Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) Reach Back Effort in Support of USCENTCOM

Afghanistan Study – Phase II Findings

15 February 2019

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Iran

- US as exiting occupier struggling to come to terms with the Taliban having power.
- Afghan government and Taliban must establish workable solution if the US role is to be diminished.
- Iran attempting to augment their influence in Afghanistan, not to stabilize Afghani government, but serve Iranian interests and anti-US policies.

Russia

- Long term projections see Taliban as controlling all but a handful of large urban cities.
- Afghanistan in constant chaos between US and Taliban.
- Russia offering sensible peace and seeking a multi-polar world order built on compromise and cooperation
- Limited desire in Afghanistan; primarily through ties with Taliban and areas close to Russian borders.

China

- Failing US policies have led to a practical reality of Taliban as defacto ruling power.
- Afghanistan government incapable and reliant on the US.
- Investment in Pakistan and Belt and Road Initiatives may provide external paths to stability, but with little specific mentioning of Chinese investment into Afghanistan.

Key Findings:

- Chinese, Russian, and Iranian interests in Afghanistan based in real politic to augment respective influence.
- US Afghan policy ineffective, historically and under Trump administration; US withdrawal likely.
- No long-term vision of an independent, capable Afghanistan government, or desire to stabilize Afghani government.
- Iran most interested in increasing influence in Afghanistan; limited Chinese and Russian interest

Method

- Analyzed 224 news articles from over 20 Russian, Iranian, and Chinese sources from May-September 2018
- Quantitative and qualitative coding scheme examining strategic narratives

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Key Points

1. Taliban shown as the legitimate power in Afghanistan—demonstrates staying power, resourcefulness, and organizational capacity to contest ISIL, US/NATO forces, and Afghani government for control; necessitates that any resolution to the situation in Afghanistan requires Taliban input.
2. Chinese, Russian, and Iranian interests in Afghanistan concerned with stability and the reduction of terrorism, not with Afghani prosperity or strength.
3. Iranians signaling greatest interest in augmenting political influence and investment in Afghanistan with some calls for a socio-economic path to regional stability.

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RECONCILIATION & REINTEGRATION

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What do we know about reconciliation and reintegration (R&R) in Afghanistan?

*Presence of (R&R) components**

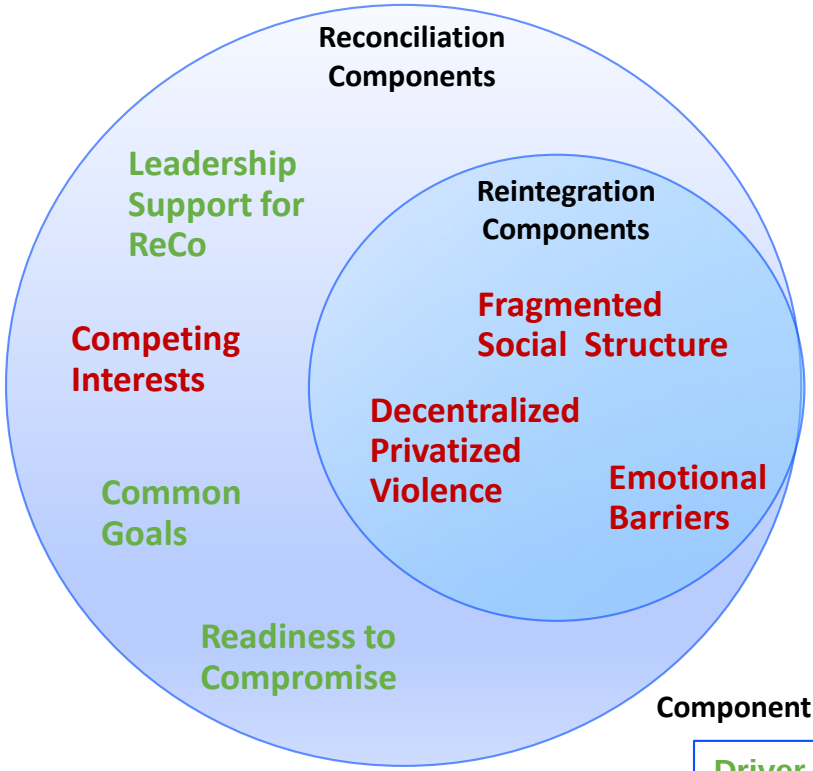
		N. Ireland	Rwanda	Colombia	Pakistan	Afghanistan
Barriers	Reputation of faction during conflict					
	Fragmented social structure					
	Emotional barriers to reconciliation and reintegration					
	Actors with competing interests					
	Decentralization and privatization of violence					
	Crime policy					
	Censorship					
Drivers	Readiness to compromise					
	Common goals among actors					
	Leadership support for reconciliation					
	Societal support (public opinion)					
	Popular support for demobilization					
	Accountability of government institutions, civil organizations, and factions					
	Acknowledgement of suffering and restorative justice					
	Popularly supported grievance, truth-telling; conflict redress procedures					
	Formal processes for institutional diversity and inclusion					
	Economic development and consistent social services					
	Support for leadership					
	Participation in voluntary civic associations & formal political institutions					
	Peaceful and supportive international climate					

Barrier Present
Barrier Absent

Driver Present
Driver Partially Present
Driver Absent
Insufficient Data

* Most critical components highlighted here

Degree of Overlap for Selected Reconciliation & Reintegration Components in Afghanistan



Component Types

Driver

Barrier

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What are USG Capabilities to Mitigate Barriers and Support Drivers to R&R

- Despite a bleak prognosis, the USG is not powerless to influence R&R in Afghanistan

- DIMEFIL framework and doctrinal sources (FM 3-24 COIN, FM 3-05 Civil Affairs, Political-Military Analysis Handbook, JP 3-13 Information Operations) suggest **actions that can mitigate barriers and support drivers**

- Key **partners** would include:
  - Host Nation (HN)
  - Local civil organizations
  - UN peacekeeping forces
  - NATO allies
  - NGOs
  - USG: DoS, USAID, IC, DEA, FBI, DoJ, HHS
    - E.g., Specific offices focusing on CT and social services capacity (DoJ, HHS)
    - E.g., Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (State Dept.), to combat small arms and light weapons trafficking

