



ANALYSIS DOCUMENT OF THE IESE 12/2011

GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF AFGHANISTAN

(APRIL 2011)

1. INTRODUCTION

For many centuries, Afghanistan has been a natural corridor for conquerors and traders that moved troops or goods from West to East, between Middle East and India, and the other way around. This was the path chosen by Alexander the Great, 328 years before Christ. Nowadays, Afghanistan is more than a corridor; it's a crossroad of routes in Asia.



The political, economic, social and military life of the Afghan State, of 652.000 square km of surface, is conditioned by the Hindu Kush mountainous massif which has 600 km in length and ranges the whole country from northeast to southwest. These mountains part a great amount of territory and hinder communications between the various provinces; in addition, the harsh continental climate during winter favors the tribe's importance over the central government and frequently constrains the state action to the capital and its whereabouts.



<http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-project/maps>

Traditionally, the terrain has helped the asymmetrical strategies, particularly the use of the guerrilla. In the depth of the valleys, it's easy to find refuge among a population that must manage autonomously the services which, like security, should be provided by the State itself. The communication problem is worse in the North. Until the opening of the Salang tunnel by the Soviets in 1964, the pass between Kabul and the north of the country was very precarious. This tunnel is an important step and has been under attack many times.

The external borders aren't natural and lack any type of control; that's why they are prone to illegal traffic of weapons, drugs and human beings. Its length is directly proportional to its interrelationships with its neighbors.

In Afghanistan converge three geopolitical regions, where many civilizations reside:

- In the East: Pakistan where 90 % of its Muslim population is Sunni and the 7 % is Shia.
- In the North: the plains of Central Asia are crossed by the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers where we can see the Orthodox Christian civilization among the main religion, the Islam. We mustn't forget China and its ancient culture that each day gains influence in the area.

In the west: the plateaus of Persian Iran with its Shia influence and where there's also Sunni Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula. Afghanistan emerges as one of the results of the Great Game; this is the name of the geostrategic dispute that held the British and the Russian empires in Central Asia during the 19th century. As they were unable to conquer Afghanistan, these powers agreed on leaving it as a neutral state between both empires

The Wakhan corridor, located in the Pamir Mountains, north-east of Afghanistan, and in the extreme of which is situated China, is the strongest signal of the intent of preventing an armed confrontation between these powers. China's border, one of the highest of the world, remains closed during at least five months a year due to the snow. However, this path can have an important role in the future as energy corridor for the layout of the alternative gas and oil pipes to the current ones that transport energy products to China.

In the 20th century, during the Cold War, Afghanistan was the scenario of the rivalry of two other empires, this time the Soviet and the American empires. The United States planned an encircling strategy against the USSR's expansionism known as Kennan's containment strategy. Therefore, when the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the Americans reacted supporting the insurgency that was fought to drive away the Soviets.

Nowadays, in the Afghan conflict there are external actors involved even though this time the situation is far more complex, especially due to its bigger volume. It's imperative to analyze the interests and the roles of all geopolitical and geostrategic actors present in all conflicts occurring in a buffer state.

Although, in the past Afghanistan could maintain a certain degree of neutrality thanks to its geographical situation, over the last 31 years it hasn't known peace. In 1931, the USSR and the King of Afghanistan signed a non-aggression treaty, in order to strengthen the neutrality. The dynamic of the Cold War caused the USSR to intervene politically in Afghanistan more and more often until 1979 when the Soviet troops crossed the border with the pretext of protecting the Afghan communist Government at that moment.

Afghanistan is positioned at the junction of several nuclear powers aiming to be regional leaders, such as China, Pakistan, India, Russia and Iran. The latter, despite not having an atomic arsenal, wants to be treated as a nuclear country, because they have the uranium enrichment technology necessary to develop this capacity. This group of neighbour countries grants Afghanistan a special interest.

What's more, there are several POL/MIL organizations in the area that contribute to its stability and that we must take into account when searching for Afghanistan's conflict resolution.

Russia leads the **Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)**, founded in 2002 and to which also belong Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan joined in 2006 completing the geopolitical region and, as the Secretary-General of the CSTO, Nikolay Bordyuzha, said: *"Uzbekistan's decision to rejoin the CSTO changes radically the geopolitical situation not only in Central Asia, but in all the post-Soviet territory"*. The CSTO has a mutual defense clause, the deterrent capacity of which contributes to the stability of all the area of North Afghanistan against potential attacks, including the terrorist ones. Copying the NATO, this organization has created the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces (JRRF), the efficiency of which hasn't been proved yet, taking into account that the Uzbek Government didn't want to participate.

