

AFGHANISTAN

The modern history of Afghanistan begins with the end of the monarchy in 1973. In that year a coup supported by the leftist Parcham ("Banner") Party made Afghanistan a republic. The Parcham and the leftist Khalq (or "Masses") party joined to form the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (or "PDPA") in 1977. Nur Mohammed Taraki was elected president of the Revolutionary Council, prime minister of the country, and secretary general of the combined PDPA. Babrak Karmal, a Parcham leader, and Hafizullah Amin were elected deputy prime ministers. The leaders of the new government insisted that they were not controlled by the Soviet Union and proclaimed their policies to be based on Afghan nationalism, Islamic principles, socioeconomic justice, nonalignment in foreign affairs, and respect for all agreements and treaties signed by previous Afghan governments. Any unity of purpose between the Parcham and Khalq factions rapidly faded as Khalq grew to dominate policy, primarily due to their power base among the Afghan army officer corps. Karmal and other Parcham leaders were sent abroad on various missions. In their absence there was a systematic purge of Parcham members or other dangerous types who might oppose the new regime. Taraki announced reform programs, including the elimination of usury, equal rights for women, land reform, and administrative decrees in classic Marxist-Leninist language. The people in the countryside, familiar with Soviet radio propaganda, weren't buying it. They assumed the Khalq was Communist and pro-Soviet. The reform program undermined basic Afghan cultural beliefs. Khalq political repression antagonized large segments of the population. The pot boiled!

The uprising in Nurestan late in the summer of 1978 was the event that blew the lid off! This and other revolts, largely uncoordinated, spread throughout the provinces, and periodic explosions rocked Kabul and other major cities. On February 14th, 1979, the US ambassador was killed. US assistance ended. Hafizullah Amin became prime minister on March 28, 1979, although Taraki retained his posts as president of the Revolutionary Council and secretary general of the PDPA. The expanding revolt in the countryside continued and the Afghan Army collapsed. The Amin regime sent for the Soviets.

Taraki was killed in a confrontation between Taraki and Amin supporters on September 14th, 1979. Amin then tried to broaden his internal base of support and to convince Pakistan and the United States that he could be trusted. The Soviets got wind of this and were determined not to lose control of their new "satellite". On the night of December 24th, 1979, they began their invasion. Amin and many of his followers were dead by December 27th. Babrak Karmal returned to Afghanistan from the Soviet Union and became prime minister, president of the Revolutionary Council, and secretary general of the PDPA in his turn. Opposition to the Soviets and Karmal spread rapidly. There were bloody confrontations with demonstrators. Resistance escalated everywhere. By early 1980, several regional groups, collectively known as the "Mujehadeen" (from the Farsi word for "warrior"), had presented a united front against government control. Throughout Afghanistan and in neighboring Peshawar they resisted the Soviet invaders and the Soviet-backed Afghan Army.

In the best tradition of the "Great Game" as played in "High Asia" friction between Khalq and Parcham factions grew as, in 1980, Karmal removed Assadullah Sarwari as a Khalq party member and first deputy prime minister. His replacement was Sultan Ali Keshtmand, a Parcham man. In June of 1981, Karmal retained his other offices, but resigned as prime minister and was succeeded by Keshtmand. On May 4th, 1986, Mohammed Najibullah, former head of the secret police, replaced Karmal as secretary general and by November Karmal was out! A unilateral cease-fire beginning on January 15th, 1987 met with little response inside Afghanistan and was rejected by resistance leaders in Pakistan.

By November 1987 the handwriting was on the wall. A new constitution changed the name of the country back to the Republic of Afghanistan and allowed other political parties to participate in the government. Najibullah was elected to the newly strengthened post of president. There was no effect on the war. There were effects on neighboring countries. Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran numbered in the millions. Morale and cohesion in the Afghan military was bottoming out. Men were drafted only to desert at the earliest opportunity. The Afghan military shrank from over 100,000 men in 1978 to about 25,000 by 1987. The effect on the Soviets was remarkable. They began developing innovative tactics involving "Spetsnaz" commandos and lightning ambushes, which the equally resourceful Afghans countered with stealth and courage. The tide seemed to slowly turn against the Afghans, however, as Soviet air-mobile operations and heavy bombing took their toll. Mujehadeen fighters controlled less and less of the country and it looked as if their campaign of resistance had failed. It is important that you should understand that the Afghan resistance effort came very close to collapse about this time. They were isolated and their organization was fragmented. They suffered from hunger and disease and were short of even the most basic supplies.

