

Strategy Research Project

A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF U.S. STRATEGY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

BY

MARK A. BURROUGH
Department of Army Civilian

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF U.S. STRATEGY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

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Mark A. Burrough
Department of Army Civilian

Richard H. Smyth
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF U.S. STRATEGY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

The United States interest in Afghanistan has fluctuated from a low point of almost total disengagement in the late 1990s to the current high point with the commitment to the global war on terror. Until recently, the U.S government has failed to establish a long-term strategic vision for involvement with Afghanistan, relying more on reactive measures to deal with evolving situations. US actions and inactions have had a significant influence on the changing conditions in Afghanistan. The lack of committed and continuous direct involvement in Afghanistan has created problems which could have potentially been avoided. This paper is a case study of the US strategic thinking as it applies to Afghanistan from the Cold War to the present time. It examines the successes and failures of US strategy and policy as it relates to the changing situations in Afghanistan. Issues investigated include the changing level of interest from the Cold War era to the current Global War on Terror and the relationship to US strategy and policy towards Afghanistan. This paper will also examine the consequences of the United States government actions or inactions as associated with these strategies and policies.

The approach taken in this paper has been to divide the discussions into six time segments. The first three segments include the Cold War era, starting with the post-World War II period (1945-1978), followed by the period of Soviet occupation (1979-1989) and then ending with the post occupation period (1989-1992) up to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The post-Cold War era includes the three segments starting with the Afghan Civil War period (1992-96), followed by the Taliban rule (1996-2001), and the post 9/11 period (2001-2009) through Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

The division into the various time segments is based on distinguishing features of the periods, particularly as they shaped US policy. The first period represents the time Afghanistan was still considered a viable self-governed country. The second period of the Cold War involves the intervention by the Soviet Union, first in supporting the initial Afghan communist coup and then the following ten-year Soviet occupation. The final Cold War segment involves the three-year period following the Soviet withdrawal of troops and the final days of the Soviet-backed communist government. The last three segments involve the aftermath of the anti-communist *jihad*, including the Afghan civil war, the rise of radical Islamic influences, and the fall of the Taliban government and current stabilization efforts as part of OEF.

Prologue

For eons, Afghanistan has been a battleground and a strategic prize, whether of the ancient Aryans, the Sasanians, the Medes, the Macedonians, the Mauryans, the Arabs, the Turks, the Mongols, the Moguls, or the Persians, among others. While these waves of conquest and occupation have shaped the Afghan culture and context, it is the nineteenth century rivalry between the British and Russian Empires, with Afghanistan as a buffer state, which established the foundation for emergence of Afghanistan's strategic interest to the United States.

The Nineteenth Century saw a determined advance of the Russian Empire southeastwards into Central Asia. At the same time, Britain's Indian Empire (absentmindedly, by some accounts) was advancing to the northwest. It seemed inevitable that the two Empires would meet. Indeed, some of the more aggressive imperialists within the British government argued for a "forward policy" that would push

the boundaries of British India to the edge of the Czar's Empire. On the other hand, there were those in St. Petersburg that dreamed of throwing the British out of India and gaining the warm water ports that would establish Russia as a global power. Thus started the "Great Game," with British and Russian agents engaged in intelligence collection, political seduction and exploitation of likely allies. Responding to rumors of undue influence on the Afghan Emir by the Russians, the British allied themselves with a rival claimant to the crown in Kabul, resulting in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42) and the humiliating British retreat from Afghanistan. While this might have set the stage for further Russian advances, rebellion in the occupied territories north of Afghanistan required the Czar's attention, and the experiences of the Crimean War (1853-56) left neither Russia nor Britain with an appetite for conflict with another modern army. Thus Afghanistan's role as a buffer state was established, with the Afghans clearly aware that establishing too close of a relationship, or even the appearance of too close of a relationship, with one of the major powers could and likely would produce an intervention by the other, as in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80) launched by Great Britain following arrival of Russians envoys in Kabul . During these decades of Russian-British rivalry, the Imperial powers essentially dictated the modern boundaries of Afghanistan, dividing several ethnic groups in the west, north and east. The most significant of these boundaries, in terms of influence on later events, was the Durand Line separating British India from Afghanistan and dividing the homeland of the Pashtun people.¹