For its part, China leads in coordination with Russia the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** of which Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are also part. Afghanistan has participated as distinguished guest in the last meetings; this constitutes a political support to the Government of President Hamid Karzai.

Among the priority objectives of the SCO are ensuring stability and combating "terrorism, separatism and extremism". That is, the organization has assumed as its own the Chinese conception of fighting against *"the three evil forces"*; this is how Beijing names the Uyghur independence in the autonomous region of Uyghur Xinjiang. However, the SCO has a bigger dimension, since, as it is established in its Founding Charter, its objectives are: *"to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness between the member States; to encourage the efficient cooperation in such spheres as politics, trade and economy, environment protection, culture, science and technology, education, energy, and also other spheres; to consolidate multidisciplinary cooperation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region and promotion of a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order"*.

The fact that Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are members of the CSTO and the SCO provides great stability to this region in the North of Afghanistan. Despite the problems between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, all these former members of the USSR, along with China, are committed to fight against international terrorism. What's more, the leadership of two emerging powers such as Russia and China is trying to remove the USA of this area. Russia aims to be the power again politically controlling the territories of the former Soviet republics of Central Asia.

The five republics of Central Asia, the four mentioned above and Turkmenistan, participate in the NATO's Partnership for Peace Program. There is no doubt that the Alliance has a high degree of implication to assist the Afghan Government through the ISAF, to maintain security in the country, to facilitate the extension of the Government's control and to support the reconstruction and humanitarian assistance.



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The bilateral relations that the USA has been establishing in Central Asia after the September 11 attacks have shown the strategic importance that this region has for the Americans. Uzbekistan’s Government of the President Islam Karimov and Bush Administration signed an agreement for the use of the Karhi-Khanabad base by the American Air Force, until November 2005 when they had to leave the base at the request of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan’s petition to denounce the agreement with the USA was made public for the first time at the Summit of the SCO held in July 2005 in Astana; this was interpreted as the organization’s first positioning against the US presence in Central Asia.

In Kyrgyzstan, the American agreed to use Manas base. However, with Russia’s resurgence and China’s raising, the US activities in this area are beginning to make uncomfortable both powers; despite the interest they share to combat international terrorism.

2. THE GEOPOLITICAL LESSONS OF AFGHANISTAN’S HISTORY

The geopolitical region’s history and particularly the one of Afghanistan clarify certain keys aspects that we must take into account when revising the strategy of the Coalition for the current conflict.

In 1725 the Loya Jirga was created in Kabul; it's a meeting of tribal chiefs, who in 1747 founded the Afghan State controlled by a monarchy of the Durrani tribe, who since then are known as the "Durrani" of the Pashtun ethnic group, and extended their domain through the North at the expense of Turkmen, Uzbek, and Tajik. They also conquered certain parts of the East, in the Punjab, Kashmir and Balochistan. This way, they created a fragile empire mainly Pashtun, which was the ethnic group ruling. This is without doubt part of the Pashtuns' collective memory, because they have a deeper ethnic and tribal sentiment than the one of the Afghan nationalism. The fragility of the Afghan monarchy was the result of the rivalries between the Pashtun factions, frequently encouraged by neighbour countries.

Over time, the political control of the Pashtuns has retracted on Kabul and the rest of ethnic groups have been systematically marginalized from Government posts. This fact has caused a number of riots between ethnic groups.

After establishing itself in India, the British Empire competed against the Russian Empire for the geopolitical control of Afghanistan. In the decade of 1830, the Afghan asked the Russian assistance, leading to the rejection of the British. This achievement was the spark that provoked the first of the three Anglo-Afghan Wars which took place between 1839 and 1842. The British had to renounce its dominance in Afghanistan, since they were defeated. Thirty-six years later, the advancement of Russia in the region was clear, and this started the Second Anglo-Afghan War that lasted two years. This confrontation ended with the purchase of the Pashtun tribal chiefs' political will. They signed the Treaty of Rawalpindi, according to which Afghanistan became an associated State of British India. Great Britain recognized Afghanistan's independence in 1919, after being defeated during the third war.