	Barriers present and drivers absent in Afghanistan	Mitigating Actions
Barriers	Reputation of Faction During Conflict	Information operations that influence a faction's reputation
	Fragmented social structure	Civil affairs, POLMIL, Key leader engagement, hosted negotiations to mitigate fragmentation
	Emotional Barriers to Reconciliation and Reintegration	Civil affairs, Support to grievance and truth-telling commissions
	Actors with Competing Interests	Civil affairs, , Political/Military (POLMIL), Key leader engagement, hosted negotiations to resolve
	Decentralization and privatization of violence	Aid host nation (HN) government (intel, air & ground support, military police, HN forces advising) in combatting armed groups and interdicting arms
Drivers	Societal support (public opinion)	Information operations to influence public support of R&R
	Popular support for demobilization	Information operations to influence public support of demobilization
	Accountability of government institutions, civil organizations and factions	Civil affairs, Political/Military (POLMIL), Support to HN government assessment and anti-corruption programs
	Acknowledgement of suffering and restorative justice	Civil affairs, Support to grievance and truth-telling commissions
	Popularly supported grievance, truth-telling; conflict redress procedures	Civil affairs, Support to grievance and truth-telling commissions
	Formal processes for institutional diversity and inclusion	POLMIL, Diplomatic efforts with HN government
	Economic development and consistent social services	Civil affairs, economic development, support of HN government
	Support for leadership	Civil affairs, POLMIL, Key leader engagement, diplomatic efforts with HN government
	Participation in voluntary civic associations & formal political institutions	Information operations to mobilize public participation, Civil affairs, POLMIL, key leader engagement to foster local leadership
	Peaceful and supportive international climate	POLMIL, Diplomatic efforts to align neighbor an R&R

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What do we know about reconciliation and reintegration (R&R) in Afghanistan and what are the USG capabilities to influence R&R?

Overlap between Reconciliation and Reintegration Components and Presence in Afghanistan

- Examining the two sets of R&R components suggests that **reintegration could be pursued in Afghanistan without undermining or prohibiting reconciliation**
- However… case studies suggest that successful R&R requires **an equal or greater number of drivers than barriers**
- … and there is a striking **absence of critical *drivers*** for R&R in Afghanistan, both overall and compared with four historical cases
- … as well as a similar or greater **number of critical *barriers*** to R&R compared with other cases

USG Capabilities to Mitigate Barriers and Support Drivers to R&R

- Despite a bleak prognosis, the USG is not powerless to influence R&R in Afghanistan
- DIMEFIL framework and doctrinal sources (FM 3-24 COIN, FM 3-05 Civil Affairs, Political-Military Analysis Handbook, JP 3-13 Information Operations) suggest **actions that can mitigate barriers and support drivers**
  - E.g., through information operations, key leader engagement, aiding host nation, etc.

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STABILITY ANALYSIS: GRAY ECONOMY

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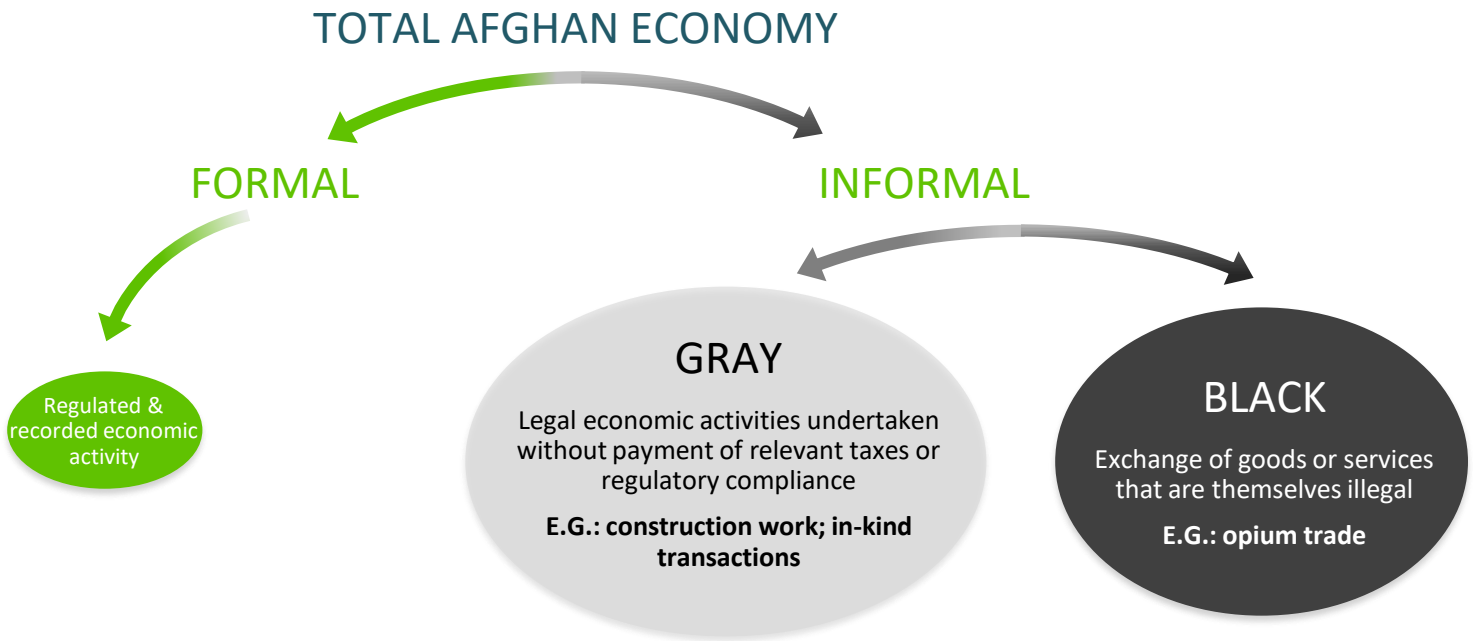
How does the Gray Economy in Afghanistan Influence Stability?

- The gray economy in Afghanistan is estimated to be worth 80-90% GDP, and employ approx. 90% of the population.
- While there has been considerable attention played to the effects of the opium (black) economy on security and governance, the gray economy has received less attention.
- Distinguishing between the grey and black economies is critical understanding their influence on stability, as their relationship to governance and security are structurally different.



