



# JANGUL CONFLICT AND DRUG TRAFFICKING IN AFGHANISTAN'S BORDERLANDS





**IN THE 1980'S, MY VILLAGE WAS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST REGIME AND THE MUJAHEDDEEN. THE DESTRUCTION WAS DEVASTATING.**



**WE WERE LEFT TO PICK UP THE PIECES OF OUR LIVES.**




**AFTER ONE BOMBARDMENT, OUR HOUSE WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED.**

**LUCKILY, SOME MONEY AND OPIUM THAT WE HAD BURIED SURVIVED THE ATTACK.**

**WE USED IT TO BUILD A NEW HOME.**





I WAS IN MY EARLY TWENTIES AT THE TIME AND WITH A YOUNG FAMILY OF MY OWN TO PROVIDE FOR.

THE INSECURITY AND UNCERTAINTY AFFECTED EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

SOME, LIKE MY BROTHER, FLED TO PAKISTAN

... SOME, LIKE MYSELF, JOINED GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES.

...WHILE OTHERS JOINED THE MUJAHADEEN.





PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN



COUPONS

THE ARMY OFFERED A DECENT SALARY AND COUPONS FOR FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES...

WITH THIS I WAS ABLE TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY.



I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME SERVING IN THE NORTH OF THE COUNTRY.

Where is your family again, friend?

They are in Nangarhar.

IT WAS A LONELY PERIOD. I FOUND MYSELF REMINISCING OFTEN, ABOUT MY FAMILY...



...AND MY CHILDHOOD. I USED TO HELP MY DAD CULTIVATE THE WHEAT AND THE POPPY THAT WE GREW ON OUR FARM.





What does this mean now  
that Jalalabad has fallen  
to the mujahadeen?

The only thing we know is that  
everything is uncertain.



I SOON LEFT THE ARMY.  
THE SALARIES DROPPED  
SIGNIFICANTLY AND  
THE COUPONS FOR FOOD  
ALSO STOPPED.

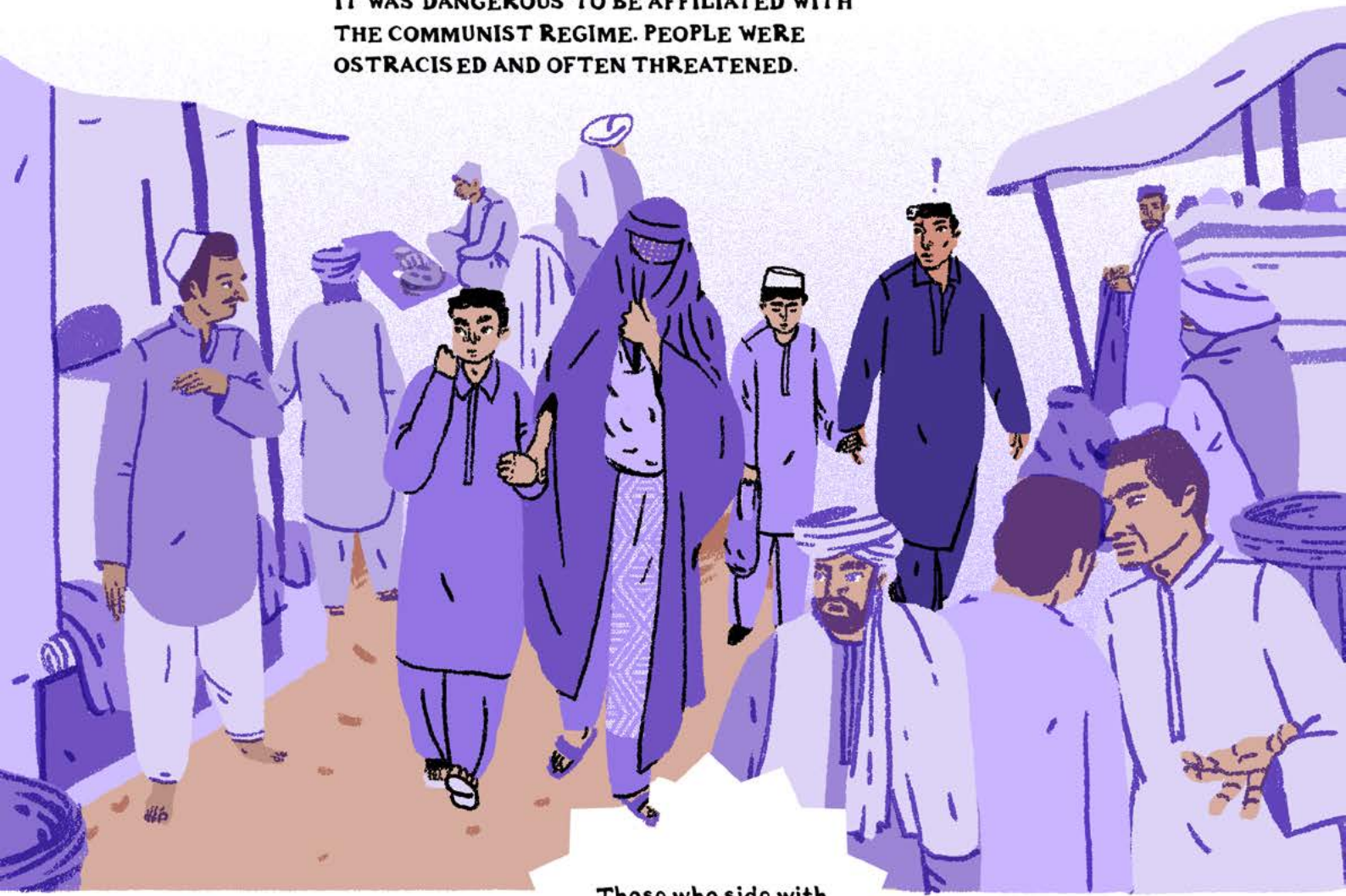
I RETURNED TO  
NANGARHAR, TO  
MY FAMILY.