That is, the British didn't achieve a military victory, but political and it was only possible through negotiations with the Pashtun chiefs. This historical lesson should be remembered when facing the challenges at the present time.

The Durrani reign lasted until 1973 when the King Zahir was deposed through a coup d'état lead by Mohammed Doud Khan, who proclaimed a Republic. In 1978 a pragmatic pro-communist Government, which intended to develop a project of modernization over its ideology was established. In order to carry through this project, it was necessary to smear the traditional systems; for this reason, they tried to undermine the tribal and religious chiefs that were part in that moment of the opposition.

The project for modernization was supported by the USSR and promoted the idea of creating Pashtunistan; this clearly went against the Pakistani interests. Its Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, went so far as to encourage a conspiracy against Doud Khan, supported by the more fundamentalists Pashtuns leaders. After the failure of the conspiracy, the Pashtun leaders had to seek refuge in Peshawar (Pakistan), where they created an infrastructure in 1976, in order to recruit Mujahideen people from all around the Islamic world. To fight Doud Khan and the communists, the Islamic party Hekmatyar organized them in detachments.

In 1978, the communist carried through a coup d'état against Doud Khan who was executed. This gave way to a new government that placed more emphasis on national unity,

socioeconomic justice and respect to the Islam, trying not to exacerbate the Islamists. On the 5th of December 1978, Moscow and Kabul signed a Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation that on the 24th December 1979 the Soviets used as an excuse to intervene in Afghanistan with 80 000 soldiers.

The USSR had 100 000 troops in Afghanistan that had been provided with heavy weaponry and that didn't hesitate to use it; they also tried to control the country's development through the introduction of improvements in the woman's rights, the education sector, a land reform..., following the model valid during the Soviet time in the Central Asia republics and that changed them radically. For example, Uzbekistan was very similar to Afghanistan, but the Soviets forced gender equality, its education, etc. Therefore, the social reality in these republics greatly differs the Afghan even though its origin was very similar. However, all of them were considered foreign laws imposed by force, contrary to the Islamic traditions and the Pashtun code.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan left Pakistan in an uncomfortable geopolitical situation between India and the USSR, ally of the Indian Government. Due to this geopolitical position, Pakistan had to renounce to the strategic depth in case of a military conflict with India.

In the Cold War context, the USSR's intervention was considered as a hostile movement by Reagan's Administration, which decided to send help to the insurgence through Pakistan's Intelligence Service (ISI Inter-Services Intelligence), along with Saudi Arabia and China. The insurgence was provided with Stinger surface to air with infrared guided missiles, which with a range of more than 4 500 meters, they practically prevented the fly of helicopters, that were a key aspect in these types of conflicts. In addition, it forced fixed-wing aircrafts, particularly the Su-25, to carry out their bombings from higher and thus significantly worsening their precision. This difficulty, the weariness of the Soviet society due to the great number of casualties among its conscripts and Gorbachov's policy forced the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989.