The Pashtun people, who have traditionally described their nationality as "Afghan" no matter which side of a border they live on,² were and are the largest of the

four major ethnic groups within Afghanistan comprising about 55 percent of the population. The Pashtuns themselves are divided into seven major tribes with the most prominent being the Durrani and the Ghilzai. The Ghilzai, from the central part of the country and the Pakistan border areas, are the larger of these tribes, but the Kandahar and Kabuli Durrani have dominated political control of the country. The Persian-speaking Tajiks, from the northern areas of Afghanistan, have historically accounted for about 25 per cent of the population. The last two major ethnic groups have been the Hazara, the only significant Shi'a group in the country and with about 10 per cent of the population, mainly in the mountainous central part of the country, and the Turkic Uzbeks with about 8 per cent of the population and located mainly in the north.³

Resenting the *de facto* veto authority over Afghan foreign relations by the Russians and especially the British, the Afghan Durrani King Amanullah took advantage of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Britain's exhaustion following the First World War, and unrest in peninsular India to launch the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919. The result of this war was the recognition of Afghanistan as a completely independent state – but one whose interests would seem to best be served by continuing to maintain a balance between Russian, now Soviet, and British interests.

Over the next twenty years, Afghanistan embarked on a cautious modernization program and pursued closer relations with Ataturk's Turkey as the model of a modern Moslem state. Despite some flirtations with Nazi Germany, Afghanistan maintained its neutrality throughout World War II in line with its now-established strategic culture of non-alignment, setting the stage for its post-war foreign policy.⁴

Cold War Period 1945-1979

By the end of World War II, it was apparent that the United States would replace the United Kingdom as the next world power and the Afghan government sought to establish a relationship with the U.S., in part to serve as a balance to the USSR. However, Afghanistan's weakness and policy of neutrality did not make it a likely candidate for close ties with a United States. U.S. policy, at the time, was focused on blocking Soviet expansion with an emphasis on establishing treaty relationships with a circle of states that could contain the Soviet Union.⁵

Close relationships between the U.S. and Iran had been established as the result of successful expulsion of the Soviet Union from the northern part of Iran after World War II. With the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from "East of Suez" and the creation of the independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947, the United States sought to enlist the two new states into the containment camp. India, already pursuing a policy of non-alignment and reflecting the latent anti-Americanism inherent in its leaders' socialist views of history and imperialism, wanted no part of an alliance with the U.S. Pakistan, seeking allies for its own purposes as it confronted India, was not as shy. With Iran and Pakistan in hand as allies, a weak Afghanistan already tending toward neutrality did not seem essential to the U.S. strategy. Indeed, it seemed virtually impossible to maintain close relationships, particularly military relationships, with both Afghanistan and Pakistan due to the lingering tensions between the two countries resulting from the colonial era Durand Line.⁶

At Pakistan's independence in 1947, the Durand Line, which the Afghans felt had been unjustly imposed and served to divide the Afghan nation, was maintained as the boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghan government officials, led by the

King's cousin and Prime Minister, Prince Daoud, started a movement for the establishment of a "Pashtunistan" incorporating all the traditional lands of the Pashtun people and the subsequent incorporation of that area into Afghanistan. As a majority of Pashtuns lived in Pakistan, the Pakistani government viewed the calls for Pashtunistan with some alarm, and there were numerous political and military encounters between the two countries. With Pakistan as an important partner in the containment strategy, the U.S. was in no position to support Afghanistan on this issue. A search for support on Pashtunistan led the Afghans to become more aligned with the Soviet Union, especially for military sales and training.⁷

Two other factors would have a major impact on how Afghanistan figured in US strategic assessments. The first was the effort by Prime Minister Daoud in the 1950's to seek more development, in addition to military, aid from the Soviet Union in order to maintain a balance with the modest economic support provided by the U.S. The Soviet Union took advantage of this opportunity starting in 1955 by continually increasing the amount of aid, and by the mid 1960's tipping the balance more toward the Soviet Union. Afghan officials soon realized that they could play donors off against each other, but the more assertive Soviet assistance efforts led to Afghanistan's gradual dependence on the Soviet Union and laid the grounds for future military coups. Daoud resigned in 1963 due to the failure of his economic and social programs, but continued to maintain relationships and contacts within the Afghan military.⁸

The second Afghan process affecting US strategic interests was the "democratic experiment" (1963-73) initiated by the monarchy and including a democratic constitution providing for more freedom, open elections, political parties, and tolerance for dissent.