BUT I WAS JOBLESS;  
THERE WERE VERY  
FEW OPPORTUNITIES  
AT THIS TIME.

AFGHANISTAN



**IT WAS DANGEROUS TO BE AFFILIATED WITH  
THE COMMUNIST REGIME. PEOPLE WERE  
OSTRACISED AND OFTEN THREATENED.**



**Those who side with  
the communists  
forsake their  
country and God.**

**POLITICAL MATTERS  
WERE INESCAPABLE...**







PAKISTAN

THE WAR FRACTURED OUR SOCIETY. JIRGA'S (\*DECISION-MAKING BODIES) TOOK PLACE ACROSS BORDERS, IN PAKISTAN, IN DIASPORA COMMUNITIES.

WE LIVED DAY TO DAY IN DESPERATION.

I WAS LOOKING FOR ANY OPPORTUNITY THAT MIGHT GIVE ME AND MY FAMILY SOME KIND OF ECONOMIC SECURITY.



FINALLY, AN OPPORTUNITY CAME MY WAY—THROUGH A COUSIN OF A FRIEND I KNEW FROM MY TIME IN THE ARMY. HE WAS A LIEUTENANT IN THE ARMY.



If you come with me I can pay you a good amount of money, but you understand that you must take the heroin all the way to Moscow.

What are the risks?

There are many and they are high.





I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY, EVEN THOUGH I KNEW THE RISKS.



IT WAS THE ONLY OPTION.

BUT I DECIDED NOT TO TELL MY WIFE.



I will not be gone a long time. I am only going to the north again for a few months. I hear they have many laborer jobs available right now.

MOSCOW



Now, understand that this bag is professionally made to hide this. But there are 2.5 kgs of heroin in it so you should guard it with your life.



ONCE WE LEFT NANGARHAR, WE STAYED IN A HOME THAT WASN'T OUR OWN WHILE WE WAITED FOR OUR PASSPORTS AND VISAS TO BE PREPARED.



FINALLY, WE REACHED THE BORDER.

AFGHANISTAN



I BOUGHT SOME ALMONDS AND RAISINS AND THREW THEM IN MY BAG WITH THE HEROIN.



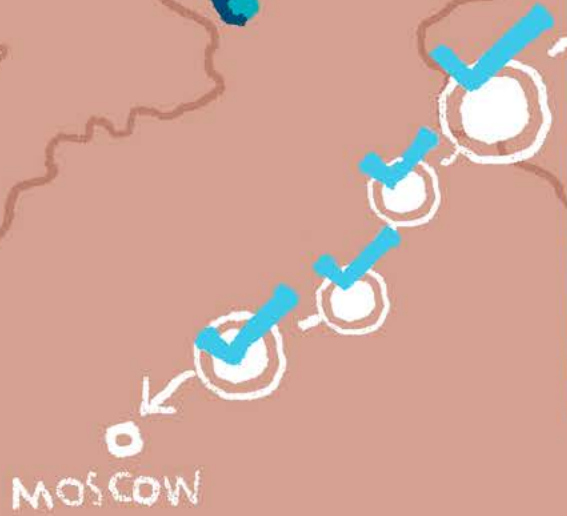
Are these almonds you are carrying?