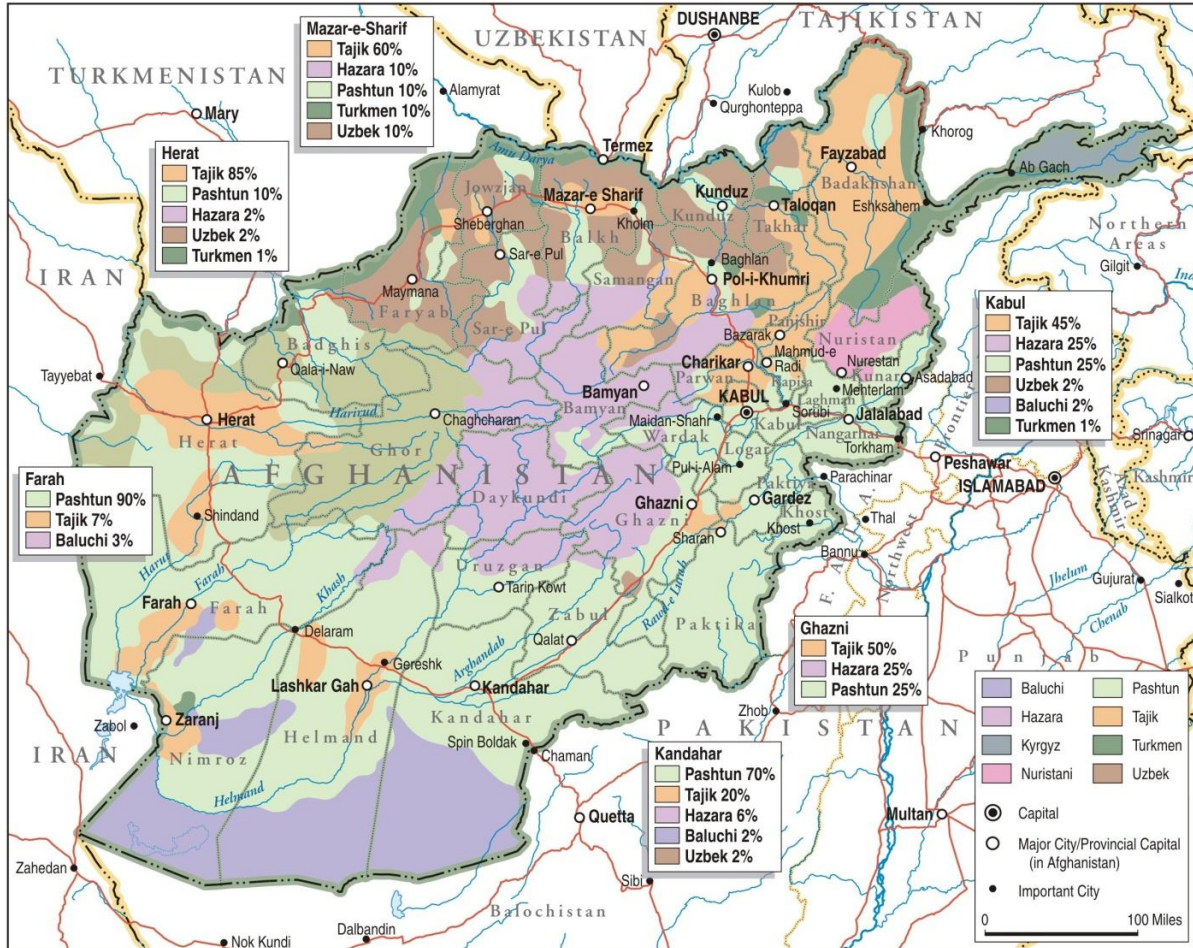
3. GEOPOLITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ETCHNICAL DISTRIBUTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has nearly 29 millions of inhabitants that have lived during 31 years in wartime; this has caused one million of Afghans to live as refugees in Iran and 2.5 million in Pakistan. These figures give us an idea of the importance and influence that both neighbors have in the conflict's resolution. Living conditions are really hard, with a life expectancy of only 44.5 years, 20 % of the population live in extreme poverty, 1 out of 4 children dies before reaching 5 years, and more than 40 % of the population hasn't got a job. More than the 75 % can't access basic services.

In this human environment, the social structure is build around the ethnic group and tribe.

There are four that are very important (Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara); and 21 minor (Aimaq, Turkmen, Baluchis, etc.).

As I've said before, the Pashtun are the founders of the independent Afghanistan, the main group and the ethnic group that identifies more with the Afghan nationalism. They are Sunni and constitute the 42 % of the population.



<http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-project/maps>

The Tajik, that form the 27 % of the population, have a Persian origin and are also Sunnis. They speak Dari or Persian which was considered an educated language; this made easier their access to the administration and clergy of a country controlled by Pashtun people. Their presence at the capital and other cities as well as in the wide northwestern area, near the Republic of Tajikistan make this ethnic group the most important one in the country after the Pashtun; and they don't hide their aspirations of taking part in the political power.

The Hazara are considered as Afghanistan's pariah by other ethnic groups; they are originally nomad people and probably Mongolian descent, who have been relegated to the poorer and more mountainous areas in the centre of the country. They are Shia people and so they have a certain bond with Iran; however, they were also greatly repudiated by the Taliban people who don't consider them Muslim. They speak a variant of Persian and they constitute 9 % of the country's population.

The Uzbeks and Turkmen of Turkish origin are the 9 % and the 3 %, respectively, of the population. They live in the north, in regions near the Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan's republics.

