کانگرس یا روش های دیگر دولت ایالات متحده، تقریباً 145 میلیارد دالر به نرخ دالر فعلی در اختیار آژانس های فدرال، از جمله ODD، جهت بازسازی و فعالیت های مربوطه در افغانستان گذاشته شد.<sup>32</sup> به گفته SIGAR، از این مجموع، تقریباً 83 میلیارد دالر به نرخ دالر فعلی به ASFF تخصیص یافته است که به شکل مصارف جنگ در فوق ذکر شده است.<sup>33</sup>

بعضی از ناظران غیردولتی تخمین های بلندتری از مصرف فعالیت های دولت ایالات متحده در افغانستان در جریان دو دهه گذشته ارائه می کنند. بعنوان مثال، به تاریخ 15 اپریل 2021، پروژه مصارف جنگ موسسه واتسون در حصهٔ مسائل بین المللی و مسائل عمومی در پوهنتون براون، مصارف ایالات متحده را تا به امروز برای جنگ در افغانستان 2.26 تریلیون دالر تخمین زده است.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> ایوان مک اسکیل و سایمون تیسدل، "کاخ سفید استراتیژی افغانستان را به طرف گفتگو با طالبان تغییر می دهد،"گاردین (بریتانیا)، 19 جولای 2010.

<sup>27</sup> این بخش توسط بر ندان مک گری، تحلیلگر بو دیجه دفاعی ایالات متحده، تهیه شده است.

<sup>28</sup> عملیات نگهبان آزادی کمک ایالات متحده به مأموریت حمایت قاطع به رهبری ناتو برای تعلیم، مشاوره و کمک به قوا و نهادهای امنیتی افغان است. جهت معلومات بیشتر، رک. به ناتو، "ماموریت حمایت قاطع در افغانستان" آپدیت در 6 جولای 2021 در آدرس https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\_113694.htm

ا مال مالي 2021 مصارف جنگ سه ماهه دوم آبديت الي 31 مار ج 2021، در فايل در اختيار مؤلف $\mathrm{DOD}^{29}$ 

GAO <sup>30</sup> الغتنامه اصطلاحات مورد استفاده در بروسهٔ بوديجه فدرال ، GAO-05-734SP سيتمبر 2005، ص. 70، در

https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-05-734sp.pdf. در بخشی از این سند آمده است: "یک آژانس تعهدی را متحمل می شود، برای مثال، زمانی که سفارشی می دهد، قراردادی امضا می کند، کمک مالی اعطا می کند، خدماتی خریداری می کند یا اقدامات دیگری انجام می دهد که دولت را مکلف به بر داخت عمومی یا از یک حساب دولتی به حساب دیگر می کند."

DOD 31، سال مالی 2021 مصارف جنگ سه ماهه دوم آیدیت الی 31 مارچ 2021، در فایل در اختیار مؤلف.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>سر مفتش ویژه برای بازسازی افغانستان، رابور فصلی به کانگرس ایالات متحده، 30 جو لای 2021.

<sup>33</sup> همانجا، DOD، دفتر معاون وزير دفاع (مفتش)/افسر ارشد مالى، ماه مى 2021، بررسى اجمالى بوديجه دفاعى، وزارت دفاع ايالات متحده، درخواست بوديجه سال مالى 2022، ص. 7-2، در

https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2022/FY2022\_Budget\_Request\_Overview Book.pdf

<sup>34</sup> این عدد در قالب دالر اسمی است. پوهنتون براون، مؤسسه واتسون در امور بین الملل و عمومی، ویبسایت مصارف جنگ، تاریخ دسترسی 16 آگست 2021.

این تخمین علاوه بر تمویل مالی برای عملیاتهای احتیاطی خارج از کشور DOD و وزارت امور خارجه، مبالغی را برای آنچه منحیث سایر مصارف مربوط به جنگ تشریح می کند، مانند سود بدهی ملی ناشی از استقراض، افزایش بودیجه اصلی DOD و مراقبت های صحی برای کهنه سربازان امریکایی که در افغانستان خدمت کرده اند را شامل می شود.<sup>35</sup>

#### <mark>کدام وقت و چرا عقب نشینی نظامی ایالات متحده شروع شد؟<sup>36</sup></mark>

زمانی که دونالد ترامپ در جنوری 2017 به قدرت رسید، طبق راپور ها، حدود 11000 سرباز امریکایی در افغانستان حضور داشتند، در حالی که تعداد قوای ایالات متحده از اوج خود در مدت 2009-2011 که حدود 100000 سرباز امریکایی بود کاهش یافته بود.<sup>37</sup> در ماه جون 2017، پرزیدنت ترامپ اختیار تعیین تعداد قوا را به جیمز منیس وزیر دفاع تقویض کرد که مطابق راپور ها به حدود 3500 قوای اضافی محدود می شد؛ متیس دستور اعزام آنها را در سپتمبر 2017 امضا کرد.<sup>38</sup> این قوای اضافی (که همگی به RSM تحت هدایت ناتو تخصیص داده شده بودند) در مدت چند ماه به افغانستان رسیدند و تعداد کل قوای ایالات متحده در این کشور الی ختم سال 2017 به تعداد 14000 الی 15000 رسید.<sup>39</sup>

تا اواسط سال 2018، پرزیدنت ترامپ ظاهراً از عدم پیشرفت نظامی علیه طالبان عصبانی شده بود و برای اولین بار دستور مذاکرات رسمی و مستقیم ایالات متحده و طالبان را بدون مشارکت دولت افغانستان صادر کرد. در حالی که این گفتگوها تحت نظر زلمی خلیل زاد، نماینده خاص برای مصالحه افغانستان، در جریان بود، پرزیدنت ترامپ به ابراز ناامیدی از مأموریت نظامی ایالات متحده در افغانستان و تمایل به خروج قوای ایالات متحده ادامه داد و در آگست 2019 گفت که می خواهد این کار را "در اسرع وقت انجام دهد". به تعداد قوای ایالات متحده در سال 2019 شروع به کاهش کرد: در یک کانفرانس خبری در 9 اکتوبر 2019، جنرال آستین اس. میلر، قومندان ارشد ایالات متحده در افغانستان، گفت که تعداد قوای ایالات متحده در طول سال گذشته به تدریج به 2000 نفر کاهش یافته و حدود 12000 الی 13000 است. 4

در فبروری 2020، ایالات متحده و طالبان موافقتنامه ای رسمی امضا کردند که در آن ایالات متحده متعهد شد که تمام سربازان، قراردادی ها و پرسونل غیردبیلوماتیک خود را از افغانستان خارج کند و تعداد قوای نظامی خود را الی اواسط جولای 2020 به قراردادی ها و پرسونل غیردبیلوماتیک خود را از افغانستان خارج کند. در مقابل، طالبان متعهد شدند که از تهدید هر گروهی، از جمله القاعده، برای ایالات متحده یا متحدانش از طریق منع آن گروهها برای اقامت، تعلیم یا جمع آوری کمک های مالی در افغانستان، حلوگری کند.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> همان.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاورمیانه، و کاتلین مک اینز، کارشناس امنیت بین المللی، تهیه شده است.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> در حالی که این تعداد به قسم مجموعی 8400 نفر راپور داده شده بود، در آگست 2017 رسانه ها راپور دادند که این رقم در واقع حدود 11000 در هر روز معین به علت تبدیل شدن جزوتام ها در داخل و خارج از منطقه عملیات است. رجوع کنید به گوردون لوبولد و نانسی 11000 در هر روز معین به علت تبدیل شدن جزوتام ها در داخل و خارج از منطقه عملیات است، "وال استریت جورنال، 22 یوسف، "تعداد عساکر ایالات متحده در افغانستان بیشتر از آن چیزی است که به طور عمومی افشا شده است، "وال استریت جورنال، 22 آگست 2017. همچنین بر اساس راپور CRS R44116 تعداد عساکر قراردادی وزارت دفاع در افغانستان و عراق: 2007-2020، توسط هایدی ام. پیترز مراجعه کنید.

<sup>38</sup> تارا كاپ، "متيس دستوراتي براي فرستادن 3500 قواي جديد ايالات متحده به افغانستان صادر مي كند،" ميليتري تايمز، 11 سپتمبر 2017.

<sup>39</sup> دن لاموث، "ترامپ عساکر را در افغانستان اضافه کرد. اما ناتو هنوز هم در رسیدن به هدف خود ناتوان است." واشنگتن پست، 9 نومبر 2017؛ گرگ جاف و میسی رایان، "حداکثر 1000 قوای امریکایی دیگر ممکن است در بهار امسال به افغانستان فرستاده شوند. " واشنگتن پست، 21 جنوری 2018. الی 30 سپتمبر 2017، تعداد کل قوای برحال و ذخیره فعال در افغانستان 15298 نفر بود. راپور سه ماهه مرکز دیتاهای قوای انسانی دفاعی، پرسونل نظامی و ملکی بر اساس خدمات/آژانس بر اساس ایالت/کشور، سپتمبر 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> کوین بارون، "ترامپ می گوید عساکر امریکایی نباید نقش پولیس را در افغانستان اجرا کنند. پس چرا اصلاً آنجا هستند؟" *دیفنس وان*، 22 جولای 2019؛ "ترامپ می خواهد به سریعترین حالتی که می تواند از افغانستان خارج شود،" ط*لوع نیوز*، 1 آگست 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> توماس گیبونز نف و مجیب مشعل، "ایالات متحده خاموشانه در حال کاهش قوای خود در افغانستان است،" *نیویورک تایمز*، 21 اکتوبر 2019.

تعهد ایالات متحده برای عقب نشینی، مشروط به کاهش خشونت طالبان علیه دولت افغانستان، دادن امتیاز در گفتگوهای بین الافغانی یا انجام افدامات دیگر نبود.

در این موافقتنامه همچنین آمده بود که الی 5000 محبوس طالبان که توسط دولت افغانستان (که جزء طرفین موافقتنامه نبود) و تا 1000 پرسونل افغان اسیر شده توسط طالبان در ماه مارچ 2020 "آزاد خواهند شد". مذاکرات بین الافغانی نیز قرار بود در همان ماه آغاز شود، اما مذاکرات برای ماهها، در میان بن بست سیاسی در کابل و اختلاف نظر بر سر آزادی محبوسین، پلان ریزی نشده باقی ماند. طرفین درگیری آزادی محبوسین را در اوایل سپتمبر 2020 تکمیل کردند و مانع اصلی مذاکرات بین الافغانی را، که در 12 سپتمبر 2020 در دوحه آغاز شده بود، برطرف کردند. در تمام طول سال 2020، مقامات ایالات متحده اظهار می کردند که طالبان به شکل کامل به موافقتنامه متعهد نیستند، تعداد قوای ایالات متحده همچنان کاهش می یافت و یک ماه قبل از ضرب الاجل اواسط جو لای 2020 ذکر شده در موافقتنامه ایالات متحده و طالبان به 8600 نفر رسید. <sup>42</sup> سردرگمی در مورد وضعیت نظامی آینده ایالات متحده در اکتوبر 2020 به علت دیدگاه های متناقض بیان شده توسط مقامات ارشد دولت ترامپ افزایش یافت، از جمله توبیت پرزیدنت ترامپ که "ما باید تعداد اندک باقیمانده از مردان و زنان شجاع خود را که در افغانستان خدمت می کنند، تا کریسمس در خانه داشته باشیم." هم

در 17 نومبر 2020، كريستوفر ميلر، سرپرست وقت وزارت دفاع، اعلام كرد، "ما دستورات پرزيدنت ترامپ براى ادامه جابجايى قوا از افغانستان را اجرا خواهيم كرد"، و 2500 قواى امريكايى الى 15 جنورى 2021 در افغانستان خواهند ماند. سرپرست وزارت ميلر اين عقب نشينى (كه همزمان با كاهش مشابه قواى ايالات متحده در عراق اعلام شد) را "منطبق با پلان هاى تثبيت شده و اهداف استراتيژيک ما" توصيف كرد و گفت كه "اين به معناى تغيير در سياست يا اهداف ايالات متحده نيست". 44 در 15 جنورى 2021، سرپرست وزارت ميلر تأييد كرد كه تعداد قواى ايالات متحده در افغانستان به 2500 نفر رسيده است. 45

پرزیدنت بایدن، که در 20 جنوری 2021 روی کار آمد، ظاهراً به حیث معاون رئیس جمهور در سال 2009 با تصمیم دولت اوباما برای افزایش تعداد قوای ایالات متحده مخالفت کرده بود و منحیث نامزد انتخابات در تبلیغات اولیه 2020 نسبت به تعداد سربازان در افغانستان ابراز تردید کرده بود.<sup>46</sup> او منحیث رئیسجمهور در یک مصاحبه در ۱۶ مارچ ۲۰۲۱ گفت که موافقتنامه ایالات متحده و طالبان "معامله ای با مذاکرات محکم نیست" و مراعات ضرب الاجل خروج در ۱ ماه می "می تواند اتفاق بیفتد" اما "سخت" خواهد بود.<sup>47</sup> او همچنین گفت که بررسی سیاست ایالات متحده در افغانستان توسط دولت "در حال انجام" است و رسیدن به یک تصمیم "مدت زیادی طول" نخواهد کشید. در یک کانفرانس مطبوعاتی در 25 مارچ 2021، او گفت "نمی توانم تصور کنم" که سال آینده عساکر امریکایی در افغانستان باشند.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> كايلى اتوود و رايان براون، "كاهش قواى امريكايى در افغانستان زودتر از وقت معينه "، سى ان ان، 30 اپريل 2020؛ "وزير دفاع ايالات متحده مى گويد، طالبان به تعهدات خود عمل نمى كند،" *رويترز*، 5 مى 2020؛ رابرت برنز، "جنرال امريكايى: طالبان هنوز شرايط خروج ايالات متحده را يوره نكرده است، *"آسوشيتديرس*، 10 جون 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> "ترامب: سرباز آن امریکایی مستقر در افغانستان باید تا کریسمس در خانه باشند،" رویترز، 7 اکتوبر 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> "سر پر ست وزارت میلر تعداد سربازان را در افغانستان و عراق اعلام کرد،" وزارت دفاع، 17 نومبر 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> " بیانیه سرپرست وزارت دفاع کریستوفر میلر درباره تعداد قوا در افغانستان،" وزارت دفاع، 15 جنوری 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> كال، *داير كتوريت اس*، نقل شده در، صص 353-354، 367؛ "متن: جوبايدن در رو در رو با ملت"، *اخبار سي بي اس*، 23 فبروري. 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> "متن: جورج استفانوپولوس از شبکه خبری ای بی سی با رئیس جمهور جو بایدن مصاحبه می کند،" اخبار ای بی سی، 17 مارچ 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> " رئيس جمهور بايدن كانفر انس خبري بر گز ار مي كند،" C-SPAN، 25 مار چ 2021.

در 14 اپریل 2021، پرزیدنت بایدن اعلام کرد که ایالات متحده "خروج نهایی" را در اول ماه می آغاز خواهد کرد که تا 11 سپتمبر 2021 تکمیل خواهد شد. 4 طالبان در یک پاسخ مکتوب، ایالات متحده را متهم به نقض موافقتنامه فبروری 2020 کرد و اعلام کرد که تصمیم ایالات متحده برای ماندن بعد از اول ماه می "در اصل راه را برای [قوای طالبان] برای انجام هر اقدام متقابل لازم باز می کند، از این رو جانب امریکایی مسئول تمام عواقب آینده خواهد بود." کی مقام ارشد دولت بعد از اعلامیه عقب نشینی گفت که، "ما به طور مشخص به طالبان اطلاع داده ایم که اگر حملاتی را علیه قوای ایالات متحده یا متحدانش انجام دهد ... ما به شدت پاسخ خواهیم داد". <sup>51</sup> در 26 آگست 2021، قوای امریکایی و شهروندان افغان در حمله ای در کابل کشته شدند که ادعا شد توسط گروه وابسته به امارت اسلامی در افغانستان انجام شد که با طالبان در گیر بوده است. با اینحال، این حمله ممکن است سؤالاتی را در مورد پایبندی طالبان به موافقتنامه فبروری 2020 ایالات متحده و طالبان ایجاد ایندال، این حمله ممکن است سؤالاتی در هر گروه یا فردی ... از خاک افغانستان برای تهدید امنیت ایالات متحده جلوگیری کند."

بعضی از ناظران معتقدند که دولت بایدن می توانست موافقتنامه را نادیده بگیرد و یک قوای کوچک متشکل از چند هزار سرباز را در کشور حفظ می کرد تا توافق صلح بین الافغانی را تسهیل کند. 52 بر اساس این نظریه، مصارف حفظ چنین قوایی در مقایسه با خطرات امنیتی مربوط با فروپاشی دولت افغانستان ناچیز بود. در مقابل، پرزیدنت بایدن استدلال می کرد که حفظ چنین قوایی امکان پذیر نبود؛ تعداد اندک قوای امریکایی برای بازدارندگی قوای طالبان کافی نبود و در نهایت ضرورت به افزایش مجدد قوا و توانایی های نظامی ایالات متحده در افغانستان می شد. 53 با اینحال، بعضی دیگر معتقدند که حتی با فرض اینکه یک تأثیر حداقلی می توانست ممکن باشد، انجام این کار ارزش به خطر انداختن منابع و قوای ایالات متحده را نداشت. 54

مرحله نهایی خروج نظامی پلانگذاری شده ایالات متحده در 1 می 2021 شروع شد و تا جون، قومندانی مرکزی ایالات متحده (CENTCOM) راپور داد که 44 فیصد از "پروسهٔ عقب نشینی" کامل شده است.<sup>55</sup> اکثر متحدان ناتو و سایر شرکای ایالات متحده قوای خود را تا ماه جو لای خارج کردند.<sup>65</sup> در 8 جولای، پرزیدنت بایدن اعلام کرد که "ماموریت نظامی ما در افغانستان در 31 آگست ختم میشود." پیشروی سریع طالبان که با تصرف کابل در ماه آگست و تخلیه اضطراری پرسونل سفارت ایالات متحده و بعضی از افغان ها از افغانستان به اوج خود رسید، ایالات متحده را مجبور ساخت تا چند هزار قوای اضافی را برای تسهیل تخلیه مستقر کند.

در 14 آگست، پرزیدنت بایدن بیانیه ای را منتشر کرد که در بخشی از آن گفت، "اگر اردوی افغانستان نتواند یا نخواهد کشور خود را حفظ کند، حضور نظامی ایالات متحده برای یک سال یا پنج سال دیگر، تفاوتی نمی کرد.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> کاخ سفید، "سخنان برزیدنت بایدن درباره مسیر بیش رو در افغانستان،" 14 ایریل 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> "اعلاميهٔ امارت اسلامي در باره بيانيه اخير رئيس جمهور ايالات متحده جو بايدن،" *ويس آف جهاد*، 15 ايريل 2021.

<sup>51</sup> كاخ سفيد، "كانفر انس خبري توسط يك مقام دولتي ارشد درباره افغانستان،" 13 ايريل 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> مؤسسه صلح ایالات متحده، گروه مطالعه افغانستان: رایور نهایی، فبروری 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> كاخ سفيد، سخنان بر زيدنت بايدن در بار ه عقب نشيني قو اي ايالات متحده از افغانستان، 8 جو لاي 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> واندا فلباب-بر اون، تصميم ايالات متحده براى عقب نشيني از افغانستان يك تصميم صحيح است، مؤسسه بروكينگز، 15 اپريل 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> "أيديت درباره عقب نشيني قواي ايالات متحده از افغانستان 31 مي 2021،" CENTCOM ،1 جون 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> گیر مولسن و کتی گانون، "اکثر قوای ار و بایی بعد از 20 سال خاموشانه افغانستان را تر ک می کنند،" *اسوشیتد بر س*، 30 جون 2021.

و حضور بی پایان امریکا در میانه جنگ داخلی یک کشور دیگر برای من قابل قبول نبود."<sup>57</sup> او این موضع را در سخنرانی 16 آگست 2021 تکرار کرد و گفت: "هیچوقت زمان خوبی برای خروج قوای امریکایی نبود".<sup>58</sup>

بعضی معتقدند که ایالات متحده به طور کامل خاتمه مؤثر جنگ را در استراتیژی های لشکرکشی و طرح های قوای خود در افغانستان قرار نداد، که منجر به اقداماتی نظامی شد که نتیجه مطلوبی برای جنگ ایجاد نکرد.<sup>59</sup> در سطح عملیاتی، بعضی ناظران قوت پلان خروج قوای امریکایی و شرکای کلیدی افغان را از افغانستان زیر سوال می برند.<sup>60</sup> چنین سوالاتی همچنین به تخمین های ANDSF جهت مقاومت در مقابل پیشروی طالبان مربوط می شود. کانگرس ممکن است بدقت بررسی کند که آیا، و چی قسم، پلانگذاری لشکرکشی نظامی می توانست این نقص های استراتیژیک و عملیاتی مشخص را مدیریت کند که آیا نخیر.<sup>61</sup>

#### سلطهٔ طالبان و سقوط دولت افغانستان

#### <u> کدام زمانی و چی قسم طالبان بر قوای دولت افغانستان غلبه کرد؟<sup>62</sup> </u>

در طول سال های 2020 و 2021، مقامات افغان کوشش کردند که تأثیر مخرب احتمالی خروج قوای ایالات متحده را کم اهمیت نشان بدهند و در عین حال بر لزوم ادامه کمک های مالی ایالات متحده به قوای افغان تأکید می کردند. 63 در یک کانفرانس مطبوعاتی در ماه می 2021، جنرال مارک میلی، رئیس قوای مشترک اردو، گفت که "نتایج بد" با توجه به آنچه که او منحیث نقاط قوت دولت و اردوی افغانستان توصیف می کند، "اجتناب ناپذیر" نیست. 64 در ارزیابی سالانه تهدیدات در سال 2021، دفتر مدیر استخبارات ملی راپور داد که "در حالتی که ائتلاف از حمایت خود دست بکشد، دولت افغانستان برای مهار کردن طالبان مشکل خواهد داشت. 65

یک ارزیابی خارجی که در جنوری 2021 منتشر شد به این نتیجه رسید که طالبان از یک برتری قدرتمند نسبت به قوای دفاعی و امنیتی ملی افغانستان (ANDSF) در حصهٔ انسجام، و برتری جزئی در حصهٔ جلب و جذب قوا برخوردار است و این دو قوا اساساً در منابع مادی و حمایت خارجی تفاوت دارند. یک امتیاز ANDSF که تعداد آن باشد، بسیار محدودتر از آنچیزی که اغلباً فرض می شد، ارزیابی شد. نویسنده در ارزیابی نهایی خود به این نتیجه رسید که طالبان از برتری اندکی نسبت به دولت برخوردار است. 66 طالبان همچنین بر قلمروهای قابل توجهی کنترول پیدا کرده بود: در اکتوبر 2018، آخرین زمانی که دولت ایالات متحده چنین دیتاهایی را به دسترس عموم قرار داد، این گروه کنترول 40 فیصد از افغانستان را در اختیار داشت یا در حال مبارزه بود و در سال های بعد هم به بیشرفت های تدریجی ادامه داد.

<sup>57</sup> كاخ سفيد، "اطلاعيه توسط يرزيدنت جو بايدن درباره افغانستان،" 14 أگست 2021.

<sup>58</sup> کاخ سفید، "سخنان بر ز بدنت بایدن در بار ه افغانستان،" 16 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> کریستوفر دی. کولندا، بیروزی هیچ: تصور *اشتباه ما درباره جنگ* (انتشارات یوهنتون کنتاکی، تحت چاپ).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> دوان کول، دانیلا دیاز، ملانی زانونا، لورن فاکس و جنیفر هانسلر، "جمهوری خواهان ارشد کمیته روابط خارجی بایدن را به خاطر "فاجعه تمام عیار" در افغانستان محکوم می کنند"، *سی ان ان پالیتکس*، 15 آگست 2021. رک

https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/15/politics/michael-mccaul-afghanistan-withdrawal-criticism-cnntv/index.html المجتب ا

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاورمیانه، و کاتلین مک اینز، کارشناس امنیت بین المللی، تهیه شده است

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> زهرا رحیمی، "ANDSF قوای هوایی را به نمایش می گذارد در حالی که کشور برای خروج ایالات متحده آماده می شود،" *طلوع نیوز*، 26 ابر بل 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> متن: جلسه مطبوعاتی وزیر دفاع آستین و رئیس قوای مشترک جنرال میلی، وزارت دفاع، 6 می 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> ار زیابی سالانه تهدید جامعه استخبار اتی ایالات متحده، دفتر مدیر استخبار ات ملی، 19 ابریل 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> جاناتان شرودن، "قواي امنيتي افغانستان در مقابل طالبان: ارزيابي نهايي"، CTC Sentinel، سال 14، شماره 1، جنوري 2021.

در اوایل ماه می 2021، طالبان پیشروی وسیعی را شروع کردند که ساحات وسیعی از مناطق روستایی کشور را به تصرف خود در آوردند و تسلط این گروه را بالای بعضی از مناطق مستحکم کردند که قبلاً در آن ها حضور چشمگیری داشتند. تصرف سایر مناطق توسط طالبان تعجب آورتر بود: بعضی از مناطق شمالی زمانی که این گروه در دهه 1990 قدرت را در دست داشتند در برابر طالبان مقاومت نظامی کرده بودند، که سقوط آنها در سال 2021 به دست طالبان بسیار مهم بود. یک منبع تخمین زد که طالبان کنترول بیشتر از 100 ولسوالی از 400 ولسوالی افغانستان را در ماههای می و جون 2021 بدست گرفتند. 67 براساس راپورها سرعت پیشروی طالبان بعضی از اعضای این گروه را هم غافلگیر کرد، قسمیکه یکی از قومندانان گفته است که قوایش عمداً از تصرف مراکز ولایت ها قبل از خروج قوای ایالات متحده پر هیز می کنند. 68 در جو لای، طالبان شروع به تصرف گذرگاه های سرحدی با تاجیکستان، ایران و پاکستان کردند و دولت افغانستان را از عواید گمرکی حیاتی محروم کرد. در 21 جو لای 2021، جنرال میلی تخمین زد که بیشتر از 200 ولسوالی تحت کنترول طالبان است، اما تأکید کرد که طالبان هیچ مرکز ولایتی را که در آن قوای افغان تجمیع شده بودند، تصرف نکر ده است. 69

در 6 آگست 2021، طالبان اولین مرکز و لایتی خود را تصرف کرد، یک دستاورد قابل توجه با نظر به اینکه قومندانان ایالات متحده و دیگران اغلب به ناتوانی طالبان در تصرف و کنترول مراکز ولایتی در سال های اخیر منحیث مدر کی بر قدرت نسبی دولت افغانستان اشاره کرده بودند. تصرف نیمی از مراکز و لایت های افغانستان توسط طالبان در طی یک هفته بعد، بسیاری از ناظران و بنا به راپورها، مقامات امریکایی، را شگفت زده کرد.<sup>70</sup> طبق راپورها تا 13 آگست، مقامات ایالات متحده نگران بودند که طالبان می توانند مدت چند روز به کابل برسند. بعد از سقوط جلال آباد در شرق و مزار شریف در شمال، طالبان آخرین شهرهای بزرگ را به تصرف درآوردند و آخرین پایگاه های مقاومت سازمان یافته دولت افغانستان را از بین بردند. در صبح 15 آگست 2021، طالبان وارد کابل شدند و تسلط مؤثر خود را بر کشور کامل کردند. ولایت مرکزی و دارای اهمیت تاریخی پنجشیر، جایی که بعضی از رهبران سابق افغانستان در حال کوشش برای ایجاد مقاومت مسلحانه در برابر طالبان بودند، در سپتمبر 2021 در میان راپورهایی مبنی بر کشتار غیرنظامیان توسط طالبان به تصرف قوای طالبان در آمد.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> كيت كلارك و عبيد على، "يك چهارم ولسوالى هاى افغانستان در ميان فراخوان هاى "مقاومت دوم" به دست طالبان افتاد"، شبكه تحليلگر ان افغانستان، 2 جو لاى 2021.

<sup>68</sup> دن دی لوس، مشتاق یوسف زی و صفور ا اسمیت، "حتی طالبان از سرعت پیشروی خود در افغانستان شگفت زده شده اند"، اخبار ان بی سی، 25 جون 2021.

<sup>69</sup> جلسه مطبوعاتی آستین وزیر دفاع و رئیس قوای مشترک اردو، جنرال میلی، وزارت دفاع ایالات متحده، 21 جو لای 2021. 70 زیک میلر و همکاران، "تیم بایدن از دستاوردهای سریع طالبان در افغانستان غافلگیر شد"، آسوشیتیپرس، 15 آگست 2021. 71 "بحران افغانستان: طالبان اشخاص ملکی را در قلعه مقاومت به قتل میرسانند،" بی بی سی، 13 سیتمبر 2021.

#### مراكز ولايتي تحت كنترول دولت افغانستان مراكز ولايتي تحت كنترول طالبان ( = مراكز تازه اشغال شده) 6 الى 8 آگست 9 الى 11 آگست طالبان اولین مرکز و لایتی خود را گرفتند، زرنج؛ در طالبان دستاوردهای ساحات شمالی را تثبیت میان درگیری های سنگین در شهرهای جنوبی، طالبان مى كند و فراه را در غرب اشغال مى كنند. چند مرکز ولایت شمالی را گرفتند. Farah Zaranj 14 الى 15 آگست 12 الى 13 آگست طالبان آخرین شهرهای بزرگ باقیمانده را تصرف می طالبان دومین و سومین شهر های بزرگ افغانستان (قندهار كنند، مزار شريف در شمال و جلال آباد در شرق؛ و هرات در غرب) را تصرف مي كنند و قواي افغان طالبان 15 آگست وارد كابل مى شوند. شكست مي خورند. Mazar-e-Sharif Jalalabad Herat Kabul Kandahai

#### شكل 1. كنترول طالبان بر مراكز ولايتي، 15-6 آگست 2021

منبع: ايجاد شده توسط CRS. سرحدات ماخوذ از وزارت امور خارجه ايالات متحده، GADM، و Esri.

در حالی که طالبان در بعضی مناطق با مقاومت ، هرچند در نهایت ناموفق، از طرف قوای دولتی مواجه شدند،<sup>72</sup> بعضی از مراکز ولایت ها و مناطق دیگر را با حداقل درگیری تصرف کردند. بر اساس راپور ها، در بسیاری از این مناطق، طالبان خروج قوای دولتی (و تحویل اسلحه های آنها) را ذریعهٔ پرداخت پول یا با وساطت بزرگان محلی که به دنبال جلوگیری از خونریزی بودند، تضمین کردند.<sup>73</sup>

کارشناسان برای اینکه جرا قوای ANDSF جلوی بیشروی طالبان را نگرفتند، توضیحاتی ارائه کرده اند.<sup>74</sup>

در سالهای اخیر تعداد تلفات و فرسایش بلند در ANDSF راپور داده شده است. $^{75}$  در حالی که تعداد قوای رسمی ANDSF کمتر از 300000 راپور داده شده است، اما اکثر ناظران قدرت واقعی آن را پایین تر ارزیابی می کنند.