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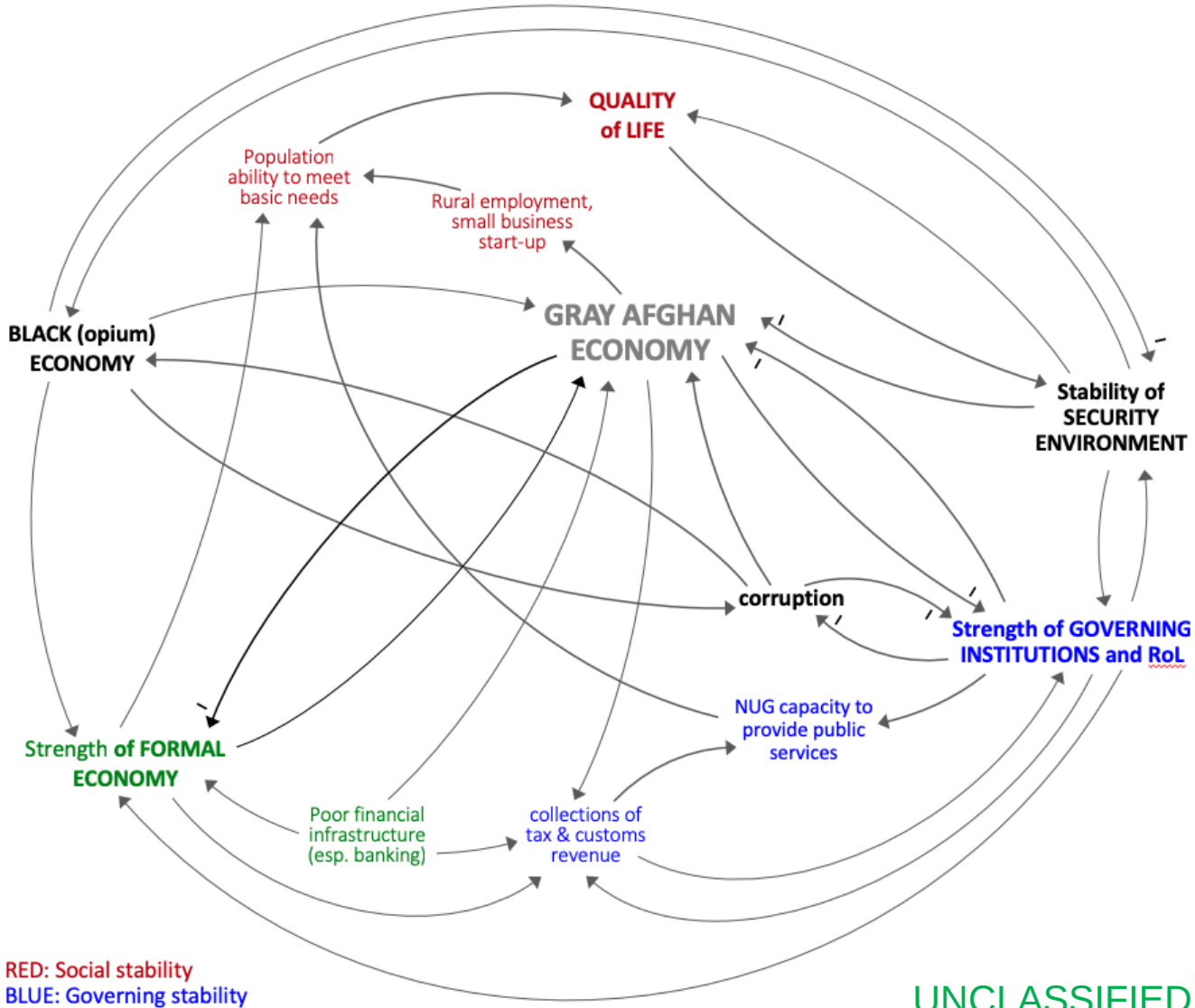
How does the Gray Economy in Afghanistan Influence Stability?

- The majority of the Afghan people are in some way reliant on the gray economy to meet their basic needs.
- To understanding the way in which a strong gray economy effects economic, governing and social stability in Afghanistan we constructed a loop diagram.
- This allows us to identify both the direct and indirect effects the strength of the gray economy has in the short and longer terms.



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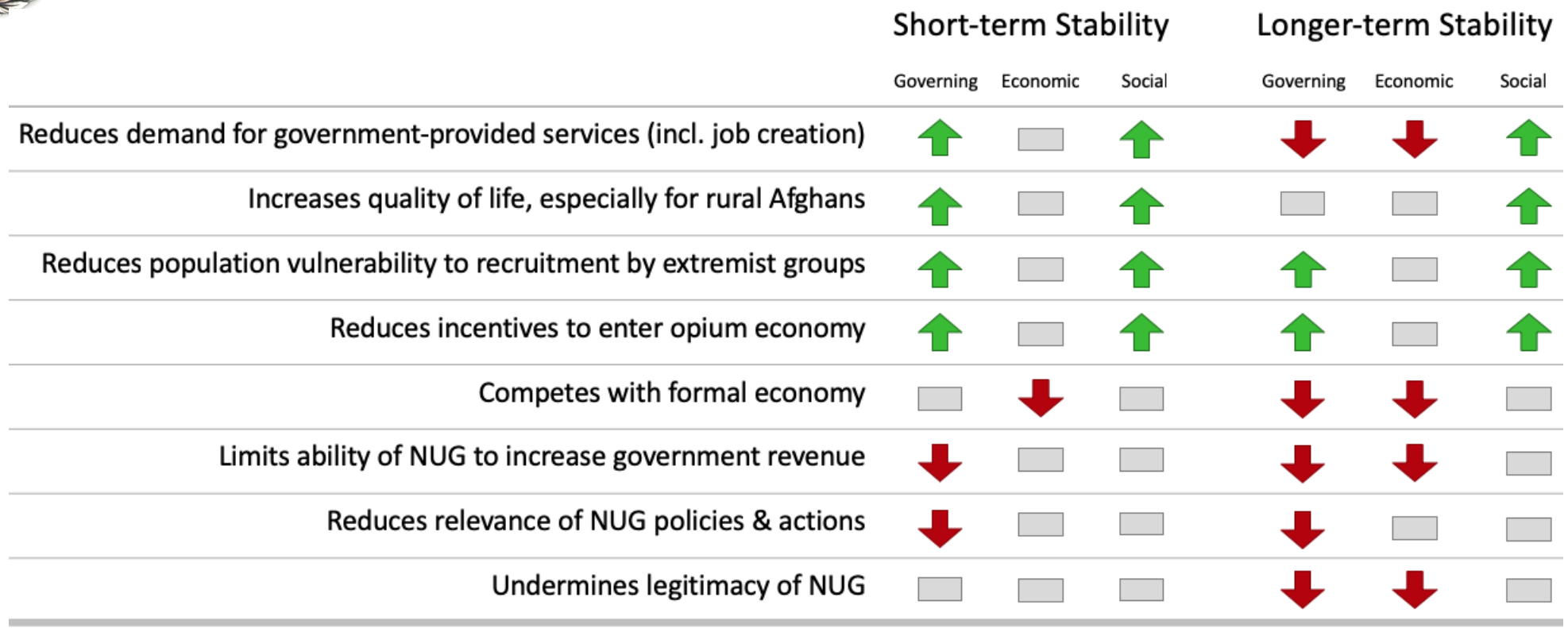
How does the Gray Economy in Afghanistan Influence Stability?



Core dilemma for the NUG: Given their poor history of governance and economic management and policy in Afghanistan, how can they convince the Afghan people to change their business practices to make them more accountable to government regulation, and subsequently more vulnerable to government policies?
Especially when Afghans have a longstanding, well-entrenched and effective alternative in the current grey economy.

