

Significant Cases of Global Arms Trade

Afghanistan

Key Data:

Years: 1978-2020

Involved Countries: Afghanistan; Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Brazil; Canada; China; Czechia; India; Italy; Norway; Russia (additional frmr. USSR); Slovakia; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom; United States; unknown origine (probably UAE)

Weapon Systems:

Arms Producers: numerous eastern and western

Perpetrators/Involved Parties: Iran; Iraq;

Victims/Affected: Estimates of total casualties range from 1,000,000 to twice that number.

It is clear that Afghanistan has received arms and military equipment from a variety of sources over the years. The United States was the largest major arms supplier to Afghanistan in every consecutive five-year period after 2001-2005, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The US also gave a total of \$18.6 billion of equipment to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces from 2005 to August 2021, according to CNN. During the Soviet-Afghan War, the Mujahideen obtained weapons from many sources, mostly supplied by foreign sources, such as the Central Intelligence Agency's Operation Cyclone, China, Egypt, Iran, and the United Kingdom, and channeled through Pakistan. According to various sources, Afghanistan has also received weapons and military equipment from Pakistan, Russia, and other countries.

Commentary

It's impossible to provide a comprehensive legal opinion concerning the supply of arms to Afghanistan from 1970 to 2023 as it requires an extensive legal analysis of various national and international laws and treaties. However, based on the provided international sources, we can provide some information related to the supply of arms to Afghanistan during this period.

The research results suggest that the supply of arms to Afghanistan has been a complex issue involving various actors, including the many different Afghan governments, NATO forces, and the Taliban. According to a recent report by The New York Times, NATO forces supplied pistols to Afghan police officers that were later sold in the local market for about \$350.¹ The report further states that the transactions were mostly in Pakistani rupees and in cash.

¹ "Pistols that NATO forces supplied to Afghan police officers sell for about \$350. Almost all their transactions are in Pakistani rupees, and in cash, the dealers said. One gun merchant, Esmatullah,..." <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/world/asia/us-weapons-afghanistan.html>

The US military also had a significant presence in Afghanistan and provided various types of military equipment to the Afghan security forces. However, the US military began to destroy and remove its equipment from Afghanistan after the signing of the Doha Agreement in February 2020.² The agreement memorialized the United States' commitment to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan and required the Taliban to prevent any group or individual from using Afghan soil to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.³

Despite claims by some media outlets and politicians, the US did not gift the Taliban \$80 billion in weapons.⁴ According to a fact-check by USA Today, the US spent \$28 billion on equipment, including aircraft, vehicles, and other military hardware, that was either destroyed, transferred to the Afghan security forces, or left behind during the withdrawal.³

There have been concerns about the fate of the military equipment left behind in Afghanistan after the withdrawal. NBC News reports that much of the equipment was lost in combat or retired from service, and a significant portion of US military aid, particularly small arms, has ended up in the wrong hands in the past.⁵

In conclusion, the supply of arms to Afghanistan from 1970 to 2023 has been a complex and multifaceted issue involving various actors and factors. While the US and other countries provided military equipment to the Afghan security forces, the fate of this equipment after the withdrawal has raised concerns about its potential misuse. It is beyond the scope of this answer to provide a comprehensive legal opinion on the matter, as it requires detailed analysis of national and international laws and treaties.

Additional Information

"Sixteen states are known to have supplied major arms to Afghanistan in the period 2001-2020 (see figure 2). The major arms were overwhelmingly armoured land vehicles and aircraft (see figure 3). Transfers from the USA The USA was the largest major arms supplier to Afghanistan in every consecutive five-year period after 2001-2005."

URL: <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2021/transfers-major-arms-afghanistan-between-2001-and-2020>

² "The destruction and removal of US equipment in Afghanistan started in earnest shortly after the Trump administration signed the Doha agreement in February 2020, and the military began reducing..."
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/21/politics/us-weapons-arsenal-taliban-afghanistan/index.html>

³ "The Doha Agreement memorialized the United States' commitment to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, as well as commitments from the Taliban to prevent any group or individual, including Al Qa'ida, from using the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies as well as a pledge by the Taliban to engage in ..." <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-afghanistan/>

⁴ "Based on our research, we rate FALSE the claim that the Biden administration "gifted" the Taliban \$80 billion in weapons and wants to take 9 mm pistols away from Americans. The U.S. spent \$28..."
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2021/08/25/fact-check-biden-didnt-gift-taliban-weapons/8197978002/>

⁵ "Much of the material was lost in combat — up to 100 vehicles per week at some points — or was retired from service. In addition, a very large share of U.S. military aid (particularly small arms)..."
<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/trump-claims-about-taliban-afghanistan-getting-u-s-weapons-miss-nca1278717>

"The US gave a total of \$18.6 billion of equipment to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) from 2005 to August 2021, according to the report. Of that total, equipment worth \$7.12..."