"Guerrilla" type forces seldom, if ever, win wars; but that their opponents often lose them. The turning point comes when some outside power intervenes. In Afghanistan, this turning point was the application of the "Reagan Doctrine", which offered support to any anti-Communist or anti-Soviet movement. Sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons and all sorts of other aid began coming in through the long border with friendly Pakistan toward the end of 1986, particularly from the United States, the United Kingdom, and China. The most important of these were shoulder-fired ground-to-air missiles (The "Blowpipe" and the lethal "Stinger"). Soviet and Afghan air forces began to suffer considerable casualties at this point. Minimum operational altitudes were established for Soviet aircraft. Soviet pilots began to complain that they could not use their bombs effectively from such altitudes. Targets could not be identified and bombs were dropped uselessly, or worse, on "friendly" villages. Helicopters were forbidden to fly in certain areas altogether! The Mujehadeen began to feel that the war could be won. Soviet morale plummeted.

During the 1980s talks had begun between the foreign ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations, the primary stumbling blocks being the timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the cessation of arms supplies to the Mujehadeen. Peace accords were signed in April 1988. The last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan on February 15th, 1989. The civil war continued, however, as the Najibullah government failed to collapse. The Mujehadeen formed an interim government in Pakistan and fought on. Najibullah was finally ousted from power in 1992, and a coalition of rebel forces set up a fragile interim government. Rival militias vied for influence (as always), interethnic tensions flared, and the economy descended into chaos. In the face of abject poverty, disease, and hopelessness, Afghanistan turned toward Islam. The interim government banned the sale of alcohol. They pressured women to cover their heads in public and adopt traditional Muslim dress.

By 1997, Afghanistan had two de facto governments. The most powerful was the "Taliban" government, recognized by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, ruled about two thirds of the country, including Kabul. The Taliban (Farsi for "students") had first appeared in Afghanistan in late 1994 as young fighters from religious schools in Pakistan. It is important to note here that the Taliban and the Al Qaeda are not primarily Afghan movements. Both of these groups are generally referred to by native

Afghans as "The Arabs" and large numbers of them come from places like Chechnya, Pakistan, and especially Saudi Arabia. Their announced goal was to replace all law in Afghanistan with Islamic law. They had a great deal of popular support among a people fed up with endless political infighting. Within two years Kabul had fallen to them with little armed resistance. Taliban interpretation of Islamic law called for public flogging and stoning to enforce a rigid code of behavior. Many activities by women, including going to school, earning a living, getting decent medical treatment, or appearing in public unaccompanied by a male relative were forbidden. Girls could be forced into marriage as young nine years of age! Music (all music) was banned. Books other than the Koran were strictly censored. (You get the picture.) The Taliban acknowledged as its leader Mohammed Omar Akhund ("Akhund" indicates "holy man"), who was honored with an ancient Islamic title, "commander of the faithful." Their government, however, had been put together in Kandahar under the direction of an interim council, headed by Mullah Mohammed Rabbani, who could thus be considered the true head of government.

An "opposition" government under Burhanuddin Rabbani controlled the north of the country. It was this "Northern Alliance" whose representative occupied Afghanistan's UN seat. The Organization of the Islamic Conference declared Afghanistan's seat vacant. In May a dispute within the opposition opened Mazar-e Sharif, their biggest stronghold, to Taliban forces. The last major center of resistance to Taliban rule had been taken, and Pakistan became the first country to recognize them. Within a few days, Pahlawan, the general who betrayed Mazar-e Sharif, changed sides again. The Taliban were driven out of Mazar-e Sharif in a bloody battle in which several thousand of them were made prisoner. (The "Great Game" continues unabated!) In July, a new anti-Taliban government with its capital in Mazar-e Sharif was announced. In fact, this government was little more than a cover for a "Northern Alliance" determined to retake Kabul. Several bloody but inconclusive offensives by various factions followed. The situation at the end of the year was much as it had been in the beginning. Afghanistan was divided along ethnic lines--the Pashtun south and east under the Taliban and the Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, and Hazara areas in the north.

Since September 11th, 2001 everything has changed but, somehow, it all remains the same.

Note: as to "His Excellency, the Exalted Sheik Osama bin Laden", his importance as a hero/freedom fighter has been severely reduced since he no longer has the ability to "Pick up the check", and relieve various hate groups from the necessity of working for a living. Once his comrades discover the gravy-train is out of business, he can be expected to obligingly allow them to make a "martyr" of him for the "Cause", thus extending his usefulness.