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AFGHANISTAN INTEREST-RESOLVE-CAPABILITY ANALYSIS

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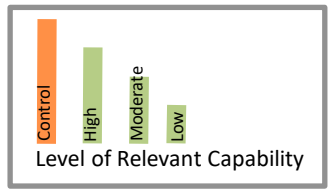
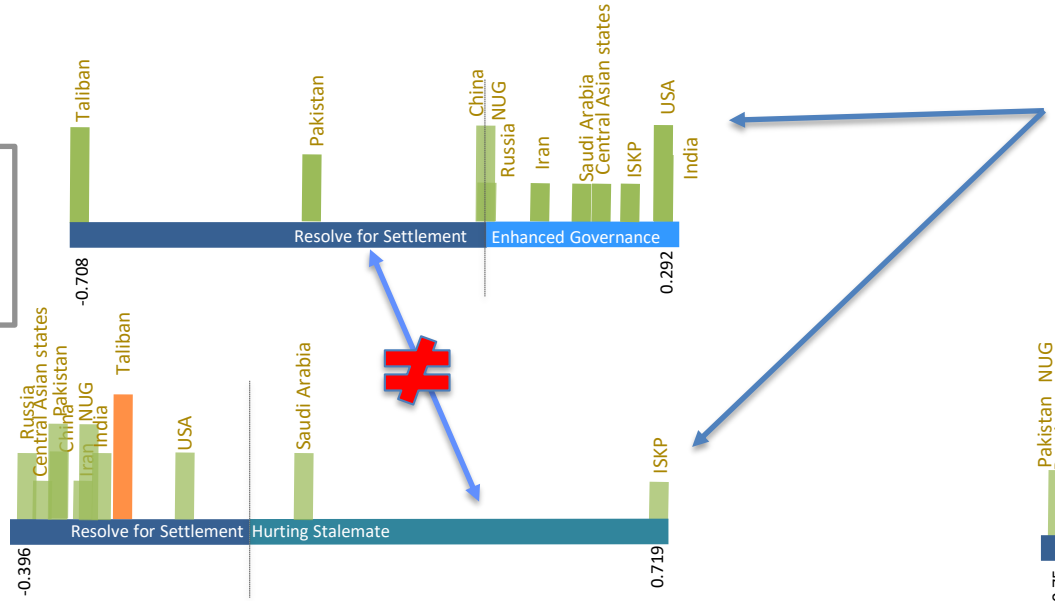
When the Perfect is the Enemy of the Good: Enhanced Governance vs. Brokered Settlement



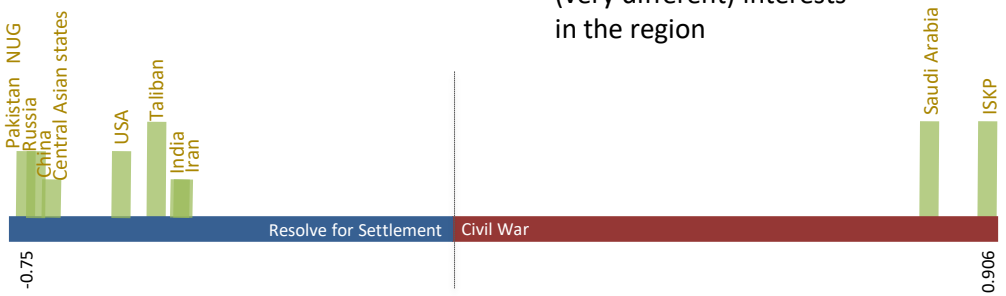
INDIFFERENT BETWEEN OUTCOMES

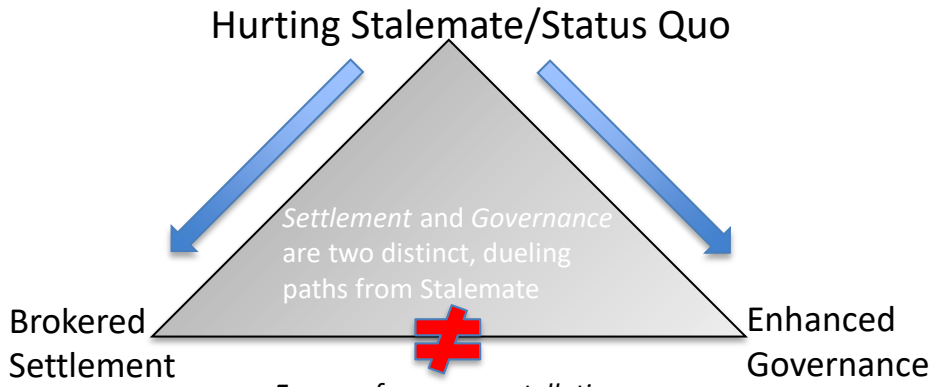


Divisions among key actors about the "best" post-conflict Afghanistan – *Enhanced Governance* vs *Brokered Settlement*– and competition over influence in post-conflict have lengthened a protracted *Stalemate*

KSA and ISKP aren't like the other actors in the model: They are Spoilers, preferred *Civil War* to *Brokered Settlement*, and see a weaker, divided Afghanistan as a means to securing their own (very different) interests in the region

Spoilers





Four *preference constellations prevent strong resolve for Brokered Settlement*

	Central Asia	India	US	Iran	Pakistan	NUG	Russia	China	Taliban	ISKP	KSA
Brokered Settlement											
Enhanced Governance											
Hurting Stalemate / Status Quo											
Withdrawal											
Civil War											

Legend
- Best Outcome
- Second Best
- Third Best
- Fourth Best
- Worst Outcome

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When the Perfect is the Enemy of the Good: Enhanced Governance vs. Brokered Settlement

NSI's IRC Analysis

- Team examined the interests (I), resolve (R), and capabilities (C) of relevant actors in Afghanistan.
- Looked at actor preferences for five different outcomes for Afghanistan:
  1. *Brokered Settlement*
  2. *Enhanced Governance* by the NUG
  3. *Continuation of the Status Quo/Hurting Stalemate*
  4. *Precipitous US withdrawal followed by Taliban consolidation of power*
  5. *Civil War*

Findings

- How can we move from current status quo?
  - Lack of consensus between actors who prefer **enhanced local governance** and those who prefer a **brokered settlement**
- Notable resolve *and* capability among those who prefer a settlement to local governance
- Analysis also reveals two significant **spoilers**
  - ISKP and Saudi Arabia
- **Four constellations** of actors with different preferences
  - Their collective capabilities and resolve against a settlement make such an outcome difficult to achieve
- Even by adjusting resolve scores, and re-prioritizing interests, it is challenging to find a path from *Stalemate*