The initiatives introduced by King Zahir Shah were initially well accepted, but as time went on he started losing control of the country and tried to retract some of the freedoms causing further dissent and unrest. The experiment would result in the rise of both extremist Islamic parties on the right and the communist party – the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) – on the left. Although Prince Daoud had resigned as Prime Minister in 1963, he continued to develop political support and in 1973, he took advantage of the King’s absence from the country to declare a failure of the “democratic experiment,” and with the assistance of the military, executed a successful coup and installed himself as President.⁹

The Soviet Union had been providing the Afghan government economic and military aid since 1955 and for over twenty years had steadily increased aid and the number of advisors on the ground. By 1978, the Soviet Union had provided over \$1 billion in economic and military assistance to the Afghan government,¹⁰ and had gained significant influence. Although Daoud had used the Afghan military to conduct the coup, his efforts to reverse some of the effects of the “democratic experiment” by purging extremists within the government affected some pro-Soviet Afghan military leaders. Although Daoud had long been a friend of the Soviets, he still professed non-alignment, and his suppression of communist-leaning military officers disturbed the Kremlin. Soviet influence in both the military and government was enough that Moscow could exert some influence for regime change to a frankly pro-Soviet government. The Soviet government used its good offices to unite the two factions of the communist PDPA (the Khalqis and the Parcham) that eventually staged the bloody communist coup of 1978 and the overthrow of the Daoud government.¹¹

The communist PDPA coup of April 1978 resulted in the declaration of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan with Nur Mohd Taraki as the president and Hafizullan Amin and Babrak Karmal as deputy prime ministers. Through 1978, and much to the consternation of the Soviet Union, Taraki started purging the Parcham faction led by Babrak Karmal from the PDPA party and government. In March 1979, Amin became the sole prime minister and quickly started acquiring power while suppressing all opposition from the right and left, while at the same time restarting political dialogue with the United States. The Soviet Union became concerned with the situation and started making plans to intervene and remove Amin. Before the Soviets could act, Amin eliminated Taraki in a bloody coup in September 1979. The situation quickly deteriorated in October and November with numerous revolts within the Afghan military. In December, Soviet forces in Afghanistan were put on alert and the decision was made to invade and take control of the Afghan government.¹²

Afghanistan had so far played only a minor role in the early U.S. Cold War strategy but that would change with the Soviet invasion. The Cold War policy established during the Truman administration stayed in effect through seven Presidential administrations. U.S. interests in Afghanistan as part of the containment policy against Soviet expansion were marginalized due to the relationships established with Iran and Pakistan and the lack of any other vital interest in Afghanistan. Tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the Pashtun issue also led to minimal involvement of the U.S. with the Afghan government. The Soviet Union would support Afghanistan on the Pashtun issue, but the U.S. government sided more with the Pakistani government. Repeated requests for U.S. military assistance from the Afghan

government were not fulfilled due to concerns of potential military actions against Pakistan. The U.S. government did provide limited economic assistance to Afghanistan but nowhere close to the economic and military assistance given Pakistan.¹³

The U.S. government made a half hearted attempt to keep up with Soviet aid to Afghanistan, but by 1978, the Soviets had provided twice as much economic aid as the U.S. government.¹⁴ The Soviet Union had a long-term grand strategy for Afghanistan that was working towards more influence in South Asia and the Middle East with the intent of gaining access to a warm water port in the Indian Ocean or the Persian Gulf. Much of the Soviet aid was used in northern Afghanistan to build roads and air bases to military standards for projected use in future military operations. The U.S. government was counting on strong relationships with Iran and Pakistan, and only limited strategic involvement in Afghanistan to limit Soviet expansion in the region. The majority of the limited aid provided by the U.S. was for economic and agricultural projects (such as the Helmand Valley Project) in south and southwest Afghanistan. U.S. standing in the region would drastically change in 1979 with the Iranian Islamic revolution, the fall of the Shah of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Cold War balance of power in the region had shifted towards the Soviet Union and U.S. national security was at risk.¹⁵

Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan 1979-1989

Amin was killed, and replaced by Babrak Karmal from the Parcham faction of the communist PDPA, in the early hours of the Soviet invasion of 26 December 1979. Karmal attempted to regain control of the central government and to reverse many of the unpopular social and economic reforms implemented by the previous communist leaders. In an effort to gain both reliable and competent control, key positions in the

Afghan government were filled by Soviet officials. Mistrust for the Soviet-dominated government and the sense that Karmal was only a puppet leader prevented the communist government from gaining support outside of Kabul and the major urban areas. Repressive and brutal Soviet military operations also undermined Karmal's efforts to establish control of the country. Soviet military operations destroyed crops, irrigation systems, property and conducted widespread torture of suspected rebels. These brutal Soviet tactics resulting in Afghan Muslim clerics declaring a *jihad* (Holy war) and organizing the Afghan *mujahedeen* to expel the Soviets and overthrow the communist Afghan government.¹⁶

U.S. intelligence sources had reportedly been aware of the massive build up of Soviet forces on the Afghan border prior to the invasion, but the Carter administration failed to publicly discourage an attack. However, immediately after the attack there was a dramatic change in U.S. foreign policy toward Afghanistan with the establishment of the Carter Doctrine. The new policy declared the right of the U.S. to use military force to defend vital interests in the Persian Gulf region. The Carter administration took a number of actions in response to the Soviet invasion, including economic sanctions, the withdrawal of the SALT II Treaty, and the boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow. In order to establish and expand military capability in the region, the Carter administration created a new military command (eventually known as Central Command) and began efforts to develop new security relations with countries in the region. At this same time, the Carter administration also tried to improve relationships with China to balance power in the region.¹⁷

U.S. covert military aid for the *mujahedeen*, with matching support from Saudi Arabia, was instrumental in the defeat and eventual withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. However, in order to maintain the covert nature of the operations, the U.S. was forced to work through the Pakistani government as an intermediary for the distribution of the military aid. Covert U.S. aid began under the Carter administration almost immediately after the invasion and was expanded greatly under the Reagan administration.¹⁸ One of the side effects of working through Pakistan was the favoritism given to *mujahedeen* forces most friendly to Pakistan and not necessarily those operating in the best interest of the U.S. This indirect approach has been blamed for the “Blow Back” effect and the rise of radical Muslim extremists in the region.¹⁹

By the mid-1980s, the Soviets had over 100,000 troops in Afghanistan and had killed over 1 million Afghans, but had reached a stalemate in the occupation. To counter the Soviet air superiority, the U.S. government started supplying the *mujahedeen* with man-portable Stinger surface-to-air missiles. With the Stingers, the *mujahedeen* would down over 270 Soviet aircraft and significantly influence the Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. By 1986, it was clear to the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that forces needed to be withdrawn from Afghanistan. Gorbachev started by replacing Karmal with former security service chief Mohammed Najibullah in May 1986 and beginning negotiations directly with the US (and indirectly Pakistan with Pakistan) that led to the signing of the Geneva Accords on April 1988. The Accords agreed to the full withdrawal of Soviet forces by February 1989 and the end of military assistance to both the Afghan government and the *mujahedeen*.²⁰

The Soviets would abide by a portion of the Geneva Accords and would withdraw all forces by February 1989. However, neither the Soviet Union nor the U.S. would live up to the agreement to end military assistance. The Soviet Union would continue to back the Najibullah regime up until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The U.S. goal of getting the Soviets out of Afghanistan had been achieved, but it was not the end of Soviet involvement in the region. The U.S. would continue to provide covert military support for the *mujahedeen* against the communist Najibullah regime, but the focus of US strategic interests was still the Soviet Union and not Afghanistan itself.²¹

Post-Soviet Occupation 1989-1992

In February 1989 the final Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan. Initial assessments were that the communist Afghan government would collapse within days, or at most a few weeks, without Soviet military presence. An interim post occupation government was proposed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but the proposal did not take into consideration all the Afghan ethnic groups. Infighting between the *mujahedeen* factions began almost immediately. The result would be the continuation of the communist government for more than three additional years. The Russians would continue to support the Najibullah regime, and the U.S. would continue to support the *mujahedeen*. Unfortunately, there was often more fighting between the various *mujahedeen* factions than against the communist regime.²²