<sup>12</sup> اخبار بی بی سی، افغانستان: طالبان به حملات به سه شهر اصلی ادامه می دهد، 1 آگست 2021. /https://www.bbc.com/news world-asia-58040141

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> سوزانا جورج، "سقوط اردوی افغانستان: معاملات غیرقانونی و فرارهای دسته جمعی،" *واشنگتن پست*، 15 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> رک. همچنین دیدگاه IN11728 سی آر اس، فروپا*شی قوای دفاعی و امنیتی ملی افغانستان: نتایج کمک و همکاری امنیتی ایالات متحده، نوشته کریستینا ال. عربیه* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> از اکتوبر 2017، آمارهای عمومی در مورد تعداد ANDSF توسط اردوی ایالات متحده منتشر نشد. شاون اسنو، "راپور: مقامات ایالات متحده آمار مهم تلفات و آمادگی افغانستان را طبقه بندی می کنند"، *میلیتری تایمز*، 30 اکتوبر 2017.

- فساد گسترده در اردو و دولت افغانستان، که اغلب باعث بدون معاش ماندن یا حتی بدون غذا ماندن سربازان می شود، که مسلماً اقتدار دولت را تضعیف کرده و حامیان سابق و بالقوه را از آن دور می کند. -
- عدم آمادگی ر هبر ان ملکی و نظامی افغانستان که، به گفته بعضی از تحلیلگران، باور نداشتند که ایالات متحده در نهایت، قوا و قرار دادی های خود را خارج کند.<sup>77</sup>
- محاسبات سیاسی توسط دولت افغانستان برای عدم واگذاری کمپ های آسیب پذیر روستایی به طالبان، که قوای افغان را بیش از حد تحت فشار قرار داد و به راحتی توسط جنگجویان طالبان محاصره شدند.<sup>78</sup>
- أن موافقتنامه فبروری 2020 ایالات متحده و طالبان، که بنابر راپور ها، روحیه قوای افغان را "تضعیف" کرد و باعث شد تعداد در حال افز ایشی از سرباز آن افغان پول های طالبان را بپذیرند و تسلیم شوند.<sup>79</sup> بعضی همچنین استدلال می کنند که پایان حملات هوایی گسترده ایالات متحده بعد از موافقتنامه فبروری 2020 به طالبان فرصت داد تا دومر تبه ساز ماندهی شوند و اراده قوای افغان برای جنگ را تضعیف کرد.<sup>80</sup>
- اً عقب نشینی قرار دادی های ایالات متحده و بین المللی (بر اساس موافقتامه ایالات متحده و طالبان)، که افغان ها برای حفظ قوای هوایی خود و همچنین استخبارات و پشتیبانی نزدیک هوایی به آنها وابسته بودند.<sup>81</sup>
- ا ساختار متمرکز اردوی افغانستان، که بعضی از ناظران استدلال می کنند ایالات متحده یک اردوی متمرکز ملی را تعلیم داد که با شرایط منحصر به فرد افغانستان، بخصوص نتوع قومی و تاریخ قوای امنیتی سازمان یافته و رهبری شده به حالت محلی، سازگار نیست.<sup>82</sup>
- اولویت بندی کمیت قوای ANDSF بر کیفیت آنها توسط ایالات متحده، که منجر به تصمیم گیری در مورد قدرت ما اولویت بندی کمیت قوای ANDSF بر کیفیت آنها توسط ایالات متحده، که منجر به تصمیم گیری در مورد قدرت نهایی ANDSF شد که بدون حمایت بین المللی غیر قابل دسترس بود.83

#### وضعيت دولت سابق افغانستان چي قسم است<sup>84</sup>?

پرزیدنت اشرف غنی، که دوره حکومت هفت ساله اش با بحران های انتخاباتی، درگیری های جناحی و نابودی تدریجی قوای افغان همراه بود، صبح روز 15 آگست 2021 از کشور فرار کرد.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> چس دانر، "چرا قوای امنیتی افغانستان ناگهان سقوط کردند"، مجله نیویورک، 17 آگست 2021; توماس گیبون-نف و تیمور شاه، "طالبان به شهرهای افغانستان نزدیک می شود، کشور را به لبه برتگاه می برد،" نیویورک تابمز، 9 جولای 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> ایمی کازمین و همکاران، "مورال ضعیف، عدم حمایت و سیاست بد: چرا اردوی افغانستان جمع شد"، *فایننشال تایمز*، 15 أگست 2021. <sup>78</sup> بنجامین جنسن، "طالبان چی قسم این کار را انجام دادند: در "هنر عملیاتی" پیروزی نظامی آن"، شورای آتلانتیک، 15 أگست2021. <sup>79</sup> چورج، "سقوط نظامی افغانستان."

<sup>80</sup> ياروسلاو تروفيموف، "چى قسم طالبان بر اردوى افغانستان غلبه كرد كه توسط ايالات متحده در مدت بيشتر از 20 سال ساخته شده بود"، *وال استريت جورنال*، 14 ايريل 2021.

<sup>۔</sup> <sup>81</sup> جک دچ، "خروج قرار دادی های خصوصی نقطه عطفی در فرویاشی نظامیان افغان بود"، ف*ارین یالسی،* 16 آگست<u>2021.</u>

<sup>82</sup> تارا كاپ، "ايالات متحده 83 ميليارد دالر براى تعليم قواى افغان مصرف كرد. چرا اينقدر سريع از هم پاشيدند؟" *ديفنس وان*، 14 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> برای بحث قبلی در مورد این نکته، رک. ربکا زیمرمن، "تعلیم قوای نظامی خارجی: کمیت در مقابل کیفیت"، *وار آن راکس*، 15 جولای 2015.

<sup>84</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاور میانه، تهیه شده است

غروب 15 آگست، غنی در فیسبوک یک پست منتشر کرد که برای جلوگیری از خونریزی، کابل را ترک کرده و گفت: "طالبان به حکم شمشیر و تفنگ پیروز شده اند و حالا آنها مسئول حفظ شرف، ثروت و عزت نفس هموطنان هستند."<sup>85</sup> وزارت امور خارجه و همکاری بین المللی امارات متحده عربی بعد از چند روز سؤال در مورد مکان وی، در 18 آگست اعلام کرد که "امارات متحده عربی به دلایل بشردوستانه، پذیرای رئیس جمهور اشرف غنی و خانواده اش شده است."<sup>86</sup> از 17 سپتمبر، به نظر نمی رسد که او به شکل رسمی از وظیفهٔ خود استعفا داده باشد.

بسیاری دیگر از نخبگان وابسته به دولت، که قبلاً منحیث صاحبان قدرت بانفوذ شناخته می شدند، همچنین کشور را ترک کرده اند یا با تصاحب قدرت به حاشیه رفته اند. اسماعیل خان، قومندان ملیشه ها و والی اسبق و لایت هرات، قبل از اینکه اجاز هٔ انتقال به ایران را پیدا کند، توسط طالبان در جنگ هرات دستگیر شد؛ مارشال عبدالرشید دوستم و عطا محمد نور، یکی دیگر از والیان سابق، قوای خود را در شهر شمالی مزارشریف گرد هم آوردند و بعد از آن به از بکستان فرار کردند. گروه دیگری از رهبران سیاسی افغانستان، از جمله عبدالله وئیس شورای عالی آشتی ملی، حامد کرزی رئیس جمهور سابق و گلبدین حکمتیار رهبر سابق شورشیان اسلام گرا، بعد از تسلط طالبان با مقامات این گروه دیدار کردند، اما کدام وظیفه ای در حکومت طالبان اجرا نمی کنند. یک راپور رسانه ای در 26 آگست، کرزی و عبدالله را "عملاً در حصر خانگی" توصیف کرد. 87

امرالله صالح، معاون اول رئيس جمهور سابق، در 17 آگست در توييتر مدعى شد كه "شخص مسئول قانونى [همان] رئيس جمهور" است و "با همه ر هبران به تماس مى شود تا حمايت و اجماع آنها را تضمين كند." مال حالح قبلاً متعهد شده بود كه هرگز تسليم حكومت طالبان نخواهد شد و از افغان ها خواسته بود تا براى مقاومت در مقابل اين گروه به او ملحق شوند. او به ولايت مركزى پنجشير نقل مكان كرد، كه موقعيت استراتيزيك و ميراث تاريخى آن (اين شهر هرگز توسط شوروى در دهه 1980 يا طالبان در دهه 1990 اشغال نشد) باعث اهميت فراوان آن شد. پسر قومندان فقيد اتحاد شمال، احمدشاه مسعود، به او ملحق شد. آنها اعلام كردند كه در مقابل طالبان مقاومت مسلحانه ايجاد كرده اند و از ايالات متحده و جامعه بين الملل حمايت خواستند. هم در اين راپورها از ادامه درگيرى هاى پراكنده و كشتار غيرنظاميان توسط طالبان، اين گروه ادعا كردند كه از 6 سپنمبر كنترول اين و لايت را به دست گرفته است. 90

با تصرف پنجشیر، به نظر می رسد که طالبان به شکل مؤثر بر کل کشور کنترول دارد، برخلاف دهه 1990 که ائتلاف شمال سابق نماینده مخالفان مسلح مهم بود و حدود 10 فیصد از خاک کشور را در اختیار داشت. طالبان همچنین روابط قوی تری با قدرت های منطقه ای دارند (از جمله بعضی از کشور ها که زمانی از ائتلاف شمال علیه طالبان حمایت می کردند).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> شانتال داسیلوا، احمد منگل و مشتاق یوسفزی، "از ملت ساز افغان تا زندگی در "تبعید": اشرف غنی از کشور با شکست فرار می کند"، *اخبار ای بی سی*، 16 آگست https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/afghan-nation- builder-life. 2021 exile-ashraf-ghani-flees-country-defeat-n1276826

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> وزارت امور خارجه و همكارى بين المللى امارات متحده عربى، بيانيه درباره رئيس جمهور اشرف غنى، 18 أكست 2021. <sup>87</sup> نيك رابرتسون، "به نقل از منابع، طالبان موانع امنيتى را از حامد كرزى، رئيسجمهور سابق افغانستان، و عبدالله عبدالله برمىدارد"، سى ان ان، 26 أكست 2021.

<sup>88</sup> امر الله صالح، توبيتر، 17 أكست 2021، ساعت 9:59 صبح،

المرابع تعلق ويبر 17 السك 2021 مناسب 1970 مناسب المسكر ال

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> احمد مسعود، "دیدگاه: مقاومت مجاهدین در بر ابر طالبان حالا شروع می شود. اما ما ضرورت به کمک داریم،" *واشنگتن پست*، 18 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> ناتاشا توراک، "در حالی که مقاومت ضد طالبان و عده مقاومت داده است، جنگ در دره پنجشیر افغانستان ادامه دارد،" *سی ان بی* سی، 7 سبتمبر 2021،

با اینحال، وجود گروههای مقاومت، در پنجشیر یا مکان های دیگر، می تواند به حیث یک نقطه تجدید قوا عمل کند یا مخالفان طالبان را در سر اسر کشور تحریک کند، که ممکن است بعد از آن درخواست های بیشتری را برای کمک های ایالات متحده یا بین المللی داشته باشند.

#### طالبان از زمان در اختیار گرفتن قدرت چی قسم عمل کرده اند<sup>91</sup>?

طالبان سال ها مناطقی از افغانستان را کنترول کرده اند، اما با نسلط آنها بالای تمام کشور در آگست 2021، آنها برای اولین مرتبه از سال 2001 کنترول مناطق شهری را در دست گرفتند. افغانستانی که طالبان در سال 2021 بر آن حکومت خواهد کرد، از نظر اقتصادی، سیاسی و اجتماعی متفاوت از کشوری است که این گروه دو دهه پیش بر آن حکومت می کردند. با تحکیم قدرت طالبان، ناظران هم در مورد اینکه آنها چقدر تغییر کرده اند و چی قسم ممکن است حکومت کنند، حدس و گمان می زنند. <sup>92</sup> دولت تندرو "موقت" که توسط طالبان در 7 سپتمبر 2021 اعلام شد، یک پالیسی عام الشمولی را برای حکومت کردن نشان نمی دهد.

در 7 سپتمبر 2021، ذبیح الله مجاهد، سخنگوی قدیمی طالبان (که برای اولین مرتبه در انظار عمومی ظاهر می شد) نامهای 33 نفر را اعلام کرد که منحیث و زیران "موقت" نام گرفته شدند که "کابینه موقت" را برای اداره کشور ایجاد می کنند؛ طالبان از این حکومت تحت عنوان امارت اسلامی افغانستان یاد میکند، قسمیکه برای چندین دهه از خود به همین نام یاد میکردند. مشخص نیست که کدام شخص و چرا ممکن است این اشخاص در آینده تبدیل شوند یا اینکه این بست های "موقت" از کدام لحاظ با بست های دائمی فرق دارد. دولت طالبان همچنین در دهه 1990 "ظاهراً موقت" بود. 93

رهبر طالبان هیبت الله آخوندزاده (که یک عکس تایید شده از او وجود دارد و هیچ وقت در انظار عمومی ظاهر نشده است) منحیث امیر این گروه، قدرت عالی را در اختیار خواهد داشت؛ محمد حسن آخوند، وزیر خارجه پیشین طالبان، نخست وزیر سر پرست است. یکی از تحلیلگران، آخوند را "نسبتاً ضعیف" توصیف می کند، شخصیتی "بدون بحث" که انتخابش مانع رقابت میان چهره ها و جناح های قدر تمندتر در داخل طالبان می شود. <sup>94</sup> عبدالغنی بر ادر ، که مذاکرات با ایالات متحده را رهبری می کرد، سر پرست معاونت نخست وزیری است. بر ادر در 13 سپتمبر 2021 یک فایل صوتی منتشر کرد که در آن شایعات مربوط به کشته شدن یا مجروح شدن خود را در نزاع با دیگر اعضای طالبان رد کرد؛ بی بی سی در 15 سپتمبر 2021 راپور داد که بر ادر بعد از اختلاف شدید با شخصیت های حقانی (به بخش ذیل مراجعه کنید) در مورد اینکه آیا شاخه های سیاسی یا نظامی طالبان لایق اطلاق اعتبار برای پیروزی این گروه هستند، به قندهار رفته است. <sup>95</sup> دیگر اشخاص کلیدی عبارتند از: عبدالحق و اثق، سرپرست اداره استخبارات (که از سال 2001 تا زمان آزادی در تبادل محبوسین در سال کلیدی عبارتند از: عبدالحق و اثق، سرپرست متحده در خلیج گوانتانامو کیوبا حبس بود) و سرپرست و زارت دفاع، محمد یعقوب (پسر محمد عمر رهبر بنیانگذار طالبان).

تقریباً تمام اعضای "کابینه موقت" از مقامات سابق طالبان یا وفاداران قدیمی هستند. تمام اعضای "کابینه موقت" مرد هستند و اکثریت قریب به اتفاق از قوم پشتون و عمدتاً از جنوب افغانستان هستند. بیشتر از نیمی از آنها قبلاً تحت تحریم های ایالات متحده و/یا سازمان ملل متحد قرار داشته اند، بشمول سرپرست وزارت داخله، سراج الدین حقانی. وزارت امور خارجه امریکا سال هاست برای معلوماتی که به دستگیری حقانی، رئیس شبکه حقانی، یک سازمان تروریستی خارجی به نظر ایالات متحده (FTO) می باشد، منجر شود، الی 10 ملیون دالر جایزه تعیین کرده است.

<sup>91</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاور میانه، تهیه شده است.

<sup>92 &</sup>quot;حكومت طالبان در افغانستان آغاز شد،" كروه بين المللي بحران، 24 آگست 2021.

<sup>93 &</sup>quot;كدام شخص دولت طالبان را رهبري خواهد كرد؟" گروه بين المللي بحران، 9 سبتمبر 2021.

<sup>94</sup> مارتين ون بيجلرت، "تمركز حكومت جديد طالبان: انسجام داخلي، تسلط خارجي"، شبكه تحليلگران افغانستان، 12 سيتمبر 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> خدای نور نصار، "افغانستان: منابع می گویند که ر هبر ان طالبان در کاخ ریاست جمهوری درگیر شده اند"، بی بی سی، 15 سپتمبر. 2021.

بعضی معتقدند که نقش حقانی در دولت موقت طالبان انعکاس دهندهٔ قدرت نظامی بیشتر آنها آست و می تواند همکاری ایالات متحده را با طالبان سخت تر کند. <sup>96</sup> یک سخنگوی وزارت امور خارجه گفت که دولت "مطمئناً جامعه بین المللی و ایالات متحده، منحیث بخشی از آنچه را که امیدوار بود ببینند، مشاهده نمی کنند. "<sup>97</sup> بعضی حدس می زدند که طالبان ممکن است منحیث قسمتی از و عده خود برای ایجاد یک "دولت همه شمول" با مقامات سابق دولت افغانستان (مانند رئیس جمهور سابق حامد کرزی) یا دیگرانی در خارج از جنبش ارتباط برقرار کنند.

باید منتظر ماند که این حکومت طالبان چی قسم با چالش های متعددی که افغانستان با آن مواجه است، از جمله بحران اقتصادی در حال افزایش، مقابله خواهد کرد. به نظر می رسد که طالبان بسیاری از قابلیت های تخنیکی و اجرایی را ندارند و ممکن است برای انجام وظایف حکومتی و امنیتی در سراسر کشور، به خصوص بدون مشارکت اشخاصی که قبلاً از دولت سابق افغانستان حمایت کرده اند، دچار مشکل شوند. این امکان وجود دارد که طالبان چنین اشخاصی را مجبور یا تحریک به مشارکت کنند. مجاهد در یک کنفرانس مطبوعاتی در 17 آگست 2021 بر عفو اعلام شده توسط طالبان برای کارمندان دولت تأکید مجدد کرد و گفت:

به همه هموطنان، چه ترجمانان، چه آنهایی که فعالیت نظامی و یا غیرنظامی کرده اند، اطمینان می دهم که همه آنها مهم بوده اند. از هیچ کسی انتقام گرفته نمی شود.... هزاران سرباز [افغان] که 20 سال با ما جنگیدند، بعد از اشغال، همگی عفو شدند.<sup>98</sup>

ناظران به این نکته اشاره می کنند که همچنین طالبان بعد از تصرف کابل در سال 1996 شبیه چنین اظهاراتی را بیان می کردند ولی با سرکوب وحشیانه و نقض حقوق بشر، آنها را زیر یا گذاشتند.<sup>99</sup>

تظاهرات علیه این گروه در چندین شهر در سراسر کشور، از جمله توسط صدها زن در کابل، برگزار شده است. وزارت داخله طالبان در 8 سپتمبر 2021 فرمانی را صادر کرد که تظاهرات بدون جواز را منع می نمود. میشل باشله، کمیشنر عالی حقوق بشر سازمان ملل متحد، در 13 سپتمبر گفت که قوای طالبان از "خشونت در حال افزایش علیه معترضان و خبر نگاران" استفاده کرده اند. 100

#### اگر ایالات متحده و جامعه جهانی طالبان را بعنوان دولت رسمی افغانستان به رسمیت بشناسند، کدام نتایجی خواهد داشت<sup>101</sup>

هیچ کشوری دولت اعلام شده از طرف طالبان، بعد از تسلط آنها بر افغانستان، را به رسمیت نشناخته است. دولت ایالات متحده اعلام نکرده است که آیا دولت تحت رهبری طالبان را به رسمیت خواهد شناخت یا نخیر <sup>102</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> استفانی فایندلی، "بازی هوشمندانه شبکه حقانی با نقش های دولت افغانستان به اوج خود می رسد"، فایننشال تایمز، 10 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>97</sup> وزارت امور خارجه، جلسه مطبوعاتی وزارت امور خارجه - 9 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>98 &</sup>quot;متن اولين كنفر انس خبري طالبان در كابل"، الجزيره، 17 أگست 2021.

<sup>99</sup> گريم وود، "اين طالبان نسخه 2.0 نيست"، أتلانتيك، 18 أگست 2021.

<sup>100 &</sup>quot;آبدیت شفاهی در باره وضعیت حقوق بشر در افغانستان" چهل و هشتمین جلسه شورای حقوق بشر، 13 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> این بخش توسط متیو سی وید، کارشناس فانونگذاری سیاست خارجی، و جنیفر کی السی، وکیل عدلیه، تهیه شده است.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> وقتی در یک کنفرانس مطبوعاتی در 23 اگست، از ند پرایس، سخنگوی وزارت امور خارجه پرسیده شد: "آیا شما طالبان را در حال حاضر حاکم واقعی افغانستان می دانید؟" او گفت: "وضعیت در جریان است. هیچ نوع انتقال رسمی قدرت انجام نشده است." در یک کنفرانس مطبوعاتی در 25 اگست، جان کربی، سخنگوی پنتاگون، از طالبان به حیث "روسای اسمی دولت" یاد کرد.

و ناظران معتقدند که تصمیم به چنین تأییدی در آینده نزدیک از دولت ایالات متحده نامحتمل است. 103 در حالی که طالبان در حال حاضر از منظر عملی یا "بالفعل" افغانستان را کنترول و اداره میکنند، جامعه بین المللی طالبان را منحیث حکومت مشروع یا "قانونی" این کشور قبول نکرده است. بر اساس قانون ملل، به رسمیت شناختن رسمی یک دولت خارجی تأیید این است که یک دولت حق کنترول قلمرو یک کشور و اعمال قدرت حاکمیتی 104 را دارد و چنین دولتی مسئول انجام تعهدات بین المللی آن کشور، از جمله تبعیت از قطعنامه های شورای امنیت سازمان ملل، است که بسیاری از آنها در حال حاضر بر افغانستان اعمال می شود. هر کشوری تصمیم می گیرد که دولت یک کشور دیگر را رسماً به رسمیت بشناسد؛ به رسمیت شناختن می تواند از طریق اعلام آشکار یا سایر روش های اثباتی انجام شود، یا ضمنی و از طریق اقدامات دولت اعلام کننده باشد، مانند انعقاد یک موافقتنامه بین المللی با دولت مورد شناسایی. 105 به رسمیت شناختن معمولاً شرط ضروری جهت بر قراری روابط دیپلوماتیک است. در ایالات متحده، دولت های به رسمیت شناخته شده ممکن است به حیث یک حکومت خارجی در محاکم ایالات متحده شکایت کنند و در شرایط خاص از مصئونیت حاکمیتی در مقابل شکایت، مستفید شوند. بر اساس قوانین داخلی، صلاحیت به رسمیت شناختن دولت های خارجی در حصه انجام روابط بین المللی با رئیس جمهور است. 100

زمانیکه طالبان در سال 1996 کنترول افغانستان را به دست گرفت و تا زمان حمله به ایالات متحده در سال 2001 بعنوان دولت بافعل عمل کرد، نه ایالات متحده و نه جامعه جهانی گسترده تر، رژیم طالبان را منحیث دولت قانونی افغانستان به رسمیت نشناختند. رسمیت نشناختند. تنها سه کشور، عربستان سعودی، امارات متحده عربی و پاکستان، طالبان را به رسمیت شناختند. افغانستان در سازمان ملل توسط نماینده دایمی و دیگر مقامات دولت سابق افغانستان نمایندگی می شد، و کمیته اعتبارنامه مجمع عمومی سازمان ملل این موضوع را به تعویق می انداخت که آیا نمایندگان دولت قبلی یا طالبان باید نماینده این کشور باشند. <sup>107</sup> یک قطعنامه شورای امنیت سازمان ملل متحد دولت ها را مکلف می ساخت که دفاتر دیپلوماتیک رسمی طالبان را در خاک خود بسته کنند. <sup>108</sup> در ماه مارچ 2020، قطعنامه 2513 شورای امنیت سازمان ملل متحد اعلام کرد که طالبان "در سازمان ملل به رسمیت شناخته نشده است، و علاوه بر این، شورای امنیت از احیای امارت اسلامی افغانستان حمایت نمی کند..."<sup>109</sup>

نماینده دایمی افغانستان (که توسط حکومت غنی تعیین شده است) در 16 آگست 2021 در شورای امنیت به نمایندگی از افغانستان صحبت کرد و همچنان به حیث نماینده رسمی افغانستان در سازمان ملل متحد پذیرفته شده است. یک کمیته اعتبار نامهٔ جدید قرار است در جریان افتتاحیه 22-2021 مجمع عمومی سازمان ملل متحد در سپتمبر 2021 انتخاب شود؟ ایالات متحده و همچنین سایر اعضای دائم شورای امنیت سازمان ملل الله اغلب منحیث اعضای کمیته حضور دارند. این کمیته ممکن است در مورد نمایندگی افغانستان در سازمان ملل تصمیم فوری اتخاذ نکند و نماینده دائم فعلی افغانستان به مسئولیت خود باقی بماند. قسمیکه در نوبت قبل طالبان در قدرت بودند، کمیته می تواند هر تصمیمی در مورد اعتبار نامه افغانستان را برای مدت نامحدود به تعویق بیندازد.

<sup>103</sup> رك. نهال طوسى، "بعيد است بايدن دولت طالبان را به رسميت بشناسد،" بوليتيكو، 11 سيتمبر 2021.

<sup>104</sup> شرح قوانين (سوم) قانون روابط خارجي ايالات متحده § 203، نظر a، ص. 84 (1986).

<sup>105</sup> أي. بر او نلي، اصول حقوق بين الملل عمومي، ص. 93 (وير ايش هفتم، 2008).

<sup>106</sup> زيوتوفسكي مربوط با زيوتوفسكي عليه كري، 1, 1, 1, 576 (2015).

<sup>107</sup> رک. روش عملی سازمان ملل متحد در مواردی که نمایندگی یک کشور عضو به چالش کشیده شده است - قطعنامه 396 (V) مجمع عمومی 14 دسمبر 1950، 1997 سالنامه حقوقی سازمان ملل متحد، صحص. 6-465. همچنین رک. "اعتبارنامه"، آبیین نامه داخلی مجمع عمومی 14 دسمبر https://www.un.org/en/ga/about/ropga/credent.shtml. (29-27)

<sup>108</sup> فقرهٔ 333/8(a) of S/RES.

<sup>.</sup>S/RES/2513 109

<sup>110</sup> چین، فر انسه، فدر اسیون روسیه و بریتانیا.

علیر غم این واقعیت که به نظر نمی رسد دولت سابق افغانستان ادعای در قدرت ماندن داشته باشد<sup>111</sup> و تنها طالبان مدعی نمایندگی در سازمان ملل است، به گفته حداقل یک ناظر، ممکن است طالبان از نمایندگی افغانستان منع شوند، حتی اگر هیچ رقیبی نمایندگی آن را به جالش نکشد.<sup>112</sup>

این که آیا یک دولت به قسم دموکر اتیک انتخاب می شود یا نه، بعضی اوقات ممکن است در پروسیجر به رسمیت شناختن توسط بسیاری از کشور ها، از جمله در بعضی موارد ایالات متحده، موضو عیت داشته باشد. <sup>113</sup> در صورتی که طالبان به دنبال انتصاب مقامات دولت سابق غنی در پست های دولتی باشند (اگر چه در دولت موقت اعلام شده در 7 سپتمبر 2021 این کار انجام نشده است) مسئله به رسمیت شناختن طالبان می تواند تحت تأثیر قرار گیرد. چنین اقدامی ممکن است منحیث و زنه ای باشد در برابر هرنوع نامشرو عیتی که طالبان ممکن است با گرفتن قدرت از یک دولت منتخب دموکر اتیک در افغانستان با آن مواجه شود. <sup>114</sup> طالبان مدت ها است که منحیث یک نهاد حکومتی قانونی به رسمیت شناخته می شود و بعضی ناظران معتقدند که این گروه از زمانی که برای اولین مرتبه در افغانستان از سال 1996 الی 2001 حکومت کردند، دستگاه سیاست خارجی خود را ارتقاء بخشیده است. <sup>115</sup>

بعضی از کشورها و سازمان های بین المللی ممکن است بخواهند از به رسمیت شناختن منحیث ابز اری استفاده کنند تا طالبان را در قبال تعهدات افغانستان تحت قوانین بین المللی جوابده نمایند، مانند مشروط کردن به رسمیت شناختن به این نوع تعهدات یا خودداری از روابط دیپلوماتیک تا زمانی که چنین شرایطی پوره شود. 116 فقط یک دولت به رسمیت شناخته شده در افغانستان می تواند برای دریافت کمک های خارجی، از جمله کمک های نظامی و بشردوستانه و کمک های اقتصادی، از موسسات مالی بین المللی درخواست کند. در 15 آگست 2021، آنتونی بلینکن، وزیر امور خارجه، بدون نام بردن از طالبان، اظهار داشت حکومتی که در افغانستان به تعهدات بین المللی خود پاییند باشد و از حقوق بشر مردم خود محافظت کند، "دولتی است که ما می توانیم با آن کار کنیم و به رسمیت بشناسیم". 11 به نظر می رسد چین، روسیه و سایر کشور های مهم با استناد به حکومت مؤثر طالبان بالای اکثریت کشور، هرچند نوپای، اشاره کرده اند که به رسمیت شناختن طالبان ممکن است. 118 از سپتمبر 2021، به نظر می رسد که اکثر کشور ها در حال نظارت بر اقدامات طالبان در سطح داخلی و بین المللی هستند تا تعیین کنند که آیا باید دولت طالبان را به رسمیت بشناسند و روابط رسمی بر قرار کنند، و در عوض متعهد به حمایت مداوم خود از مردم افغانستان، حقوق بشر و کمک های بشردوستانه به آنها باشند. 119

بعضی سوالات دیگری که کانگرس می تواند از بخش اجرایی بیرسد عبارتند از:

ایالات متحده ممکن است در کدام مقطع، به رسمیت شناختن دولت تحت رهبری طالبان در افغانستان را در نظر بگیرد؟ بدون به رسمیت شناختن، آیا امکان همکاری یا همراهی ایالات متحده با چنین دولتی وجود دارد؟

<sup>111</sup> رک. فدریکا پادو و نیکو پاولوپولوس، "میان مشروعیت و کنترول: طالبان در تعقیب جایگاه دولت،" Just Security 7 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>112</sup> لری دی. جانسون، "چی قسم می توان از نمایندگی افغانستان توسط طالبان در سازمان ملل متحد جلوگیری کرد؟"، Just Security، 18 آگست 2021. نماینده طالبان می تواند در جلسات شورای امنیت در مورد وضعیت افغانستان حتی بدون به رسمیت شناخته شدن بعنوان دولت مشروع این کشور، اشتراک نماید. مقررات شورای امنیت به شورا اجازه می دهد تا سایر طرفین "صلاحیتدار" را به جلسات دعوت کند، در صورتی که این طرفین بتوانند معلومات مهمی را در مورد مذاکرات شورا ارائه دهند.

<sup>113</sup> شرح قوانین (سوم) قانون روابط خارجی ایالات متحده ﴿ 203، تبصره 1 گزارشگر.

<sup>114</sup> تس بريجمن و رايان گودمن، "به رسميت شناخته شدن و طالبان،" Just Security، 17 آگست 2021.