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IMRAN KHAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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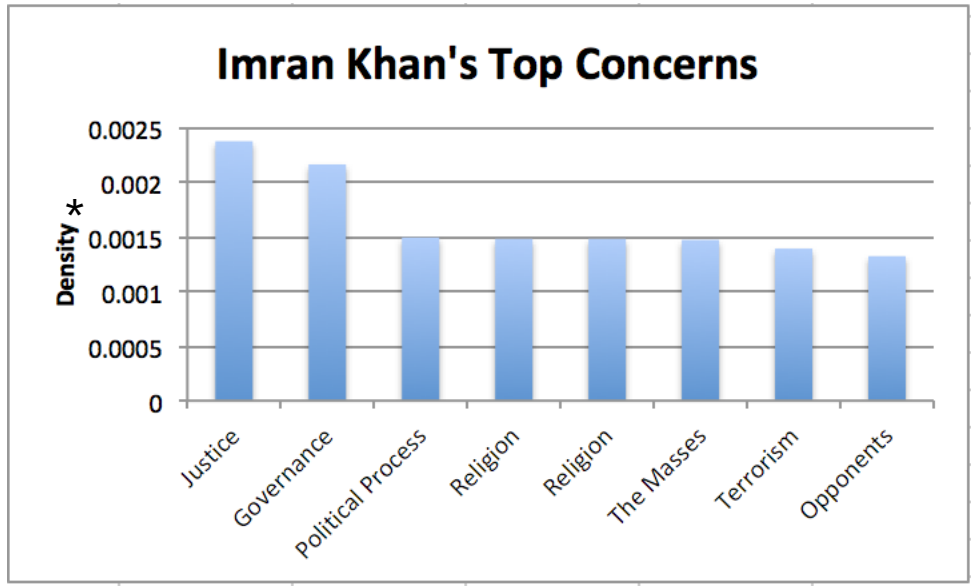
Profiling Imran Khan: Quantitative Discourse & LIWC Analysis

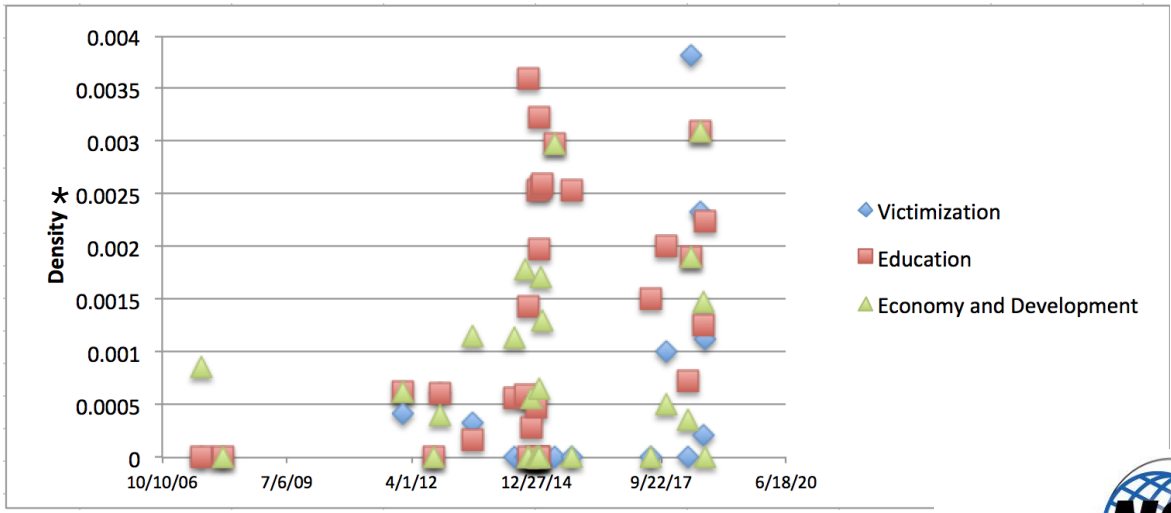
- **Question**: How can we increase the resolve and capability of Pakistan to support political reconciliation in Afghanistan and the region?
- Analyzed 30 Imran Khan speeches and interviews 2007-2018

1. What are his main concerns?
   - He is primarily a political animal:
     - **Most of his expressed concerns are with the political process**, the courts, and his opponents.
     - He appeals to the **masses** and to **religion**, but does not invoke his own adopted Sufi beliefs
     - His **primary national security** concern has been **terror attacks** within Pakistan, his secondary concerns include building good relations with regional neighbors and the US
2. Is his emphasis changing?
   - Primary changes are an increased emphasis on **victimization of Pakistan by corrupt officials**, **education** and the **economy**

- **Implications**
  - Imran Khan is **politically pragmatic**, employing religion, populism and anti-terrorism when advantageous
    - He can be expected to support Afghan reconciliation **only if advantageous to his own political career**
    - **Leverage Points**:
      - Control terror attacks within Pakistan
      - Support education and economic development
  - Imran Khan **has made a few claims in support of reconciliation in Afghanistan** and recently claims to want to facilitate



*Density is a measure of relative importance



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Profiling Imran Khan: Textual Analysis

- Question: How to increase the resolve and capability of Pakistan to support political reconciliation in Afghanistan and the region?
- Quantitative Discourse Analysis and Linguistic Inventory and Word Count (LIWC) Analysis of 30 speeches (2007-2018)

Main Findings

- Imran Khan public discourse very consistent with PTI platform
  - Anti-corruption, Pakistani sovereignty and self-determination/self-reliance, Welfare state economy and social services, Islamic values, Religious Tolerance, Education
- Other Concerns
  - Domestic terrorism, building relations with neighbors *including* India
  - Wants to aid Afghan reconciliation
- Recent increased emphasis on:
  - Economy
  - Education
  - Victimization of Pakistan through corruption

Implications

- Anti-corruption and India & Afghan policies run counter to political establishment and military – these are his political liabilities
- Supporting his agenda contra his rivals' agendas may be best way to win his support for Afghan reconciliation
- His emphasis on economic development and education may be two leverage points the US can aid
- However, he claims to want good relations with US, but is wary of foreign domination

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BACK UP SLIDES

Q1

ELEMENTAL STEPS FOR POST-NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AFGHANISTAN