With the Afghan fighting continuing throughout 1990 and the imminent end of the Cold War, both the U.S. and Soviet governments initiated cooperative efforts in December 1990 to end the conflict. Initial agreements for a UN-sponsored transitional government were rejected by Soviet hardliners, but a settlement was finally reached in

December 1991. However, the resolution failed to include disarmament of the *mujahedeen* and or provide for a peacekeeping force. In April 1992, with his most reliable and feared combat commander suddenly switching his allegiance to the *mujahedeen*, Najibullah resigned as the head of government and sought shelter in the UN Kabul offices as Pashtun and non-Pashtun *mujahedeen* forces raced to take control of the capital city. Hekmatyar's Pashtun forces joined with the renegade Afghan government forces to seize control of Kabul, but were eventually supplanted by Ahmed Shah Masoud's non-Pashtun forces. An interim government was established but immediately came under fire by the radical Islamic *mujahedeen* forces led by Hekmatyar and fighting would continue sporadically for the next four years of civil war.²³

The U.S. policy objectives towards Afghanistan during this period had been to end communist rule – and Soviet influence in the region. Little or no concern was given for a strategy that would preserve U.S. influence under a post-communist government.²⁴ The U.S. continued to intervene in Afghanistan affairs after the Soviet withdrawal because of the continued influence of the Soviets in the communist Afghan government. With the fall of the Najibullah regime in April 1992, the U.S. government declared success and tried to disengage from the situation. Neither the Bush nor Clinton administrations from 1988 to 2000 showed interest in nation building in Afghanistan; Afghanistan once again appeared to have been viewed only through the prism of Great Power Politics.

Afghan Civil War (1992-96)

The interim government established immediately after the end of the communist Afghan government in April 1992 had trouble from the very start. The anti-government

radical Islamic forces under Hekmatyar continually attacked and destroyed much of the infrastructure of Kabul. When Tajik cleric Burhanuddin Rabbani was elected president in December 1992, full-scale civil war erupted. A cycle of civil war and periodic cease-fires occurred from 1992 until 1996 while the interim government gradually disintegrated. While anti- and pro-government factions fought for control of the central authority, local leaders started accumulating power to the point where the central government had little authority. The Afghanistan central government collapsed, and the country reverted to virtual feudalism under the control of local warlords.²⁵

During this period of disorder, the Taliban emerged in 1994 as a political-religious movement in south central Afghanistan, quickly drawing support from the refugee camps and religious schools (madrassas) in Pakistan along the border with Afghanistan. The Taliban combined conservative Islamic Deobanism and Saudi Wahhabism in the madrassas to form a strict interpretation of Islam. The Pakistani madrassas were supported by Saudi aid and had well-established political links with the Pakistani government security service – the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate. A third of the Taliban who subsequently fought in Afghanistan were foreigners, the majority from Pakistan, but later radical Islamic fighters would join from other countries.²⁶

The Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Omar (a Ghilzai Pashtun) conducted military attacks against various warlords starting in 1994 and soon was able to capture control of Afghanistan's second city, Kandahar. The Taliban captured Kabul by the end of 1996, and by 1998 controlled all of the country except for a small portion in the north. Rabbani remained the legitimate president of Afghanistan in exile in Iran, and the anti-

Taliban *mujahedeen* fled Kabul for the northern regions of the country. The anti-Taliban *mujahedeen*, the Northern Alliance, would continue to fight under the leadership of Massoud and the Uzbek General Dostum.²⁷

During this Afghan Civil War period, the U.S. implemented a “hands-off” (or “not our problem”) approach to dealing with Afghanistan, leaving most of political peacemaking efforts to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia while urging the cooperation of all factions with the UN Secretary General’s Special envoy. With both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia openly supporting the radical Islamic approach to governance offered by the Taliban, those nations’ attempts at peace-brokering were not, unsurprisingly, successful.