If we sum the ethnic distribution and the language, we can see that the Pashtun are cohesive with both aspects. Nevertheless, it's important to highlight that this group feels more nationalist despite their internal divisions caused by tribal fights for the power. It's very enlightening the fact that the layout of the main and nearly the only road of Afghanistan called Ring Road goes mainly through Pashtun territory.

All ethnic groups are cross-border except the Hazara; this fact gives us an idea of the influence that the neighbour countries have in the different zones of Afghanistan. The ethnic differences propitiate continued frictions which are the breeding ground for civil conflicts, typical in Afghanistan's history, and that shouldn't be overlooked at this moment.

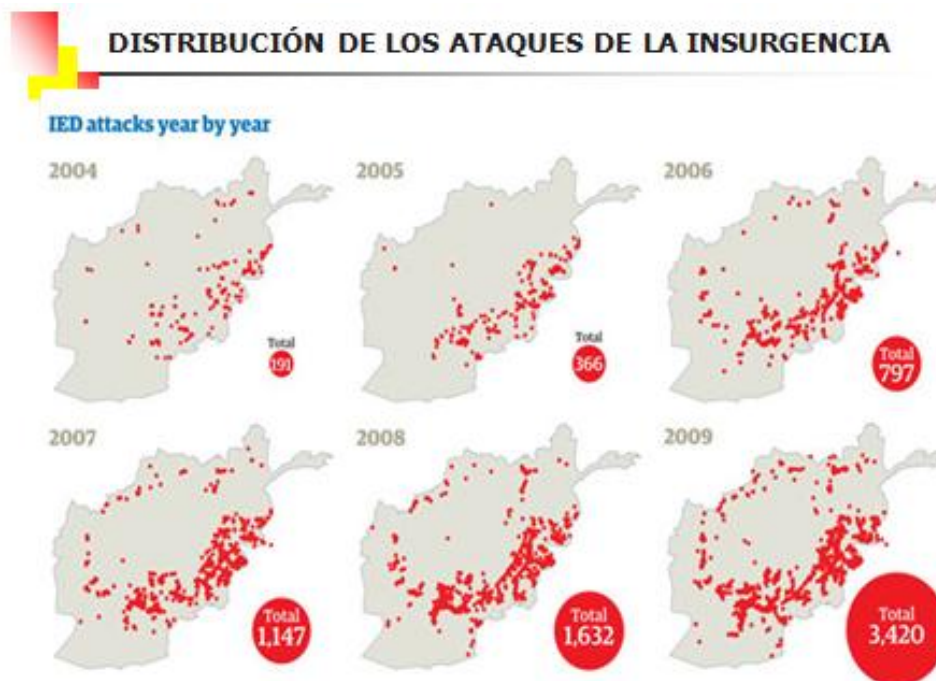
In Badghis province, where nearly all the Spanish troops and the Provincial Reconstruction team (PRT) lead by Spain are located, 63 % are Tajik; however, in the Gormach and Murghab districts, the majority of the population is of Pashtun origin, while in the Muqur districts this ethnic group is an important minority (44 %). In Qala and Naw, 72 % are Tajik and 28 % Pashtun.

In 1893, the senior management of the British Administration, Sir Henry Durand, drew up a line of 1 500 miles, in order to define the western end of British India. This line divided in two parts the Pashtun region, which for the Afghans was reminiscent of its Empire and was considered Afghan territory. This way, the various Afghan governments have usually considered vindicating the Pashtun territory that is part of Pakistan.

When Pakistan achieved the independence in 1947, the Pashtun were definitely distributed in two States. Out of 40 million, 13 million Pashtun live in Afghanistan where they are a majority over other ethnic groups, whereas the other 27 million live in Pakistan, where they constitute a minority and feel discriminated in comparison to other Pakistani citizens, because their per-capita income is 50 % less than the country's average. Regarding the cultural sphere, 78 % of men are illiterate, while in Pakistan are only 40.2 %, and regarding women 98 % of Pashtun women are illiterate, whereas only 69.4 % of Pakistani are.

In order to prevent any type of instability in the Pashtun area of Pakistan, the ISI has supported the Afghan Pashtun in their fights against foreign troops or other ethnic groups. During the Afghan conflicts, Pashtun insurgents and even members of Al-Qaida have found refuge in Pakistan among 2.5 million people of the same ethnic group sheltered in the northwest of the country.