<sup>115</sup> رک. بارنت آر. روبین، استفاده از اهرم کوشش طالبان برای به رسمیت شناخته شدن بین المللی، کتاب مسائل پروسهٔ صلح افغانستان، موسسه صلح ایالات متحده، مارچ 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> رك. بريجمن و گودمن، فوق الذكر.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> رک. سی ان ان، *و ضعبت کشور* ، 15 آگست 2021 (متن).

<sup>118</sup> اندرو آزبورن، "روسیه می گوید که کابل در زمان طالبان امن تر از زمان غنی به نظر می رسد،" رویترز، 16 آگست 2021. <sup>118</sup> رک. برای مثال، دفتر سخنگوی وزارت امور خارجه، بیانیه مشترک در مورد افغانستان، 15 آگست 2021؛ کنفرانس منطقه ای افغانستان، بیانیه نهایی رئیس، 12 آگست 2021.

#### U.S. Policy Implications of the Taliban Takeover

# How is the Taliban's takeover affecting the U.S. diplomatic presence in Afghanistan?<sup>120</sup>

On August 15, 2021, the State Department confirmed that it had evacuated the U.S. diplomatic compound in Kabul and that all remaining embassy personnel were located on the premises of Kabul International Airport. Following the completion of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Secretary Blinken announced that the State Department had suspended its diplomatic presence in the country and transferred operations to Doha, Qatar. <sup>121</sup> Ian McCary, a career State Department official, leads the U.S. diplomatic mission to Afghanistan in Doha. <sup>122</sup>

Some additional questions that Congress may consider or ask the executive branch include

What kind of diplomatic presence, if any, should the United States maintain in Afghanistan? How will the United States perform consular or other functions from Doha?

#### What is the situation regarding evacuations from Afghanistan?

On August 30, 2021, U.S. officials announced the completion of the withdrawal of its military and diplomatic personnel from Afghanistan and largely concluded its efforts to airlift U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (LPRs), and certain Afghans out of the country. <sup>123</sup> The State Department and the Pentagon say they directly evacuated or facilitated the evacuations of around 124,000 individuals, including about 6,000 American citizens. <sup>124</sup> President Biden has described the mission as an "extraordinary success," although U.S. officials acknowledge that around 100 American citizens and thousands of eligible Afghans remain in Afghanistan, many of whom seek to leave. <sup>125</sup> Some Members of Congress and rescue groups have questioned this figure, arguing that the number of U.S. citizens in Afghanistan could total as many as several hundred more than the Administration's estimate. <sup>126</sup>

President Biden has said that the United States remains committed to assisting American citizens and other eligible persons who wish to leave Afghanistan, adding that he will hold the Taliban to its commitment to provide safe passage. 127 U.S. officials are providing limited information regarding such evacuations, citing "an ongoing terrorist threat to operations of this nature."128

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> This section was prepared by Cory Gill, Analyst in Foreign Affairs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken's Remarks on Afghanistan, August 30, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken Remarks to Embassy Doha and Mission Afghanistan," September 7, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> To review the parameters under which Afghans may be eligible for resettlement in the United States, see the "What is the status of U.S. efforts to provide immigration relief to Afghans who assisted the U.S. government in the fight against the Taliban and other forces?" section of this report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, "Secretary of Defense Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Milley Press Briefing," September 1, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> The White House, "Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan," August 31, 2021; U.S. Department of State, "Department Press Briefing – September 10, 2021," September 10, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Julie Watson and Bernard Condon, "Rescue groups: US tally misses hundreds left in Afghanistan," *Associated Press*, September 4, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> The White House, "Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan," August 31, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> The White House, National Security Council, "Statement by NSC Spokesperson Emily Horne on Further U.S.

Following the reopening of the Kabul International Airport on September 9, 2021, the State Department began facilitating the evacuations of American citizens and LPRs on commercial flights. The State Department is also helping evacuate American citizens and LPRs via overland routes to an undisclosed neighboring country. <sup>129</sup> On September 17, a State Department spokesperson said that since August 31, the State Department had assisted 36 U.S. citizens and 24 LPRs in departing Afghanistan via charter flights and overland routes. <sup>130</sup>

Some Members of Congress and other observers have criticized what they characterize as poorly planned U.S. evacuation efforts, asserting that the United States failed to deliver on assurances made to American citizens and eligible Afghans that it would help them leave the country prior to the U.S. withdrawal. Press reports indicate that some personnel involved in evacuation efforts during the withdrawal process were concerned that eligibility criteria for Afghans were "everchanging," which may have led to instances where U.S. personnel prohibited eligible Afghans, including the family members of U.S. citizens, from accessing the airport. Some Members have expressed concern that many Afghans who were evacuated may not actually qualify for resettlement in the United States. States Department has faced difficulties facilitating the evacuations of LPRs and eligible Afghans. For example, U.S. efforts to evacuate hundreds of U.S. Agency for Global Media Afghan national employees, contractors, and their families have thus far not succeeded, although Secretary Blinken affirmed on September 14 that the State Department was still prioritizing their evacuation. Secretary Blinken affirmed on September 14 that the State Department was still prioritizing their evacuation.

Additionally, some Members have accused the Taliban of refusing to allow American citizens to leave Afghanistan, with one asserting that the Taliban "is holding them hostage for demands," including diplomatic recognition from the United States for the Taliban. Secretary Blinken has said that he is not aware of any such hostage-like cases. On September 9, a National Security Council spokesperson stated that the Taliban has been "cooperative" in facilitating the departures of American citizens and LPRs. 137

In addition to the matters discussed above, Members of Congress may consider the following issues as evacuations continue.

Citizen Departures from Afghanistan," September 10, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Department Press Briefing – September 10, 2021."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Department Press Briefing – September 17, 2021," September 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> House Foreign Affairs Committee (Republicans), "McCaul: 'Disgraceful' State Dept. Left Hundreds of USAGM Journalists in Afghanistan," press release, August 31, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Patsy Widakuswara and Carla Babb, "Hunger Games' Evacuations as US Left Afghanistan," *Voice of America*, September 2, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Examining the U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, 117<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., September 14, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Testimony of Secretary of State Antony Blinken at Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Examining the U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, September 14, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Michael McCaul, interview by Chris Wallace, *Fox News Sunday*, September 5, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin, Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah at a Joint Press Availability," September 7, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> The White House, "Statement by NSC Spokesperson Emily Horne on Qatar Airways Charter Flight from Kabul," September 9, 2020.

- Press reports indicate that U.S. officials are examining possible cases in which older evacuated Afghan men were admitted into the United States with girls who are under 18 years old whom they claim as wives, raising potential human trafficking concerns. The State Department has not provided a precise number of such cases, although one press report refers to "numerous incidents" where "Afghan girls have been presented to authorities as the 'wives' of much older men." One report further notes that U.S. officials in the United Arab Emirates transmitted a cable to Washington, DC, stating that some young Afghan girls were forced into marriages to escape Afghanistan after the Taliban seized control of the country.
- What evacuation plans, if any, did the Biden Administration inherit from the Trump Administration? What were the evacuation plans that the Biden Administration prepared for Afghanistan and for what possible scenarios did it plan?

# What is the status of U.S. efforts to provide immigration relief to Afghans who assisted the U.S. government in the fight against the Taliban and other forces?<sup>141</sup>

As of the date of this report, there are two main ways that Afghan nationals can gain U.S. admission and obtain lawful permanent resident (LPR)<sup>142</sup> status based largely on the assistance they provided to the United States: special immigrant visa (SIV) programs and the U.S. refugee program. In addition, Afghans may be paroled into the United States by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). A person granted parole (parolee) is permitted to enter and remain in the United States for the duration of the parole grant. Parolees do not have a set pathway to LPR status.

#### Special Immigrant Visas

Congress has enacted provisions to enable certain Afghans to obtain SIVs. Afghans apply for these SIVs on their own behalf and must provide required documentation. Individuals whose applications are approved and enter the United States on SIVs are granted LPR status upon admission. As of August 28, 2021, an approximate total of 82,000 Afghans (23,000 principal applicants and 59,000 dependent spouses and children) had been granted special immigrant status under these provisions. In FY2021 only, as of August 28, 2021, approximately 9,000 Afghans (2,000 principal applicants and 7,000 dependent spouses and children) had been granted special immigrant status under these provisions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Margaret Brennan and Bo Erickson, "U.S. investigates 'child bride' cases among Afghan evacuees," *CBS News*, September 7, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Matthew Lee, "Afghan evacuation raises concerns about child trafficking," Associated Press, September 3, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> Matthew Lee, "Afghan evacuation raises concerns about child trafficking," Associated Press, September 3, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> This section prepared by Andorra Bruno, Specialist in Immigration Policy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> LPRs (also known as green card holders) can live permanently in the United States. Typically after five years, they can apply for U.S. citizenship, subject to applicable requirements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> For additional information on Afghan SIVs, see CRS Report R43725, *Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs*.

<sup>144</sup> Links to Special Immigrant Visa Statistics as of June 30, 2021, are available from the U.S. Department of State,

The SIV provisions established two programs that include Afghans. One program, which is permanent, applies to Afghans who worked directly with U.S. Armed Forces, or under Chief of Mission (COM) authority, as translators or interpreters and meet other requirements. The other program, which is temporary, applies to Afghans who were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government, or by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in Afghanistan and satisfy other requirements. The latter program is subject to a 14-step application process, which has been widely criticized for being bureaucratic, inefficient, and slow.<sup>145</sup>

President Biden's announcement that the United States would begin the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in May 2021<sup>146</sup> heightened long-standing concerns of, and for, Afghan nationals who had assisted the U.S. government. In July 2021, after initially rejecting calls for an evacuation of these Afghans, <sup>147</sup> the State Department announced the arrival of "our first group of Afghan special immigrant applicants to the United States under Operation Allies Refuge." <sup>148</sup> In a joint statement on August 15, 2021, the Department of State and the Department of Defense said, "We will accelerate the evacuation of thousands of Afghans eligible for U.S. Special Immigrant Visas, nearly 2,000 of whom have already arrived in the United States over the past two weeks." The statement further noted: "For all categories, Afghans who have cleared security screening will continue to be transferred directly to the United States. And we will find additional locations for those yet to be screened." <sup>149</sup>

At an August 16, 2021, press briefing, the State Department spokesperson was asked how many Afghan SIV applicants would be relocated to the United States. He declined to provide a number, citing the fluidity of the situation. Future relocations were also discussed at a Pentagon press briefing that same day. After stating that 2,000 Afghan SIV applicants had already arrived in the United States, Garry Reid, director of the Department of Defense's Afghanistan Crisis Action Group, said that "USNORTHCOM [U.S. Northern Command] and the U.S. Army are working to create additional capacity."<sup>151</sup>

In more recent statements, U.S. officials have not indicated how many Afghan evacuees are SIV holders or SIV applicants. On September 3, 2021, Secretary of State Blinken referenced Afghan

Bureau of Consular Affairs at https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-statistics/immigrant-visa-statistics.html. Updated FY2021 data (through August 28, 2021) were provided to CRS by the Bureau of Consular Affairs. FY2021 data are preliminary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> For further information, see CRS Report R43725, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> White House, *Remarks by President Biden on the Way Forward in Afghanistan*, April 14, 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/04/14/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-way-forward-in-afghanistan/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Secretary Antony J. Blinken On CNN's State of the Union with Dana Bash*, press release, June 13, 2021, https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-on-cnns-state-of-the-union-with-dana-bash/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Arrival of First Flight of Operation Allies Refuge*, July 30, 2021, https://www.state.gov/arrival-of-first-flight-of-operation-allies-refuge/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Joint Statement from the Department of State and Department of Defense: Update on Afghanistan*, August 15, 2021, https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-from-the-department-of-state-and-department-of-defense-update-on-afghanistan/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> See U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Department Press Briefing—August 16, 2021*, https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-august-16-2021/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Holds a Press Briefing*, August 16, 2021, https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2733523/pentagon-press-secretary-john-f-kirby-holds-a-press-briefing/. Although Reid referenced "refugee relocation" in his remarks, he seemed to be referring to capacity for Afghan SIV applicants. For example, he noted that the arrivals "will have been prescreened by the Department of Homeland Security to enter on a condition of full immigration processing once they arrive."

special immigrants as a proportion of the overall evacuee population, but said he could not provide specific numbers:

Of the roughly 124,000 people who've been evacuated, the vast majority—the vast majority, 75, 80 percent—are Afghans at risk. And of those, some significant number will be SIVs, either people who already hold an SIV visa or those who are actually in the pipeline. 152

At a September 1, 2021, press briefing, the State Department spokesperson provided data on Afghan arrivals to the United States:

Since August 17<sup>th</sup> and through August 31<sup>st</sup> at midnight Eastern time, 31,107 people have arrived ... to the U.S. as part of this operation. So of that subset—which, of course, is just a small subset of the 124,000—we understand that about 14 percent are U.S. citizens, or 4,446; about 9 percent are LPRs, 2,785; and the remaining 77 percent —23,876 individuals —are Afghans at risk. And, of course, falling into that category are SIVs, other visa holders ….<sup>153</sup>

Press reports published on or after September 8, 2021, cite DHS data on Afghan evacuees who have arrived in the United States. For example, a Washington Post article stated:

Of the 60,000 evacuees who have arrived so far, 11 percent are U.S. citizens and 6 percent are legal permanent residents, according to DHS. The remaining 83 percent are considered "at-risk Afghans" who either qualify for special immigrant visas as a result of their work for the U.S. government, or are part of a much larger number who will arrive with a provisional immigration status known as "humanitarian parole." <sup>154</sup>

#### U.S. Refugee Program

Individuals of any nationality can be considered for refugee admission to the United States. Among the applicable requirements, an individual must meet the definition of a refugee in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The INA generally defines a refugee as a person who is outside his or her country and who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Individuals who are admitted to the United States as refugees are granted refugee status. After one year in the United States in refugee status, individuals are required to apply to become LPRs.

To be considered for refugee resettlement in the United States, a foreign national must fall under a "processing priority." For example, Priority 1 (P-1) covers individual cases referred to the U.S. refugee program by designated entities based on their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement. Priority 2 (P-2) covers groups of special humanitarian concern to the United States. It includes specific groups that may be defined by their nationalities, clans, ethnicities, or other characteristics. P-2 groups are identified by the State Department in consultation with DHS and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Secretary Antony J. Blinken Remarks on Afghanistan at a Press Availability*, September 3, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Department Press Briefing – September 1, 2021*, https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-september-1-2021/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Nick Miroff, "44 Afghan evacuees flagged as potential security risks," *The Washington Post*, September 11, 2021, p. A16. DHS does not seem to have otherwise made these data publicly available.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> INA §101(a)(42), 8 U.S.C. §1101(a)(42). For additional information on the U.S. refugee program, see CRS Report RL31269, *Refugee Admissions and Resettlement Policy*.

others. Of particular relevance to Afghans who have assisted the United States is a new P-2 group that was established in August 2021. 156

The new P-2 group is for certain Afghan nationals and their family members (spouses and sons and daughters of any age). A State Department fact sheet describes this new P-2 program as providing a resettlement opportunity for "many thousands of Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation but who are not eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) because they did not have qualifying employment, or because they have not met the time-in-service requirement to become eligible." Among those eligible for this P-2 program are "Afghans who work or worked for a U.S. government-funded program or project in Afghanistan supported through a U.S. government grant or cooperative agreement," and "Afghans who are or were employed in Afghanistan by a U.S.-based media organization or non-governmental organization." Eligible Afghans must be referred to this program by a U.S. government agency or, in the case of a media organization or NGO, by the most senior U.S. citizen employee of that organization.<sup>157</sup>

A supplementary information sheet on this P-2 program highlights relevant issues for prospective applicants to consider. Among these considerations is that there is no U.S. refugee processing in Afghanistan or certain neighboring countries. Individuals who want to pursue refugee applications must travel to third countries and must do so at their own expense. This need to process refugee cases in third countries was discussed at an August 2, 2021, briefing with State Department officials. In response to a question about whether refugee applicants would be relocated like SIV applicants, an unnamed official said: "At this time, we do not anticipate relocating P-2 applicants prior to or during the application process. However, we continue to review the situation on the ground." 159

More recent statements from the State Department suggest that some P-2-eligible and P-1-eligible Afghans may have been relocated. In his September 3, 2021, comments on the "vast majority" of Afghan evacuees that are "Afghans at risk," Secretary Blinken indicated that "some number will be potential P-1 or P-2 refugees." At the press briefing on September 1, 2021, the State Department spokesperson also suggested that Afghans with P-1 or P-2 referrals may have entered the United States. <sup>160</sup>

#### **Immigration Parole**

The parole provision in the INA gives the DHS Secretary discretionary authority to "parole into the United States temporarily under such conditions as he may prescribe only on a case-by-case

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *U.S. Refugee Admissions Program Priority 2 Designation for Afghan Nationals*, August 2, 2021, https://www.state.gov/u-s-refugee-admissions-program-priority-2-designation-for-afghan-nationals/. This fact sheet also describes the other processing priorities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> See U.S. Department of State, *Information for Afghan Nationals Regarding Priority 2 (P-2) Designation*, https://www.wrapsnet.org/documents/

Information % 20 for % 20 Afghan % 20 Nationals % 20 Regarding % 20 Priority % 202% 20 (P-2)% 20 Designation.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Briefing with Senior State Department Officials On the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program Priority 2 (P-2) Designation for Afghan Nationals*, August 2, 2021, https://www.state.gov/briefing-with-senior-state-department-officials-on-the-u-s-refugee-admissions-program-priority-2-p-2-designation-for-afghan-nationals/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Persons cannot pursue U.S. refugee applications within the United States. They can, however, apply for asylum. For information about asylum, see CRS Report R45539, *Immigration: U.S. Asylum Policy*.

basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit any alien applying for admission to the United States." Parolees can apply for work authorization.

A DHS fact sheet on Operation Allies Welcome, which is described within as "ongoing efforts across the federal government to support vulnerable Afghans ... as they safely resettle in the United States," discusses the use of parole for Afghans, as follows:

[Parole] permits certain Afghan nationals to come into the United States, on a case-by-case basis, for a period of two years and subsequent to appropriate screening and vetting, provided their movement to the United States is being carried out pursuant to the current operation. Once paroled by CBP [DHS's U.S. Customs and Border Protection], Afghan nationals may be eligible to apply for immigration status through USCIS. Afghan nationals paroled by CBP will also have conditions placed on their parole, to include medical screening and vaccination requirements, and other reporting requirements. <sup>162</sup>

Presumably, these parolees would be among the "Afghans at risk" mentioned in the above section on "Special Immigrant Visas." DHS has not published data on the number of Afghans granted parole.

Some additional questions that Congress may ask the executive branch include

- How many Afghans have pending special immigrant applications? How many of these individuals are in the United States? How many of these individuals remain in Afghanistan, and what plans, if any, are in place to help them leave the country? How many Afghans who have not submitted SIV applications do you estimate may be eligible? Where will Afghan SIV processing take place overseas?
- How many Afghan P-2 referrals has the State Department received? Where are these referred individuals currently located? What plans, if any, are in place to help referred individuals leave Afghanistan? The P-2 program announcement indicated that these cases would take 12-14 months to process. Is this still the expected time frame? What is the status of pending Afghan P-2 cases?
- How many Afghans have been paroled into the United States? How does the security clearance process for Afghan parole applicants compare to that for Afghan refugee and SIV applicants? What types of services are being provided to Afghan parolees? How many parolees have pending applications to obtain a more permanent immigration status, and what statuses are they pursuing?

استقرار مجدد طالبان در قدرت چی قسم ممکن است بالای گروههای تروریستی در افغانستان تأثیر بگذارد؟<sup>163</sup>

از سال 2001، مبارزه با تروریزم جزء مهمی از عملیات ایالات متحده در افغانستان بوده است، جایی که تعدادی از گروههای تروریستی در آن فعال هستند. بعد از سقوط دولت افغانستان، ایالات متحده یکی از شرکای قبلی خود در مبارزه با تروریسم را از دست داده است، که این مسئله باعث سوالاتی در مورد عملی بودن کوشش های ایالات متحده برای مقابله با تهدیدات تروریستی آبنده ای می شود که نشأت گرفته از افغانستان می باشد.

ifo ((5)(182(d)(5)), 8 U.S.C. §1182(d)(5). جهت اخذ معلومات بیشتر، رک. راپور R46570 سی آر اس. مهاجرت مشروط. <sup>162</sup> و زارت امنیت داخلی ایالات متحده، عم*لیات خوش آمدید به متحدان*،

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjSm9PKtfz yAhXeKVkFHWJ-C\_4QFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fpublication%2Ffact-sheet- operationallies-welcome&usg=AOvVaw3wRvqxh\_fSWBJx0NJ9fJqz

<sup>163</sup> این بخش توسط Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس)، تحلیلگر مسائل خاورمیانه، تهیه شده است.

القاعده و شاخه منطقه ای دولت اسلامی (دولت اسلامی-ولایت خراسان، ISKP، که همچنین با نام ISIS-K شناخته می شود) دو گروه از مهمترین گروههای تروریستی هستند و تسلط طالبان احتمالاً به طرق مختلف بالای آنها تأثیر می گذارد.

طالبان یک سازمان تروریستی خارجی تعبین شده توسط ایالات متحده نیست (با وجود حداقل یک مرتبه کوشش کانگرس در گذشته برای درخواست این تعبین)، اگرچه طبق حکم اجرایی 13224، این گروه (از سال 2002) و بسیاری از اعضای آن به حیث تروریست های خاص تعبین شده جهانی (SDGT) معرفی شده اند. SDGT افا و دسترسی به دارایی های خود واقع در ایالات متحده محروم می شوند، امریکایی ها از انجام معاملات با آنها منع می شوند و هر مؤسسه مالی خارجی که تشخیص داده شود معامله مهمی را از طرف یک SDGT انجام داده یا تسهیل کرده است، ممکن است از استفاده از سیستم بانکی ایالات متحده منع شود.

هنوز هم این قسم ارزیابی می شود که القاعده (AQ) در افغانستان حضور دارد و به نظر می رسد که روابط چند دهه ای آن با طالبان در سال های اخیر به قوت خود باقی مانده است. در اکتوبر 2020، قوای افغان یک افسر بلند رتبه AQ را در ولایت غزنی افغانستان کشتند، جایی که راپور داده شده بود وی در آنجا با قوای طالبان زندگی و کار می کرده است. <sup>165</sup> در ماه می 2021، ناظران تحریم های سازمان ملل راپور دادند که القاعده "ارتباطات آشکار را با رهبری طالبان در تلاش برای "مخفی کاری" و به خطر نینداختن موقعیت دیپلوماتیک طالبان به حداقل رسانده است. <sup>166</sup> سرمفتش اعلای وزارت دفاع امریکا در راپور سه ماهه پایانی سال 2020 خود، ارزیابی آژانس استخبارات دفاعی (DIA) را مبنی بر حفظ روابط طالبان با القاعده و اینکه بعضی از اعضای القاعده "جذب قوا و ساختار فرماندهی طالبان شده اند" منتشر کرد. <sup>167</sup> در یک راپور شش ماهه که در اپریل 2021 منتشر شد، وزارت دفاع اظهار داشت: "طالبان روابط سودمند متقابل را با سازمان های مربوط با AQ حفظ کرده اند و بعید است که اقدام اساسی علیه این گروهها انجام بدهند. "<sup>166</sup> دو بعید است که اقدام اساسی علیه این گروهها انجام بدهند. "<sup>166</sup> دو بعید است که اقدام اساسی علیه این گروهها انجام بدهند. "<sup>166</sup> دو بعید است که اقدام اساسی علیه این گروهها انجام بدهند. "<sup>166</sup> دو بعید است که اقدام اساسی علیه این گروهها انجام بدهند. "<sup>166</sup> دو تعلیات با مبارزه مشترک این گروهها در افغانستان و تعلقات شخصی، بشمول رابطه ازدواج، تقویت شده است.

در موافقتنامهٔ ایالات متحده و طالبان، طالبان متعهد شدند که به هیچ گروه تروریستی، از جمله القاعده، اجازه ندهند تا از خاک افغانستان برای تهدید امنیت ایالات متحده و متحدانش استفاده کنند، بشمول ممانعت از تعلیم، جمع آوری کمک مالی، جذب قوا، یا اقامت این گروهها در افغانستان. در این موافقتنامه مکانیزم های حقیقت سنجی برای نظارت بالای متعهد بودن طالبان وجود ندارد. طالبان در سالهای اخیر ادعا کرده اند که هیچ "جنگجوی خارجی" در افغانستان وجود ندارد - اصطلاحی که عموماً برای اشاره به غیرافغان هایی استفاده می شود که همراه یا در کنار طالبان می جنگند. در فیروری 2021، طبق راپورها، این گروه طرز العملی را صادر کرد که جنگجویان طالبان را از "آوردن اتباع خارجی به داخل گروه خود یا دادن سرپناه به آنها" منع می کرد. 169

یکی از تحلیلگران استدلال می کند که در حالی که بعضی از اعضای طالبان با روابط این گروه با القاعده مخالف هستند، و هزینهٔ این رابطه را از نظر وجهه بین المللی طالبان و فشار ایالات متحده ذکر می کنند، ایدئولوژی مشترک، این دو گروه را به هم مربوط می کند.

<sup>164</sup> رك. H.Con.Res. 13، معرفي شده در فبروري 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> جف سلدین، "ایالات متحده، مرگ مقام القاعده را یک شکست بزرگ برای این گروه تروریستی خواند"، *صدای امریکا*، 26 اکتوبر 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> دوازدهمین راپور تیم تحلیلی پشتیبانی و نظارت بر تحریم ها که بر اساس قطعنامه 2557 (2020) در مورد طالبان و سایر اشخاص و نهادهای مربوط که تهدیدی برای صلح، ثبات و امنیت افغانستان هستند، ارائه شده است، سند سازمان ملل متحد S/2021/486، منتشر شده در 27 مه 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> عملیات نگهبان آزادی: راپور سرمفتش اعلی به کانگرس ایالات متحده، 1 اکتوبر *2020 - 31 دسمبر 2020*، منتشر شده در 17 فیروری 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> وزارت دفاع ایالات متحده، *تقویت امنیت و ثبات در افغانستان*، دسمبر 2020، منتشر شده در 23 اپریل 2021. <sup>169</sup> ایاز گل، "طالبان افغان از جنگجویان می خواهد که شبه نظامیان "خارجی" را در حالی که ایالات متحده معامله صلح را بررسی می

کند، یناه ندهند،" صدای امریکا، 2 فبروری 2021.

در حالی که طالبان اهداف فراملی مانند القاعده ندارد، او استدلال می کند که القاعده "طالبان افغانستان را منحیث یک شریک مهم در مباشرت در جهاد جهانی می بیند، "قسمیکه از بیعت رهبران متوالی AQ با رهبران متوالی طالبان مشخص شده است. 170 سخنگوی طالبان در مصاحبه ای در آگست 2021 گفت: "هیچ مدرکی وجود ندارد که [بن لادن] در حملات 11 سپتمبر 2001 دست داشته باشد". 171 براساس راپورها، اعضای AQ در میان هزاران محبوس بودند که در ماه آگست 2021 از محبس پروان توسط طالبان آزاد شدند. 172

طبق راپورها مقامات ایالات متحده در آگست 2021 به سناتورها گفتند که در پی تسلط طالبان "گروههای تروریستی مانند القاعده ممکن است بتوانند بسیار سریعتر از حد انتظار رشد کنند". 173 مقامات استخباراتی ایالات متحده همچنین در سپتمبر 2021 گفتند که "ارزیابی فعلی" آنها این است که القاعده می تواند در مدت یک الی دو سال "توانایی ایجاد کند که حداقل این کشور را تهدید کند". 174 انها همچنین گفتند که "نشانه هایی مبنی بر حرکت بالقوه القاعده در افغانستان و جود دارد"، اما ایالات متحده با تهدیدات تروریزم بزرگتری از طرف یمن، سومالیا، سوریه و عراق مواجه است. 175 بعضی دیگر استدلال می کنند که با توجه به دو دهه فشار ضدتروریسم ایالات متحده، و جود پناهگاه های امن دیگر در سر اسر جهان و احتمال فشار طالبان، بعید است القاعده در افغانستان مجدداً احیا شود. 176 تحریک قدرت بین القاعده و طالبان در 20 سال گذشته تغییر کرده است: حمایت مالی و نظامی AQ در تقویت طالبان قبل از سال 2001 بسیار مهم بود، اما به نظر می رسد AQ نقش مستقیم و مهمی در حصه برگشت طالبان به قدرت در سال 2021 نداشته است.

از طرف دیگر، گروه وابسته به دولت اسلامی در افغانستان (ISKP) با طالبان مخالف است و این دو گروه اغلب با هم درگیر شده اند. دولت اسلامی پروژه سیاسی ملی گرایانه طالبان را در تضاد با دیدگاه جهانشمول خود نسبت به خلافت جهانی می داند. تسلط طالبان احتمالاً نشان دهنده عقب نشینی ISKP است. بر اساس راپورها، قوای طالبان یک رهبر سابق محبوس ISKP را بعد از تسخیر یک زندان دولتی افغانستان در کابل اعدام کردند. <sup>77</sup> مصالحه طالبان در مورد بعضی مسائل با شروع حکومت این گروه، می تواند تندروها را مجبور به رها کردن ISKP کند؛ بعضی از جنگجویان طالبان در گذشته با ISKP ار تباط داشته اند. ایالات متحده قبلاً از حملات طالبان علیه ISKP حمایت می کرد، یک مورد نادر از همکاری قبلی ایالات متحده و طالبان ۱۳۸۰ جنر ال میلی در یک کنفر انس مطبوعاتی در 1 سپتمبر 2021، زمانیکه از او در مورد امکان هماهنگی آینده ایالات متحده با طالبان علیه ISKP پرسیده شد، گفت: "این امکان وجود دارد." (۱۳

در 26 آگست 2021، دولت اسلامی مسئولیت یک حمله (متشکل از یک بم گذار انتحاری و چند جنگجوی مسلح) را در میدان هوایی برا در میدان هوایی برا در میدان هوایی بین المللی کابل بر عهده گرفت که باعث کشته شدن13 نظامی امریکایی و بیشتر از 150 شهروند افغان شد.

<sup>170</sup> اسفندیار میر، "باز کردن گره کور: چرا طالبان بعید است که روابط خود را با القاعده قطع کند"، موسسه جنگ مدرن در ویست پوینت، 10 آگست 2021.

<sup>171</sup> راشل پانت، "سخنگوی طالبان میگوید "هیچ مدر کی وجود ندارد" که بن لادن مسئول حملات 11 سپتمبر بوده است"، واشنگتن پست، 26 آگست 2021.

<sup>172</sup> نیک پاتون والش و سندی سیدو، "اعضای القاعده و طالبان در میان هزاران محبوس که تحت کنترول افغانستان در محبسی در کنار پایگاه هوایی متروکه ایالات متحده باقی مانده اند،" سی ان ان، 6 جو لای 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> مایکل بالسامو و همکاران، "نگرانی در مورد تهدیدات تروریستی علیه ایالات متحده که با افزایش قدرت طالبان افزایش می یابد"، *سوشیتدپرس،* 15 آگست 2021.