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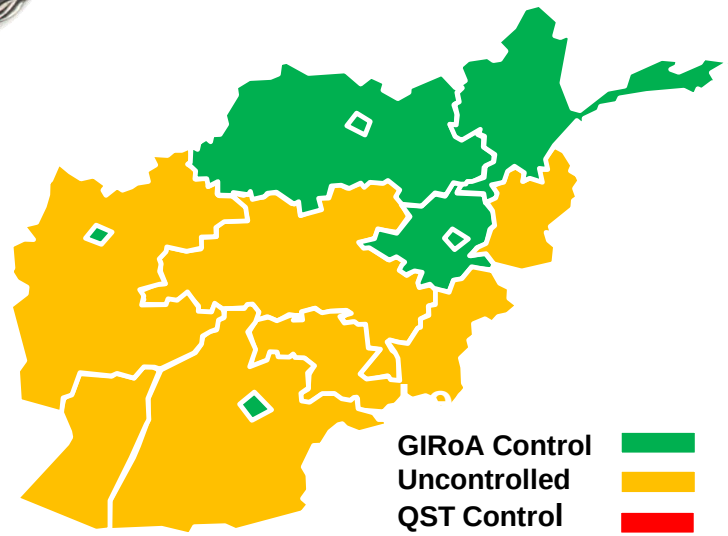
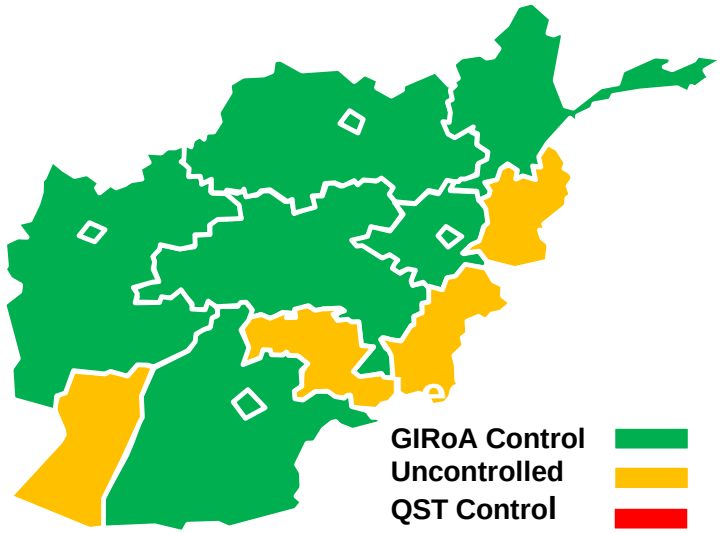
How do different elemental steps influence a post-negotiated settlement Afghanistan?

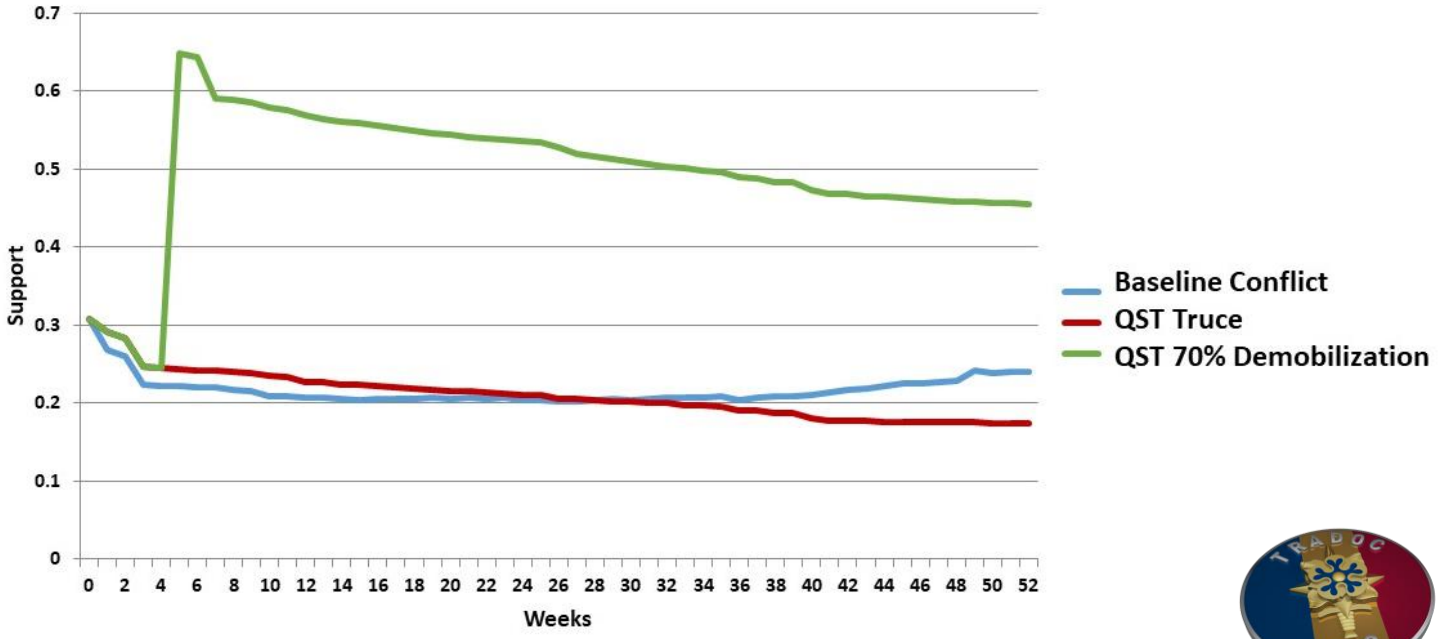


GIRoA control post Truce



GIRoA control post partial QST demob

TRADOC G27 assessed the effects of a GIRoA/QST truce, power-sharing government and reintegration of QST fighters into the ANSF on GIRoA control and popular support. Of all the variables assessed QST fighter demobilization resulted in the greatest improvement of GIRoA control and increase in GIRoA popular support.



Afghan Population support for GIRoA

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How do different elemental steps influence a post-negotiated settlement Afghanistan?

TRADOC G27 assessed the effects of a GIRoA/QST truce, power-sharing government and integration of QST fighters into the ANSF on GIRoA control and popular support

- Truce: While a logical prerequisite for any negotiated settlement, a truce without full or substantial (70%) QST fighter demobilization did not substantially increase GIRoA control or support
- Power sharing: Both power sharing at the ministerial level and through a decentralized government only marginally increased GIRoA control and popular support, compared to a truce with substantial QST fighter demobilization
- Reintegration: Irrespective of how QST fighters integrated into the ANSF (both number and ANSF organization), it did not substantially effect GIRoA control or popular support

QST fighter demobilization resulted in the greatest improvement of GIRoA control and increase in GIRoA popular support of all the variables we assessed

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VEO LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

