CHRONOLOGY 1919 - 2005
BBC Timeline: Afghanistan - A chronology of key events:

1919 - Afghanistan regains independence after third war against British forces trying to bring country under their sphere of influence.

1926 - Amanullah proclaims himself king and attempts to introduce social reforms leading to opposition from conservative forces.

1929 - Amanullah flees after civil unrest over his reforms.

1933 - Zahir Shah becomes king and Afghanistan remains a monarchy for next four decades.

1953 - General Mohammed Daud becomes prime minister. Turns to Soviet Union for economic and military assistance. Introduces a number of social reforms, such as abolition of purdah (practice of secluding women from public view).

1963 - Mohammed Daud forced to resign as prime minister.

1964 - Constitutional monarchy introduced - but leads to political polarisation and power struggles.

1973 - Mohammed Daud seizes power in a coup and declares a republic. Tries to play off USSR against Western powers. His style alienates left-wing factions who join forces against him.

1978 - General Daud is overthrown and killed in a coup by leftist People's Democratic Party. But party’s Khalq and Parcham factions fall out, leading to purging or exile of most Parcham leaders. At the same time, conservative Islamic and ethnic leaders who objected to social changes begin armed revolt in countryside.

1979 - Power struggle between leftist leaders Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammed Taraki in Kabul won by Amin. Revolts in countryside continue and Afghan army faces collapse. Soviet Union finally sends in troops to help remove Amin, who is executed.

Soviet intervention

1980 - Babrak Karmal, leader of the People’s Democratic Party Parcham faction, is installed as ruler, backed by Soviet troops. But anti-regime resistance intensifies with various mujahedin groups fighting Soviet forces. US, Pakistan, China, Iran and Saudi Arabia supply money and arms.

1985 - Mujahed in come together in Pakistan to form alliance against Soviet forces. Half of Afghan population now estimated to be displaced by war, with many fleeing to neighbouring Iran or Pakistan. New Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev says he will withdraw troops from Afghanistan.


1988 - Afghanistan, USSR, the US and Pakistan sign peace accords and Soviet Union begins pulling out troops.

1989 - Last Soviet troops leave, but civil war continues as mujahed in push to overthrow Najibullah.

1991 - US and USSR agree to end military aid to both sides.
Mujahedin triumph


1993 - Mujahideen factions agree on formation of a government with ethnic Tajik, Burhanuddin Rabbani, proclaimed president.

1994 - Factional contests continue and the Pashtun-dominated Taleban emerge as major challenge to the Rabbani government.

1996 - Taleban seize control of Kabul and introduce hardline version of Islam, banning women from work, and introducing Islamic punishments, which include stoning to death and amputations. Rabbani flees to join anti-Taleban northern alliance.

Taleban under pressure

1997 - Taleban recognised as legitimate rulers by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Most other countries continue to regard Rabbani as head of state. Taleban now control about two-thirds of country.


1999 - UN imposes an air embargo and financial sanctions to force Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden for trial.

2001 January - UN imposes further sanctions on Taleban to force them to hand over Osama bin Laden.

2001 March - Taleban blow up giant Buddha statues in defiance of international efforts to save them.

2001 April - Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, the second most powerful Taleban leader after the supreme commander, Mullah Mohammad Omar, dies of liver cancer.

2001 May - Taleban order religious minorities to wear tags identifying themselves as non-Muslims, and Hindu women to veil themselves like other Afghan women.

2001 September - Eight foreign aid workers on trial in the Supreme Court for promoting Christianity. This follows months of tension between Taleban and aid agencies.

2001 - Ahmad Shah Masood, legendary guerrilla and leader of the main opposition to the Taleban, is killed, apparently by assassins posing as journalists.

2001 October - US, Britain launch air strikes against Afghanistan after Taleban refuse to hand over Osama bin Laden, held responsible for the September 11 attacks on America.

2001 November - Opposition forces seize Mazar-e Sharif and within days march into Kabul and other key cities.

Taleban falls

2001 5 December - Afghan groups agree deal in Bonn for interim government.
2001 7 December - Taleban finally give up last stronghold of Kandahar, but Mullah Omar remains at large.

2001 22 December - Pashtun royalist Hamid Karzai is sworn in as head of a 30-member interim power-sharing government.

2002 January - First contingent of foreign peacekeepers in place.

2002 April - Former king Zahir Shah returns, but says he makes no claim to the throne.


2002 June - Loya Jirga, or grand council, elects Hamid Karzai as interim head of state. Karzai picks members of his administration which is to serve until 2004.

2002 July - Vice-President Haji Abdul Qadir is assassinated by gunmen in Kabul. US air raid in Uruzgan province kills 48 civilians, many of them members of a wedding party.

2002 September - Karzai narrowly escapes an assassination attempt in Kandahar, his home town.

2002 December - President Karzai and Pakistani, Turkmen leaders sign agreement paving way for construction of gas pipeline through Afghanistan, carrying Turkmen gas to Pakistan.

2003 June - Clashes between Taleban fighters and government forces in Kandahar province leave 49 people dead.

2003 August - Nato takes control of security in Kabul. It is the organisation's first operational commitment outside Europe in its history.

New constitution

2004 January - Grand assembly - or Loya Jirga - adopts new constitution which provides for strong presidency.

2004 March - Afghanistan secures $8.2bn (£4.5bn) in aid over three years.

2004 September - Rocket fired at helicopter carrying President Karzai misses its target; it is the most serious attempt on his life since September 2002.

2004 October/November - Presidential elections: Hamid Karzai is declared the winner, with 55% of the vote. He is sworn in, amid tight security, in December.

2005 February - Several hundred people are killed in the harshest winter weather in a decade.

2005 May - Details emerge of alleged prisoner abuse by US forces at detention centres in Afghanistan.

2005 September - Afghans vote in the first parliamentary and provincial elections in more than 30 years.

2005 December - New parliament holds its inaugural session.

Source: BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/south_asia/country_profiles/1162108.stm