<sup>174</sup> جولیان بارنز، "مقامات ایالات متحده می گویند که القاعده می تواند در مدت یک یا دو سال در افغانستان بازسازی شود"، نیویورک تایمز، 14 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> بارنز ، همان، کورتنی مک براید و وارن استرویل، "جاسوسان امریکایی نشانه هایی از برگشت جنگجویان القاعده به افغانستان را مشاهده می کنند"، *وال استریت جورنال*، ۱۴ سی*نم*بر ۲۰۲۱

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> احمد صدیقی، "غرب در حال اشتباه کردن در مورد افغانستان است – دوباره"، الجزیره، 12 سپتمبر 2021; دانیل بایمن، "آیا افغانستان مجدداً تبدیل به پناهگاه امن تروریست ها خواهد شد؟ "ف*ارین افرز*، 18 آگست 2021.

<sup>177</sup> ياروسلاو تريفيموف و همكاران، "طالبان كنترول خود را در پايتخت افغانستان تحكيم مي كند، در حالي كه هزاران نفر همچنان سرگردان هستند"، *وال استريت جورنال*، 17 آگست 2021.

<sup>178</sup> وسلى مورگان، "قواي هوايي مخفي طالبان ما"، *واشنگتن بست*، 22 اكتوبر 2020.

<sup>179</sup> جلسه مطبوعاتی وزیر دفاع آستین و رئیس قوای مشترک جنرال میلی در مورد پایان جنگ ایالات متحده در افغانستان، وزارت دفاع، 1 سبتمبر 2021.

این حمله در مورد توانایی (یا شاید علاقه مندی) طالبان برای مبارزه با ISKP و تهدیدی که ISKP برای تلاش طالبان در نمایش توانایی خود برای حکومت و ایجاد امنیت در کشور دارد، ابهاماتی را به وجود آورد. <sup>180</sup>

فراتر از افغانستان، بعضی استدلال می کنند که تسلط طالبان بر افغانستان می تواند گروههای تروریستی افراطی اسلامگرا را در سراسر جهان تقویت کند؛ بر اساس راپورها، حامیان AQ از تسلط طالبان منحیث پیروزی برای جهادگرایی جهانی استقبال کردند.<sup>181</sup> در مقابل، یکی از تحلیلگران استدلال کرده است که تسلط طالبان نشان دهنده سودمندی دیپلوماسی و مذاکره برای دستیابی به اهداف جهاد است.<sup>182</sup>

در بحبوحه خروج ایالات متحده در تابستان 2021، مقامات ایالات متحده گفتند که ایالات متحده توانایی های "فراتر از سرحدات" را برای مبارزه با تهدیدات تروریستی حفظ خواهد کرد. بعد از کنترول طالبان بالای کشور ، ایالات متحده ممکن است مجبور شود این پروگرام ها را تغییر دهد، برای مثال ذریعهٔ تبدیل کردن پرواز های پیلوت دار با عملیات پهپادها که از کمپ های ایالات متحده در منطقه خلیج فارس پرواز می کنند که دور از سرحدات افغانستان است. <sup>183</sup> فقدان حضور نظامی ایالات متحده یا قوای شریک زمینی نیز ممکن است توانایی های جمع آوری معلومات کشفی را محدود کند. حمله پهپادی ایالات متحده در 29 آگست 2021 در کابل که منجر به کشته شدن غیر نظامیان شد، چالش ها و محدودیت های این کمبودها را نشان داد. <sup>184</sup> بعضی از اعضای کانگرس استدلال کرده اند که دولت در رابطه با پروگرام های ایالات متحده برای مقابله با تروریزم در افغانستان در آینده به اندازه کافی آماده نبوده است. <sup>185</sup>

#### چشم انداز ادامهٔ کمک های غیرنظامی ایالات متحده به افغانستان چیست؟<sup>186</sup>

تا 30 جون 2021، ایالات متحده نقریباً 36.29 میلیارد دالر را منحیث "کمک های حکومتی و توسعه" در افغانستان از سال مالی 2002 به این سو تخصیص داده است که 25 فیصد مجموع کمک های بازسازی ارائه شده نوسط ایالات متحده است.<sup>187</sup> چنین کمک هایی با هدف حمایت از اهداف توسعوی از جمله گسترش تعلیم و تربیه، مبارزه با فساد، ترویج حکومتداری خوب و جامعه مدنی، و توانمندسازی زنان و دختران بوده است. اکثر کمک های غیر نظامی توسط شرکای غیر دولتی مانند نهادهای چندجانبه، سازمان های غیر انتفاعی، یو هنتون ها و فعالان بخش خصوصی اجرا شده است.

کانگرس به شکل منظم قوانینی را تصویب می کند که ایالات متحده را مکلف به کاهش کمک ها براساس شرایط مختلف افغانستان می کند، از جمله موار د مربوط با تلاش های مبارزه با مواد مخدر، فساد و حقوق زنان. <sup>188</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> سودرسان راغوان، "ایالات متحده حقانی ها را تروریست معرفی کرد و 5 ملیون دالر جایزه تعیین کرد. حالا آنها در دولت طالبان در قدرت هستند،" *واشنگتن پست*، 11 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> وارن استروبل و داستین ولز ، "تندروها تسلط طالبان بر افغانستان را در رسانه های اجتماعی جشن می گیرند،"*وال استریت* ج*ورنال*، 17 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> حسن حسن، "جنگ جهانی علیه ترور واقعاً کدام دستاور دی داشته است"، *نیولاینز*، 9 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> میسی رایان و سواد مکننت، "بعد از پیروزی طالبان، بایدن در جلوگیری از ظهور مجدد افراط گرایان در افغانستان با آزمون بزرگتری رو در رو است"، *واشنگتن بست*، 16 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> اریک اشمیت و هلن کوپر، "پنتاگون اذعان کرد که حمله پهپادی 29 آگست در افغانستان یک اشتباه غم انگیز بود که 10 غیرنظامی را کشت،" نیویورک تایمز، 17 سپتمبر 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> جاناتان سوان و زاخاری باسو، "بیرقهای سرخ برای استراتیژی "فراتر از سرحدات" بایدن"، *آکسیوس*، 12 سپنمبر 2021. <sup>186</sup> این بخش توسط امیلی مورگنسترن، تحلیلگر کمک های خارجی و سیاست خارجی، تهیه شده است.

SIGAR <sup>187</sup> ، راپور فصلی 30 جون 2021 ، ص. 25. به گفته SIGAR ، سایر کمک های بازسازی به شمول کمک های امنیتی، کمک های امنیتی، کمک های بشر دو ستانه، و عملیات های آژ انس می باشد.

<sup>188</sup> منحیث مثال، بخش (B)(2)(2)(2)(2)(2)(2) بحث اعتبارات SFOPS سال مالی 2016 (بخش 113-111) مکلف می کند که قبل از تعهد صندوق حمایت اقتصادی و صندوق های بین المللی کنترول مواد مخدر و اجرای قانون، وزیر امور خارجه. تصدیق کند که دولت افغانستان بعضی از شرایط را پوره کرده یا در حال انجام آن بوده است. اینها از جمله عبارتند از: "... ادامه اجرای قوانین و سیاست ها برای حکومت دموکراتیک و حمایت از حقوق اشخاص و جامعه مدنی، از جمله قدم هایی برای حمایت و پیشبرد حقوق زنان و دختران..." و "... کاهش فساد و تعقیب قانونی اشخاصی که ادعا می شود در فعالیت های غیرقانونی اشتراک داشته اند...".

طبق این قوانین، دولت های متوالی، پایبندی افغانستان به این شر ایط را تأیید کرده اند و هیچ بودیجه ای از طرف ایالات متحده حذف نشده است. <sup>189</sup> البته بعد از تسلط طالبان و سقوط دولت افغانستان، کمک های دوجانبه که به طور سنتی توسط نهادهای غیر دولتی انجام می شده است، ممکن است بر اساس شر ایط موجود که در اقدامات سالانه وز ارت امور خارجه، عملیات خارجی و پروگرام های مربوط (SFOPS) گنجانده شده است، کاهش پیدا کند یا حذف شود. بر ای مثال، صندوق حمایت اقتصادی فعلی و کمک های بین المللی بر ای کنترول مواد مخدر و اجر ای قانون بر ای افغانستان تخصیص داده شده است

ممکن است برای این نوع از پروگرام های، پروژه ها یا فعالیت های تخصیص پیدا نکند؛ مواردی که: (i) در صورت ضرورت، توسط دولت افغانستان یا یک نهاد افغانی دیگر قابل حفظ نباشد؛ (ii) به منظور انجام نظارت مؤثر مطابق با قوانین و مقررات فدرال حاکم قابل دسترس نباشد؛ (iii) هرنوع توسعه زیرساختی مهم و جدیدی را شروع کند؛ یا (iv) در صورتی که وزیر امور خارجه معلومات معتبری داشته باشد، بشمول مشارکت آگاهانه هر شخص، سازمان یا نهاد دولتی افغانستان در اعمال فساد بزرگ، تولید یا قاچاق مواد مخدر غیرقانونی یا ارتکاب نقض فاحش شده حقوق بشر باشد. <sup>190</sup>

همچنین ممکن است کمک های دوجانبه ایالات متحده به نهادهای دولتی در افغانستان با توجه به تصمیمات دولت متوقف شود. این اقدام ممکن است بر اساس بخش (d)7021 از اقدام تخصیصی SFOPS برای سال مالی 2021 اتفاق بیافتد، که در اختیار قرار دادن منابع مالی به هر دولت خارجی را منع می کند که رئیسجمهور تعیین کند "به هر شخص یا گروهی که مرتکب عمل تروریسم بین المللی شده باشد، مصونیت از تعقیب جزایی بدهد" یا "به هر شکل دیگری از تروریسم بین المللی حمایت کند".

کنترول طالبان بر افغانستان همچنین می تواند نگرانی های قابل توجهی را در مورد موثریت و ثبات درازمدت هر پروگرام کمکی تحت مدیریت ایالات متحده به وجود بیاورد، صرف نظر از اینکه کدامیک از شرکاء چنین پروگرام هایی را اجرا کند. وضعیت امنیتی فعلی در افغانستان و تخلیه کارمندان دیپلوماتیک و توسعوی ایالات متحده ممکن است مستقیماً بالای قابلیت های نظارت بر پروگرام ها تأثیر بگذارد و به طور بالقوه ایالات متحده را مکلف کند تا برای هرنوع پروگرام کمک که امکان تداوم آن وجود دارد، به دقت یا صرفاً بالای نظارت طرف ثالث تکیه کند.

دولت بایدن نشان نداده است که آیا به دنبال کمک غیر نظامی به افغانستان تحت حکومت طالبان خواهد بود یا نخیر. در خواست های دولت برای کمک های بشر دوستانه به افغان های نیاز مند، از جمله کسانی که در کشور باقی مالده اند و همچنین کسانی که فرار کرده اند، و همچنین رسیدگی به پناهندگان افغان متمرکز شده است. 191 بعضی از اعضای کانگرس اعلام کرده اند که تحت هیچ شرایطی از کمک های دوجانبه ایالات متحده به افغانستان حمایت نخواهند کرد، در حالی که بعضی دیگر ممکن است با مراعات معیار های خاصی از بعضی کمک ها حمایت کنند. 192 با تغییر وضعیت در افغانستان، باید دید که چی قسم می توان، و اصلاً می توان، کمک های غیر نظامی را ارائه، اداره و بالای آن نظارت کرد و کانگرس چی قسم می تواند بودیجه و شرایط کمک به این کشور را ارزیابی کند.

بعضی سوالات دیگری که ممکن است کانگرس از بخش اجرایی داشته باشد عبارتند از

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> جهت اخذ معلومات بیشتر، رک. "شرط و نظارت کمک" در راپور CRS R45818، *افغانستان: سابقه و سیاست ایالات متحده*، نوشته Clayton Thomas (کلیتون توماس).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> بخش (7)(1)(A)(a)(1)(C) لايحه SFOPS سال مالى 2019 (بخش F از 6-P.L. 116). بخش (7)(1)(A)(a)(1)(C) لايحه SFOPS سال مالى 1021 (بخش K از 2021-117)، قابل اجرا بودن اين ماده براى بوديجه تخصيص داده شده در سال مالى 2021 را مجدداً تأييد مى كند.

<sup>191 &</sup>quot;مسائل مربوط به تخصیص دوامدار قطعنامه (CR) سال مالی 2022 (ناهنجاری های مورد ضرورت برای CR کوتاه مدت)، " قابل دسترسی در https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CR Package 9-7-21. pdf.

192 ارشاد محمد، پاتریشیا زنگرل و جاناتان لندی، "امریکا کمک های بشر دوستانه را برای افغانستان تمویل می کند، اما نه برای دولت آن"، رویترز، 4 سیتمبر 2021.

### أله از این جهت نگرانی وجود دارد که کمک های غیر نظامی به این کشور به دست طالبان یا سایر نقش آفرینان غیر دولتی دار ای سوءنیت بیافتد؟

# What U.S. policy options are available to promote human rights in Afghanistan and respond to human rights abuses?<sup>193</sup>

Various U.S. policy options exist that may allow the United States to pressure the Taliban to protect human rights in Afghanistan, although the ability of the United States to induce genuine, robust, or sustained human rights commitments or actions is arguable. <sup>194</sup> The United States may consider whether and, if so, how to condition U.S. recognition of the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan—or diplomatic relations with the government following such formal recognition—on criteria that includes respect for human rights. <sup>195</sup> The United States may also consider whether to maintain, increase, or reduce U.S. sanctions depending on actions taken by the Taliban with regard to human rights. <sup>196</sup> Biden Administration officials have indicated that sanctions will not be lifted if the Taliban is not protecting the basic rights of the Afghan people, and that the United States will condition recognition of the Taliban in part on human rights matters. <sup>197</sup>

To date, the United States has reportedly been working to coordinate policy on these matters with allies and partners, which could increase the likelihood of inducing actions or commitments by the Taliban. An August 24, 2021 statement by G7 leaders stated that the Taliban "will be held accountable for their actions" on human rights and connected the "legitimacy of any future government" in Afghanistan with the Taliban's upholding of international obligations and commitments. On August 30, 2021, a U.N. Security Council resolution reaffirmed "the importance of upholding human rights including those of women, children, and minorities," and encouraged an "inclusive, negotiated political settlement, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, that responds to the desire of Afghans to sustain and build on Afghanistan's gains over the last twenty years in adherence to the rule of law." Secretary of State Blinken, while co-hosting a September 8, 2021 ministerial on Afghanistan with allies and partners, stated that the Taliban's desired legitimacy and support "has to be earned ... through a sustained pattern of action that demonstrates a genuine commitment to core expectations that are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> This section was prepared by Michael Weber, Analyst in Foreign Affairs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> For an analysis of possible leverage that the United States has over the Taliban, see Desha Girod, "Can the West Make the Taliban Moderate?" *Foreign Policy*, August 31, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> See Tess Bridgeman and Ryan Goodman, "Recognition and the Taliban," *Just Security*, August 17, 2021; and "What are some of the implications if the Taliban is recognized as the official government of Afghanistan by the United States and the international community?" above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> For a discussion of the possible implications of existing sanctions on the Taliban as a result of its control of Afghanistan, see Adam M. Smith, "The Humanitarian and Policy Challenges of U.S. Sanctions on the Taliban," *Just Security*, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken With Jake Tapper of State of the Union on CNN," interview, August 15, 2021; U.S. Department of State, "Department Press Briefing, September 1, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> Ryan Heath, "Western nations coordinating to block Taliban recognition"; Andrea Shalal, "G7 leaders plan to pledge unity on Taliban recognition, sanctions," *Reuters*, August 23, 2021; Patrick Wintour, "US-led meeting to set out framework for Taliban cooperation," *The Guardian*, September 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> United Kingdom Prime Minister's Office, "G7 Leaders Statement on Afghanistan," August 24, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> U.N. Security Council, U.N. Document S/RES/2593 (2021), August 30, 2021.

enshrined" in the Security Council resolution. Blinken noted that "the names in the caretaker government do not inspire confidence" that the Taliban will form an inclusive government.<sup>201</sup>

As noted above, reports of human rights violations in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan may raise the prospect of targeted U.S. sanctions against individual perpetrators. <sup>202</sup> Congress has provided the executive branch with global authorities to target foreign persons for sanctions based on human rights, which can aim to "name and shame" individuals, disrupt human rights violations or abuses and/or deter future such acts, and promote accountability, among other goals. Most prominently, the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Title XII, Subtitle F of P.L. 114-328) provides the executive branch standing discretionary capacity to impose economic and visa sanctions on individuals or entities based on human rights. <sup>203</sup> Executive Order 13818, which implements and builds on the act, also provides broad scope to sanction associated networks of individuals and entities. <sup>204</sup> Separately, a recurring provision in SFOPS, Section 7031(c), provides for public visa sanctions designations against foreign officials as well as their immediate family members for gross violations of human rights. <sup>205</sup> Aside from utilizing these or other relevant authorities, the executive branch could also potentially choose to draw on Presidential emergency powers to establish an Afghanistan-specific sanctions regime that targets human rights abuses there. <sup>206</sup>

Foreign assistance is another possible tool to promote human rights in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. As discussed elsewhere in this report, human rights and other conditions may lead the United States to reduce or eliminate assistance to Afghanistan in the wake of the Afghan government's collapse. Various standing provisions of U.S. law also require or allow assistance restrictions based on human rights that could have relevance in the event of the Taliban's continued control of the country. Provisions in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, restrict security and development assistance to any country the government of which "engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." Other provisions of law provide the capacity to more narrowly restrict certain types of assistance based on human rights-related matters. The extent to which democracy assistance—which Congress

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken Opening Remarks at Ministerial on Afghanistan," September 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> According the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, there are "credible reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law, and human rights abuses, taking place in many areas under effective Taliban control. They include, among others, summary executions of civilians and hors de combat members of the Afghan national security forces; restrictions on the rights of women – including their right to move around freely and girls' right to attend schools; recruitment of child soldiers; and repression of peaceful protest and expression of dissent." See U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights," August 24, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> For additional background see CRS In Focus IF10576, *The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act*, by Michael A. Weber and Edward J. Collins-Chase.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> E.O. 13818, "Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuse or Corruption," 82 *Federal Register* 60839, December 20, 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> For additional background see CRS In Focus IF10905, FY2020 Foreign Operations Appropriations: Targeting Foreign Corruption and Human Rights Violations, by Liana W. Rosen and Michael A. Weber

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> See CRS Report R45618, *The International Emergency Economic Powers Act: Origins, Evolution, and Use*, coordinated by Christopher A. Casey.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> See "What are the prospects for continued U.S. civilian assistance to Afghanistan" and "What will happen to U.S. funding provided for Afghanistan security forces?"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> See Section 116 (22 U.S.C. §2151n) and Section 502B (22 U.S.C. §2304).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> For instance, human trafficking and the recruitment or use of child soldiers, which the United States has previously identified Afghanistan in association with pursuant to relevant laws. See CRS Report R44953, The State Department's

makes available "notwithstanding any other provision of law"—will continue in Afghanistan and in what form is arguably uncertain given the current security situation and possible curtailments on the activities of civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and independent media under Taliban rule. Notably, Congress has appropriated some assistance globally for purposes of supporting and protecting civil society activists and journalists who have been "threatened, harassed, or attacked."210

Some additional questions that Congress may ask the executive branch include

- What specific human rights actions or commitments are sought from the Taliban, and how will the United States assess the credibility of any commitments? What actions will the United States take in response?
- To what extent, if at all, could U.S. attempts to exercise leverage over the Taliban be undermined by the actions of other actors such as China and Russia?
- What, if any, possible unintended humanitarian or other consequences could result if the United States maintains or increases sanctions due to concerns over human rights, and how, if it all, can these consequences be mitigated?
- What plans exist, if any, for U.S. democracy and human rights foreign assistance to continue in the context of a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan?

#### What might the Taliban takeover mean for security cooperation as a national security tool?211

A central aspect of the U.S. and coalition campaign in Afghanistan was training and equipping the ANDSF. 212 Some observers, citing long-standing deficiencies in certain components of the ANDSF, as well as recent events, have questioned the efficacy of U.S. efforts to build the security capacity of allies and partners writ large. 213 Drawing on this example, the fact that the ANDSF did not forestall a Taliban takeover could suggest to some that such capacity-building efforts are strategically problematic and that the U.S. should exercise caution when trying to build foreign militaries. Others have countered that the situation in Afghanistan was unique, that train and equip efforts were being conducted during wartime, and that there were myriad other factors leading to the collapse—including the failings of the Afghan government and the unique dependence of the Afghan military on U.S. support—that are not always present in other security cooperation endeavors. <sup>214</sup> A 2014 Rand Corporation study of the relationship between security cooperation and fragility found that U.S. security cooperation efforts did correlate with a

Trafficking in Persons Report: Scope, Aid Restrictions, and Methodology, by Michael A. Weber, Katarina C. O'Regan, and Liana W. Rosen; and CRS In Focus IF10901, Child Soldiers Prevention Act: Security Assistance Restrictions, by Michael A. Weber.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> See Section 7032(h) of P.L. 116-260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> This section was prepared by Kathleen J. McInnis, Specialist in International Security.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Craig Whitlock, "Afghan security forces' wholesale collapse was years in the making," *The Washington Post*, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Anthony Capaccio," As Kabul Fell, U.S. Watchdog Wrote Sad Coda to a 20-Year Failure," Bloomberg News, August 17, 2021; Kori Schake, Why the Afghan Army Folded: America has historically struggled to train foreign militaries, The Atlantic, August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> CRS Report R44313, What Is "Building Partner Capacity?" Issues for Congress, coordinated by Kathleen J. McInnis; Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction, August 2021.

reduction in partner state fragility, but that that (a) most of the effect was concentrated at lower funding levels; and (b) the correlation was stronger in more democratic states and those with stronger institutions.<sup>215</sup> In 2020, the Fund for Peace, a nongovernmental organization, ranked Afghanistan among the ten most fragile states in the world.<sup>216</sup> Members of Congress and others may seek to draw lessons from security sector reform efforts in Afghanistan and determine what lessons, if any, might be transferable or relevant in other contexts.

Some additional questions that Congress may ask the executive branch include

- With the collapse of the Afghan military, is there potential for U.S.- and coalition-trained and armed Afghan forces to join the Taliban or regional terrorist groups? If this happens, what are the possible threats posed by these individuals?
- Likewise, is there a possibility that some Afghan Special Forces or other elements could form the nucleus of a credible counter-Taliban resistance movement? Under what circumstances might the U.S. government provide support to such a group, if any?

# Social and Economic Implications of the Taliban Takeover

# What might be the implications of the Taliban takeover for Afghan women and girls?<sup>217</sup>

Decades of war after 1978 and the repressive five-year rule of the Taliban severely undermined the rights and development of Afghan women, who had been granted equal rights under the 1964 constitution. These rights were not always observed, but prior to 1978, women were present in legislative bodies, universities, and work places, particularly in urban areas. During their rule between 1996 and 2001, the Taliban "perpetrated egregious acts of violence against women" as part of a "war against women," according to a 2001 State Department report. Based on their particularly conservative interpretation of Islam and Pashtun social norms, the Taliban prohibited women from working, attending school after age eight, and appearing in public without a male blood relative and without wearing a burqa. Women accused of breaking these or other restrictions suffered severe corporal or capital punishment, often publicly.

To date, the Taliban have not described in detail how they now view women's rights or what role women would play in a future Taliban-governed society. In February 2020, deputy Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani wrote of "an Islamic system ... where the rights of women that are granted by Islam—from the right to education to the right to work—are protected." Skeptics note that a pledge to safeguard the rights of women "according to Islam" and their interpretation of sharia is subjective and echoes similar pledges made by the Taliban while previously in power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Michael J. McNerney et al., "Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool," Rand Corporation, 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index, 2020, https://fragilestatesindex.org/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> This section was prepared by Sarah R. Collins, Research Assistant. For additional background, see CRS In Focus IF11646, *Afghan Women and Girls: Status and Congressional Action*, by Clayton Thomas and Sarah R. Collins.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Report on the Taliban's War Against Women*, November 17, 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> Sirajuddin Haqqani, "What We, the Taliban, Want," *The New York Times*, February 20, 2020.

Since taking power in August 2021, Taliban officials have reiterated their commitment to protecting women's rights "within the framework of Sharia." Some observers question whether the statements by the Taliban are an attempt to assuage concerns that a rollback of women's rights is imminent and to dispel "rumors" about reported actions recently carried out by the group, such as forced marriages. In the immediate aftermath of the takeover, Taliban leaders called on women government employees to return to their posts, as long as they were wearing the hijab (headscarf), and granted "amnesty" to all who worked with foreign powers. Taliban leaders have subsequently called for women to stay home temporarily, until the military situation becomes more clear and "until we have a new procedure," citing concerns over new Taliban forces who "have not yet been trained very well" and who may mistreat, harm, or harass women.

The Taliban are accused of numerous attacks on girls' schools during their insurgency. The Taliban claim to not oppose education for girls, and in Taliban-controlled areas some girls had been attending primary school. In some cases, before the full takeover in August, when a local community advocated for girls' education, the Taliban allowed it until sixth grade; when it did not, the Taliban closed girls' schools. A 2018 study could not identify a single girls' secondary school open in areas of heavy Taliban influence or control.<sup>224</sup> On September 12, 2021, Acting Minister for Higher Education Abdul Baqi Haqqani announced that women would be allowed to continue attending university; however classrooms would be gender-segregated and Islamic dress would be compulsory for women. Haqqani also noted that a curriculum review would be undertaken, and that female students would only be allowed to be taught by women or by male teachers if they are hidden behind a curtain or via video conferencing.<sup>225</sup>

The Taliban are often portrayed as the prime drivers of Afghan women's oppression. Others have noted that many people within Afghan society hold restrictive views of women's rights that in some cases predate the Taliban movement, particularly in rural areas where 76% of the population resides: "For many rural women, particularly in Pashtun areas but also among other rural minority ethnic groups, actual life has not changed much from the Taliban era, formal legal empowerment notwithstanding." 226

Moreover, the physical and psychological toll of the conflict's violence have further undermined women's development. According to the 2021 SIGAR lessons learned report on gender equality

One outcome of the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan was supposed to have been a steady improvement in the lives of Afghan women—and, to be sure, improvements have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> "Transcript of Taliban's first news conference in Kabul," Al Jazeera, August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Lynne O'Donnell, "As Taliban Expand Control, Concerns About Forced Marriage and Sex Slavery Rise," Foreign Policy, July 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> "Taliban urges government staff to return to work," *Ariana News*, August 16, 2021. Other restrictions imposed in some areas of the country since May 2021 have included ordering women not leave the home without a male guardian, closing girls and mixed-gender schools, and banning the use of television. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Escalation of Violent Confrontations and a Rise in Violations of Human Rights, June 22 to July 6, 2021," July 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Maggie Astor, Sharif Hassan, and Norimitsu Onishi, "A Taliban spokesman urges women to stay home because fighters haven't been trained to respect them," *The New York Times*, August 24, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> Ashley Jackson, "Life Under the Taliban Shadow Government," Overseas Development Institute, June 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> Ezzatullah Mehrdad, Gerry Shih and Miriam Berger, "Taliban minister says women can attend university, but not alongside men," *Washington Post*, September 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> John R. Allen and Vanda Felbab-Brown, "The fate of women's rights in Afghanistan," Brookings Institution, September 2020.

happened. But these gains have occurred alongside, and in many cases in spite of, the misery wrought by the last two decades of war. Violence continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing Afghan women, both directly and indirectly [ ... ] every civilian casualty brings with it a series of potential ripple effects: increasingly desperate poverty, mental trauma, and the social stigma and discrimination that accompany permanent disability and widowhood.<sup>227</sup>

For some Afghan women, particularly those in rural areas more affected by conflict, the Taliban takeover may represent an improvement over high levels of violence that have characterized recent years, if the group can prevent further violence and improve security conditions. Fieldwork conducted in 2019 and 2020 found that "peace is an absolute priority for some rural women, even a peace deal very much on the Taliban terms." Some have credited the Taliban's takeover in 1996 with reducing the widespread sexual and gender-based violence perpetuated by militias during the preceding civil wars. <sup>229</sup>

For other women, the Taliban's takeover in 2021 has increased fears of sexual violence, retaliation, and displacement, and highlight longer-term concerns over the future of women's rights under a Taliban government. <sup>230</sup> A number of women have publicly protested in Kabul and other cities to demand protection for human rights and inclusion in the Taliban government. Reports indicate some women have been beaten by Taliban fighters while protesting, and some journalists have been detained while covering the protests. <sup>231</sup> The caretaker cabinet announced on September 7, 2021, reinstates the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which enforced the Taliban's interpretation of Islam in the 1990s. It did not include the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which was not present in the prior Taliban government but had been created during the most recent Afghan government. <sup>232</sup>

The future of women's rights and status in Afghanistan could depend on many factors, including

- Consensus, or a lack thereof, within the Taliban over which rights will be afforded under an Islamic system;
- The security situation and the level of violence;
- Levels of international development aid and the ability of donors to implement programs for women; and
- The degree to which international or domestic actors can induce the Taliban to institute policies respecting women's rights.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup> SIGAR, Support for Gender Equality: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan, February 2021, pp. 11-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> Allen and Brown, "The fate of women's rights in Afghanistan"; International Crisis Group, "What Will Peace Talks Bode for Afghan Women?" briefing note, April 6, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Aisha Ahmad, "Afghan Women: The State of Legal Rights and Security," *Policy Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January - June 2006), pp. 25-41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> See e.g. "I worry my daughters will never know peace': women flee the Taliban—again," *The Guardian*, August 12, 2021; Farnaz Fassihi and Dan Bilefsky, "For Afghan Women, Taliban Stir Fears of Return to a Repressive Past," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Yaroslav Trofimov, "Afghan Women Protest Hard-Line Taliban Government, Face Violent Crackdown," *Wall Street Journal*, September 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> Rachel Pannett, "Who leads Afghanistan's new government? Here's what we know about the Taliban's top officials," *Washington Post*, September 8, 2021.