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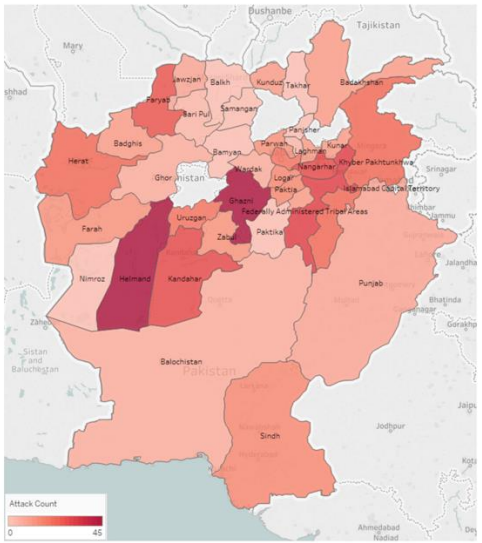
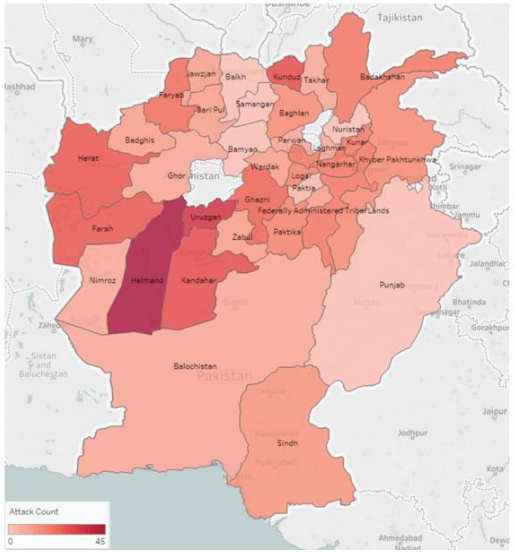
What Are Drivers and Barriers to Stability in Afghanistan?

March '14 - June '14		April '15 - June '15
Fractionalization	Organization Structure	Consolidation
Target Diversity, Bombings	Instability Tactics	Target Coherence, Firearms





AFPAK Violent Extremist Organizations Causing Most Instability over Past Decade (2007-2017)

ID	VEO Name	# of Attacks
1	Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)	21
2	Halqa-e-Mehsud (HeM)	30
3	Haqqani Network	97
4	Hizb-I-Islami	44
5	Jaish-e-Islam (Jaish-ul-Islam)	25
6	Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	19
7	Jundalluh Group (Pakistan)	32
8	Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State (IS-K)	387
9	Lashkar-e-Islam (LeI)	132
10	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)	164
11	Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	16
12	Mujahideen Ansar/Ansarul Majahideen	19
13	Taliban	7099
14	Tehrik-e-Khilafat (TeK)	16
15	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	1397

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What Are Drivers and Barriers to Stability in Afghanistan?

Leadership and Organizational Structure Changes in the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban Precede Periods of Instability.

- In 2014, coinciding with a troop withdrawal and absence of a “formidable outgroup” to Afghan Taliban, you see weak leadership and splintering/fractionalization into smaller, less coherent VEOs
- In 2015, coinciding with the emergence of a formidable outgroup (IS-K), you see S. Haqqani taking on a more significant role in leadership and consolidation into a larger, more strategic Taliban
- The leadership team that exists in the present (2018) Afghan Taliban has resulted in greater potential for continued instability and reduced the likelihood of reconciliation.

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NEGOTIATION OUTCOMES & STABILITY: PRELIMINARY REM RESULTS

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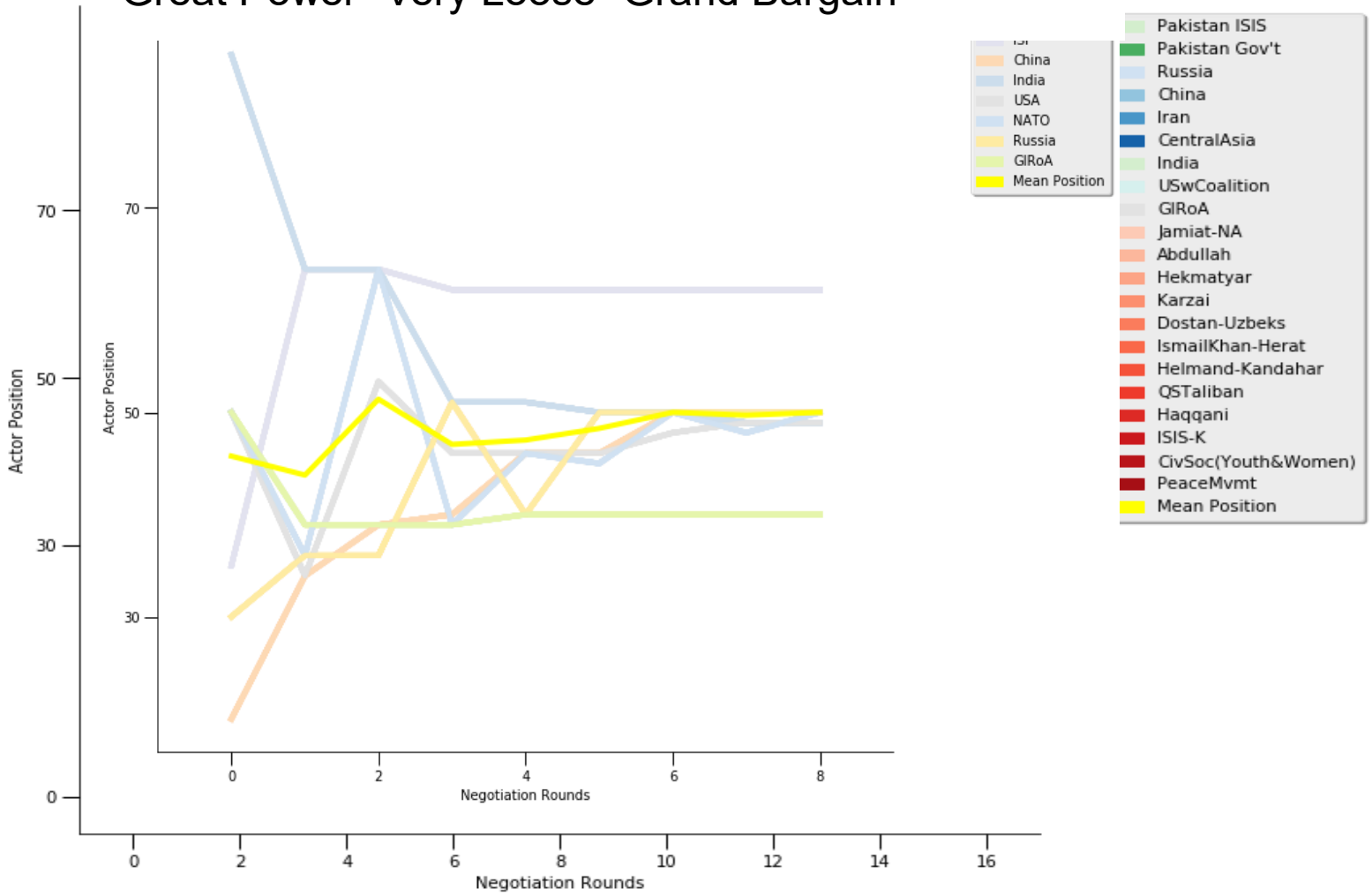
Who's In, Who's Out: Negotiation Outcomes and Stability

Q3

"Bottom-up, Top-down Consensus""

"Great Power "Very Loose" Grand Bargain"



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As of: 1-Oct-18

What do we know about reconciliation and reintegration (R&R) in Afghanistan?