FOREIGN WEAPONS

FIM92A "Stinger" - US; "Blowpipe" - UK; All other foreign weapons - RU

TABLES OF ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

AFGHAN GOVERNMENT FORCES: 1980+

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 50, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 20%

Infantry Company:	3xTL3 Infantry(C)
Motorized Infantry Company:	3xTL3 Infantry(C)/Truck
Mechanized Infantry Company:	3xTL3 Infantry(B)/BTR-60PB
Tank Company:	3x(T-55 <u>or</u> T-62)
Infantry Battalion:	1xTL3 Infantry (B) HQ/Truck, 3xInfantry Company, 1xAT-3 ATGM(MP), 1x82mm M37(3)/Truck
Motorized Infantry Battalion:	1xTL3 Infantry (B) HQ/Truck, 3xMotorized Infantry Company, 1xAT-3 ATGM(MP), 1x82mm M37(3)/Truck
Mechanized Infantry Battalion:	1xTL3 Infantry (B) HQ/Truck, 3xMechanized Infantry Company, 1xAT-3 ATGM(MP), 1x82mm M37(3)/Truck
Tank Battalion:	3xTank Company
Mortar Battalion:	1-3x82mm M37 Mortar(3)/Truck
Artillery Battalion:	1x76mm M42(3)/Truck, 1x122mm D30(3)/Truck, 1xBM21(8)
Infantry Brigade:	1xTL3 Infantry (C) GHQ/Truck, 2xInfantry Battalion, 1xArmored Infantry Battalion, 1xArtillery Battalion, 1xArmored Recon Company, 1xTL3 Engineer/Truck, 1xBRDM-2/AT-3, 1x23mm ZPU23/2(SP), 2x(T-54 <u>or</u> SU-100)
Mechanized Brigade:	1xTL3 Infantry (C) GHQ/BTR-60, 1xTank Battalion, 3xMechanized Infantry Battalion, 1xArmored Recon Co, 1xTL3 Engineer/Truck, 1xZSU-23/4, 1xMechanized Artillery Battalion

Notes: All other Afghan TO&E's are identical to Russian types of the same time period with generally second-line equipment.

"MUJAHIDEEN" FORCES: 1985-1991

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 00, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 15%

Guerrilla Infantry "Company":	1-6xTL2 Infantry(C)
Militia Infantry Company:	1-3xTL3 Infantry(C)
Regular Infantry Company:	3xTL3 Infantry(C), 1xTL3 Support Stand, 1x120mm M1943 Mortar(3)/Truck, 1xFIM92A "Stinger"
Special Forces Company:	2xTL3 Infantry (S)
Support Company:	1x82mm M37 Mortar(2), 1xTL3 Infantry Support/Cart, 1xType 63 MRL(3)/Truck, 1xAGS-17
Militia Infantry Battalion:	1xTL3 Infantry(C) HQ, 2-3 Militia Company, 1xTL3 Infantry Support, 1x82mm M37 Mortar(2)
Regular Infantry Battalion:	1xTL3 Infantry(C) HQ, 3xInfantry Company, 1xSupport Company
Available Support Units:	(One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)
Light Artillery Battery:	1x76mm M42(1) <u>or</u> 76mm M42(2)
Heavy Artillery Battery:	1x122mm D30(1) <u>or</u> 122mm D30(2) <u>or</u> 122mm D30(3)

Anti-Tank Battery: 1x100mm M44 ATG
 Tank Platoon: 1xT-54 or T-55 or T-62 or BMP-1
 Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1xHeavy AAMG or 14.5mm ZPU-4 Note: These would be in static positions
 (Tribal) Brigade: 2-6 "Militia" or "Regular" Infantry Battalion, Various Available Brigade Support

Notes: 1) One Battalion per brigade may be equipped with "Toyota" pickup trucks or various commandeered civilian/military transport.
 2) Special "Tank Killer" platoons may be formed. These receive a minus two (-2) modifier when assaulting enemy armor.
 3) One man-packed "Stinger" or "Blowpipe" AAGM may be attached to each "Militia" or "Guerrilla" company after 1986.

"TALIBAN/AL QAEDA" Forces: 2001

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 00, Class: Conscripts, Base Determination Factor: 25%

Militia Infantry Company: 1-3xTL3 Infantry(C)
 Regular Infantry Company: 1-5xTL3 Infantry(C), 1xTL3 Support Stand, 1x120mm M43 Mortar(3)/Truck, 1xFIM92A "Stinger"
 Support Company: 1xT-34/85 or T-55, 1xType 63 MRL(3)/Truck

"Taliban" Infantry Battalion: 1xTL3 Infantry(C) HQ, 2-3 Militia Infantry Company, 1x120mm M43 Mortar(2)
 "Al Qaeda" Infantry Battalion: 1xTL3 Infantry(C) HQ/Truck, 3xInfantry Company, 1xSupport Company