Yes! Please help yourself.



I CAN'T EXPRESS HOW NERVOUS I WAS IN THAT MOMENT.

I GOT AWAY AS SOON AS I COULD AND WAITED FOR THE LIEUTENANT.



WE WENT THROUGH MANY CHECKPOINTS AFTER THAT, BUT LUCKILY NONE WITH SCANNERS.

Hand over your passports.

You will not be stopped at the market by the police, but you must stay at this hotel.





THE NEXT MORNING,  
THE BUS DRIVER  
REFUSED TO GIVE US  
BACK OUR PASSPORTS.

HE INSISTED THAT WE  
HAD TO GO BACK AND  
THAT OUR JOURNEY  
COULD NOT CONTINUE.



THEY MUST HAVE  
HAD A DEAL WITH  
THE GOVERNMENT.



WE STAYED AT THE  
HOTEL WHILE WE  
TRIED TO FIND A WAY  
FORWARD.

WE FELT LIKE A  
COMMODITY; USED,  
TRANSPORTED AND  
PROFITED FROM.

SUDDENLY, WE WERE  
APPROACHED BY A  
YOUNG AFGHAN BOY.

Are you wanting to go to Moscow?

Yes, but we have no passports.

No problem. We leave in the morning.





**EVEN GETTING OUT OF THE HOTEL WAS DIFFICULT. WE HAD TO LIE ABOUT OUR REASON FOR LEAVING.**



**You aren't allowed to leave! Where are you going?**

**Just to a nightclub!**

**Okay, fine, but don't stay out long.**

**FINALLY, WE REACHED MOSCOW.**



**I MISSED HOME IMMENSELY.**



**WE DELIVERED THE HEROIN TO THE TRADER.**

**EVERYTHING IN MOSCOW FELT FOREIGN, UNFAMILIAR AND DISCOMFORTING.**

**I COULDN'T WAIT TO GET BACK HOME.**



**HE WAS A GOOD MAN.**



**HE FED US AND TREATED US WELL. OUR JOURNEY THERE WAS OVER, FOR NOW.**



MOSCOW

WITH THE MONEY WE RECEIVED FROM THE TRADER AND NO HEROIN TO CARRY, WE MADE OUR WAY BACK HOME TO AFGHANISTAN.

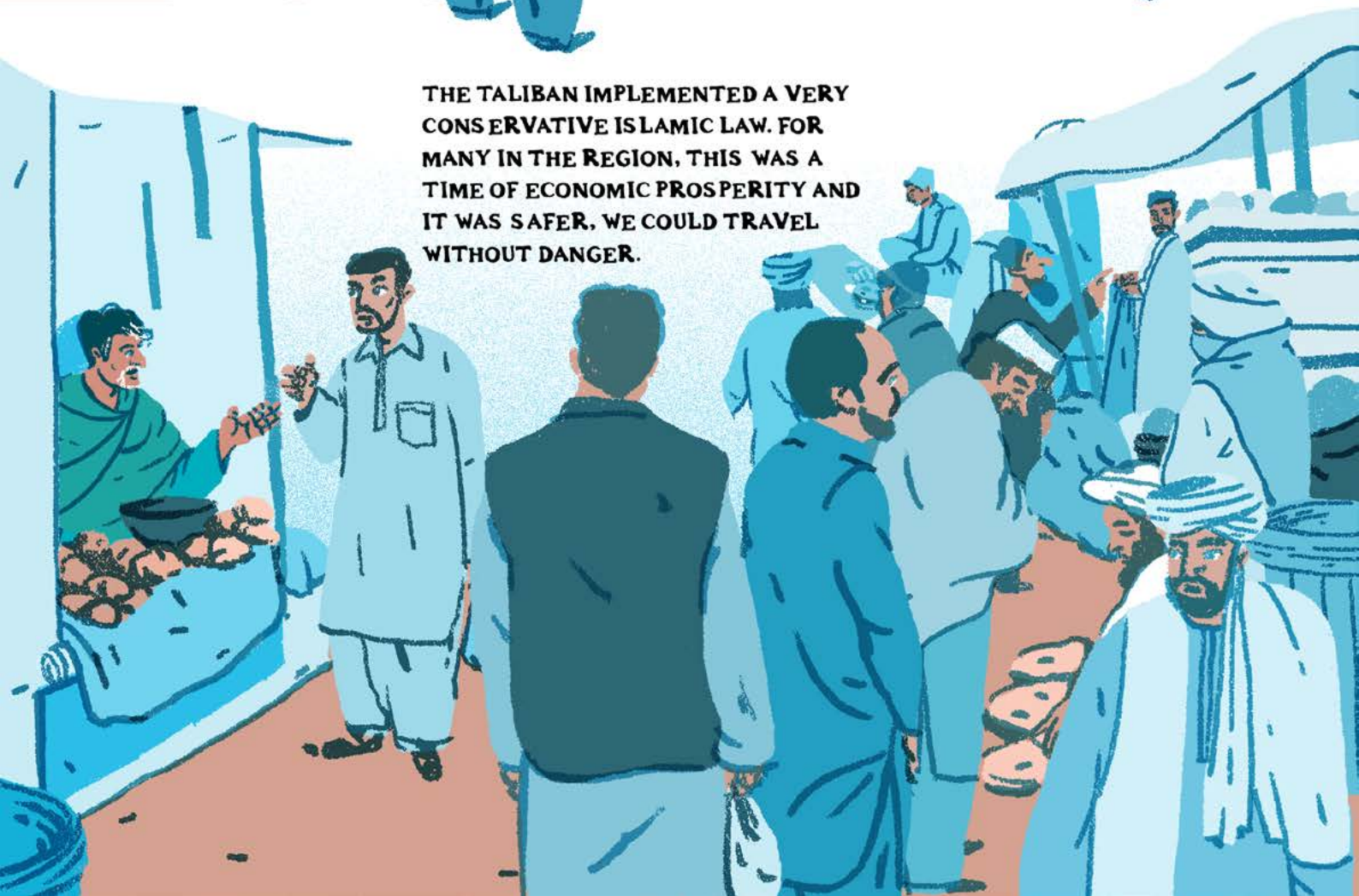
WE DIDN'T HAVE PASSPORTS SO WE HAD TO PAY A LOT OF BRIBES. IT WAS A DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE JOURNEY.