### How has the Taliban advance affected the humanitarian situation on the ground in Afghanistan?<sup>233</sup>

The humanitarian situation since the Taliban takeover is fragile and subject to change. Humanitarian needs are expected to rise significantly, and many humanitarian organizations are assessing the status of their activities based on the security situation. Current conditions could further hinder assistance delivery and risk the safety of humanitarian personnel. The United Nations confirmed its commitment to stay, deliver assistance, and support the humanitarian response in Afghanistan<sup>234</sup>; however, these efforts could shift depending on security considerations.<sup>235</sup> While the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has historically engaged with the Taliban, the level and extent, if any, of current communications are not publicly available. The International Committee of the Red Cross, which has been in Afghanistan since 1987 and has provided assistance across the country (including in Taliban-controlled areas), plans to continue its efforts along with the Afghan Red Crescent Society. <sup>236</sup> As of early 2021, roughly half of Afghanistan's population (18.4 million people, out of a population of 35 to 40 million) faced a severe humanitarian crisis<sup>237</sup>, with approximately one-third of the population struggling with emergency-level food insecurity.<sup>238</sup> The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, conflict, and natural disasters (most recently drought conditions) have exacerbated the humanitarian situation, resulting in chronic vulnerability among the general population. Escalating conflict in recent months has resulted in increasing numbers of trauma injuries among Afghans as well as increased overall protection concerns, particularly for women.<sup>239</sup>

23

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> This section was prepared by Rhoda Margesson, Specialist in International Humanitarian Policy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> Humanitarian assistance is provided according to principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), "Statement by Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov, U.N. [Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General] DSRSG and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator on UN staying to support aid response in Afghanistan," August 17, 2021. Specific U.N. entities have issued similar statements. On September 13, 2021, U.N. Secretary-General Guterres convened a high-level ministerial meeting in Geneva, Switzerland on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. See https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-ministerial-meeting-humanitarian-situation. Member States pledged more than \$1.2 billion for the people of Afghanistan at the ministerial meeting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> ICRC, "Afghanistan: A Statement from Robert Mardini, the Director-General of the ICRC," August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the humanitarian situation; immediate and secondary impacts contributed to a near doubling of the number of people requiring assistance, from 9.4 million in January 2020 to 18.4 million in January 2021. U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA), "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan (2018-2021) - Year-End Monitoring Report (Jan - Dec 2020)," January 2020, and UNOCHA, "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan Summary 2021," May 9, 2021. The immediate response to COVID-19 focuses largely on the health and hygiene impacts of the pandemic, while the longer term response to the secondary impacts focuses on protection, food security and livelihoods, nutrition, and education. The urgent need to shift programming and resources toward the COVID-19 response also came at the expense of some other humanitarian priorities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> "WFP Afghanistan: Situation Report," August 16, 2021; See also, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, "Afghanistan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis: March - November 2021," April 2021. High food insecurity is due to a complex mix of factors, such as food prices, reduced income and poverty, conflict, COVID-19 impacts, and natural disasters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> In Afghanistan, many protection concerns exist for vulnerable populations as well as the local staff aiming to assist them. According to the United Nations, for humanitarian organizations, protection is typically about advocating for and supporting ways to reduce and prevent people's exposure to risks and to ensure respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. UNOCHA, "Protection." See https://www.unocha.org/es/themes/protection. Systematic violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by the Taliban and other armed groups ranged from deliberate attacks on health and education facilities to targeted killings and the forced recruitment of children as child soldiers. Office of the Special

U.N. Funding Appeals. Prior to the Taliban takeover, humanitarian needs were not fully met, in part due to limited resources, government capacity shortcomings, and security constraints on humanitarian operations. The 2021 U.N. Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan totaled \$1.3 billion to meet basic needs such as food, water, shelter, protection, and medical services (including those related to COVID-19). The August 27, 2021, U.N. Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan sought \$299 million in anticipation of half a million Afghan refugee arrivals in neighboring countries through the end of 2021. On September 5, 2021, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a flash appeal for \$606 million to meet immediate humanitarian response gaps through the end of the year. For years, the U.S. government has been the largest donor of humanitarian assistance for the Afghan population, including those displaced internally or as refugees.

### What is the status of Afghan Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees?<sup>244</sup>

The United Nations and other humanitarian organizations continue to assess the rapidly evolving displacement situation in Afghanistan.<sup>245</sup> The status and number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan are not known due to the rapidly evolving security and political situation on the ground. Prior to the Taliban takeover, the United Nations estimated there were more than 3.4 million IDPs, a number which is anticipated to increase.<sup>246</sup> Most Afghans are reportedly staying inside the country, with some returning home as areas stabilize and others fleeing rural areas for Kabul province and other major cities.<sup>247</sup> Humanitarian organizations are providing assistance to IDPs where access is possible.

The United Nations is preparing refugee-receiving countries (specifically Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) for potential new Afghan refugee arrivals.<sup>248</sup> The

Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "Afghanistan," June 2021. See also Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed conflict (A/75/873–S/2021/437) issued on 21 June 2021, pp. 3-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> UNOCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021, May Update*, June 8, 2021. As of September 8, 2021, the appeal was 40.3% funded.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan: Summary & Inter-agency Funding Requirements July-December 2021, August 27, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> UNOCHA, "Afghanistan Flash Appeal: Immediate Humanitarian Response Needs (Sept - Dec 2021)," September 5, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> USAID, Afghanistan – Complex Emergency," Fact Sheet #5, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, September 3, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> This section was prepared by Rhoda Margesson, Specialist in International Humanitarian Policy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> **Refugees** have fled their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons based on race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social or political group. Refugees are unwilling or unable to avail themselves of the protection of their home government due to fears of persecution. Once granted refugee status, a person has certain rights and protections under international law. **Asylum-seekers**, who flee their home country, seek sanctuary in another state where they apply for asylum (i.e., the right to be recognized as a refugee). They may receive legal protection and assistance while their formal status is determined. **IDPs** have been forced from their homes, often for many of the same reasons as refugees, but have not crossed an international border.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> UNOCHA, "Humanitarians seek \$1.3 billion to help millions in war-weary Afghanistan," January 12, 2021 and "Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (30 August – 5 September 2021); UNHCR, "UNHCR warns Afghanistan's conflict taking the heaviest toll on displaced women and children," August 13, 2021. UNHCR, "UNHCR Position on Returns to Afghanistan," August 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, "Flash External Update: Afghanistan Situation #4," September 1, 2021. UNHCR, *Afghanistan Situation: Supplementary Appeal: July-December 2021*, August 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan: Summary & Inter-agency

willingness and capacity of neighboring countries to host Afghan refugees in the short- and long-term remains unclear. (Iran and Pakistan already host over 2.2 million registered Afghan refugees—roughly 85% of all Afghan refugees—from previous waves of displacement.)<sup>249</sup> Border closures with neighboring countries continue to fluctuate, although most land border-crossing points have reportedly been closed except in limited instances. The United Nations has consistently reported Afghans moving toward Pakistan border posts, but no large-scale international displacement from Afghanistan has so far been observed.<sup>250</sup> Reports of recent Afghan arrivals in other countries, such as Turkey, are also beginning to emerge.<sup>251</sup> Citing the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as customary international law, the United Nations has called on all countries to allow civilians fleeing Afghanistan access to their territories, to support the right to seek asylum, and to ensure respect for the principle of non-refoulement (not to forcibly return refugees).<sup>252</sup>

#### What are the implications of the Taliban's takeover for counternarcotics?<sup>253</sup>

Afghanistan is among the world's most significant sources of illicit drugs, particularly opiates. According to U.S. and U.N. estimates, more than 80% of the world's heroin supply originates in Afghanistan. In 2020, an estimated 215,000 hectares of opium poppy was cultivated in Afghanistan—most of which was harvested in areas under Taliban influence or control. Afghanistan is also a major source of methamphetamine and cannabis products (e.g., hashish or cannabis resin). The illicit drug trade, just one component of a broader—and thriving—informal economy in which the Taliban have long operated, is a major source of revenue for the Taliban; it is also vital as a driver of employment for agricultural workers in opium poppy cultivation regions of Afghanistan. Opiates have taken a public health toll on the Afghan population, as the country has reported some of the world's highest substance abuse rates in recent years.

Uncertainty surrounds the question of what type of counternarcotics posture the Taliban intend to adopt. In 2000, following unsuccessful efforts in 1997 and 1999, the Taliban imposed a short-lived ban that dramatically decreased recorded opium poppy cultivation in 2001.<sup>257</sup> A Taliban

Funding Requirements July-December 2021, August 27, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>249</sup> Afghans have been displaced as refugees due to different conflicts over the past four decades, creating one of the largest protracted refugee situations in the world. Since 2002, nearly 5.3 million Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan under UNHCR's facilitated Voluntary Repatriation Program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan: Summary & Inter-agency Funding Requirements July-December 2021, August 27, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> The New Humanitarian, "The Afghan refugee crisis brewing on Turkey's eastern border," August 3, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> UNHCR, "UNHCR Position on Returns to Afghanistan," August 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> This section was prepared by Liana Rosen, Specialist in International Crime and Narcotics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>254</sup> White House, Office of National Drug Control Policy, "The Office of National Drug Control Policy Releases Data on Afghanistan Poppy Cultivation and Potential Heroin Production," press release, July 16, 2021; U.S. Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, Vol. 1: Drug and Chemical Control, March 2021, p. 86; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report*, Booklet 2: Global Overview, June 2021, p. 51; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report*, Booklet 3: Drug Market Trends, June 2021, pp. 68, 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> White House, Office of National Drug Control Policy, "The Office of National Drug Control Policy Releases Data on Afghanistan Poppy Cultivation and Potential Heroin Production," press release, July 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report*, Booklet 3: Drug Market Trends, June 2021, p. 108; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "UNODC Reports Major, and Growing, Drug Abuse in Afghanistan," press release, June 21, 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> U.S. Department of State, "The Taliban And The Afghan Drug Trade," Fact Sheet, December 20, 2000; United

spokesperson stated on August 17, 2021, that the Taliban envision an elimination of drug production and smuggling in the country—and are seeking international assistance to achieve this goal. Some question the credibility of such a posture, and anticipate the prospect of continued Taliban involvement in and reliance on the opium trade as a revenue source, particularly given its importance as a generator of labor-intensive employment and cash liquidity. This may include profiting from the taxation of the movement of illicit drug-related products, such as the import of precursor chemicals required in the processing and production of heroin and methamphetamine. Even if the Taliban were to impose an effective ban on the illicit drug trade, revenue opportunities in the informal or grey-zone economy—through a wide range of taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of the taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of the taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of the service of taxation and extortion schemes—may likely persist or expand. The service of th

Under Afghan Presidents Ashraf Ghani and Hamid Karzai, the U.S. government spent billions of dollars supporting a wide range of capacity-building assistance, training, and mentoring projects for counternarcotics-related ministries, task forces, and law-enforcement units in Afghanistan; U.S. programs also sought to promote alternative licit livelihood options and address drug treatment and rehabilitation services, particularly for women and children.

Some additional issues that Congress may consider as events continue to unfold include

- Whether to continue to support any, some, or all counternarcotics programming in Afghanistan;
- What consequences for human and economic security may result if counternarcotics donor funding to Afghanistan declines; and
- How the counternarcotics policy postures of regional actors, including China, Iran, and Russia, may evolve under the current circumstances. <sup>261</sup>

### How might the Taliban takeover affect Afghanistan's relationships with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)?<sup>262</sup>

Since rejoining the international community in 2002, Afghanistan has been an active member of IFIs. The World Bank committed \$784 million to development projects in Afghanistan in 2021, and \$5.3 billion to date.<sup>263</sup> The World Bank is the largest single source of funding for Afghanistan's development, financing up to 30% of the country's civilian budget and supporting

Nations International Drug Control Programme, *Afghanistan: Annual Opium Poppy Survey 2001*, October 2001, p. 11. <sup>258</sup> Joanna Taylor, "Afghanistan 'will not be a country of cultivation of opium anymore', Taliban insists," *Independent* (UK), August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> Jonathan Landay, "Profits and poppy: Afghanistan's illegal drug trade a boon for Taliban," Reuters, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>260</sup> Graeme Smith and David Mansfield, "The Taliban Have Claimed Afghanistan's Real Economic Prize," *New York Times*, guest essay, August 18, 2021; United Nations Security Council, *Twelfth Report Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team*, S/2021/486, June 1, 2021, pp. 14-16; Graeme Smith, *Resource Flows and Political Power in Afghanistan, Overseas Development Institute*, November 2020. See also World Bank, *The Long Shadow of Informality: Challenges and Policies*, Franziska Ohnsorge and Shu Yu, eds., 2021, https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/publication/informal-economy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> For past criticism, see Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*, SIGAR-18-52-LL, June 14, 2018; see also Tia Sewell, "Where's the U.S. Strategy for Counternarcotics in Afghanistan?," Lawfare, November 18, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> This section was prepared by Martin Weiss, Specialist in International Trade and Finance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> The World Bank in Afghanistan, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview.

core functions of the government.<sup>264</sup> As of December 2020, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had extended around \$500 million in loans and grants to Afghanistan.<sup>265</sup> Multilateral development bank (MDB) financing supports a wide range of endeavors. World Bank financing is largely focused on governance efforts, including macro-fiscal policy and management; finance, private investment, and job creation; public sector governance and anti-corruption; human capital development and service delivery; citizen engagement and social inclusion; urban development and infrastructure; connectivity; and sustainability. ADB financing is focused primarily on large infrastructure projects. Both development banks are also providing Afghanistan COVID-19-related support, such as financing to construct hospitals and train staff.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to a \$370 million COVID-19 relief program for Afghanistan in November 2020. Afghanistan also benefitted from the IMF's disbursement of about \$220 million under the Fund's Rapid Credit Facility and debt-service relief of about \$10 million under a special trust fund. Additionally, Afghanistan is eligible to receive a proportionate share of the recently agreed \$650 million Special Drawing Rights (SDR) allocation that is designed to bolster the foreign exchange reserves of member countries. <sup>266</sup> The allocation is scheduled to be distributed to member states on August 23, 2021. Under the allocation, Afghanistan would receive around \$434 million of SDRs, based on its 0.07% quota in the IMF, bringing its total SDR allocation up to about \$653 million.

A key issue is whether the IMF and the MDBs recognize the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan. While IFI charters are explicit about the requirements for a country's membership, they are largely silent on the issue of representation, leaving the decision to its member countries. At the IMF, IMF Press Secretary Gerry Rice released a statement on August 18 that, "[t]here is currently a lack of clarity within the int'l community regarding recognition of a government in Afghanistan, as a consequence of which the country cannot access SDRs or other IMF resources." The United States was also reportedly negotiating to pause the SDR allocation to Afghanistan. On August 17, Representative French Hill and 17 other lawmakers wrote to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen urging the United States to intervene and help prevent Afghanistan from accessing any IMF resources. The Improvement of the Treasury Secretary Improvement Improvem

The World Bank suspended funding for dozens of projects in Afghanistan on August 24, citing questions over the legitimacy of Taliban rule. Under World Bank policies, the organization cannot disburse funds when there is no agreement by its 189 member countries on whether a country has a legitimate government. The World Bank completed evacuation of its Kabul-based staff to Islamabad the previous week.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> Josh Zumbrun, "World Bank Freezes Aid to Afghanistan," Wall Street Journal, August 24, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>265</sup> Asian Development Bank Member Fact Sheet, June 2021, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27747/afg-2020.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>266</sup> CRS In Focus IF11835, *International Monetary Fund: Special Drawing Rights Allocation*, by Martin A. Weiss and Rebecca M. Nelson

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>267</sup> Alison Duxbury, The Participation of States in International Organisations (Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>268</sup> Gerry Rice (@IMFSpokesperson), Twitter, August 18, 2018, available at https://twitter.com/IMFSpokesperson/status/1428096013374410752

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>269</sup> Chris Giles et al., "Afghanistan faces 'dire' financial outlook, warns former central bank chief," *Financial Times*, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>270</sup> The letter is available at https://hill.house.gov/uploadedfiles/20210817ltrtosecyellenresdrstoafghanistan.pdf.

#### دولت بایدن کدام دارایی های بانک مرکزی افغانستان را توقیف کرده است و نتایج بالقوه آن حسب المناب المن

بر اساس ارزیابی IMF در جون 2021، بانک مرکزی افغانستان (د افغانستان بانک) تقریباً 9.5 میلیارد دالر ذخایر بین 1020 المللی داشت. 272 بیشتر ذخایر بانک مرکزی در خارج از افغانستان نگهداری می شود. بر اساس ترازنامه پایان سال 2020 بانک مرکزی، 1.3 میلیارد دالر در بانک فدرال ریزرف نیویورک نگهداری می شد؛ 3.2 میلیارد دالر در بانک فای خارجی نگهداری می شد؛ 3.2 میلیارد دالر در بانک فای خارجی نگهداری می شد؛ در 15 میلیارد دالر سرمایه گذاری (عمدتاً در اوراق بهادار دولتی ایالات متحده) توسط بانک فدرال ریزرف نیویورک، بانک جهانی و بانک تسویه حساب های بین المللی مدیریت می شد. در 15 آگست 2021، دولت بایدن ذخایر دولت افغانستان را که در حساب های بانکی ایالات متحده نگهداری می شد، توقیف کرد. 273 وضعیت موجودی بانک مرکزی بانک مرکزی از خارجی بانک مرکزی - حدود 400 ملیون دالر که عمدتاً در کاخ ریاست جمهوری و دفتر مرکزی بانک مرکزی نگهداری می شد - نامشخص است. 274 اجمل احمدی، سرپرست پیشین بانک مرکزی که از کابل فرار کرد، در شبکه های اجتماعی تخمین زد که وجوه قابل دسترسی طالبان 0.1 الی 0.2 فیصد کل ذخایر بین المللی افغانستان است. 275 بر اساس راپورها اعضای طالبان سعی کردند ذخایر خارجی را بررسی کنند اما مقامات بانک مرکزی به آنها گفتند که نمی توانند به آنها دسترسی داشته باشند چراکه توسط بانک فدرال ریزرف نیویورک نگهداری می شود. 276

ناتوانی در دسترسی به نخایر بین المللی احتمالاً توانایی طالبان را برای مدیریت اقتصاد پیچیده خواهد کرد. واحد پول افغانستان، افغانی، در پایین ترین ارزش خود معامله می شود و انتظار می رود کاهش ارزش پول باعث افزایش تورم شود. به منظور مهار تورم، طالبان ممکن است خروج پول از کشور را محدود کند (اعمال کنترول سرمایه). ترکیبی از کنترول سرمایه و تورم چشم انداز اقتصادی تیره ای را برای مردم افغانستان ایجاد می کند. علاوه بر این، توانایی طالبان برای مدیریت اقتصاد مورد تردید است. طالبان سرپرست جدید بانک مرکزی افغانستان را شخصی به نام حاجی محمد ادریس معرفی کرد که هیچ نوع تحصیلات رسمی اقتصادی ندارد. او ظاهراً ریاست کمیسیون اقتصادی طالبان را بر عهده داشته است که فعالیت های آن به شمول جمع آوری مالیات غیرقانونی از کسب و کارها و دهاقین جهت تمویل مالی اقدامات این گروه شبه نظامی بوده است.

بعضی از سوالات دیگری که ممکن است کانگرس از بخش اجرایی داشته باشد عبارتند از

- مقامات دولتی ایالات متحده و کارشناسان دیگر دورنمای اقتصادی کوتاه تا میان مدت افغانستان را چی قسم ارزیابی می کنند؟
- به شکل تاریخی 80%-70% از بودیجه دولت افغانستان توسط کمک های بین المللی پوره می شده است. <sup>278</sup> بدون این نوع تمویل مالی، طالبان چی قسم می خواهد دولت را تمویل مالی، به شمول پر داخت حقوق بخش دولتی و تمویل خدمات اساسی، کند؟

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>271</sup> این بخش توسط ربکا نلسون، کارشناس تجارت و امور مالی بین المللی، تهیه شده است.

<sup>272</sup> ذخایر بین المللی به شمول طلا و دار ایی ها (مانند پول نقد، دیپازیت های بانکی و اور اق بهادار دولتی) است که به اسعار خارجی اصلی مانند دالر و یورو بیان می شوند.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>273</sup> جف استاین، "دولت بایدن میلیار دها دالر از ذخایر افغانستان را مسدود و طالبان را از پول نقد محروم می کند "، واشنگتن پست، 17 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>274</sup> جى پى كونينگ، "كدام اتفاقى براى دارايى هاى بانك مركزى افغانستان مى افتد؟ " وبلاگ مانينس، 17 آگست 2021. <sup>275</sup> احمل احمدى، تو بيتر، 18 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>276</sup> ناتالی موسومچی، "طالبان تلاش کردند تا نزدیک به 10 میلیارد دالر ذخایر بانک مرکزی افغانستان را در اختیار بگیرند، اما بیشتر پول در نیویورک است، " بیزنس اینسایدر، 25 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>277</sup> الطاف نجفی زاده، "طالبان یک شخص ناشناس را به حیث رئیس بانک مرکزی در آستانه بحران معرفی کردند، "بلومبرگ، 23 آگست 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>278</sup> دیوید لادر، "حکومت طالبان آژانس های کمک رسانی را با معضل اخلاقی و مالی رو در رو می کند "، *رویترز*، 24 آگست 2021.

- طالبان چقدر آمادگی دارند تا مؤسسات مالی کلیدی را مدیریت کنند و زیرساخت های اساسی را حفظ نماید؟
- أنه سقوط اقتصادی چی قسم ممکن است بالای امنیت و ثبات کشور و احتمال مهاجرت گروهی اثر بگذارد؟ این ملاحظات چی قسم ممکن است تصمیمات ایالات متحده را درباره تحریم ها و کنترول امریکا بالای دارایی های ملی افغانستان شکل بدهد؟
- أنه اهرم فشار قابل بحث احتمالی ایالات متحده نسبت به طالبان به شمول کمک به توسعه؛ تحریم ها (چه موارد جدید و چه اتمام تحریم های موجود)؛ توقیف منابع بانک مرکزی افغانستان؛ و گسترش به رسمیت شناختن است. کدامیک از این موارد کمترین و بیشترین تأثیرات را دارد؟

# What is the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Afghanistan and what are the implications of the Taliban takeover for COVID-19 control and vaccine distribution?<sup>279</sup>

As of September 13, 2021, Afghanistan has reported more than 155,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 7,000 deaths from the disease.<sup>280</sup> Public health responders in the country believe the actual figures are likely higher due to low testing rates and lack of a national death registration system.<sup>281</sup> On September 2, 2021, WHO officials reported that 18% of COVID-19 diagnostic tests were positive; transmission of the highly contagious Delta variant is reportedly contributing to a fourth wave of the pandemic in the country.<sup>282</sup> Instability and interruption to aid flows have also forced temporary suspension of some COVID-19 responses, particularly plans to establish new diagnostic laboratories, install oxygen plants in hospitals, and expand isolation centers and intensive care unit beds for COVID-19.<sup>283</sup> According to WHO, after September 5, 2021, 3% of the country's isolation beds and 8% of its intensive care unit (ICU) beds will remain operational.<sup>284</sup>

Since the beginning of the pandemic, WHO, UN agencies, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, have worked with the country's Ministry of Health on the COVID-19 response, including by helping to strengthen laboratory capacity and training vaccinators to deploy the COVID-19 vaccine. WHO reported that its work builds on routine health care activities in the country, such as polio immunization campaigns and health systems capacity strengthening. As of September 13, 2021, approximately 1.9 million COVID-19 vaccines had been administered in Afghanistan, covering roughly 5% of the country's population. According to the most recently available

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>279</sup> This section was prepared by Sara Tharakan, Analyst in Global Health and International Development, and Tiaji Salaam-Blyther, Specialist in Global Health.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>280</sup> WHO, COVID-19 Dashboard: Afghanistan, accessed on September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>281</sup> Emma Farge, "Hundreds of health centres at risk of closure in Afghanistan – WHO," Reuters, September 6, 2021. Diaa Hadid, "A Crippling 3rd Wave Of COVID Adds To Afghanistan's Woes," NPR, July 2, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>282</sup> WHO, "Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report Issue 5," September 2, 2021, accessed on September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>283</sup> WHO, "Statement by the WHO Representative in Afghanistan," August 24, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>284</sup> WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report Issue 5, September 2, 2021, accessed on September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>285</sup> Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, "Resourceful Optimism: Fighting COVID-19 in Afghanistan," April 20, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>286</sup> WHO, "WHO continues fight against pandemic amid worsening global public health emergency and uneven vaccine rollout," July 20, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>287</sup> WHO, "Statement by the WHO Representative in Afghanistan," August 24, 2021; and WHO, *COVID-19 Dashboard: Afghanistan*, accessed on September 13, 2021. Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, *Afghanistan: Country Profile*, accessed September 13, 2021.

reports, prior to the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan was in phase one of its vaccination campaign, and was vaccinating front-line health care workers, media personnel, teachers, and its security and defense forces.<sup>288</sup> In the longer term, it is unclear how supply chain disruptions associated with earlier Kabul International Airport (formerly Hamid Karzai International Airport) closures will affect the COVID-19 vaccine supply, as well as other necessary health and hospital supplies.

The implications of the Taliban's takeover, in terms of prospects for COVID-19 control, remain to be seen. Though WHO and UN agencies have committed to long-term operations in the country, including delivering COVID-19 and polio immunizations (Afghanistan is one of the last countries where polio is endemic), the World Bank and WHO warn that the interruption of aid flows may leave millions of Afghans without access to health services and jeopardize the progress on health indicators of the past 20 years (such as reductions in maternal and infant mortality and increases in immunization rates).<sup>289</sup>

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in early September 2021, 90% of health facilities in Afghanistan closed due to restrictions on aid financing to the Taliban; WHO is funding 500 clinics as a stopgap measure, though 75% of clinics remain closed.<sup>290</sup> Health facilities continue to experience critical shortages in medical supplies due to earlier uncertainty at the Kabul international airport, which has created a backlog of deliveries.<sup>291</sup> The airport's reopening and resumption of some flights is expected to increase aid flows eventually.<sup>292</sup> Overcrowding among displaced people has reportedly limited infection prevention measures and increased the risk of transmission of different types of infections, including COVID-19.

Historically, the Taliban has opposed vaccines, including reportedly committing attacks on health workers providing polio vaccines. In earlier waves of the pandemic, they reportedly assisted domestic and international efforts to combat COVID-19.<sup>293</sup> Some observers dismissed the Taliban's earlier response and charged that the Taliban's escalation of violence since 2019 was the main factor impeding the country's response to the pandemic.<sup>294</sup> WHO officials have warned that Taliban attacks on health care workers remain a challenge, and have said large numbers of internally displaced persons are fostering conditions for increased COVID-19 transmission.<sup>295</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>288</sup> WHO, "WHO continues fight against pandemic amid worsening global public health emergency and uneven vaccine rollout," July 20, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>289</sup> WHO, "Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report Issue 5," September 2, 2021, accessed on September 13, 2021. Karl Blanchet, Ahmed Shah Salahi, and Sayed Saeedzai, et al., "Afghanistan needs international support. But what kind?," *The New Humanitarian*, September 13, 2021. Irwin Roy, "Afghan healthcare under threat from international aid freeze," *The New Humanitarian*, September 6, 2021. WHO, *Statement on Afghanistan by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean*, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>290</sup>WHO, "Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report Issue 5," September 2, 2021, accessed on September 13, 2021; Irwin Loy, "Afghan healthcare under threat from international aid freeze," *The New Humanitarian*, September 6, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>291</sup> Apoorva Mandivilli , "Health care in Afghanistan is crumbling, aid groups warn," *The New York Times*, September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>292</sup> "Kabul airport reopens to receive aid, domestic flights restart," *Reuters*, September 4, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>293</sup> See Ashley Jackson, "For the Taliban, the Pandemic is a Ladder," *Foreign Policy*, May 6, 2020, and "The Taliban are joining Afghanistan's fight against covid-19," *Economist*, May 9, 2020. Abdul Qadir Sediqi and Orooj Hakimi, "Coronavirus makes Taliban realise they need health workers alive not dead," Reuters, March 18, 2020. Ruchi Kumar, "Taliban launches campaign to help Afghanistan fight coronavirus," Al Jazeera, April 6, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>294</sup> Ashley Jackson, "For the Taliban, the Pandemic is a Ladder," Foreign Policy, May 6, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>295</sup> WHO, *Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report Issue 5*, September 2, 2021, accessed on September 13, 2021. WHO, *Statement on Afghanistan by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean*, August 18, 2021.

Given these factors, it is unclear whether to, and what extent, the new government formed by the Taliban will assist in COVID-19 control and vaccination campaigns.

## How have other countries reacted to the Taliban's takeover?

#### How have NATO allies responded to the U.S. withdrawal?<sup>296</sup>

Following the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement and subsequent U.S. consultations with NATO allies, NATO announced in April 2021 that it would begin withdrawing from Afghanistan on May 1, 2021, and complete the withdrawal "within a few months." Some European allies expressed unease that the mission—which they viewed as a symbol of European solidarity with the United States following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001—was ending on terms determined largely by the United States and with what they viewed as limited European involvement. Space Criticism increased during the Taliban takeover in August, driven by a belief that Europeans in Afghanistan and their Afghan partners were put at heightened risk due to actions taken by the United States. Space European allies also have expressed concern about the longer-term implications for Europe of the withdrawal, particularly with respect to potential refugee flows and terrorist threats. More broadly, the withdrawal has reportedly raised questions in Europe about European allies' dependence on the United States and about U.S. reliability as an ally.

NATO's almost 20-year engagement in Afghanistan was by far the most expansive military operation in the alliance's history. Close to one-third of the fatalities suffered by coalition forces in Afghanistan were from non-U.S. NATO member and partner countries. In 2011, the high point of the NATO mission in Afghanistan in terms of troop numbers, about 40,000 of the 130,000 troops deployed to the mission were from non-U.S. NATO countries and partners. Civen their level of engagement, European allies were critical of the Trump Administration's lack of consultation with them prior to its February 2020 agreement with the Taliban. Although they welcomed President Biden's pledge of more substantive consultations before finalizing decisions on the U.S. withdrawal, many European allies subsequently asserted that "the timing and nature of the withdrawal were set in Washington" and that they were not adequately consulted during the planning process. Such criticism continued into late August, as several allied governments,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>296</sup> This section was prepared by Paul Belkin, Analyst in European Affairs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>297</sup> NATO, "NATO and Afghanistan," updated regularly at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\_8189.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>298</sup> See, for example, Jacopo Barigazzi, "Biden's Afghan pullout triggers unease among NATO allies," *Politico*, April 15, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>299</sup> Matthew Karnitsching, "Disbelief and betrayal: Europe reacts to Biden's Afghanistan 'miscalculation," *Politico*, August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>300</sup> Josep Borrell Fontelles, "Europe, Afghanistan is Your Wake-Up Call," *New York Times*, September 1, 2021; Gilles Gressani, "Elements for a Doctrine: A Conversation with Charles Michel," Groupe d'Etudes Geopolitiques, September 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>301</sup> "Afghanistan Coalition Military Fatalities by Year," icasualties.org. Figures are updated regularly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>302</sup> NATO, *ISAF: Key Facts and Figures*, June 6, 2011, at https://www.nato.int/isaf/placemats\_archive/2011-06-06-ISAF-Placemat.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>303</sup> "Germany Worried at Possible U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *DeutscheWelle*, December 28, 2018; Ben Farmer, "Britain Left in Dark over U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *The Telegraph*, December 21, 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>304</sup> Josep Borrell Fontelles, "Europe, Afghanistan is Your Wake-Up Call," New York Times, September 1, 2021

including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK), unsuccessfully requested that the Biden Administration extend the August 31 deadline for withdrawal from Afghanistan.<sup>305</sup>

As European allies were withdrawing forces over the summer, they also began to facilitate the removal of small numbers of Afghans. By the end of August, European allies and Canada had evacuated more than 28,000 Afghan citizens, including more than 8,000 by the UK, almost 5,000 by Italy, 4,100 by Germany, 2,600 by France, and 1,900 by Spain. NATO allies Albania and North Macedonia, as well as neighboring Kosovo, reportedly agreed to host several thousand atrisk Afghan evacuees seeking entry into the United States and other third countries (Albania about 4,000, Kosovo about 2,000, and North Macedonia between 800 and 1,800).

