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UNIDAD DE ANÁLISIS POLÍTICO Y SEGURIDAD CORPORATIVA

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Source: Council on foreign relations, 2026

Afghanistan–Pakistan War: Scope Amid Another Crisis in the Persian Gulf

The open war between Afghanistan and Pakistan has much deeper roots than the 2026 military escalation. At the center of the conflict is the Durand Line, the border drawn in 1893 by the British Empire that divided Pashtun territory and whose legitimacy has never been fully accepted by Kabul.

Since Pakistan's independence in 1947, Afghanistan has questioned this demarcation, while Islamabad has defended it as the basis of its territorial sovereignty. Built on this historical fracture was also Pakistan's doctrine of "strategic depth," according to which Afghanistan was supposed to function as a political and military rear base against India.

For decades, Pakistan sought to wield decisive influence over Afghan politics, including its support for the Taliban movement, but the Taliban's return to power in 2021 ultimately revealed the failure of that logic: instead of a loyal neighbor, Islamabad found itself facing a less dependent regime and an even more unstable border (En la RedMX, 2026; Reuters, 2026; The New York Times, 2026).

Within this context, the actors involved go far beyond Kabul and Islamabad. The most decisive player in the crisis is the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, which Pakistan accuses of operating from Afghan territory, launching cross-border attacks, and using Afghanistan as a sanctuary. That accusation is the main immediate trigger of war. But the strategic landscape also includes India, whose growing engagement with Kabul and longstanding rivalry with Pakistan fuel Islamabad's perception of a possible two-front pressure.

China, for its part, appears as an actor interested in containing the escalation—not out of neutrality, but out of the need to protect its strategic investments in Pakistan and its economic opportunities in Afghanistan. Added to this is the indirect presence of other mediators and regional powers, such as Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, all of whom have an interest in preventing the crisis from evolving into broader destabilization across South and Central Asia Reuters, 2026; En la RedMX, 2026; El Colombiano, 2025).

The most recent phase of the conflict confirmed the shift from border tension to direct military confrontation. At the end of February 2026, Pakistan bombed Kabul, Kandahar, and other Afghan positions, while Taliban forces responded with attacks on Pakistani military posts along the Durand Line. Islamabad justified the offensive as a necessary response to the TTP threat, while Kabul portrayed it as an act of aggression and framed its reaction as retaliation and a defense of sovereignty. The military asymmetry is clear: Pakistan retains a far superior conventional and air advantage, but Afghanistan maintains the ability to inflict attrition through irregular warfare, cross-border incursions, and the potential use of the broader insurgent environment.

The costs are already visible in the form of civilian casualties, humanitarian deterioration, closure of border crossings, expulsion of Afghans, and damage to bilateral trade—particularly severe for Afghanistan due to its dependence on Pakistani routes (Reuters, 2026; EFE, 2026; The New York Times, 2026; En la RedMX, 2026).

Nevertheless, this war is not unfolding in isolation, but rather within a much more crowded regional landscape. Its overlap with tensions between Iran, the United States, and Israel adds economic, energy-related, and strategic pressure on Pakistan, particularly due to rising oil prices, higher transportation costs, and uncertainty around regional trade and mobility. At the same time, relations between India and Pakistan are entering a new phase of deterioration following the crisis in Kashmir, accusations of cross border terrorism, and diplomatic and commercial retaliations between the two countries. This reinforces for Islamabad the risk of strategic simultaneity: containing the Afghan front while preventing its rivalry with India from escalating further. In this context, the India–Pakistan nuclear risk does not appear to be the most likely immediate scenario, but it remains a structural source of concern, especially because any expansion of the regional crisis could alter deterrence and security calculations across all of South Asia. (Reuters, 2026; Reuters, 2025; El Colombiano, 2025; The New York Times, 2026).

Source: El Gran Continente, 2026

> “More than a bilateral conflict, it is a crisis with the potential to reorganize the regional architecture.”

In conclusion, the war between Afghanistan and Pakistan reflects the exhaustion of a regional architecture sustained for years by disputed borders, ambiguous support for armed actors, and increasingly fragile strategic balances. Pakistan now faces the failure of the doctrine through which it sought to shape Afghanistan to its advantage; Afghanistan is trying to turn the confrontation into an assertion of sovereignty; India sees an opportunity to expand its sphere of influence; and China seeks to prevent instability from harming its interests.

More than a bilateral clash, what is at stake is the possibility that a localized war could end up reshaping the strategic balance between South Asia, Central Asia, and the broader Middle Eastern environment. That is the true gravity of the current moment: not only has an open war begun, but this war has the potential to alter the political map of the entire region (En la RedMX, 2026; Reuters, 2026; The New York Times, 2026).

REGIONAL

How Venezuela became the key piece in the global energy supply chain for China and the U.S. after the closure of the Strait of Hormuz?

Today, Venezuela is once again gaining relevance as a strategic energy partner following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, thanks to the fact that it holds the largest proven oil reserves in the world.

The crisis in Iran has disrupted the flow of crude oil and liquefied natural gas from the Middle East, particularly affecting Asia—especially China, Japan, and other countries highly dependent on Arab and Persian oil—which has led major importing powers to redirect their attention toward alternatives such as Venezuelan heavy crude.

This becomes even more significant as oil prices have surged from around USD 80 per barrel to over USD 107, severely impacting major importers (EL MUNDO, 2026). This reconfigures regional dynamics in other oil-producing countries, such as those in Latin America, with fluctuations even reaching USD 120.