USING THE MONEY I EARNED FROM THE TRIP TO MOSCOW, I WAS ABLE TO OPEN A SMALL SHOP AT THE BAZAAR.

WHEN THE TALIBAN WERE IN POWER, WE COULD GROW AND TRADE OPENLY AND THEY TAXED FARMERS AND TRADERS.

AFGHANISTAN

THE TALIBAN IMPLEMENTED A VERY CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIC LAW. FOR MANY IN THE REGION, THIS WAS A TIME OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND IT WAS SAFER, WE COULD TRAVEL WITHOUT DANGER.





**BUT SOON THE TIDES  
CHANGED AGAIN**

**AND ONCE MORE  
EVERYDAY PEOPLE  
HAD TO ADAPT TO  
THE REALITY WE  
WERE FACED WITH.**

**THE TALIBAN REGIME  
WAS OVERTHROWN IN  
2001 AND THE KARZAI  
GOVERNMENT  
OUTLAWED THE  
TRADE OF OPIUM.**

**THEY COULDN'T ENFORCE  
IT FOR LONG AND PEOPLE  
CONTINUED GROWING  
AND TRADING OPIUM,  
PARTICULARLY IN THE  
OUTLYING AREAS.**



**I have got a great  
opportunity - another trip  
smuggling heroin to Moscow,  
the same as last time but even  
higher pay out.**

**No, thank you, friend.  
I am doing well - I have  
just bought a piece of  
land and have started to  
even build on it.**

**I promised myself I would  
never do that again, the  
risk is too high.**







I AM OUT OF THE DRUG TRADE NOW; I AM TOO OLD FOR THESE THINGS!

I'M HAPPY AND CONTENT. MY SONS ARE ALL WORKING AND HAVE BUSINESSES.

BUT MY COUNTRY REMAINS UNSTABLE. IT SEEMS AS THOUGH HISTORY CONTINUES TO REPEAT ITSELF.