Pashtuns have an ethnic code and of honor called Pashtunwali¹ that nowadays is still observed in rural areas. This code considers these values: revenge (*Badal*) without time limit, loyalty (*Hamsaya*), forgiveness (*Nanawatay*) through compensation (*Saz*) or Pashtun cohesion. When in a contradictive situation, the Pashtunwali is above the Sharia.



Simon Rogers ([The Guardian](#)) basado en los datos de wikileaks

In the image we can observe the distribution of the attacks with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). The areas that have more insurgence activity and expansion are the Pashtun regions. These maps, created by “*The Guardian*” with the data published by WikiLeaks, alert to the increase of these attacks carried out in areas free of insurgents.

The reports gather the suspicions of the Pakistani intelligence services’ supports to the Taliban insurgence. The statements of the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, in India reveal that, like before, nowadays there is a Great Game: “*It’s no secret what Pakistan’s been doing with the Taliban. All sides know what’s been going on since Afghanistan was first occupied*”.

The Taliban movement that we could translate as «Islam scholars» emerges in the Koranic schools (*madrasas*) of the *Afghan refugee camps* of Pashtun ethnic located in the rural areas of Pakistan in the region of Peshawar. The poorer young Pashtun, war victims and

¹ BAQUÉS QUESADA, Josep; Los pastún: análisis de su impacto político en Afganistán (DT 22/10) Real Instituto Elcano

http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/riecano/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/defensa+y+seguridad/dt22-2010

disappointed with the tribal traditions found in the *madrassa* the support to live and the religious radicalism to bear the suffering, while receiving at the same time training in the insurgent struggle.

The Pakistani fundamentalist party, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI) had a great influence in these schools; they defend a return to the Islam origins and reject everything that comes from modernization and that may contaminate their beliefs. Their postulates coincide fairly well with the Jihadist. One of the consequences of this creed, of Deobandi tradition, is that the woman is relegated to a completely secondary role, subordinated to men and without access to culture. Moreover, it's important to know that they consider the Shia people as apostates.

4. DRUG TRAFFICKING IN AFGHANISTAN²

The origin of drug cultivation dates back to the 80s to fund the Mujahideen that fought against the Soviet. Drug trafficking undermines the government and corrupts the structures of the fragile Afghan State. Therefore, after coming to power, the Taliban banned poppy cultivation with the threat of heavy penalties; in 2001 the cultivated area decreased significantly.

After the USA invaded Afghanistan, farmers were free to continue with the lucrative cultivations even though they only receive 1 % of the money resulted. What's more, Taliban prefer seeing drug trafficking as an important financing source for their fight, and a way to corrupt Karzai's Administration. In 2008, Afghanistan ranked 176 out of 180 countries regarding corruption; however, in 2009 worsened falling to the 179 position. Corruption is present even in the most important Government structures. In addition, the media has even accused of corruption the stepbrother of President Karzai, Ahmad Wali Karzai, who leads the Provincial Council.

The drug coming from Afghanistan passes through all borders, but especially the Iranian border and through the north; this creates addicts in all countries that crosses and so all are interested in eradicating it. Russia's cooperation in operations to fight this criminal phenomenon must be framed by the concern due to the increase of heroin addicts in the Russian Federation.