Available Support Units: (One or more of these units, or parts thereof, may appear in a particular action at your discretion.)
 Artillery Battery: 1x122mm D30(1) or 122mm D30(2) or 122mm D30(3) or 1xType 63 MRL(3)
 Anti-Tank Battery: 1x100mm M44 ATG
 Tank Platoon: 1xT-54 or T-55 or T-62 or BMP-1 or BMP-2
 Anti-Aircraft Battery: 1xHeavy AAMG or 14.5mm ZPU-4

Notes: 1) Various kinds of transport vehicles may be provided. However, the "Toyota 4x4" pickup is still the vehicle of choice.
 2) Any serious organization of Afghan forces is impossible due to the nature of the present conflict. Any conceivable combination of the weapons listed in the 2001 arsenal above may be allowed.

TACTICAL NOTES: 1980-2002

The Afghan army of the Civil War period is equipped and trained on the Soviet model. The stress is on firepower and mobility. Winning tactics call for you to draw your opponent out into the open. Failing that, you must concentrate your fire and destroy him in detail. Halfway measures are simply not in the Soviet "style". Go after the "Mujies" anti-aircraft weapons whenever you encounter them. Then close with helicopters. The organization and tactics of the government's "allies", the Soviet/Russian forces sent to Afghanistan, are detailed in their own chapter of the TO&E section. The same is true for the U.S. forces currently engaged in Afghanistan

As a Mujehadeen player, you must husband your firepower carefully. You must make use of every piece of covering terrain. When buying forces, go for quality over quantity. "Guerrilla" forces cannot survive without aggressive initiative and high cohesion. You must always play for time. You will seldom be the attacker, so the onus of victory is on your opponent. Make him pay for it.

After 1986 things change dramatically. "Cohesion" should rise considerably and more and more "Captured" support units begin to appear. Your, largely Soviet, opponent will depend more and more on helicopter operations to root you out. The "Stinger" is your best friend! The same advice applies for players fielding Taliban forces as to early Mujehadeen. The U.S. has all the firepower in the world and satellite linkups to direct that power. Your duty is to hold out. Make use of cover and fortification and make sure your positions can cover each other. It's more effective to field a small, high cohesion force, than to provide your opponent with simply more cannon fodder.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Afghanistan is currently in the midst of a "guerrilla" type Civil War. The situation is extremely fluid. U.S. and Allied forces have enjoyed considerable initial success and seem to have driven the Taliban into small, isolated mountain and desert hideouts. But the Taliban cannot be counted out. Not yet! Reports from Afghanistan reveal a tough, resourceful, and fanatically determined enemy. He is an expert marksman with both small arms and anti-tank weapons. He makes skillful use of mortars and rocket launchers and has scored quite a few hits on attackers' vitally important helicopters. Finally, he is inured to all the considerable hardships of the Afghan environment, highly motivated, and capable of considerable stealth and innovation. Having failed in open warfare, he has retired to deep and sophisticated mountain cave complexes. Since American weapons and tactics proved these to be ineffective as well, he has reverted to his old tactics from the war with the Soviets. Small unit actions and ambushes with the aim of luring U.S. helicopters into range of his anti-aircraft weapons have become the rule. I believe he is counting on a perceived moral weakness on the part of the U.S. and its allies. He is prepared for a long war, perhaps even generations of war. Only time will tell if he can maintain his resistance in the face of both overwhelming military power and an almost complete isolation from outside assistance. There is no longer any clearly defined organization or TO&E for the Taliban forces and they may be armed with anything from the arsenal below.

2002 AFGHAN ARSENAL

Vehicles: 90xT-55, 20xT-62, 20xT-72, 10xPT-76, 40xBRD-M2, 50xBMP-1, 100xBMP-2, 90xBTR-60, 40xBTR-152, 15xT-34/85 (Static)
 AT Weapons: 200x107mm B-11, 200x82mm B-10
 Artillery: 12x240mm BM24, 50x122mm BM-21, 40x120mm M43 Mortar, 250x82mm M43 Mortar, 250xOther Guns (130mm M46, 122mm D30, 100mm SU-100, 85mm D44, or 76mm M1942)
 Anti-Aircraft: Numerous AAGM (SA-7, SA-14, or SA-16), 70x57mm S-60, 200x37mm M1939, 24xZSU-23/4, 150xZPU-23/2, 400xZPU AAMG's
 Combat Aircraft: 16xMi-24, 25xMi-8/Mi-17

Small arms: Any combination of Soviet and Western weapons from the past fifty years may be encountered.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Defense Ministry - Tel: 25714 (operator assistance required), Army HQ - Tel: 27515 (operator assistance required)