URL: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/27/politics/afghan-weapons-left-behind/index.html>

"This list shows military equipment used by the mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan War. The Mujahideen obtained weapons from many sources, mostly supplied by foreign sources, such as the Central Intelligence Agency's Operation Cyclone, China, Egypt, Iran and the United Kingdom, and channeled through Pakistan."

URL:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_military_equipment_used_by_mujahideen_during_Soviet%E2%80%93Afghan_War

"The Soviet army in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Dec. 31, 1979. The collapse of the Afghan government and the Taliban's recapture of power came after a blitz by the militant group that stunned many ..."

URL: <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/19/1028472005/afghanistan-conflict-timeline>

"Afghan War, in the history of Afghanistan, the internal conflict that began in 1978 between anticommunist Islamic guerrillas and the Afghan communist government (aided in 1979-89 by Soviet troops), leading to the overthrow of the government in 1992."

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Afghan-War>

"Pistols that NATO forces supplied to Afghan police officers sell for about \$350. Almost all their transactions are in Pakistani rupees, and in cash, the dealers said. One gun merchant..."

URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/world/asia/us-weapons-afghanistan.html>

"As of December 31, 2020, the U.S. Congress had appropriated more than \$88.3 billion in security assistance to supply and equip Afghan security forces with the goal to promote stability and..."

URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/the-unintended-impacts-of-u-s-weapons-supplied-to-afghanistan/>

"This page shows a list of military weapons and vehicles used by the Afghan National Army up until December 2016. Infantry weapons and equipment Handguns and submachine guns Automatic rifles Sniper rifles Machine guns Grenade-based weapons Rocket-based weapons Armoured vehicles Unarmoured vehicles Other vehicles International 7000-MV [2]"

URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_army_equipment_of_Afghanistan

"Sipri states that the Taliban intercepted shipments intended for other factions. It also lists as suspected suppliers Angola, the Balkans and Black sea regions, Central Asia, China, 'Golden Triangle', Horn of Africa, Liberia, Middle East, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South America."

URL: <https://politics.stackexchange.com/questions/66150/who-supplies-arms-to-taliban>

"Even more recently, the US Defense Department supplied the Afghan military with 7,000 machine guns, 4,700 Humvees and more than 20,000 grenades between 2017 and 2019, a report from the special..."

URL: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/21/politics/us-weapons-arsenal-taliban-afghanistan/index.html>

"This includes four C-130 transport aircraft, 23 Brazilian-made A-29 "Super Tucano" turboprop ground-attack aircraft, 45 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and 50 smaller MD-530 choppers. In addition,..."

URL: <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/21/1029449432/taliban-afghanistan-us-weapons-captured>

"The Islamic Republic that replaced the shah's regime had a hard time keeping the F-14s flying, but its other U.S.-supplied weapons were put to use in its 1980 to 1988 war with Iraq, a nation ..."

URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamhartung/2021/08/27/afghanistan-is-just-the-latest-case-of-us-arms-ending-up-with-us-adversaries/>

"The US military had supplied Afghan security forces with 16,000 night-vision goggle devices. (AP) "The ability to operate at night is a real game-changer," one congressional aide told Reuters."

URL: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-20/taliban-new-us-made-war-chest-afghanistan/100393572>

"For the two previous fiscal years ending in June, the amount spent on the Afghan military totaled \$2.6 billion. The Pentagon on Monday acknowledged that a large number of American-supplied arms ..."

URL: <https://www.forbesindia.com/article/global-news/for-sale-now-ussupplied-weapons-in-afghan-gun-shops/70841/1>

"Much of the Taliban's armory comes from American equipment given to the Afghan military and police. By. June 13, 2018. An Afghan National Army soldier mans his position while his fire team ..."

URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/how-the-us-is-indirectly-arming-the-taliban/>

"As War Report acknowledged, "the newest of the B-52s used in Afghanistan was built in 1962, long before many U.S. airmen were even born.". In the 2002 story, the B-52 is stated as capable of ..."

URL: <https://www.popsci.com/technology/timeline-us-airborne-tools-of-war-afghanistan/>

"Russia is supporting and even supplying arms to the Taliban, the head of US forces in Afghanistan has told the BBC. In an exclusive interview, Gen John Nicholson said he'd seen "destabilising ..."

URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-43500299>

"Getty Images. The Taliban showed off weapons and military hardware it says were seized from Afghan forces, as the group regains ground in Afghanistan's northern districts amid a U.S. troop ..."

URL: <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/561684-taliban-shows-off-weapons-military-hardware-seized-from-afghan-forces/>

Sources / Literatur

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