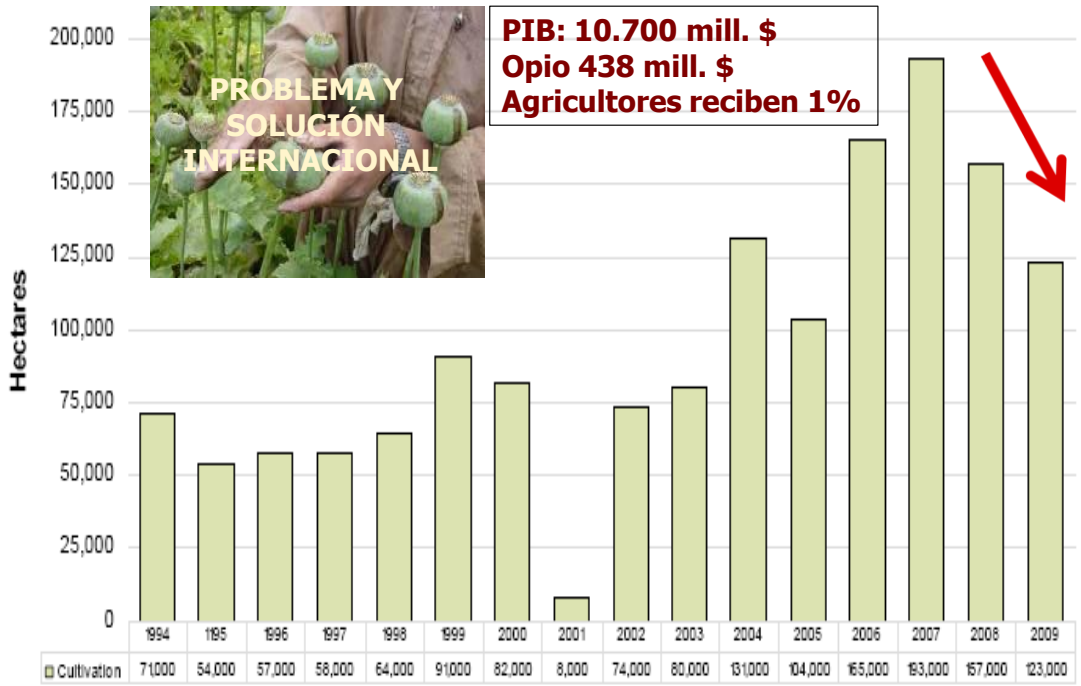
It is estimated that the opium trade from Afghanistan surpasses the 8 000 tonnes; this means around 80 % and 90 % of the opium consumed over the world. Drug trafficking promotes the illegal flow of arms and it is estimated that it constitutes nearly 50 % of the Afghan GDP.

The Afghan Government is responsible for the eradication of poppy cultivation and they are supported by the ISAF. The international community has increased the pressure to the Afghan Government so they intensify their efforts in this fight; this has bear results and since 2007 poppy cultivation has been gradually reduced.

² http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2010/DIEEEO15-2010DrogaAfganistan.pdf

Hectáreas de amapola cultivadas por año

Figure 1: Opium cultivation in Afghanistan (ha), 1994-2009



Fuente: UNODC, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2009; Summary Findings".

5. AFGHANISTAN: A POTENTIAL ENERGY CORRIDOR

Even though Afghanistan has several oil reserves in the north and of strategic minerals in the south, its main value is given by its geopolitical situation; Afghanistan becomes a transit place for the energy resources coming from Iran and Turkmenistan to Pakistan, India, and even China. Iran has the second most important gas reserves in the world and Turkmenistan is in the fourth place.

The creation of oil and gas pipelines by Afghanistan to Pakistan and India would increase the output of energy resources to Central Asia and Iran, a fact that would favor nearly all countries in the area. However this possibility would affect the Russian politics which tries to control, as much as possible the gas distribution in Europe and Asia. The company UNOCAL (Union Oil of California), of which Hamid Karzai was a consultant, planned the construction of a gas pipeline that would go from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan through Herat and would cross Kandahar until Pakistan through Multan. This project is known as TAP for the countries' acronyms. In July 2001, the enterprise established negotiations with the Taliban Government. The US intervention in 2001 paralyzed the project and favored the Russian company GAZPROM to continue monopolizing the Turkmen gas.



<http://geology.com/>

In 2008, the TAP project became TAPI when they included India even though the country hasn't accepted to date to be part of it. Most likely India doesn't want to depend on Pakistan, its traditional rival, through which would receive the gas.

6. PAKISTAN AND INDIA'S ROLE

Since its emergence as a State, Pakistan sees in Afghanistan a territory that enables it to win the strategic depth necessary in a conflict against India. That's the reason why it intends to establish an Alliance of permanent influence over the Afghan Government.

To Pakistan, the worst hypothesis is for Afghanistan to fall under the influence of India or of an ally. This is how the Soviet troops' presence in Afghan territory was perceived. With this kind of influence over Afghanistan with a Pashtun majority, it wants to prevent a movement from its western neighbour to try to achieve an independent Pashtunistan. At the same time, Pakistan wants to prevent Afghanistan being a place where the Pakistan Pashtun dissidents find refuge.



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What's more, the Pakistani Government finds in external enemies a way to strengthen its always subdued internal cohesion. Taliban radicalism can be a boomerang to Pakistan, if it's not controlled in its own territory. Its expansion through terrorism can unsettle the fragile State's order.