At the same time, the new administration of Delcy Rodríguez has advanced a deep reform of the Organic Hydrocarbons Law, marking a radical shift after more than 20 years of strict nationalization and breaking PDVSA's previous monopoly.

Source: Paso Yobái "digital" Noticias, 2026

The reform allows private companies—without major state participation—to carry out exploration, production, transportation, and storage of hydrocarbons. It also reduces taxes such as corporate income tax and grants greater autonomy to private producers, facilitating the outsourcing of operations and the transfer of PDVSA assets (Tu Gaceta Oficial, 2026).

Source: BBC, 2023

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China is therefore facing disruptions in energy supplies from the Persian Gulf— which accounts for between 40–50% of the Asian giant's crude oil imports—driving an aggressive purchase of Venezuelan oil, including former U.S.-origin cargoes, amid what has been described as a kind of "energy war" (El Financiero, 2026). Although the Chinese government has mitigated immediate externalities through strategic reserves, its dependence on the Strait of Hormuz raises refining costs for Venezuelan crude—given that it is extremely heavy, around 7° API—putting pressure on inflation and manufacturing. Meanwhile, the U.S. market is benefiting from record domestic production and preferential access to Venezuela through Chevron's licenses, offsetting global shortages and stabilizing domestic gasoline prices despite the surge in international oil prices. Moreover, its investments in the Orinoco Belt position Venezuela as a cornerstone ally, reducing Washington's vulnerability relative to the Chinese market. (Infobae, 2026).

However, both markets still depend on something even more critical than oil itself: liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is heavily used in fertilizer production, particularly because methane is essential for producing ammonia and urea—the foundation of nitrogen-based fertilizers that boost agricultural output worldwide. Meanwhile, LNG is also fundamental for generating stable energy and serves as a raw material for industrial gases needed in silicon wafer lithography, for manufacturing microchips and semiconductors that sustain the global technology ecosystem (Global, 2026). Much of this production takes place in the Middle East or relies on Qatari and Iranian LNG. According to Bloomberg, for every month that Qatar halts its LNG production, the world loses more than 1.5% of its supply, disrupting these markets for weeks(Bloomberg, 2026). Much of this production takes place in the Middle East or relies on Qatari and Iranian LNG. According to Bloomberg, for every month that Qatar halts its LNG production, the world loses more than 1.5% of its supply, disrupting these markets for weeks

LOCAL

Composition of Congress 2026–2030 ¿What do these elections tell us about checks and balances and the outlook for the Presidential race?

On Sunday, March 8, Colombia held its legislative elections for the Senate and the House of Representatives, marking the first key stage of the 2026 electoral calendar.

The composition of the new Congress reaffirmed the Pacto Histórico as the most important political force in the country, while also further consolidating the opposition bench led by the Centro Democrático. With no clear majorities, Congress will act as an effective check on President Petro during his final year in office and on the next administration, requiring broad coalitions for key legislation such as budgets and reforms, and favoring negotiation oriented candidates in the presidential race. A strengthened right wing—primarily the Centro Democrático and the Conservative Party—will exercise tough opposition, limiting progressive agendas.

Likewise, the representation gained by the Pacto Histórico and other left leaning groups positions them to act as an opposition force should Paloma Valencia or Abelardo de la Espriella unexpectedly win the executive branch. It is important to clarify that traditional parties were not fully sidelined in these elections; they will remain key actors in securing support for the second round and in building bridges with the executive branch to advance the next government's agenda, regardless of its political orientation (BBC, 2026).

Here is how each department in Colombia voted for the Senate:

Source: Black Maps, 2026

Senate

Source: Valora Analitik con datos de la Registraduría, 2026.

House of Representatives

Partido	Curules	Partido	Curules
Pacto Histórico	40	Colombia Renaciente	3
Partido Liberal	28	Creemos	2
Centro Democrático	28	ASI	2
Partido Conservador	19	Partido Demócrata	2
Partido de la U	12	Salvación Nacional	1
Cambio Radical	10	Mais	1
Alianza Verde	7	La Fuerza	1
Nuevo Liberalismo	3	Putumayo también es Colombia	1

Source: EL TIEMPO, 2026

Additionally, the results show a highly weakened center with no dominant candidate—that is, the bloc with the lowest electoral viability given the outcomes of former mayor Claudia López's primary and the lack of significant seats in both chambers for more moderate positions (El Nuevo Siglo, 2026). Accordingly, the composition of the Senate and House of Representatives is as follows.

Likewise, it is worth highlighting **Juan Daniel Oviedo** as the major surprise of the Gran Consulta por Colombia, surpassing the entire centrist bloc and positioning himself as an alternative—both for independent voters and for the center right—doubling López's numbers and attracting an electorate disenchanted with traditional coalitions (EL PAÍS, 2026).

His victory, in the midst of such intense polarization, is key to understanding that citizens are increasingly willing to listen to someone with solid proposals, choosing something beyond a campaign built solely on constant attacks against a particular political group. Even with this scenario, the legislative results show that, in reality, the political center was one of the major losers in the race. In the Senate, this bloc barely stayed afloat and lost candidates who were once prominent members of Congress, such as Angélica Lozano, Jorge Enrique Robledo, and Katherine Miranda

Meanwhile, in the House of Representatives, support for Nuevo Liberalismo virtually disappeared—especially in Bogotá—revealing widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of Mayor Carlos Fernando Galán. On the other hand, the Alianza Verde found itself in a weak position, marked by crisis and a lack of identity that could consolidate the center as a force capable of competing in a united way within Congress (Borda Guzmán, 2026).

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