The resettlement of Afghans in Europe comes as the European Union (EU) and its member states have struggled to address migration and refugee flows to Europe and are eager to avoid a recurrence of the 2015 crisis in which over a million migrants and refugees reached Europe. Prior to the Taliban takeover, some governments had moved to repatriate Afghan asylum-seekers rejected on the grounds that conditions in Afghanistan, aided by NATO engagement, did not merit refugee status. Afghan repatriation has since halted, but many European governments have expressed concern about the potential for growing numbers of migrants and refugees from Afghanistan.<sup>308</sup> These concerns could be compounded by fears of a potentially heightened terrorist threat to Europe posed by Taliban rule. European allies continue to grapple with the threat posed by ISIS and affiliated groups both in the Middle East and Africa. European citizens who have trained with these terrorist groups and the potential for refugees or migrants to become radicalized after arriving in Europe have been particular concerns.<sup>309</sup>

The U.S. withdrawal also has raised broader questions about European reliance on the United States, particularly militarily, and about potentially shifting U.S. priorities. As noted above, some European allies were critical of their lack of involvement in determining the end of an operation they viewed largely as an example of transatlantic cooperation and unity. For these critics, the withdrawal has compounded existing concerns about U.S. credibility based on policy reversals experienced during the Trump Administration; perceived U.S. political fragmentation; and concerns about longer-term U.S. foreign policy trends, such as a potential embrace of isolationism. Others in Europe have stressed that the Afghanistan mission, and the nature of the withdrawal, exposed critical shortfalls in European military capabilities—in this view, European reliance on U.S. defensive capabilities meant that European troops could not safely remain in Afghanistan without U.S. support.<sup>310</sup>

These considerations have heightened longer-standing calls in Europe for European allies to reduce dependency on the United States and pursue a more autonomous EU foreign and security

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>305</sup> Matthew Lee, Jim Lawless, and Aamer Madhani, "G-7 Leaders Can't Sway Biden to Delay Afghanistan Withdrawal," Associated Press, August 25, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>306</sup> George Bowden, "Afghanistan: Final Flights Arriving as UK's Campaign Ends," BBC News, August 29, 2021; "Factbox: Evacuations from Afghanistan by Country," Reuters, August 30, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>307</sup> "Albania: First Arrivals of Afghan Refugees," EuroNews, August 27, 2021; "Afghans Evacuated from Kabul in U.S. Airlift Arrive in Kosovo," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 29, 2021; "More than 100 Afghan Citizens Offered Refuge in North Macedonia," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 31, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>308</sup> Katrin Bennhold and Steven Erlanger, "Why Europe's Leaders Say they Won't Welcome More Afghan Refugees," *New York Times*, August 23, 2021; Lili Bayer and Zia Weise, "Migration Fears Complicate Europe's Response to Afghanistan Crisis," *Politico.eu*, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>309</sup> Atlantic Council. "Experts React: What the Fall of Afghanistan Means for Europe," August 18, 2021; Laurens Cerulus, "Europe Needs Security 'Screening' of Afghan Refugees, Top Official Says," *Politico.eu*, August 26, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>310</sup> Steven Erlanger, "Afghan Fiasco Raises Hard Questions for Europe," New York Times, August 31, 2021.

policy. Proponents of increased EU "strategic autonomy," including French President Macron, have said a more independent and militarily capable Europe would benefit both Europe and the United States by ensuring more equitable burden-sharing.<sup>311</sup> Others in Europe, including Poland and the Baltic States, have been more reluctant to endorse policies that might be viewed as undermining strong U.S. leadership of NATO.<sup>312</sup>

#### How have regional countries reacted to the Taliban's takeover?313

Pakistan. Pakistan has played an active and, by many accounts, disruptive and destabilizing role in Afghan affairs for decades. Afghanistan's former leaders, along with many U.S. and Western officials, attribute the Taliban's existence—as well as its strength and endurance over the past two decades—to either the active or passive support of Pakistan's military and intelligence services, including allowing the Taliban to maintain safe havens on Pakistani territory. The Trump Administration sought and received Islamabad's assistance in facilitating U.S. talks with the Taliban after 2018, and U.S. assessments of Pakistan's role in this process have generally been positive. Islamabad welcomed the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement as a vindication of its "long-held stance that there is no military solution of the Afghan conflict," and it contended that the agreement would pave the way for intra-Afghan negotiations. U.S. withdrawal appears to many observers to have validated Pakistan's broader post-2001 strategy.

At present, Pakistan claims to seek the establishment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan and it vows to be "a responsible partner for peace and security in Afghanistan." The first high-ranking Pakistani official to visit Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover was the chief of Pakistan's lead intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), leading to speculation that he had "brokered" a subsequent power-sharing arrangement among Afghan Taliban leaders. Five days later, CIA Director William Burns was in Pakistan to consult on Afghanistan with both Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff and the ISI chief. 318

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>311</sup> Sam Fleming et al., "Afghanistan pullout deepens EU concern over lack of military power," *Financial Times*, September 2, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>312</sup> Justyna Gotkowska, "Poland and the Baltic States: A Preference for a Renewed West," Heinrich Boll Stiftung, January 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>313</sup> This section was prepared by Cory Welt, Specialist in Russian and European Affairs; Andrew Bowen, Analyst in Russian and European Affairs; Caitlin Campbell, Analyst in Asian Affairs; Chris Blanchard, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs; Ken Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs; Alan Kronstadt, Specialist in South Asian Affairs; Maria Blackwood, Analyst in Asian Policy; and Clayton Thomas, Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>314</sup> See, for example, "Some Afghans Blame Neighboring Pakistan for Taliban Gains," *Associated Press*, August 12, 2021; White House, *Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia*, August 21, 2017, and the July 8, 2021, remarks by a Pentagon spokesperson at https://go.usa.gov/xFeAg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>315</sup> For example, Special Representative Khalilzad thanked Pakistan for releasing Baradar from custody in October 2018 and for facilitating the travel of Taliban figures to talks in Doha. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin "expressed gratitude" to his Pakistani counterpart in March 2021 for Pakistan's "continued support for the Afghan peace process" ("Mullah Baradar released by Pakistan at the behest of US: Khalilzad," *The Hindu*, February 9, 2019; Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Pentagon chief praises Pakistan's role in Afghan peace process," *Dawn*, March 23, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>316</sup> See the February 29, 2020, Foreign Affairs Ministry release at https://tinyurl.com/tx2ezo7; Anne Patterson, "What's Next for Pakistan and the US?," Middle East Institute, April 15, 2021. According to a major early 2021 assessment, "Pakistan has adopted a policy that can loosely be described as preferring instability in Afghanistan to a stable Afghanistan that is allied to India" ("Afghan Study Group Final Report: A Pathway for Peace in Afghanistan," U.S. Institute of Peace, February 3, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>317</sup> Amb. Asad Majeed Khan, "Inclusive Government Needed in Afghanistan" (op-ed), *Washington Times*, September 2, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>318</sup> ISI Director-General Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed was in Kabul on September 4 ("DG ISI Meets Taliban Leaders in

Senior Pakistani officials have issued some expressions of enthusiasm over the Taliban's swift victory. In mid-August, as the Taliban entered Kabul, Prime Minister Imran Khan said, "What is happening in Afghanistan now, they have broken the shackles of slavery." Pakistan's security establishment, seeking to prevent establishment of a pro-India government in Kabul, apparently continues to view the Afghan Taliban as a relatively friendly and reliably anti-India element in Afghanistan. Pakistani leaders claim that their influence over the group is limited. Many observers see the Taliban's takeover as a substantive triumph for Pakistan, bolstering its influence in Afghanistan and, correspondingly, advancing its decades-long efforts to limit Indian influence there. These developments provide Pakistan with possible advantages as regional powers attempt to gain influence in South and Central Asian politics. 321

Despite some implicitly pro-Taliban statements from top Pakistani officials, numerous analysts question whether Pakistan's preferred outcome in Afghanistan was a Taliban-dominated government, in particular one that emerged through military means (which Pakistani leaders continue to deny having sought). In this way, the Taliban takeover appears to be dividing Pakistan's strategic community. Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have been complicated by the presence of at least 1.4 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan (unofficial estimates reach up to 3 million) since the 1990s, as well as an historical, ethnically tinged dispute over their shared 1,600-mile-long border. Pakistan has in recent years fenced 90% of that frontier and operates 800-900 checkpoints there. As of mid-September 2021, the tide of refugees has not been as great as many predicted, but a new influx may present difficulties for Pakistan, including domestic political and ethnic-based resistance. The Taliban (like past Afghan governments) have never accepted the British colonial-era "Durand Line" as a legitimate international frontier separating Afghanistan and Pakistan. Such differences may exacerbate Pashtun nationalism inside Pakistan, creating a potential flashpoint in future relations.

Kabul," *News International* (Karachi), September 5, 2021; "Endless Warfare Lies Ahead Afghanistan Despite ISI-Brokered Deal to Appoint Name Minister," *First Post* (Delhi), September 6, 2021). See the Pakistan Army's September 9, 2021, release at https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=6273.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>319</sup> "Taliban Has 'Broken Shackles of Slavery," Says Pak PM Imran Khan," NDTV (Delhi), August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>320</sup> In June 2021, Pakistan's Prime Minister seemed to blame the United States for this development, telling an interviewer, "Given that the United States gave a date of withdrawal, from then onward, our leverage diminished on the Taliban" ("Imran Khan Urges a New Pakistan-U.S. Bond" (interview), *New York Times*, June 25, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>321</sup> "The Real Winner of the Afghan War? It's Not Who You Think," *New York Times*, August 26, 2021; "Pakistan, China, India Jockey for Position in Afghanistan's New Great Game," *Reuters*, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>322</sup> Husain Haqqani, "Pakistan's Pyrrhic Victory in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, July 2021; "Pakistan, After Rooting for Afghanistan's Taliban, Faces a Blowback," *Wall Street Journal*, July 9, 2021; Hamid Mir, "Pakistanis Aren't Rejoicing Over the Triumph of the Taliban" (op-ed), *Washington Post*, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>323</sup> "Pakistan Divided Over Taliban Victories in Afghanistan," *Gandhara* (Prague), July 19, 2021. In the words of one longtime observer, "many Pakistanis are gloating, while others are warning about the future. We are doing a victory dance, but there is dread in our hearts" (Mohammed Hanif, "In Pakistan, We Cultivated the Taliban, Then We Turned on Them" (op-ed), *Guardian* (London), August 24, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>324</sup> "For Afghanistan Peace and Order, World Leaders Must Learn From Past Mistakes" (interview with Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States), *USA Today*, August 19, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>325</sup> "Afghans Who Fled the First Taliban Regime Found Precarious Sanctuary in Pakistan," *Time*, August 18, 2021; "Afghans Flee to Pakistan, an Uncertain Future Awaits," *New York Times*, September 8, 2021. Pakistan's government has anticipated as many as 700,000 new Afghan refugees at a potential cost of \$2.2 billion as officials establish camps and ways to track and feed them ("Hosting 700k Afghans Will Cost \$2.2b for 3 years," *Express Tribune* (Karachi), July 18, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>326</sup> Madiha Afzal, "An Uneasy Limbo for US-Pakistan Relations Amidst the Withdrawal from Afghanistan," Brookings Institution, August 6, 2021.

The Taliban's victory may pose other challenges for Pakistan. Many commentators, including some from Pakistan, express strong concerns about the prospect that the takeover could empower Islamist militant groups that have continued to operate on Pakistani territory. Given Pakistan's own experience with domestic Islamist militancy over the past two decades, some analysts doubt that Islamabad will support a Taliban regime in Kabul in the same manner as it did in the 1990s. The threat of increasing Islamist militancy in Afghanistan could have serious implications for Pakistan's internal security. Terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and its regional affiliate, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP, also known as ISIS-K and founded mainly by Pakistani militants) have long considered the Pakistani government to be a prime regional adversary and may be further empowered.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP or Pakistani Taliban) conducted numerous domestic terrorist attacks in Pakistan that cost thousands of lives from 2007 to 2014. Pakistani Army operations in western Pakistan in 2014 reduced such incidents, but the group appears to be resurging in 2021—in concert with Al Qaeda—with up to 6,000 cadres.<sup>330</sup> The Afghan Taliban have, as part of their takeover, freed thousands of prisoners from Afghan government jails, including some high-ranking TTP figures and a reported 780 fighters.<sup>331</sup> The Pakistani Taliban, which is distinct from but has significant ideological ties to the Afghan Taliban, seemingly have renewed their "allegiance to the Islamic Emirate" in Afghanistan. The two groups reportedly have been described as "two faces of the same coin" by top Pakistani security officials.<sup>332</sup>

China (People's Republic of China, or PRC). China's leaders likely fear unmoderated Taliban control of Afghanistan will enable the spread of terrorism in the region and harm China's security interests. China may try to foster friendly ties with the Taliban in an attempt to influence the group's activities in ways that protect China's interests. The U.S. withdrawal and Taliban takeover have afforded the PRC an opportunity to criticize the United States and question Washington's credibility with allies and partners. The property of the U.S. withdrawal and Taliban takeover have afforded the PRC an opportunity to criticize the United States and question washington's credibility with allies and partners.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>327</sup> "The Fall and Rise of the Taliban," *Dawn* (Karachi), August 29, 2021; "On Afghanistan, Pakistan Walks Tightrope of Optimism and Caution," *Al Jazeera* (Doha), August 28, 2021; Abdul Basit, "A Taliban Takeover Will Strengthen Pakistan's Jihadis," *Foreign Policy*, August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>328</sup> See, for example, Madiha Afzal and Michael O'Hanlon, "Why Staying in Afghanistan Is the Least Bad Choice for Biden" (op-ed), *Washington Post*, March 8, 2021; "Enough is Enough: Pakistan Not Happy With Afghan Taliban," *News International* (Karachi), April 28, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>329</sup> Robin Wright, "Afghanistan, Again, Becomes a Cradle for Jihadism – and Al Qaeda," *New Yorker*, August 23, 2021; "Zahid Hussein, "Multiple Security Challenges for Pakistan as Afghan War Comes Close to Borders" (op-ed), *Arab News* (Jeddah), July 17, 2021. On IS-K, see "Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>330</sup> Abdul Sayed and Tori Hamming, "The Revival of the Pakistani Taliban," *CTC Sentinel*, April/May 2021; Colin Clarke, "Twenty Years After 9/11: What is the Future of the Global Jihadi Movement?," *CTC Sentinel*, September 2021.

<sup>331 &</sup>quot;Despite Taliban Assurances, World Frets Again About Afghan Militant Havens," Reuters, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>332</sup> "Pakistani Taliban's Emir Renews Allegiance to Afghan Taliban," *Long War Journal*, August 19, 2021; "Pakistani Army Warns of Blowback in Crackdown on Afghan Taliban," *Gandhara* (Prague), July 2, 2021.

<sup>333</sup> In recent years, and especially since 2019, Beijing has increased engagement with the Taliban as it became apparent that the group would remain a major political and military force in Afghanistan and as China sought to establish a facilitator role for itself in the Afghan reconciliation process. Jason Li, "China's Conflict Mediation in Afghanistan," Stimson Center, August 16, 2021, at https://www.stimson.org/2021/chinas-conflict-mediation-in-afghanistan/? utm\_source=Stimson+Center&utm\_campaign=9d5166cab8-RA%2FComms%2FAsia+Digest+August&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_15c3e20f70-9d5166cab8-403780106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>334</sup> Yue Xiaoyong, China's special envoy for Afghan affairs, called the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan "hasty and irresponsible" and other PRC officials and media have offered scathing critiques of the United States. A spokesperson

After the Taliban proclaimed victory, China's government sent a strong signal that it intends to treat the organization as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, although it has not recognized it as such as of September 17, 2021. Reiterating the PRC's proclaimed foreign policy principle of "non-interference in external affairs," PRC officials repeatedly have called on the Taliban to establish "solidarity" with "all factions and ethnic groups in Afghanistan" and build an "open and inclusive political structure" with which to govern Afghanistan. Spokespeople of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed multiple Taliban statements relevant to China's interests. These included statements that it would protect foreign missions in the country, support positive relations with China (including China's participation in reconstruction and development in the country), and—most importantly to China's leaders—prevent Afghan territory from being used to engage in terrorist acts against China. Their part, the Taliban has indicated it intends to cooperate closely with China, with a Taliban spokesperson reportedly suggesting in one foreign media interview that China would be the Afghan government's most important partner going forward.

PRC leaders and experts have long been concerned that Afghanistan-based terrorists pose a "direct threat" to China's national security.<sup>338</sup> Afghanistan shares a mountainous 47-mile-long border with China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which is home to most of China's predominantly Muslim Uyghur ethnic group.<sup>339</sup> Since 2009, Xinjiang has been the site of intensive security measures—including arbitrary mass internment—by the PRC to combat "terrorism, separatism and religious extremism" in response to Uyghur demonstrations, ethnic unrest, and scattered violent incidents purportedly carried out by Uyghurs.<sup>340</sup> Chinese leaders fear terrorist groups operating out of Central Asia and Afghanistan either harbor Uyghur terrorists or

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for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs remarked on August 17, 2021: "The U.S launched the Afghan War in the name of counterterrorism. But has the U.S. won? After 20 years, the number of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan has grown to more than 20 from a single digit. Has the U.S. brought peace to the Afghan people? For 20 years, more than 100,000 Afghan civilians have been killed or wounded in the gunfire of U.S. troops and its ally forces, and more than 10 million people have been displaced.... Wherever the U.S. sets foot, be it Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan, we see turbulence, division, broken families, deaths and other scars in the mess it has left. The U.S. power and role is destructive rather than constructive." CGTN, "Chinese diplomat: U.S. bears 'inescapable responsibility' for Afghanistan's situation," August 14, 2021, at https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-08-14/U-S-bears-inescapable-responsibility-for-Afghanistan-s-situation-12IphvoB6Mg/index.html; PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on August 17, 2021," August 17, 2021, at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\_eng/xwfw\_665399/s2510\_665401/2511\_665403/t1900083.shtml.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>335</sup> The spokesperson further noted, "China respects the Afghan people's right to decide on their own future independently. We are ready to continue to develop good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation with Afghanistan and play a constructive role in Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction." PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on August 16, 2021," August 16, 2021, at http://www.china-un.ch/eng/zgyw/t1899785.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>336</sup> China has maintained contacts with the Afghan Taliban to varying degrees over the decades with the goal of securing commitments from the organization that it would not engage in or otherwise support terrorist acts against China. The PRC engaged more closely with the Taliban starting in the mid-2010s amid reconciliation efforts between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Andrew Small, *The China*-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 128; Andrew Small, "Why Is China Talking to the Taliban?" *Foreign Policy*, June 21, 2013, at https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/06/21/why-is-china-talking-to-the-taliban/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>337</sup> Mattia Sorbi, "Afghanistan, il portavoce dei talebani Zabiullah Mujahid: 'Chiediamo all'Italia di riconosceri. La Cina ci finanziera," *La Repubblica*, September 1, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>338</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Wang Yi Meets with Head of the Afghan Taliban Political Commission Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar," July 28, 2021, at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\_eng/zxxx\_662805/t1895950.shtml.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>339</sup> Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group who practice a moderate form of Sunni Islam.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>340</sup> CRS In Focus IF10281, *China Primer: Uyghurs*, by Thomas Lum and Michael A. Weber.

support Uyghur terrorist groups. 341 Chinese officials have asked the Taliban to "make a clean break with" the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a small group that seeks to establish an independent Islamic state for the Uyghurs.<sup>342</sup> The Taliban has insisted it will not tolerate ETIM's activities in Afghanistan, suggesting that most ETIM fighters had already left the country at the Taliban's urging.343

Chinese leaders also fear a resurgent Afghan Taliban may empower and embolden regional terrorist groups—including the Pakistani Taliban, which claimed responsibility for an April 2021 car bombing of a Pakistan hotel minutes before the PRC ambassador to the country was scheduled to arrive.<sup>344</sup> The hotel bombing was one of three attacks reported to target, injure, or kill PRC nationals in Pakistan since April.<sup>345</sup>

Iran opposed the Taliban while the group was formerly in power, with the two sides nearly coming into direct conflict in 1998 when the Taliban killed ten Iranian diplomats in northern Afghanistan. Iran later helped U.S. officials establish the post-Taliban Afghan government in 2001. 346 Despite consistent wariness of Taliban intent, Iran appears to be seeking accommodation with the group. Iranian officials met with the Taliban numerous times after 2018, including hosting a senior Taliban delegation in Tehran in February 2021. U.S. officials have also alleged that some Taliban fighters have received arms and other support from Iran.<sup>347</sup> Iran's interests in Afghanistan include preserving its historic influence in western Afghanistan, protecting Afghanistan's Shia minority (the Hazaras), and reducing the flow of refugees into Iran (Iran hosts millions of documented and undocumented Afghans).

The Iranian government, whose embassy in Kabul remains open, appears to view positively the departure of U.S. troops from Afghanistan (which President Ebrahim Raisi characterized as a "defeat") and has called for national unity in Afghanistan. 348 Some have speculated that Iran, as it did during the 1990s, might support Afghans in northern, western, and central Afghanistan against the Taliban, particularly if a Taliban-led government expresses hostility toward Tehran, Iranian officials condemned the Taliban's September 2021 takeover of Panjshir, the last bastion of armed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>341</sup> William Yang, "China Ready for 'Friendly Relations' with the Taliban," *Independent*, August 17, 2021; *Janka* Oertel and Andrew Small, "After the withdrawal: China's interests in Afghanistan," European Council on Foreign Relations, August 5, 2021.

<sup>342</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Wang Yi Meets with Head of the Afghan Taliban Political Commission Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Wang Yi Meets with Head of the Afghan Taliban Political Commission Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar," July 28, 2021, at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa eng/zxxx 662805/t1895950.shtml. The U.S. government designated the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224 in 2002 (to block terrorist financing) and in 2004 placed ETIM on the Terrorist Exclusion List, which bars members of terrorist groups from entering the United States. In November 2020, the Trump Administration removed ETIM from the Terrorist Exclusion List, stating that "for more than a decade, there has been no credible evidence that ETIM continues to exist." In June 2021, however, United Nations sanctions monitors reported that ETIM has hundreds of fighters in Northeast Afghanistan and a larger presence in Idlib, Syria, and moves fighters between the two areas. CRS In Focus IF10281, China Primer: Uyghurs, by Thomas Lum and Michael A. Weber.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>343</sup> Xie Wenting and Bai Yunyi, "Exclusive: New Afghan govt eyes exchanging visits with China; ETIM has no place in Afghanistan: Taliban spokesperson," Global Times, September 9, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>344</sup> Asif Shahzad, "Car bombing at hotel in southwest Pakistan kills 4, wounds 11," *Reuters*, April 21, 2021.

<sup>345</sup> Lucas Niewenhuis, "Not the outcome China wanted': Why a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan makes Beijing anxious," SupChina, August 16, 2021, at https://supchina.com/2021/08/16/not-the-outcome-china-wanted-why-ataliban-controlled-afghanistan-makes-beijing-anxious/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>346</sup> Barnett Rubin, "A New Look at Iran's Complicated Relationship with the Taliban," War on the Rocks, September 16, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>348</sup> Maziar Motamedi, "US 'defeat' in Afghanistan a chance for peace: Iran president," *Al Jazeera*, August 16, 2021.

resistance.<sup>349</sup> Other analysts argue Iran is unlikely to oppose the Taliban, to avoid further instability, and will continue to seek accommodation with the group.<sup>350</sup>

Russia. Russia's response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has included expressions of both satisfaction and concern. On the one hand, Russian officials and commentators have expressed some satisfaction at the rapid collapse of Afghanistan's government and military after twenty years of U.S. support. Some have framed the outcome as "America's failure" and contrast it to what they characterize as Russia's prudent outreach to the Taliban in recent years. <sup>351</sup> At the same time, Russian authorities have long been concerned about instability in Afghanistan and the potential spread of radical Islam, drugs, and refugees throughout the neighboring Central Asia region and into Russia. <sup>352</sup>

Initial Russian statements suggest the Russian government seeks to build constructive relations with the Taliban while encouraging them to avoid rule by terror as they consolidate power. Russian officials said they have no intention of evacuating the Russian embassy in Kabul and that Taliban forces pledged to provide security for Russia's embassy and personnel.<sup>353</sup> The Russian ambassador to Afghanistan remarked in the first days of the Taliban's takeover that the situation in Kabul was "better than it was under Ashraf Ghani."<sup>354</sup> At the same time, Russian authorities have said that for now Russia will continue to consider the Taliban a terrorist organization.<sup>355</sup>

In recent years, Russian authorities have increased their political and intelligence connections to the Taliban, as well as to other local power brokers in Afghanistan.<sup>356</sup> Russia has been party to numerous peace talks and consultations involving a variety of actors, including the Taliban, aimed at securing a negotiated political settlement to Afghanistan's civil conflict. Reports indicate Russia's outreach to the Taliban began years ago, including clandestine political and intelligence contacts and, potentially, military assistance.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>349</sup> Farzin Nadimi, "Iran Sets Its Eyes on Afghanistan," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 19, 2021; "Iran condemns Taliban for assault on holdout fighters in Panjshir Valley," *Times of Israel*, September 6, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>350</sup> Murat Sofuoglu, "After a short honeymoon, are Iran-Taliban relations deteriorating?" *TRT World*, September 9, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>351</sup> Mark Galeotti, "Moscow Watches Kabul's Fall with Some Satisfaction, Much Concern," *Moscow Times*, August 16, 2021; Felix Light and Pjotr Sauer, "Chaos Engulfs Kabul, Russia Says It's Ready to Work with the Taliban," *Moscow Times*, August 16, 2021; and Julia Davis, "Russia Is 'Enjoying' America's Failure—and Cozying Up to the Taliban," *Daily Beast*, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>352</sup> Nurlan Aliyev, "How Russia Views Afghanistan Today," *War on the Rocks*, October 19, 2020; Tom Balmforth and Gabrielle Tetrault-Farber, "For Russia, U.S. Afghan Exit Creates Security Threat on Southern Flank," *Reuters*, July 8, 2021; Robyn Dixon, "Why Afghanistan's Growing Chaos Alarms Leaders from Tajikistan to Russia," *Washington Post*, July 9, 2021; and Kathy Gannon, Vladimir Isachenkov, and Mstyslav Chernov, "Russia: Afghan Instability Heightens with Hasty U.S. Retreat," *Associated Press*, July 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>353</sup> Yana Pashaeva, "Will Russia and the Taliban Become Friends?" *Slate*, August 19, 2021. https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/08/taliban-afghanistan-russia.html

<sup>354</sup> Andrew Osborn, "Russia Says Kabul Seems Safer Under Taliban Than It Was Under Ghani," Reuters, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>355</sup> Nastassia Astrasheuskaya and Stephanie Findlay, "Russia Seeks to Forge Ties with Taliban as US Troops Leave Afghanistan," *FT*, July 27, 2021; and Anton Troianovski, "Russian Officials Are Staying in Kabul, Saying They Have Nothing to Fear as Others Race to Leave," *New York Times*, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>356</sup> TASS Russian News Agency, "Taliban Delegation Is Currently in Moscow, Representative Says," July 8, 2021; TASS Russian News Agency, "Talks with the Kremlin Are Necessary, Says Kremlin," July 9, 2021; and Maxim Suchkov, "Russia's 'Troubleshooting Tactics' with the Taliban," Middle East Institute, July 14, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>357</sup> Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Russia is Sending Weapons to Taliban, Top U.S. General Confirms," *Washington Post*, April 24, 2017; and Mujib Mashal and Michael Schwirtz, "How Russia Built a Channel to the Taliban, Once an Enemy," *New York Times*, July 13, 2020.

Prior to the Taliban's takeover, Russia began planning for contingencies by bolstering its military and security posture in neighboring Central Asia.<sup>358</sup> With regional military bases and its leadership of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Russia acts as the primary security guarantor in Central Asia against spillover from Afghanistan.<sup>359</sup> September 2021 visits to India and Tajikistan by Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and statements by military officials have highlighted Russian concerns about the potential for instability to spread.<sup>360</sup> In the summer of 2021, Russia bolstered its military presence in Central Asia, including by modernizing its forces in Tajikistan (Russia has an estimated 7,000 troops at the 201<sup>st</sup> Military Base in Dushanbe), increasing coordination among CSTO members, bolstering intelligence and border forces, and conducting multiple military exercises.<sup>361</sup>

Central Asia. Many analysts assess that Central Asian governments' primary concern following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan is maintaining stability and ensuring their own countries' security, as well as the potential for large numbers of refugees, and possibly IS-affiliated extremists, to flow into their countries. Taliban leaders have reportedly stated that they will not violate the territorial integrity of Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbors, and that they do not pose a threat to the region. The governments of Central Asia have generally adopted a pragmatic approach toward the Taliban, particularly Afghanistan's immediate neighbors Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In a statement issued on September 8, Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the creation of an interim government in Afghanistan, adding, "We hope that this decision will be the first step toward achieving a broad national consensus and lasting peace and stability in that country. We express our readiness to develop a constructive dialogue and practical cooperation with the new state organs of Afghanistan." The government of Tajikistan, which also shares a border with Afghanistan, has by contrast expressed strong opposition to the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>358</sup> Dan De Luce, "Bounties or Not, Russia Has Worked to Expand its Clout in Afghanistan as the U.S. Eyes an Exit," *NBC News*, June 30, 2020; and Dara Massicot, "Can a Pragmatic Relationship with the Taliban Help Russia Counter Terrorism," *National Interest*, September 3, 2021.

<sup>359</sup> Vusula Abbasova, "Russia Pledges Military Assistance to Central Asian Allies," Caspian News, July 31, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>360</sup> Tass, "Russia-led Bloc Members Must be Ready for Any Scenario in Afghanistan, Top Brass Says," September 9, 2021; and Tass, "Top Russian Security Official to Discuss Afghanistan with Post-Soviet Bloc in Dushanbe," September 14, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>361</sup> Reuters, "Russia to Reinforce Military Base in Tajikistan," July 21, 2021; *Moscow Times*, "Russia to Boost Tajikistan Army Amid Afghanistan 'Deterioration," July 28, 2021; Vladimir Isachenkov, "Russia, Central Asian Allies Hold Drills Near Afghanistan," *Associated Press*, August 10, 2021; and *RFE/RL*, "Russia Wraps Up Drills With Uzbek and Tajik Troops Near Afghan Border," August 11, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>362</sup> Kate Mallinson, "Afghanistan Creates Tricky New Reality for Central Asia," Chatham House, August 27, 2021; Mansur Mirovalev, "Afghanistan's Central Asian Neighbours Panic, Reject Refugees," *Al Jazeera*, August 19, 2021; Chris Rickleton, "Central Asia and Afghanistan: Enemies at the Gate?" *Eurasianet*, August 13, 2021.