Externally, Pakistan is trying to strengthen its role in international politics and solve the problem created by the Afghan refugees in its territory.

After the fall of the Taliban regime as a consequence of the international coalition's intervention lead by the USA, Pakistan found itself in a crossroad which forced it to consider:

1. - Pakistan could be tempted to unsettle the Afghan Government, in order to promote a more favorable change for it;
2. - The failure of the Afghan politics could create important tensions in the critical balance of Pakistan's internal politics. A big crisis in Pakistan could affect seriously the general strategy of the region.

Pakistan is the nuclear power in the world with less control over its nuclear arsenal, and after September 11 it has received important aid from the USA, in order to improve its control and to promote development. In the current year, Obama's Administration will give Islamabad's Government 1 200 million dollars; this hasn't risen its image among Pakistani.

Pakistan's situation is conditioned by the Government's weakness and its problems to solve internal conflicts originated from the economical crisis in the country, natural disasters and subversive groups that operate in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) despite the operations of the Pakistani army and the regular attacks of the US unmanned air vehicles.

The negotiated resolution of the Afghan conflict would help to stabilize Pakistan and the region, thanks to the links of its intelligence services with the Taliban movement and other groups bent of the Jihad in Afghanistan. Pakistan Armed Forces' role is a key aspect in order to finish with the Taliban sanctuary and Al-Qaida in FATA. We must keep in mind the power that yield the Pakistani FAS on the political decisions of the country. They opposed for a long time to involve themselves in the counter-terrorist fight in FATA; they said that they weren't prepared for these type of actions and that they were more necessary in Kashmir's border.

The operations of the Pakistani army in the Swat Valley and South Waziristan have been relatively successful against the Taliban movement in Pakistan. This movement was originated in 2007 under the name of Tehrik Taliban-i-Pakistan (TTP); its goal was to establish a fundamentalist Islamic regime in the country. It's well known that the TTP has links with Al-Qaida who has supported them technically in their attacks.

One of the key aspects to understand Pakistan's position in the Afghan conflict is its potential effects in the conflict that Kashmir maintains with India, because everything that favors India is seen as a menace to Pakistan.

For its part, India has taken advantage of the Afghan conflict to introduce its companies in the country as well as development aid. India is the second most important donor of the East area after Iran, but well ahead of the next donor, Germany. Moreover, India is gaining more and more political influence in the international framework and thus it becomes an important country, in order to try and find a valid resolution for the Afghan conflict. At the moment, it has refused to relate a solution for this conflict with an Indo-Pakistani agreement that involves the peaceful settlement of the dispute about Kashmir.

A possible solution would be for India to give up any influence in Afghanistan, handing it over to Pakistan in exchange of Pakistan doing the same regarding Kashmir. This resolution would require ensuring that Pakistan would not support Kashmir's Jihadists and that it would control the Pashtun insurgents, regardless of them being Pakistani or Afghan.

For its part, the USA clearly supports India as the deterrent of China and Russia's regional influence, but without abandoning in any case Pakistan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The strategy to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan requires:

- An Afghanization process of the conflict where the Afghan, lead by their Government, will provide security to its territory and population. In order to achieve this, they will need the necessary police and military forces to prevent desertions.
- It is necessary to prevent Afghanistan becoming a failed state, because it would provide Al-Qaida with the ideal situation to reestablish its sanctuary. Therefore, the construction of solid state institutions is essential.
- It's indispensable for countries directly involved in the conflict as the USA and states of the area such as Pakistan, India, Iran, China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia to take part in the conflict's resolution.
- The resolution must be effective for the Pashtun in Afghanistan and accepted by the Pakistani Pashtun. This means that it must be negotiated with the Taliban as far as possible
- The resolution must propitiate a significant reduction of poppy cultivation, in order to prevent the corruption of the Afghan State. Corruption involves a serious risk, because it could finish the Government soon after the international troops leave the Afghan territory, as it happened after the Soviet departure.
- The resolution must achieve Pakistan's commitment to fight the Jihadists and Al-Qaida in its own territory.
- The withdrawal of international troops must be consensual by all countries involved and carried out without being announced until strictly essential, in order to prevent the powers and countries of the area trying to gain advantage positions. In addition, the withdrawal announcements strengthen the Taliban and undermine Karzai's Government.

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