Within days of Afghan "peace" deal, US bombs Taliban

The bombing near military base

Afghan officials: 4 bombs go off in Kabul

AP | Updated: May 11, 2020, 13:39 IST

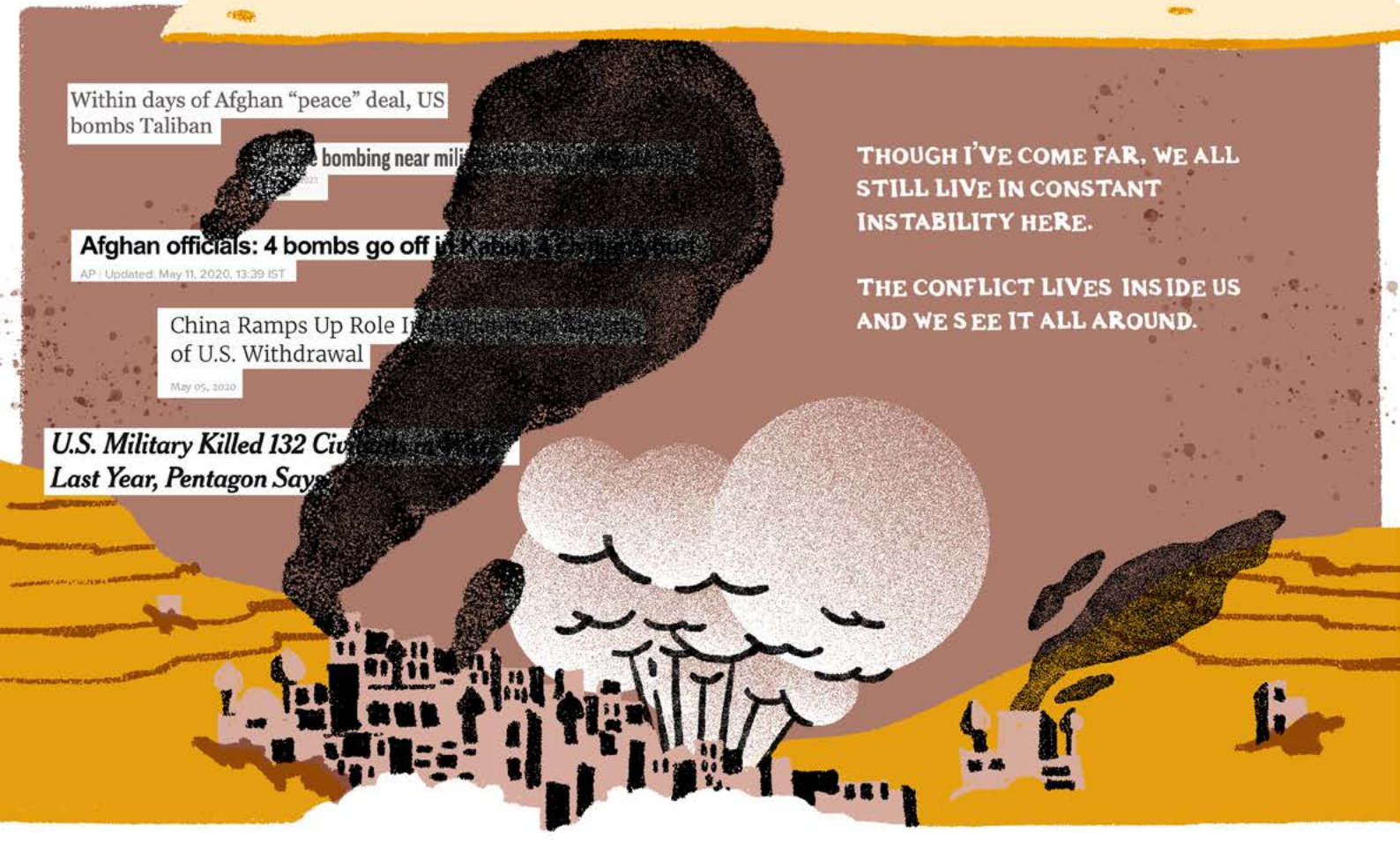
China Ramps Up Role In  
of U.S. Withdrawal

May 05, 2020

U.S. Military Killed 132 Civilians  
Last Year, Pentagon Says

THOUGH I'VE COME FAR, WE ALL STILL LIVE IN CONSTANT INSTABILITY HERE.

THE CONFLICT LIVES INSIDE US AND WE SEE IT ALL AROUND.







## About Drugs & (dis)order

Drugs & (dis)order: building sustainable peacetime economies in the aftermath of war' is a four-year research project generating new evidence on how to transform illicit drug economies into peace economies in Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar. It is the work of an international consortium of internationally recognised organisations with unrivalled expertise in drugs, conflict, health and development. Led by SOAS University of London, project partners are: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Alcis, Christian Aid, Kachinland Research Centre (KRC), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Organization for Sustainable Development and Research (OSDR), Oxford's School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA), PositiveNegatives, Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN), Universidad de los Andes, and Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

This comic was illustrated by Kruttika Susarla ([www.kruttika.com](http://www.kruttika.com)).

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