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CNAS Releases Afghanistan Policy Brief by Andrew Exum

WASHINGTON, D.C., OCTOBER 20, 2009 – After eight years of conflict and an ongoing policy review by the Obama Administration, the future of Afghanistan remains uncertain. As the latest assessment in Washington takes place amidst a contested Afghan national election, conditions on the ground continue to deteriorate. In *Afghanistan 2011: Three Scenarios*, a new policy brief published by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), Fellow Andrew Exum discusses three possible scenarios for what Afghanistan might look like in 2011 that the Obama Administration should consider while reviewing its strategy.

[Read the full policy brief here.](#)

Exum, who was a civilian advisor to Gen. Stanley McChrystal in Afghanistan, writes that the Obama Administration should consider three scenarios:

- In the “worst-case” and most unlikely scenario, Afghanistan returns to pre-9/11 conditions where insurgent groups again gain control of the nation, reestablish an Islamic Emirate, and grant refuge to transnational terror groups.
- In the “most-likely” scenario, the Obama Administration cautiously transitions to a coordinated counterterrorism mission where allied engagement is limited to training Afghanistan national security forces, employing precision airpower and conducting direct-action special operations.
- In the third and “best-case” scenario, the United States and its allies agree to a fully resourced campaign to provide security for key population centers and continue to develop effective security forces. By committing to a foundation for peace in Afghanistan, the United States and its allies achieve its main policy objective of regional stability.



OCTOBER 20, 2009 The Obama administration released its new policy and strategy for the Afghanistan conflict on October 20. For the next few days, through the administration's announcement on October 20, 2009, the policy will emerge — the little light at the end of the tunnel — the Obama administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan in the next 12 months. The strategy is expected to be released in the next few days.

Then, the Obama administration will, in many ways, re-examine the conflict in Afghanistan and the policy options. The Obama administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan will be shaped by the administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan. The Obama administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan will be shaped by the administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan. The Obama administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan will be shaped by the administration's strategy for the conflict in Afghanistan.

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About the author: [Andrew Exum](#) is a Fellow at CNAS. He served on active duty in the U.S. Army from 2000 until 2004. He led a platoon of light infantry in Afghanistan in 2002 and a platoon of Army Rangers in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2003 and 2004, respectively. Most recently, Exum served as an advisor on the CENTCOM Assessment Team and as a civilian advisor to Gen. Stanley McChrystal in Afghanistan. He is the founder of the counterinsurgency blog [Abu Mugawama](#).

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