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With 'Surge' Over, a Long War Still Looms in Afghanistan

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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The Afghan surge is over, and while US officials [insist](#) that the mission was accomplished, the Taliban has not only weather the major increase in foreign ground troops but actually managed to grow by some estimates, remaining a force to be reckoned with across Afghanistan.



Where does that leave Afghanistan 11 years into a NATO war of occupation? Looking down the barrel of an even bloodier civil war, [according to some experts](#), who say that as NATO reduces its presence the Taliban may pick up the pace of attacks against the Karzai government.

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1

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The surge was initially presented as part of a NATO plan to eventually break the Taliban and force them to the negotiating table, where some sort of settlement would be reached. Now, the US says that they [don't expect](#) any serious progress in talks with the Taliban for years.

For more NATO nations, the goal now seems to be to get out while the getting's good, but with the US pledging to keep troops in the country through 2024 they seem to be setting themselves up for a war in the long haul, and a question of how long they will continue to throw troops at a battle that the experts see ending with a Taliban victory.