 <sup>363</sup> Vladimir Isachenkov, "Russian envoy expects Taliban not to threaten Central Asia," Associated Press, July 14,
 2021; Vladimir Isachenkov, "Taliban visit Moscow to say their wins don't threaten Russia," Associated Press, July 8,
 2021; "As Tajikistan Mobilizes 20,000 Troops, Taliban Says It Poses No Threat," *Eurasianet*, July 6, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>364</sup> Ivan Klyszcz, "Don't Underestimate Tajikistan in the Afghanistan Crisis," *The Diplomat*, September 2, 2021; "Turkmenistan: Taliban of Brothers," *Eurasianet*, August 24, 2021; Gavin Helf and Barmak Pazhwak, "Central Asia Prepares for Taliban Takeover," United States Institute of Peace, July 20, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>365</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "O'zbekiston Respublikasi Tashqi ishlar vazirligi rasmiy vakilining bayonoti" [Statement by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan], September 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>366</sup> Bruce Pannier, "Tajikistan: The Taliban's Toughest Critic," *RFE/RL*, September 13, 2021; Ivan Klyszcz, "Don't Underestimate Tajikistan in the Afghanistan Crisis," *The Diplomat*, September 2, 2021.

In the weeks leading up to the U.S. withdrawal, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan bolstered the military presence at their borders with Afghanistan.<sup>367</sup> In August and September, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan participated in bilateral and multilateral military exercises with Russia that focused on potential security threats emanating from Afghanistan.<sup>368</sup> Tajikistan also held an anti-terrorism exercise with China.<sup>369</sup> Further military exercises by the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are planned in Tajikistan for October and November.<sup>370</sup> Analysts assess that recent events in Afghanistan may lead to an intensified Russian security presence in Central Asia.<sup>371</sup>

International human rights organizations have urged Central Asian countries to take in refugees from Afghanistan, while regional governments have been reluctant to accept large numbers of Afghans.<sup>372</sup> Although officials in Tajikistan initially signaled willingness to take in as many as 100,000 refugees, in September the country's Minister of Internal Affairs stated that Tajikistan lacks the resources to do so without international assistance.<sup>373</sup> Thousands of Afghan troops reportedly fled to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as the Taliban established control of northern Afghanistan; some have subsequently been sent back.<sup>374</sup> Between August 14 and 15, a reported 46 aircraft from the Afghan Air Force crossed into Uzbekistan carrying some 500 people, including pilots, crew, and their families.<sup>375</sup> The government of Uzbekistan reportedly faced pressure from the Taliban to return the personnel and their aircraft to Afghanistan, and requested that the United States relocate them.<sup>376</sup> On September 12 and 13, the Afghans were transferred from Uzbekistan to a U.S. base in the United Arab Emirates.<sup>377</sup> It remains unclear what will

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>367</sup> "Tajikistan Holds Massive Combat-Readiness Check Amid Rising Instability In Neighboring Afghanistan," *RFE/RL*, July 22, 2021; "Turkmenistan: As Taliban arrives at the gates, diplomats and army scramble," *Eurasianet*, July 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>368</sup> "Russia Wraps Up Drills With Uzbek And Tajik Troops Near Afghan Border," *RFE/RL*, August 11, 2021; "Russia-Led CSTO To Hold Military Drills In Central Asia Due To Situation In Afghanistan," *RFE/RL*, August 27, 2021; "Russia-Led CSTO Starts Military Drills In Kyrgyzstan Due To Situation In Afghanistan," *RFE/RL*, September 7, 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>369</sup> Laura Zhou, "China conducts anti-terror drill with Tajikistan, as Afghan spillover worries grip central Asia," *South China Morning Post*, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>370</sup> "Russia-Led CSTO To Hold Military Drills In Central Asia Due To Situation In Afghanistan," *RFE/RL*, August 27, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>371</sup> Temur Umarov, "Do the Taliban Pose a Threat to Stability in Central Asia?" Carnegie Moscow Center, September 3, 2021; Kate Mallinson, "Afghanistan Creates Tricky New Reality for Central Asia," Chatham House, August 27, 2021; Andrew Kramer and Anton Troianovski, "With Afghan Collapse, Moscow Takes Charge in Central Asia," *New York Times*, August 19, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>372</sup> Mihra Rittman and Hugh Williamson, "Uzbekistan Should Do More to Help Afghans," *The Diplomat*, September 8, 2021; Mansur Mirovalev, "Afghanistan's Central Asian Neighbours Panic, Reject Refugees," *Al Jazeera*, August 19, 2021; "Central Asia Refuses to Accept Afghan Refugees," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, September 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>373</sup> "Unpacking Eurasia's role in the Afghanistan evacuation," *Eurasianet*, September 3, 2021; "Tajikistan Can't Afford to Take in Afghan Refugees Without Help – Police Chief," Reuters, September 2, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>374</sup> "Unpacking Eurasia's role in the Afghanistan evacuation," *Eurasianet*, September 3, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>375</sup> Catherine Putz, "Afghan Forces Flee, Fly to Central Asia," *The Diplomat*, August 17, 2021; Siobhan Hughes and Jessica Donati, "Uzbekistan Warns U.S. That Afghan Pilots and Their Families Can't Stay," *Wall Street Journal*, August 30, 2021; Jessica Donati and Siobhan Hughes, "Afghan Pilots Who Sought Safety in Uzbekistan Begin U.S. Transfer Under New Agreement," *Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>376</sup> Phil Stewart, "Afghan Pilots Start Leaving Uzbekistan for UAE, Despite Taliban Pressure—Source," Reuters, September 12, 2021; Siobhan Hughes and Jessica Donati, "Uzbekistan Warns U.S. That Afghan Pilots and Their Families Can't Stay," *Wall Street Journal*, August 30, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>377</sup> Jessica Donati and Siobhan Hughes, "Afghan Pilots Who Sought Safety in Uzbekistan Begin U.S. Transfer Under New Agreement," *Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 2021.

happen to the aircraft, which are said to include Black Hawk helicopters and PC-12 surveillance aircraft supplied to Afghanistan by the United States.<sup>378</sup> On August 15, a smaller group, reportedly over 140 people and around 18 aircraft, flew from Afghanistan to Tajikistan.<sup>379</sup> A State Department spokesperson was quoted in the press as stating, "the Afghan personnel and aircraft are secure and being housed by the government of Tajikistan."<sup>380</sup> Some of the Afghan pilots currently in Tajikistan have appealed for asylum in Canada.<sup>381</sup>

Central Asian countries have assisted evacuation efforts out of Afghanistan. The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has temporarily relocated some of its staff to Almaty, Kazakhstan. The UNAMA staff deployed to Almaty, who number about 100, are expected to stay in Kazakhstan for six months, although conditions in Afghanistan may lead to the extension of their stay; depending on the security situation in Afghanistan, U.N. staff may use Almaty as a hub to rotate in and out of the country. Uzbekistan facilitated the transit of Afghans and foreign nationals out of Afghanistan, allowing European military aircraft to fly evacuees from Kabul to airports in Tashkent, Navoi, and Bukhara. From there, evacuees, including some U.S. citizens, were flown to Europe on specially chartered civilian airliners. Tajikistan also facilitated evacuations from Afghanistan, including flights via Dushanbe organized by Turkey and India.

India. New Delhi's Afghanistan policies have been conceived largely through the lens of competition and proxy conflict with Indian rival Pakistan. New Delhi's interests primarily focus on limiting the activities and reach of the numerous regional Islamist, anti-India terrorist groups that pose an ongoing threat to India, perhaps especially as related to Kashmiri separatism and militancy (which Pakistan is widely believed to support). India also has a keen interest in securing access to and greater connectivity with Central Asia, which Pakistan presently obstructs. <sup>386</sup> Like Iran and Russia, India supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in the 1990s and backed the elected post-2001 Afghan government, but reportedly established some backchannel communications with the Taliban in recent months. <sup>387</sup> India had been the leading regional

<sup>379</sup> Bruce Pannier, "Tajikistan: The Taliban's Toughest Critic," *RFE/RL*, September 13, 2021; Catherine Putz, "What's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>378</sup> Ibid.

Next for Afghan Pilots Who Escaped to Central Asia?" *The Diplomat*, September 13, 2021.

380 Catherine Putz, "What's Next for Afghan Pilots Who Escaped to Central Asia?" *The Diplomat*, September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>381</sup> Murray Brewster, "Former Afghan air force pilots renew plea for Canada's help," CBC News, September 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>382</sup> United Nations Kazakhstan, "UN Statement on Temporary Relocation of the UNAMA Staff to Almaty," August 20, 2021; United Nations, "Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General," August 18, 2021; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "On Temporary Deployment of the UN Mission in Almaty," August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>383</sup> "Uzbekistan predostavil tretii aeroport dlia evakuatsii iz Afganistana—Bukharu" [Uzbekistan has made a third airport available for evacuation from Afghanistan—Bukhara], *Fergana News*, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>384</sup> "You have seen the outrageous and achieved incredible things,' Germany tells troops," Reuters, August 27, 2021; "AKK spricht mit Bundeswehrsoldaten in Taschkent" [AKK speaks with Bundeswehr soldiers in Tashkent], *Deutsche Welle*, August 27, 2021; Official Website of the Republic of Poland, The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, "Premier: Polska jest tam, gdzie inni tej pomocy od nas potrzebują" [Prime Minister: Poland is there when others need help from us], August 26, 2021, available at https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-polska-jest-tam-gdzie-inni-tej-pomocy-od-nas-potrzebują; "Hungary Ends Afghan Evacuations With 540 Flown Out," Agence France Presse, August 26, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>385</sup> "Afghanistan Evacuees Arrive In Tajikistan, Uzbekistan," *RFE/RL*, August 21, 2021; Manjeet Negi, "IAF Transport Aircraft Return from Tajikistan after Afghanistan Evacuations," *India Today*, August 30, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>386</sup> Suhasini Haidar, "Taliban gains complicate India's options," *The Hindu*, August 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>387</sup> "In a Huge Shift, India Opens Channels with Afghan Taliban Factions and Leaders," *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), June

supporter of the former Afghan government, providing more than \$3 billion in development assistance affecting all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Any gains accrued through this "soft power" emphasis on infrastructure and social services may be lost with the Taliban takeover. India has evacuated most of its personnel and shuttered its diplomatic operations in Afghanistan.

The Taliban takeover in Kabul sent shockwaves through India's strategic and security communities, where Islamist militant gains are widely predicted to benefit anti-India terrorist groups, especially those oriented toward Kashmir, such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and the Haqqani Network, all of which have conducted major terrorist attacks in India.<sup>389</sup> The developments also could bolster Beijing's regional influence and present India with "encirclement" by a "consolidated front" comprised of China, Pakistan, and the Taliban. 390 Many Western analyses take a similar view, warning of a broad resurgence of regional Islamist militancy that will target India and its interests.<sup>391</sup> Thousands of LeT and JeM militants, many of them Pakistani nationals, reportedly have fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Taliban military chiefs, notably including those from the vehemently anti-India Haqqani Network, are said to be coordinating with their LeT and JeM counterparts. According to at least one assessment citing Afghan sources, "These are individuals who have trained with the Pakistani military...." Pakistan's main intelligence service reportedly has colluded with Taliban elements to attack Indian targets in Afghanistan.<sup>392</sup> In late August, a Taliban official in Qatar reportedly said, "India is very important for this subcontinent. We want to continue our cultural, economic and trade ties with India like in the past."393

By some accounts, India "missed the bus" diplomatically and is facing a return to the "worst-case scenario" with Afghanistan.<sup>394</sup> Since mid-August, a debate has been underway in India about the wisdom of recognizing and pursuing engagement with a Taliban-dominated Afghan government. Some analysts counsel against such engagement, arguing that there is no "reformed Taliban 2.0" and that India has little or nothing to gain from negotiating with "a Pakistani proxy."<sup>395</sup> Others favor engagement in order to leverage India's purported popularity and soft power in Afghanistan

<sup>9, 2021; &</sup>quot;Indian Delegation Met Taliban in Doha, Says Qatari Official," Hindu (Chennai), June 21, 2021.

Aparna Pande, "India in the Eye of the Taliban" (op-ed), The Hill, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>389</sup> Avinash Paliwal, "A Strategic Shock for the Subcontinent" (op-ed), *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), August 25, 2021; "Taliban Advances in Afghanistan Give Kashmir Militants a Boost," *Der Welte* (Berlin), July 8, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>390</sup> "With the U.S. Exit From Afghanistan, India Fears an Increasingly Hostile Region," *NPR*, August 27, 2021. In the words of one longtime observer, "What New Delhi fears most is Beijing's ability to expand its political and diplomatic footprint in Afghanistan with the return of a Taliban regime" (Sumit Ganguly, "What the Taliban Takeover Means for India," *Foreign Policy*, August 17, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>391</sup> "Taliban Takeover Threatens to Raise India-Pakistan Tensions," *Wall Street Journal*, September 1, 2021. See also Kabir Taneja and Mohamed Sinan Siyech, "Terrorism in South Asia After the Fall of Afghanistan," *War on the Rocks*, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>392</sup> "Pak's Terror Groups Join Taliban War, India Wary," *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), July 11, 2021; Rudra Chaudhuri, "Will the Taliban Keep Their Promises in Afghanistan?," Carnegie India (Delhi), August 17, 2021; "Pakistani Fighters, Taliban Instructed to Target Indian Assets in Afghanistan, Sources Say," *India Today* (Delhi), July 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>393</sup> "India Important, Want to Maintain Ties: Taliban Leadership in Qatar," *Indian Express* (Delhi), August 30, 2021. One senior Taliban/Haqqani Network figure reportedly has stated that his group seeks good relations with India and does not intend to "meddle" in Kashmir ("Won't Meddle in Kashmir: Long-Time Taliban Ally Haqqani Network," *Times of India* (Delhi), September 2, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>394</sup> Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, "In Afghanistan, How India Missed the Bus" (op-ed), *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), July 21, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>395</sup> Chetan Rana, "A Taliban Outreach that Needs Correction" (op-ed), *Hindu* (Chennai), August 26, 2021; Gautam Makophadhaya, "With the Taliban Takeover of Kabul, a Thorny Question Confronts India: Should We Recognize the Taliban?" (op-ed), *Times of India* (Delhi), August 27, 2021.

while pressing for democratic values.<sup>396</sup> Still others call for diplomatic patience in a still-fluid situation, contending that India's interests will be advanced by highlighting Pakistan's "symbiotic relationship" with the Taliban.<sup>397</sup>

Several Indian analysts have issued harsh criticisms of the "precipitous" U.S. withdrawal and its implications for India; others have raised new questions about American credibility as a strategic partner for India as it seeks to balance against China. At the same time, some commentators foresee a circumstance in which the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, with its attendant reduced American reliance on Pakistan, may benefit New Delhi's efforts to address Pakistan going forward. For some, the Taliban win marks a major turning point in regional geopolitics; in the words of one senior analyst, it means for India "greater cooperation with Washington, deeper conflicts with Beijing, and wider fissures in the traditional strategic partnership with Moscow."

Gulf States. The Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf are longtime security partners of the United States and host U.S. forces at military bases on their territory, many of which have been used for U.S. operations in Afghanistan since 2001.

The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia were the two states that, along with Pakistan, recognized the pre-2001 Taliban government. As of September 17, 2021, no Gulf state government had recognized the new Taliban-led government, and, it remains unclear whether or how any future Gulf state relations with the Taliban may affect U.S. use of Gulf bases to conduct counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan. Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates temporarily hosted Afghan nationals evacuated in August 2021 by U.S. and coalition operations. Secretary of State Blinken has thanked officials from those countries for their support and has thanked Kuwait for facilitating the transit of U.S. government personnel and U.S. citizens evacuated from Afghanistan.

At the virtual ministerial on Afghanistan on September 8, 2021, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah Al Saud expressed the kingdom's "support for the Afghan people and the future choices they make for their country without any external interference" and said "the formation of the caretaker government would be a step in the right direction toward achieving security and stability, rejecting violence and extremism and building a bright future for Afghans." The United Arab Emirates has facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance into Kabul International Airport, 402 and separately facilitated the removal of members of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>396</sup> Bharat Karnad, "With the Taliban Takeover of Kabul, a Thorny Question Confronts India: Should We Recognize the Taliban?" (op-ed), *Times of India* (Delhi), August 27, 2021; MK Bhadrakumar, "India's Interests Won't Be Served by Demonizing Taliban" (op-ed), *Indian Express* (Delhi), September 11, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>397</sup> Shyam Saran, "On Kabul, India Need Not Hurry" (op-ed), *The Print* (Delhi), August 25, 2021. See also C. Raja Mohan, "It is Pakistan's Moment of Triumph in Afghanistan, But India Must Bet on Patience" (op-ed), *Indian Express* (Delhi), August 25, 2021; HS Panag, "India Backed the Wrong Horse in Afghanistan and Has Gone Into a Strategic Sulk Now" (op-ed), *The Print* (Delhi), August 26, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>398</sup> See, for example, Brahma Chellaney, "Biden's Afghan Blunder," *Project Syndicate*, July 13, 2021; Aparna Pande, "India in the Eye of the Taliban" (op-ed), The Hill, August 23, 2021; Shekhar Gupta, "Kabul Shows Up Biden as a Sheep in Sheep's Clothing" (op-ed), *The Print* (Delhi), August 28, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>399</sup> Rajesh Rajagopalan, "A US Not Tied in Afghanistan Only Helps India Deal with Pakistan Problem Better" (op-ed), *The Print* (Delhi), August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>400</sup> C. Raja Mohan, "Post-American Afghanistan and India's Geopolitics," Foreign Policy, August 18, 2021.

<sup>401</sup> Saudi Press Agency, "Foreign Minister Participates in Virtual Ministerial Meeting on Afghanistan," September 9, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>402</sup> France 24, "UAE operating aid air bridge to Kabul as Pakistan's PIA to resume commercial flights," September 11, 2021.

Afghan Air Force from Uzbekistan, where they had fled with their aircraft and families as the Taliban advanced through Afghanistan in mid-August. 403

Oatar, in particular, has played an active role in negotiations and in operations related to the winding down of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan; Secretary Blinken said on September 7, 2021, visit to Doha with Secretary of Defense Austin, "Many countries have stepped up to help the evacuation and relocation efforts in Afghanistan, but no country has done more than Qatar." 404 Qatar hosted U.S.-Taliban talks after 2018 and hosted senior Taliban leaders in Doha until their return to Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover. Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani said on August 23, "We remain that impartial mediator throughout this process."405 Following the evacuation of the U.S. embassy in Kabul in August 2021, operations were transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Doha. Qatari technicians have also been instrumental in undertaking repairs that enabled Kabul International Airport to resume some flights in early September. Several Qatar Airways charter flights have since evacuated additional Americans and other foreign nationals who sought to leave Afghanistan. On September 12, 2021, Qatari Foreign Minister Al Thani met Taliban government Acting Prime Minister Akhund to discuss a range of issues, including Qatar's continuing efforts to evacuate foreign nationals, and, according to Qatar's Foreign Ministry, called on the Taliban to "involve all Afghan parties in national reconciliation."406

Gulf state officials are likely to consider how Taliban governance and security conditions in Afghanistan affect the threats posed by transnational terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. Humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan, the effects of the situation there on the government of Pakistan, and Taliban-Iran relations are other relevant considerations for Gulf policymakers.

#### U.S. Military Operations: Summary of Evacuation Efforts and Budgetary Implications

### What U.S. military operations were conducted during the withdrawal from Afghanistan?<sup>407</sup>

There were three major operational actions ongoing in Afghanistan as of August 26, 2021. The first was the redeployment or repositioning of U.S. troops and capabilities that were once part of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) or Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS). On July 12, 2021, command of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) was transferred from General Scott Miller (USA) to CENTCOM Commander General Frank McKenzie (USMC). 408 On the ground, USFOR-A had a forward element in Kabul led by Navy Rear Admiral Peter Vasely. 409 Prior to the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>403</sup> "Afghan pilots start leaving Uzbekistan for UAE, despite Taliban pressure-source," *Reuters*, September 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>404</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken And Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin," September 7, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>405</sup> "Qatar is an 'impartial mediator' amid Afghanistan evacuations: FM," Al Jazeera, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>406</sup> Reuters, "Qatar's foreign minister visits premier of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan," September 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>407</sup> This section was prepared by Kathleen McInnis, Specialist in International Security, and Andrew Feickert, Specialist in Military Ground Forces.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>408</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report: Security*, July 30, 2021, p. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>409</sup> Ibid.

August 15, 2021, collapse of the Afghan government, between 650 and 1,000 U.S. troops were on the ground conducting withdrawal operations. As part of the transition, U.S. security cooperation activities in support of the ANDSF were transferred from Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) to the Qatar-based Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan (DSCMO-A), led by Army Brigadier General Curtis Buzzard. Given the collapse of the ANDSF, it is unclear what role DSCMO-A will play, if any.

The second major operational action was Operation Allies Refuge (OAR), which was initiated on July 17, 2021, to support relocation flights for Afghan nationals and their families eligible for Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs). 412 On August 12, 2021, in light of the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken informed President Ghani that the United States would begin reducing its civilian footprint in Kabul, and would accelerate flights of SIV applicants. 413

The Department of Defense also announced the commencement of Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) from Afghanistan.<sup>414</sup> At an August 18 press conference, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley stated that the NEO operation had five core tasks:<sup>415</sup>

- Establish and maintain security at the Kabul International Airport;
- Defend the airport from attack. Evacuate all American citizens from Afghanistan who desire to leave this country;
- Evacuate any third country national, or allies and partners as designated by the Secretary of State;
- Evacuate personnel with State Department-designated Special Immigrant Visas; and
- Evacuate any other evacuees that the State Department designates.

In support of OAR and U.S. withdrawal operations, DOD announced that at least the following actions were taken:<sup>416</sup>

- Three infantry battalions—two Marine Corps, one U.S. Army—deployed to Kabul International Airport. 417
  - The Marine units were from the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>410</sup> Deirdre Shesgreen, "US troops leave Bagram Airfield, suggesting full US withdrawal from Afghanistan is near, *USA Today*, July 2, 2021; John R. Kirby (@PentagonPressSec), Twitter, August 14, 2021, https://twitter.com/PentagonPresSec/status/1426655650499727367?s=20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>411</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, Quarterly Report: Security, July 30, 2021, p. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>412</sup> U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan, *Operation Allies Refuge*, https://af.usembassy.gov/operation-allies-refuge/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>413</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Readout of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III's Call With President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, August 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>414</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Milley Press Briefing, August 18, 2021. https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2738086/secretary-of-defense-austin-and-chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-gen-mille/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>416</sup> Jim Garamone, "DOD Deploys Forces to Protect Kabul Embassy Drawdown," DOD News, August 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>417</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Milley Press Briefing, August 18, 2021.

(SPMAGTF-CR) assigned to U.S. CENTCOM. The Army unit was from the Minnesota National Guard. 418

- The U.S. Air Force 621st Contingency Response Group at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst deployed to assist in running operations at Kabul International Airport. 419
- A joint U.S. Army/Air Force support element of around 1,000 personnel was to be sent to Qatar, and possibly to Afghanistan (or to other areas where Afghans will be processed) to facilitate the processing of SIV applicants.<sup>420</sup>
- One battalion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division (U.S. Army) deployed to Kabul to assist with U.S. Embassy security.<sup>421</sup>
- Two battalions of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division (U.S. Army) were to be deployed to Afghanistan (it was previously announced that one of these battalions would be sent to Kuwait as a quick reaction force. The deployment of a second battalion was announced on August 16, 2021.)<sup>422</sup>
- A headquarters element of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division (U.S. Army) was deployed in support of efforts to secure Kabul International Airport (KAIA). 423

On August 26, 2021, thirteen U.S. service members and more than 100 Afghans were killed in an Islamic State attack at Kabul International Airport. <sup>424</sup> A further U.S. eighteen service members were wounded in the attack. <sup>425</sup>

The U.S. military withdrawal and noncombatant evacuation operation ended on August 30, 2021.

Some additional questions that Congress may ask the executive branch include

- What kinds of contingency plans were developed for the collapse of the Afghan government and the need to evacuate U.S. personnel from Afghanistan? If such plans were developed, when did planning start and were plans approved by the Secretary of Defense?
- How will Congress and the executive branch review U.S. military and intelligence assessments and actions with regard to the events of August 2021? How if at all might the results of related findings be shared with the public?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>418</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Holds an Off-Camera Press Briefing*, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>420</sup> Jim Garamone, "DOD Deploys Forces to Protect Kabul Embassy Drawdown," DOD News, August 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>421</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Milley Press Briefing, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>422</sup> Ibid; Robert Burns, Matthew Lee and Ellen Knickmeyer, "US sending 3K troops for partial Afghan embassy evacuation," *AP News*, August 12, 2021; U.S. Department of Defense, Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Holds an Off-Camera Press Briefing, August 16, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>423</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Holds a Press Briefing, Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby; Major General Hank Taylor, Deputy Director of the Joint Staff For Regional Operations, J-35*, August 17, 2021.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>424</sup> Yaroslav Trofimov, Nancy A. Youssef and Sune Engel Rasmussen, "Kabul Airport Attack Kills 13 U.S. Service Members, at Least 90 Afghans," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 27, 2021.
 <sup>425</sup> Ibid.

- Does the U.S. Department of Defense intend to investigate the circumstances related to the U.S. military and intelligence assessments and actions associated with the events of August 2021?
- How does the current security situation in Afghanistan impact DOD's ability to conduct "over the horizon" counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan? What, precisely, does DOD mean by the term "over the horizon" counterterrorism operations, and what kinds of equipment, personnel, and capabilities are required to perform such missions? How might the conduct of those missions differ from U.S. counterterrorism missions under Operation Freedom's Sentinel?

#### How did the United States conduct the aerial evacuation?<sup>426</sup>

On August 15, 2021,<sup>427</sup> the U.S. military began evacuating thousands of persons from Kabul International Airport (formerly Hamid Karzai International Airport).

The U.S. military utilized a number of cargo aircraft for the aerial evacuation of U.S. government personnel, U.S. civilian personnel and U.S. citizens, and certain other individuals departing Kabul. When performing airlift operations, aircraft are limited by the amount of weight they can carry for take offs and landings (called maximum takeoff weight and maximum landing weight). These weight limits are intended to prevent structural damage to an aircraft. Based on these limitations, aircrews must balance the amount of cargo—or people—with the weight of the fuel. In addition, Air Forces Central Command (AFCENT) advised aircraft that Kabul International Airport had extremely limited fuel quantities, and as a result aircraft should not refuel while on the ground. Most U.S. cargo aircraft, however, have the ability to receive fuel while airborne from tanker aircraft, known as aerial refueling. Aerial refueling allows cargo aircraft to load more cargo on the ground, trading off fuel against the maximum takeoff weight, ensuring the aircraft is able to get off the ground. In this approach, the cargo aircraft would then rendezvous with a tanker aircraft to receive additional fuel before proceeding on to its destination. The U.S. military employed KC-135s and KC-10s tankers to establish an airbridge—using aerial tankers to refuel aircraft midflight to extend an aircraft's range—to support air evacuations.

The U.S. military utilized C-17 aircraft to transport personnel; other cargo aircraft such as the Marine Corps' KC-130, the Air Force's C-5, and the Air Force's C-130 were utilized for personnel evacuation as well (Figure 2). The C-17 is reportedly able to transport approximately

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>426</sup> This section was prepared by John Hoehn, Analyst in Military Capabilities and Programs. For additional background and context see CRS Insight IN11730, *Afghan Aerial Evacuation in Context*, by John R. Hoehn and Jeremiah Gertler.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>427</sup> Department of Defense, "Secretary of Defense Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Milley Press Briefing," press release, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>428</sup> Typically maximum takeoff weight is equal to or greater than maximum landing weight because an aircraft will reduce its weight in transit by burning fuel.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>429</sup> Defense Internet Notice to Airmen Service, August 17, 2021, https://www.notams.faa.gov/dinsQueryWeb/queryRetrievalMapAction.do?reportType=Raw&retrieveLocId=oakx&actionType=notamRetrievalbyICAOs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>430</sup> This includes the C-5, C-17, and C-130. It is unclear if the Marine Corps' KC-130 can refuel midair.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>431</sup> For a definition of an airbridge see Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-36, *Air Mobility Operations*, June 28, 2019, https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP\_3-36/3-36-D25-Mobility-Refuel-Ops.pdf.

102 troops or 170,900 pounds of cargo.  $^{432}$  One C-17 reportedly carried over 800 passengers to Al Udeid airbase in Qatar.  $^{433}$ 



Figure 2. C-130, C-5 and C-17 Comparison

Source: https://defense-arab.com/vb/threads/166318/.

Note: Two C-130 are pictured at the top, a C-5 in the middle, and a C-17 is pictured at the bottom.

Several constraints affected air operations for the Kabul airlift. First, Kabul Airport had a single runway and a relatively small parking area for aircraft, <sup>434</sup> physically limiting the number of aircraft. Second, a limited amount of fuel was at the airfield, and DOD instructed aircraft not to refuel on the ground. Third, airlift operations were dependent on the number of State Department consular officers processing visas in Qatar, <sup>435</sup> Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates; the Department of Defense announced that a fourth location would start in Germany, <sup>436</sup> Spain, <sup>437</sup> and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>432</sup> Troop capacity is based on paratrooper operations, which implies the aircraft reaches space constraints instead of weight constraints. AFCENT, however, has stated that aircraft shall not refuel on the ground, implying if an aircraft is at maximum weight, it will need to refuel midair. U.S. Air Force, "C-17 Globemaster III Fact Sheet," press release, May 14, 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>433</sup> Joseph Trevithick, "Packed C-17 Cargo Jet Out Of Kabul Actually Had 823 People Onboard Setting New Record," *The Drive*, August 20, 2021.

 $<sup>^{434}</sup>$  Republic of Afghanistan,  $Aeronautical\ Information\ Publication:$   $Aerodrome\ Part\ 3,$  July 19, 2018, https://acaa.gov.af/wp-content/uploads/AERODROME.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>435</sup> "U.S. pauses Afghanistan evacuation flights as processing facility hits capacity," *CBS News*, August 20, 2021, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-evacuations-pause-taliban-doha-kabul/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> Department of Defense, "Ramstein Air Base: Setting Up an Instant City for Afghan Evacuees," press release, September 12, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> U.S. Embassy in Spain and Andorra, "U.S.-Spain Cooperation to Assist Evacuees from Afghanistan."

Italy. August 22, 2021, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin ordered the Department of Defense's Transportation Command to activate the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) to buttress the U.S. military's evacuation efforts.

### What was the role of U.S. contractors and contract operations in Afghanistan?<sup>440</sup>

Overseas contingency operations in recent decades have highlighted the role that contractors play in supporting the U.S. military, both in terms of the number of contractor personnel and the work performed by these individuals. Analysts have highlighted the benefits of using contractors to support the military. Some of these benefits include freeing up uniformed personnel to focus on military-specific activities; providing supplemental expertise in specialized fields, such as linguistics or weapon systems maintenance; and, providing a surge capability to quickly deliver critical support tailored to specific military needs. Just as the effective use of contractors can augment military capabilities, the ineffective use of contractors can prevent troops from receiving what they need when they need it and can potentially lead to wasteful spending. Some argue that contractors can also compromise the credibility and effectiveness of the U.S. military and undermine operations. At 2

In the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement, the United States committed to withdrawing the "private security contractors" of the United States, its allies, and Coalition partners as part of the military withdrawal. Although it is unclear if individual contractors in other mission categories were also subject to the same withdrawal commitment, an August 11, 2021, DOD press briefing indicated that at that time, DOD planned to continue to carry out some types of contract-based activities in Afghanistan, reportedly to include contract maintenance support for Afghan Air Force airframes. He Following the Taliban takeover and withdrawal of U.S. military forces, these activities were not to continue.