"Great Power" ZOPA and Stability

- Multiple expert views were explored. There is little consensus, resulting in widely divergent potential outcomes: depending on expert view at the "Great Power" level; various outcomes were possible:
  - A "GIROA left out in the cold" endstate, where great powers agree to a very weak central government with locally dominated regions
  - An "Isolated Pakistan" outcome where external powers and GIRoA agree to a relatively strong state but with substantial local autonomy
  - If GIRoA is open to substantial decentralization at the start of bargaining, a very weak coalition (therefore potentially unstable) around a strongly decentralized state is possible.

"Bottom Up" and "Top Down" ZOPA & Stability

- Model runs using expert input with higher granularity at local level highlighted greater potential for stable solution in the area of a weaker central government with strong local autonomy.

Next Steps

- Further study with Bargaining and Negotiation Model, including study of post-settlement stability depending on degree of independent security guarantees by parties.
- Exploration of same questions using identity dynamics and competitive governance models

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TIMED INFLUENCE NET MODELING

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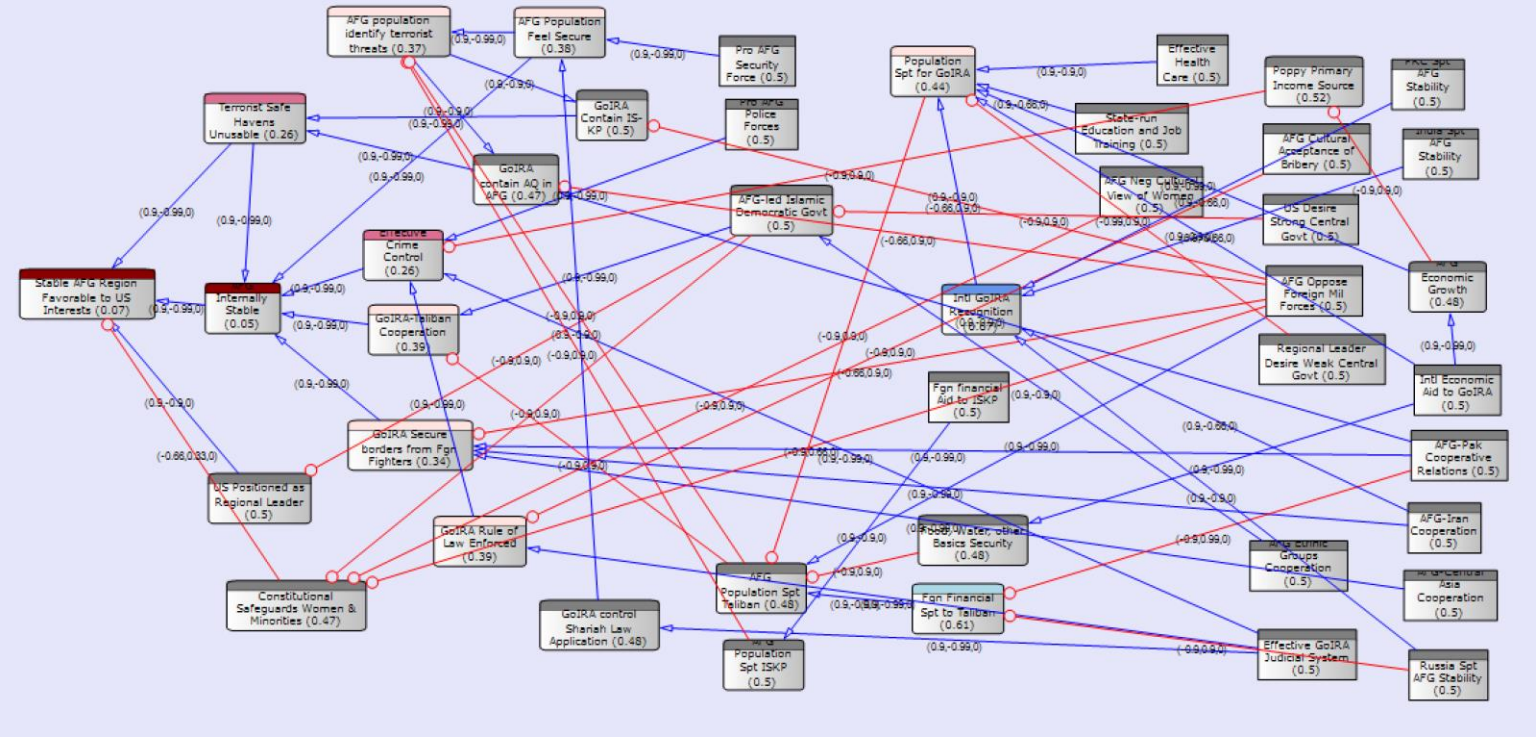
Timed Influence Net Model Causal Factor Analysis

Q3

Initial insights from TIN model construction



AFG perceives USG leadership as occupation

AFG perceives safeguard programs as cultural attacks

Presence of foreign fighters undermine GIRoA credibility

Regional opposition groups jealous of Taliban negotiations

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Insights from GMU Timed Influence Net Modeling

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- The Timed Influence Net Model starts with the desired end-state(s) and examines influence factors that contribute or undermine their attainment—in this case political reconciliation in Afghanistan, prevention of extremist safe havens, and a stable situation in Afghanistan
- Challenges finding an effective TIN model solution may offer real-world insights:
  - US objective to be positioned as a regional leader in South Asia conflicts with Afghanistan goal to eliminate foreign influence in the country
  - Women and minority safeguards implemented through equal opportunity programs may be perceived as US effort to undermine Afghan culture (Taliban definitely portrays it that way)
  - AFG security forces inability to prevent access from foreign fighters provide an external source of instability which undermine GIRoA credibility
  - Opposition groups other than Taliban which are not involved in reconciliation talks are likely to oppose agreements negotiated with GIRoA and undermine long-term stability

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PREVENTIVE DEFENSE FACILITATED BY TRACK 2 PROCESS & CLIMATE FINANCE

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Preventive Defense Facilitated By Track 2 Process & Climate Finance

Track 2 process & funding via Climate Finance:

- Global Climate Finance now over $350 billion per year and growing
- Track 2 Process can help create agreement on:
  - # of jobs needed after cease-fire
  - Expected Climate Change impact on Afghanistan
  - # of jobs Climate Finance can fund
- Use Climate Finance to help fund sustainable peace

Crisis management situation that requires immediate attention:

- Massive fraud expected in next Afghan Presidential election
- If fraud is not prevented, expect considerable violence and instability
- Shovel-ready biometric solution available to prevent most fraud
- Cost of doing nothing far greater than implementing solution
- Biometric solution would build mutual trust that fosters political reconciliation

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