Since 2008, CENTCOM has published quarterly contractor census reports, which provide aggregated data—including figures on mission category and nationality—regarding contractors employed through DOD-funded contracts who are physically located within the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR), which includes Afghanistan.<sup>446</sup> The personnel counts included in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>438</sup> U.S. Embassy in Italy, "U.S. Flights Take Afghan Evacuees from Italy to the United States," press release, August 29, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>439</sup> See CRS Insight IN11731, Afghanistan Evacuation: The Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) and the Defense Production Act (DPA), by Michael H. Cecire and Heidi M. Peters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>440</sup> This section was prepared by Heidi Peters, Analyst in U.S. Defense Acquisition Policy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>441</sup> For past CRS analysis, see CRS Report R43074, Department of Defense's Use of Contractors to Support Military *Operations: Background, Analysis, and Issues for Congress*, by Heidi M. Peters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>442</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Operational Contract Support: Management and Oversight Improvements Needed in Afghanistan," GAO-12-290, March 29, 2012, p. 1-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> See Department of State, "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America," February 29, 2020, at https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>444</sup> See Department of Defense, "Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Holds a Press Briefing," transcript, August 11, 2021, at https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2728440/pentagon-press-secretary-john-f-kirby-holds-a-press-briefing/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>445</sup> Jack Detsch, "Departure of Private Contractors Was a Turning Point in Afghan Military's Collapse," *Foreign Policy*, August 16, 2021.

<sup>446</sup> See CRS Report R44116, Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq: 2007-2020,

quarterly contractor census reports should be used cautiously as they do not necessarily reflect the actual on-the-ground situation. In particular, in the report for the third quarter of FY2021, DOD indicated that the reported personnel counts for Afghanistan were derived from DOD information systems as of early June 2021, with the number of contract personnel in country subsequently "decreas[ing] due to ongoing redeployment and related drawdown activities in accordance with the President's direction."

During the third quarter of FY2021, CENTCOM reported a total of 7,795 contractor personnel working for DOD in Afghanistan, down nearly 54% from the second quarter of FY2021. 448 In Afghanistan, as of the third quarter of FY2021, U.S. citizens accounted for about 34% of DOD's 7,795 reported individual contractors. Third-country nationals represented approximately 32% and local/host-country nationals (i.e., from Afghanistan) made up roughly 34%. After the collapse of the Afghan government, the number of third-country national and U.S. citizen contractor personnel remaining in country, if any, is unclear.

In Afghanistan, DOD has used armed and unarmed private security contractors to provide services such as protecting fixed locations; guarding traveling convoys; providing security escorts; and training police and military personnel. The number of private security contractor employees under contract with DOD in Afghanistan fluctuated significantly over time, depending on various factors. As of the third quarter of FY2021, DOD reported 1,356 security contractors in Afghanistan (down from 2,856 in the previous quarter), with 466 specifically categorized as armed private security contractors (compared to 1,520 in the previous quarter).

At the time of the Taliban's takeover on August 15, 2021, obligations for all DOD-funded contracts performed within the Afghanistan area of operation between FY2011 and FY2020 totaled approximately \$100.4 billion in FY2022 dollars, with an estimated additional \$1.2 billion in FY2022 dollars obligated year-to-date in FY2021 for DOD-funded contracts performed within the Afghanistan area of operations. 450

Standard federal procurement contract provisions offer options for modifying, changing, or terminating contracts. These provisions include, but are not limited to, clauses that allow contracting officers to modify or terminate an existing contract in response to changing circumstances.<sup>451</sup>

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by Heidi M. Peters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>447</sup> See Department of Defense, "Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility," July 2021, at https://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/.CENTCOM\_reports.html/FY21\_3Q\_5A\_Jul2021.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>448</sup> See Department of Defense, "Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility," July 2021. Comparable historical or current data from the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), or other executive branch agencies, are not routinely released to the public.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>449</sup> See Department of Defense, "Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility," July 2021, and Department of Defense, "Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the US CENTCOM Area of Responsibility, April 2021, at https://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/.CENTCOM\_reports.html/FY21\_2Q\_5A\_Apr2021.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>450</sup> FY2021 figures include obligations during the period of October 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. CRS adjustments for inflation using deflators for converting into FY2022 dollars derived from Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense, *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY2022*, "Department of Defense Deflators—TOA By Category 'Total Non-Pay,'" Table 5-5, pp. 64-65, August 2021. See also the overview of "Analytical Methodology" for CRS Report R44116, *Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq: 2007-2020*, by Heidi M. Peters for a discussion of how CRS determines annual obligations associated with the Afghanistan area of operations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>451</sup> Federal procurement contracts generally must include some variation of a changes clause that allows contracting officers to modify existing contracts based on a change in government requirements (see Federal Acquisition Regulation [FAR] Subpart 43.2). In other instances, contracting officers can exercise the right to terminate a contract in

### What will happen to U.S. funding provided for Afghanistan security forces?<sup>452</sup>

To date, U.S. defense officials have not stated in detail how developments in Afghanistan may change their plans for the use of Afghan Security Forces Funds (ASFF) appropriated for FY2021 and prior years, or requested for FY2022. At an August 24, 2021, press conference, DOD spokesperson Kirby said that "we're working closely with Congress" on money intended for the ASFF but that "that money is being held now."

On August 25, 2021, Bloomberg News reported that the DOD was consulting with Congress and the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) over "at least \$6 billion in unspent funds for the now-defunct Afghan Security Force," including "\$600 million in previously approved but unspent fiscal 2020 funds, as well as \$2.3 billion in this fiscal year as of June plus \$3.3 billion requested for fiscal 2022."<sup>454</sup>

As part of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2021 (Division C of P.L. 116-260), Congress provided \$3.05 billion for the ASFF, to remain available until September 30, 2022. In May 2021, then-Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs David Helvey testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the department expected to continue supporting the ASFF after U.S. military personnel withdrew from the country, particularly salaries of the Afghan security forces, supplies and equipment for the ANDSF, and operations and functions of the Afghan Air Force and Afghan Special Mission Wing. 455

In the ASFF appropriation for fiscal year FY2021, Congress limited the obligation of such funds until the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, certifies in writing to the congressional defense committees "that such forces are controlled by a civilian, representative government that is committed to protecting human rights and women's rights and preventing terrorists and terrorist groups from using the territory of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and United States allies."

On August 24, 2021 (as discussed in more detail below),<sup>457</sup> DOD transferred more than \$1 billion from the ASFF to Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid, Defense (OHDACA) account

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whole or in part for the government's convenience if the U.S. government no longer requires the contracted goods or services (see FAR Part 49). See CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10428, COVID-19 and Federal Procurement Contracts, by David H. Carpenter for a discussion of legal options associated with the inability of a federal contractor to perform government procurement contracts as originally contemplated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>452</sup> This section was prepared by Brendan McGarry, Analyst in U.S. Defense Budget.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>453</sup> Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby and Major General Hank Taylor, Deputy Director of the Joint Staff for Regional Operations Press Briefing, Department of Defense, August 24, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>454</sup> Anthony Capaccio, "Pentagon's Afghan Exit Leaves Unused \$6 Billion to Fight Over," *Bloomberg News*, August 25, 2021, at https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-25/pentagon-s-afghan-exit-leaves-unused-6-billion-to-fight-over.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>455</sup> Congressional Quarterly, "House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on Afghanistan," transcript, May 12, 2021. Given this testimony, the FY2022 DOD budget documentation does not explain why funding requested for ASFF was included in direct war costs (i.e., those that are not expected to continue once combat operations end at major contingency locations) rather than in enduring operations (i.e., in-theater and stateside costs that will remain after combat operations end).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>456</sup> House Committee Print 116-68, p. 389, at https://www.congress.gov/116/cprt/HPRT42770/CPRT-116HPRT42770.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>457</sup> See the question below, "How much has DOD spent on withdrawing U.S. military and civilian personnel from Afghanistan?"

"to relocate Afghan special immigrant visa (SIV) applicants and their families, and other individuals at risk, in conjunction with the withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan," according to a department reprogramming action that required the prior approval of congressional defense committees. The funding was available from the ASFF "because the Department has curtailed support to the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces in light of current circumstances."

On September 7, 2021, as part of a short-term continuing resolution for FY2022, the Biden Administration requested language be added to the FY2021 ASFF appropriation to authorize such amounts to be available to cover costs associated with the recovery, repair, storage, and disposal of equipment and supplies acquired for the Afghanistan security forces; termination of previous contracts funded by the ASFF; and temporary support for certain members of the Afghanistan security forces.<sup>460</sup>

On September 8, 2021, DOD's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) issued policy guidance to defense agencies related to Building Partner Capacity (BPC) cases funded with ASFF. In the policy, DSCA directed the agencies to "identify any close-out activities for ASFF-related BPC cases and return any unobligated funds not required to support close-out activities."

In justifying the \$3.3 billion requested for ASFF in FY2022, DOD stated that, given the planned withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, the assistance was "even more important than previously to maintain the viability of the Afghan forces and strengthening the Afghan government leverage in negotiations to end the war on terms that preserve a democratic form of government." 462

In July, prior to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the House Appropriations Committee reported a version of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2022 (H.R. 4432), that would provide \$3.05 billion for ASFF. In July, the Senate Armed Services Committee approved a version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 that would authorize "the appropriation of funds for the Afghanistan security forces beyond the transition of U.S. and coalition nations from the country," according to an executive summary of the document. 464

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Budget Execution, Reprogramming Actions, "Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program #2," FY21-16 PA, August 24, 2021, p. 1, at https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/execution/reprogramming/fy2021/prior1415s/21-16 PA Afghan SIV Program 2 Request.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>459</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>460</sup> White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "Delivering for the American People and Meeting Urgent Needs in the New Fiscal Year," blog post by Acting OMB Director Shalanda Young, September 7, 2021, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2021/09/07/delivering-for-the-american-people-and-meeting-urgent-needs-in-the-new-fiscal-year/. See link from "technical assistance" in the text to the document, "FY 2022 Continuing Resolution (CR) Appropriations Issues (anomalies required for a short-term CR)," pp. 27-28, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CR Package 9-7-21.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>461</sup> DOD, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Immediate Return of Unobligated Afghanistan Security Forces Funds, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), DSCA Policy 21-67," September 8, 2021, at https://samm.dsca.mil/policy-memoranda/dsca-21-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>462</sup> DOD, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, May 2021, Justification for the FY 2022 Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), p. 7, at https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2022/FY2022 ASFF Justification Book.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>463</sup> H.R. 4432, p. 10, at https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/H.R. 4432 /BILLS-117hr4432rh.pdf. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet approved its version of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>464</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, "SASC Completes Markup of Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act," press release, July 22, 2021, at https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/press-releases/-sasc-completes-markup-of-

In September, following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the House Armed Services Committee approved a version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year FY2022 (H.R. 4350), that would authorize a total of \$325 million for ASFF for "contract close-out and other close-out operations." 465

# What has happened to U.S. military equipment and other personal property brought to, or purchased for use by, U.S. Forces in Afghanistan?<sup>466</sup>

In general, during an organized withdrawal of U.S. forces from an area of operations, there are two ordered processes by which DOD and the Military Services (hereinafter "Services") are to manage military equipment and other materiel (i.e., personal property<sup>467</sup>) not organically assigned to a military unit. These two processes are explained below.

- Retrograde: "The process for the movement of non-unit equipment and materiel from a forward location to a reset (replenishment, repair, or recapitalization) program or to another directed area of operations to replenish unit stocks, or to satisfy stock requirements." Essentially, DOD-owned equipment that is still required to meet current and future military needs is returned to the United States or to an alternate location determined by the Services.
- Disposition: "The process of reusing, recycling, converting, redistributing, transferring, donating, selling, demilitarizing, treating, destroying, or fulfilling other end of life tasks or actions for DOD property. Does not include real (real estate) property." DOD-owned equipment that is no longer needed (called "excess" property), or is cost-prohibitive to transport (i.e., the transportation cost exceeds replacement value) is either demilitarized, destroyed and/or sold, or can

services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FY22%20NDAA%20Executive%20Summary.pdf.

fiscal-year-2022-national-defense-authorization-act. See link to Fiscal Year 2022, National Defense Authorization Act, Senate Armed Services Committee, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, Chairman, U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe, Ranking Member [Executive Summary], p. 5, at https://www.armed-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>465</sup> H.R. 4350, p. 1265, at https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/H.R. 4350 /BILLS-117hr4350rh.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>466</sup> This section was prepared by G. James Herrera, Analyst in U.S. Defense Readiness and Infrastructure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>467</sup> DOD defines *personal property* as "property except real property. [This definition] excludes records of the Federal Government, battleships, cruisers, aircraft carriers, destroyers, and submarines." See DOD Manual 4160.21-V1, October 22, 2015 (Change 3, 10/02/2019), p. 90, available at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/416021\_vol1.pdf?ver=2019-10-02-080613-750#page=90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>468</sup> DOD, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Chiefs of Staff, As of January 2020, p. 187, available at https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/dictionary.pdf#page=193.

<sup>469</sup> DOD, DOD Manual (DODM) 4160.21 Defense Materiel Disposition: Disposal Guidance and Procedures, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)), Incorporating Change 3, October 2, 2019, p. 83, available at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/416021\_vol1.pdf?ver=2019-10-02-080613-750#page=83. DOD disposition activities are executed according to multiple statutory requirements and authorities, some broadly applicable, and others specific to Afghanistan for a specified period of time. For example, "defense articles" determined to be "non-excess" to DOD needs were available for transfer to the Afghan government pursuant to the authority and requirements in Section 1222 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 13 (P.L. 112-239). The term "defense articles" has the meaning given the term in Section 644(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. §2403(d)). See Section 1222 of P.L. 112-239. Other examples are the statutory requirements set forth under Title 40 United States Code (U.S.C.), Chapter 7—Foreign Excess Property, which provide the conditions by which foreign excess personal property, or FEPP, can be disposed of by federal executive agencies (see 40 U.S.C. §704).

be made available under various statutory authorities to certain foreign governments.

According to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction Quarterly Report of July 30, 2021

CENTCOM estimated it had completed more than half of the retrograde process by June 14, and more than 90% by July 5. This process included 984 C-17 transport aircraft loads out of Afghanistan, more than 17,000 pieces of equipment turned over to DLA [the Defense Logistics Agency] for disposition, and 10 facilities, including Bagram Airfield, handed over to Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense. Included in the retrograde are thousands of vehicles and other equipment, including over 400 pieces of rolling stock and more than 6,600 pieces of non-rolling stock. The two most expensive retrograded items were 14 airdefense artillery pieces valued at more than \$144 million, and five "Enhanced Sentinel FMTVs (Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles)" valued at more than \$16 million.

Dispositioning of DOD-owned personal property in Afghanistan—largely through transfers to the Afghan government—is not the same process as procuring equipment with U.S. funds specifically for the ANDSF.<sup>471</sup> In the case of Afghanistan, the Afghan government and other partner nations have received dispositioned U.S. military equipment and materials to advance U.S. national security and foreign policy interests.<sup>472</sup> As of September 17, 2021, DOD has not published a complete public estimate of how much DOD-owned personal property has been destroyed or abandoned in Afghanistan, or the amount of DOD-owned personal property remaining in Afghanistan. Much of this this equipment and material is likely now to be possessed by the Taliban, but exact quantities are not known.<sup>473</sup>

Following the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan on August 30, CENTCOM Commander General McKenzie, stated the U.S military had demilitarized (i.e., destroyed) their Counter-Rocket, Artillery, Mortar (C-RAM) protection systems in place at Kabul International Airport. These systems were destroyed to prevent them from being used against U.S. forces while U.S. operations were ongoing. He also stated that up to 70 Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, 27 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWVs), and 73 aircraft were demilitarized.<sup>474</sup> He asserted that "those aircraft will never fly again... they'll never be able to be operated by anyone. Most of them were non-mission capable to begin with, but certainly they'll never be able to be flown again."

During the September 1, 2021, markup of the House committee version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 (H.R. 4350), a provision was included

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>470</sup> SIGAR Quarterly Report to Congress, July 30, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>471</sup> For more information on U.S.-funded equipment and materiel for the ANDSF—which includes the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP)—see Government Accountability Office (GAO) report GAO-17-667R *Afghanistan Security* (August 10, 2017), available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-17-667r.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>472</sup> See Military Equipment Transferred to the Afghan Government: DOD Did Not Conduct Required Monitoring to Account for Sensitive Articles, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), December 2020; Also, see DOD, "Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Holds an Off-Camera Press Briefing," Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>473</sup> Idrees Ali and Patricia Zengerle, Jonathan Landay, "Planes, guns, night-vision goggles: The Taliban's new U.S.-made war chest," Reuters Aerospace & Defense, August 19, 2021; Adam Taylor, "The Taliban is flaunting captured U.S. weapons that may be worth billions. Can it use them?" *Washington Post*, August 20, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>474</sup> Recorded statement of General Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, accessible at CBSnews.com; see Caroline Linton and Eleanor Watson, "Pentagon announces last U.S. troops have left Afghanistan," CBSnews.com, August 31, 2021.
<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

under Section 1054 that would require DOD to provide a report and briefing on "covered United States equipment, property, and classified material" that was destroyed, surrendered, or abandoned in Afghanistan during the "covered period." The covered period would mean the period that began on February 29, 2020, and ends 120 days after the FY2022 NDAA is enacted. Covered equipment, property, and classified material includes all real property, personal property, equipment including all nonexpendable items needed to outfit or equip an individual or organization, and classified information in any form. After the FY2021, an FY2022 NDAA has not been introduced in the Senate.

According to U.S. officials and press and social media reports, the Taliban have also captured equipment procured with U.S. funds for the ANDSF, including aircraft, ground vehicles, small arms, and ammunition. On August 17, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, "We don't have a complete picture, obviously, of where every article of defense materials has gone, but certainly a fair amount of it has fallen into the hands of the Taliban." On August 18, General Mark Milley stated that the U.S. government had unspecified "capabilities" relevant to U.S.-origin equipment seized by the Taliban. Additionally, fleeing ANDSF personnel reportedly took some military equipment and arms—including aircraft—to neighboring countries, including Iran, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

Some additional questions that Congress may ask the executive branch include

- How will the fall of U.S. military equipment, supplies, munitions, and explosives into the hands of the Taliban affect U.S. security interests in and around Afghanistan?
- To what extent will the Taliban, or other foreign nations or groups, be able to use and sustain U.S.-origin equipment?
- To what extent can demilitarized U.S.-origin military equipment, supplies, and munitions be reverse-engineered, disassembled, or tested for physical and cyber vulnerabilities by foreign actors, including competitor nation states?<sup>481</sup>
- Is there potential for these items to be transferred to transnationally active terrorist groups? To U.S. adversaries and competitors?
- How might unemployed U.S.-trained personnel improve the capabilities of Taliban forces or other groups active in Afghanistan?

 $<sup>^{476}</sup>$  H.R. 4350, Section 1054, available at https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/H.R. 4350 /BILLS-117hr4350rh.pdf#page=797.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>478</sup> White House, Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, August 17, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>479</sup> Secretary of Defense Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Milley Press Briefing, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>480</sup> Haley Willis, Christiaan Triebert, Evan Hill, Brenna Smith and Dmitriy Khavin, "What Scenes From the Taliban's Victory in Afghanistan Reveal," *New York Times*, August 16, 2021; and, Alan Cullison and Gordon Lubold, "Some Afghan Military Members Fled Taliban Takeover in U.S.-Supplied Aircraft, *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>481</sup> For a public reference of potential vulnerabilities, see DefenseOne article "How Equipment Left In Afghanistan Will Expose US Secrets," by Patrick Tucker, September 10, 2021.

#### How much has DOD spent on withdrawing U.S. military and civilian personnel from Afghanistan?482

DOD has not released estimated or actual costs associated with withdrawing U.S. military personnel from Afghanistan. 483 When asked at an August 23 press conference about the cost of evacuation efforts, Pentagon spokesperson Kirby said, "we're not letting cost drive the operation," and the Commander of Transportation Command, General Stephen Lyons, said, "we're cracking costs, but we're nowhere close to accumulating that data for public dissemination."484

In May 2021, the number of U.S. military personnel in the country reportedly totaled 3,500,<sup>485</sup> down from a high in FY2011 of approximately 100,000. 486 In 2017, the department stopped publicly reporting the number of U.S. military personnel deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and certain other countries. 487 For FY2021, which ends September 30, 2021, DOD planned to spend \$12.9 billion on direct war costs in Afghanistan and assumed an average annual troop strength of 8,600 U.S. military personnel in the country, according to the department's FY2022 budget documentation. 488 DOD describes direct war costs in part as "combat or combat support costs that are not expected to continue once combat operations end at major contingency locations."489 It is unclear how much of this funding, if any, has been used to date for withdrawing military and civilian personnel from Afghanistan.

In August, DOD transferred a total of \$1.462 billion to Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) account to provide temporary housing, sustainment, and other humanitarian assistance to special immigrant visa (SIV) applicants and their families, according to two department reprogramming actions that required the prior approval of congressional defense committees. <sup>490</sup> That figure includes \$396.39 million in a reprogramming action dated August 5, 2021, and \$1.066 billion in a reprogramming action dated August 21, 2021. The latter involved transferring amounts from the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). According to

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., p. 7-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>482</sup> This section was prepared by Brendan McGarry, Analyst in U.S. Defense Budget.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>483</sup> Missy Ryan and Karen DeYoung, "Biden will withdraw all U.S. forces from Afghanistan by Sept. 11, 2021," The Washington Post, April 13, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>484</sup> Gen. Stephen R. Lyons, Commander of U.S. Transportation Command, and Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby Press Briefing, Department of Defense, August 23, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>485</sup> See, for example, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper, "Pentagon Accelerates Withdrawal From Afghanistan," The New York Times, updated July 4, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>486</sup> For more information, see CRS Report R44116, Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq: 2007-2020, by Heidi M. Peters.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>488</sup> DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, May 2021, Defense Budget Overview, United States Department of Defense, Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request, p. 7-3, at https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2022/ FY2022 Budget Request Overview Book.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>490</sup> DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Budget Execution, Reprogramming Actions, "Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program," FY21-13PA, August 5, 2021, at https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/execution/reprogramming/fy2021/prior1415s/21-13 PA Afghan%20SIV Request Revised Baseline.pdf; and "Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program #2," FY21-16PA, August 24, 2021, at

https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/execution/reprogramming/fy2021/prior1415s/21-16 PA Afghan SIV Program 2 Request.pdf.

the department budget execution documentation, "funds from Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) are available because the Department has curtailed support to the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces in light of current circumstances."

On September 7, 2021, as part of a short-term continuing resolution for FY2022, the Biden Administration requested \$2.4 billion in supplemental appropriations for DOD to cover costs related to the relocation of individuals from Afghanistan.<sup>492</sup> Of that amount, \$2.2 billion was requested for the OHDACA account, to remain available through September 30, 2023; the rest of the funding was requested for various operation and maintenance (O&M) and military personnel (MILPERS) accounts, to remain available through September 30, 2022.<sup>493</sup>

The Administration also requested that DOD general transfer authority thresholds for FY2020 and FY2021 be increased by a total of \$600 million "to replace the general transfer authority that was used to fund the relocation and support of Afghanistan personnel." That figure includes increases of \$100 million for FY2020 (bringing the total general transfer authority to \$4.1 billion), and \$500 million for FY2021 (bringing the total general transfer authority to \$4.5 billion).

### How will the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from Afghanistan impact the budget?<sup>496</sup>

Some Members of Congress and nongovernmental officials have discussed the possibility of not expending or redirecting funding after withdrawing U.S. military personnel from Afghanistan. The Chair of the House Armed Services Committee has said avoiding the expense of direct war costs in Afghanistan "on a year in and year out basis ... is going to give us greater flexibility—certainly over a five-year period.... If, come October 1, we're not in Afghanistan anymore that is going to save some amount of money."<sup>497</sup> Jim McAleese, a defense consultant, has reportedly said withdrawing U.S. military personnel from Afghanistan could potentially provide up to \$21 billion of DOD funding for "currently under-resourced missions."<sup>498</sup>

How much funding might be unobligated or redirected is unclear, in part because DOD planned to fund activities in Afghanistan after withdrawing U.S. military personnel. Of the \$42.1 billion requested for contingency operations in FY2022, DOD requested \$8.9 billion for direct war costs

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>492</sup> White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "Delivering for the American People and Meeting Urgent Needs in the New Fiscal Year," blog post by Acting OMB Director Shalanda Young, September 7, 2021, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2021/09/07/delivering-for-the-american-people-and-meeting-urgent-needs-in-the-new-fiscal-year/. See link from "technical assistance" in the text to the document, "FY 2022 Continuing Resolution (CR) Appropriations Issues (anomalies required for a short-term CR)," p. 29, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CR\_Package\_9-7-21.pdf.

 $<sup>^{493}</sup>$  OMB, "FY 2022 Continuing Resolution (CR) Appropriations Issues (anomalies required for a short-term CR)," p. 29, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CR\_Package\_9-7-21.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>494</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>496</sup> This section was prepared by Brendan McGarry, Analyst in U.S. Defense Budget.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>497</sup> Representative Adam Smith, remarks during American Enterprise Institute webinar hosted by Mackenzie Eaglen, *A conversation with House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith: Priorities for the fiscal year 2022 defense budget*, April 22, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>498</sup> Jim McAleese, as quoted in Bryan Bender, "Biden bucks the brass on Afghanistan," *Politico Pro* Morning Defense newsletter, April 15, 2021.

in Afghanistan even though it assumed no U.S. military personnel in the country during FY2022.<sup>499</sup> The department's FY2022 budget documentation states in part, "Although the United States plans withdrawal from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021, there are residual costs in the FY 2022 budget, which include equipment reset and readiness, in-theater support, and operations/force protection."<sup>500</sup> The department includes in funds requested for direct war costs \$3.3 billion for the ASFF. For the \$5.6 billion in remaining funds requested for direct war costs in Afghanistan for FY2022, the department did not identify functional or mission categories for activities in or specifically related to Afghanistan. Similarly, of the \$24.1 billion requested for "enduring theater requirements and related missions" in FY2022, DOD did not identify how much would be for activities in or specifically related to Afghanistan. It is unclear how the Taliban takeover might impact U.S. spending.

## Possible Strategic-level Congressional Questions and Considerations

The U.S. experience in Afghanistan could provide U.S. policymakers and the broader public an opportunity to reflect upon, and learn from, its successes and failures in order to inform both policies elsewhere as well as the future of U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Such questions might include, but are not limited to

- To what extent was there a shared national consensus about the purposes and importance of U.S. military operations and foreign assistance in Afghanistan? How did that consensus, or the lack thereof, impact U.S. policy in Afghanistan?
- How did successive Administrations and Members of Congress inform the public about the goals, means, and outcomes of U.S. efforts? To what extent did these efforts result in the development of an informed national conversation about U.S. policy and consensus about the future of U.S. policy?
- To what extent were U.S. policies and strategies incongruent with on the ground realities? To what extent did such mismatches contribute to campaign disconnects and failures?
- What mechanisms did successive Congresses and Administrations use to review U.S. strategy, policy, and resources toward Afghanistan, assess progress, measure risks, and renew authorizations and appropriations? Were those mechanisms sufficient?
- How might U.S. government efforts be better coordinated and integrated across the elements of the interagency to greater effect on the ground?
- How did oversight mechanisms, including hearings, briefings, reporting requirements, and inspectors general, inform the development and implementation of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan? What indications did these mechanisms provide with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of the Afghan government and the effectiveness of U.S. military and civilian operations in Afghanistan?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>499</sup> DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, May 2021, Defense Budget Overview, United States Department of Defense, Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request, p. 7-3, at https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2022/ FY2022\_Budget\_Request\_Overview\_Book.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>500</sup> Ibid., p. 7-2.

- What do U.S. train and equip efforts in Afghanistan suggest about security cooperation enterprise more broadly? Where else might similar circumstances—corruption, dependence on the United States for critical enablers, and political factors—threaten the success of U.S. security cooperation efforts? How similar or dissimilar is the situation in Afghanistan to other large-scale security U.S. cooperation efforts in the Middle East and Africa?
- How have U.S. allies, partners, and adversaries perceived and responded to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the U.S. response to the August 2021 collapse of the Afghan government? What implications might these responses have for U.S. national security policy in the future?

#### معلومات مؤلفان

(کلیتون توماس)، هماهنگ کننده تحلیلگر امور خاورمیانه

برندن دبلیو مک گری تحده تحلیلگر بودیجه دفاعی ایالات متحده تحلیلگر مسائل آسیا

کاتلین جی مک اینیس کارشناس امنیت بین الملل کارشناس امور خاورمیانه

کوری آر. گیل تحلیلگر امور خارجه کارشناس امور خاورمیانه

امیلی ام. مورگنسترن تحلیلگر کمک خارجی و سیاست خارجی تحلیلگر آمادگی دفاعی و زیرساخت های ایالات متحده

> سارا آر کالینز معاون تحقیق کارشناس جرایم بین المللی و مواد مخدر

هایدی ام پیتر ز تحلیلگر سیاست اکتساب دفاعی ایالات متحده تحلیلگر سیاست اکتساب دفاعی ایالات متحده

> رودا مارگسون کار شناس سیاست بین المللی بشر دو ستانه

اندرو فیکرت کارشناس فوای زمینی نظامی

کوری ولت متخصص امور روسیه و اروپا

اندرو اس. بوون تحلیلگر امور روسیه و اروپا

سار ا ام ثارکان تحلیلگر صحت جهانی و توسعه بین المللی تحلیلگر امور خارجه

ربکا ام. نلسون متخصص تجارت و امور مالی بین المللی

مارتین ای. وایس متخصص تجارت و امور مالی بین المللی تحایالگر سیاست آسیا

#### <mark>بیانیه عدم مسئولیت</mark>

این سند توسط دفتر خدمات تحقیقی کانگرس (CRS) تهیه شده است. CRS به حیث کارکنان مشترک غیر حزبی برای کمیته های کانگرس و اعضای کانگرس خدمات ارائه می دهد. این دفتر فقط به دستور و تحت هدایت کانگرس عمل می کند. معلومات موجود در راپور CRS نباید برای اهدافی غیر از درک عمومی معلوماتی که توسط CRS در ارتباط با نقش نهادی CRS در اختیار اعضای کانگرس قرار گرفته است، مورد استناد واقع شود. راپور های CRS، به عنوان آثار دولت ایالات متحده، به شمول قانون کاپی رایت در ایالات متحده نیستند. هریک از راپور های CRS را می توان به شکل مکمل و بدون اجازه از CRS تکثیر و توزیع کرد. با این حال، از آنجایی که راپور های CRS ممکن است به شمول تصاویر یا مطالب دارای حق تصاویر یا مطالب دارای حق تصاویر یا مطالب دارای حق کاپی رایت داشته باشد.