Taliban Rule (1996-2001)

The success of the Taliban can be attributed to several factors to include the promise of stability, security, and an end to warlordism, and a return to a decentralized government similar to the traditional Pashtun village government system. The initial Taliban military actions were conducted against the unpopular former *mujahedeen* warlords who were charging tolls and collecting bribes for use of the local highways. The Taliban took advantage of the situation caused by the internal conflict between the various *mujahedeen* factions, blaming them for the destruction and suffering of the Afghan people.²⁸

The Taliban movement initially gained the popular support of the Afghan majority despite the Talibs’ extremely with a strict interpretation of Islam. The Taliban established vice and virtue squads to enforce the strict rules and render judgment and punishment, including public executions (sometimes by stoning), for a myriad of

offenses. Dress codes were enforced and many freedoms were taken away. The Taliban was especially hard on the Hazaras due to the ethnic and religious differences of the Shi'a sect. The unfair treatment of the Hazaras caused tension between the Taliban and Iran almost to the point of conflict on the Iran border. To counter this injustice, Iran would provide support for the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.²⁹

U.S. response to the Taliban in the mid to late 1990s was unclear due to the lack of any agreed strategic framework with which to deal with the new power. On one hand, the Clinton administration recognized the stability the Taliban provided. Two key U.S. allies in the area, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, supported the Taliban, and there was pressure from the US business community to engage the Taliban in establishing an oil and gas pipeline through Taliban-controlled portion of Afghanistan from Turkmenistan to an Indian Ocean port. The fact that the Taliban were anti-Iranian and anti-Russian also had some influence on U.S. assessment of the Taliban.³⁰

On the other hand, Taliban attitudes toward women and absolute disregard for recognized human rights generated abhorrence. The net result was an absence of any activist policy and a withdrawal from shaping operations.

U.S. strategy towards the Afghanistan and the Taliban would only take shape based on their involvement with Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda terrorist organization. In 1996, after being expelled from Sudan at the encouragement of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia government, bin Laden moved to Afghanistan where he had fought with the *mujahedeen* during the Afghan-Soviet war. The Taliban would allow bin Laden to set up a number of training camps for up to 5,000 men, while bin Laden provided financial support to the Taliban, as much as an initial \$100 million in cash and

gifts. After the 1996 attacks against the US military barracks in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, were linked to bin Laden, the U.S. initiated covert operations to track bin Laden and the other al Qaeda leadership. After the August 1998 attacks on two U.S. embassies in east Africa, it was clear that the Taliban was providing safe haven for bin Laden and al Qaeda. Attempts by the Clinton administration to get the Taliban to extradite bin Laden failed and limited military operations were authorized. Cruise missile attacks were launched against al Qaeda training camps, but bin Laden himself escaped injury. Again, in October 2000 bin Laden was linked to the attack on the *USS Cole*, but the U.S. took no strong measures to deal with bin Laden. Key personnel in the Clinton administration could not reach agreement on the use of military actions after the attack.³¹ Bin Laden continued to provide financial support for the Taliban with an estimated \$184 million for the year prior to September 2001. No covert Presidential Findings explicitly targeting bin Laden are known to have been authorized during the Clinton Administration.

After George W. Bush was elected President in 2000, no concerted effort was made to deal with the threat imposed by bin Laden and Al Qaeda until after the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Once again, US strategy and policy toward Afghanistan was focused on outside influences rather than the entire context of Afghanistan itself.

Post 9/11 Period (2001-2009)

By the late 1990s, the Taliban maintained control over most of the territory of Afghanistan except for a small portion in the north under the control of the Northern Alliance. The terrorist attacks on the United State in September 2001 (9/11) would alter

that situation dramatically. U.S. security interests in Afghanistan would become the main priority as soon as the attacks were linked to the Al Qaeda organization and its camps in Afghanistan. The U.S. moved to establish a new policy towards Afghanistan and launch attacks on al Qaeda and the Taliban. The military campaign to remove the Taliban regime would take less than three months, but the ensuing effort to establish a viable Afghan government has gone on for over seven years with no end in sight.

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the Taliban controlled 75 percent of the country and was recognized as the legitimate government by only three countries – Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. Both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan played roles in the rise of the Taliban and continued their support throughout most of the 1990s. During the late 1990s, Saudi Arabia would withdraw financial support, but continued to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. The Taliban strived for recognition from other countries, including the U.S., but were unsuccessful due to their mistreatment of women and other human rights violations. The United Nations continued to recognize the Rabbani regime in exile as the legitimate government of Afghanistan in the absence of broad international recognition of the Taliban regime.³²

The new Bush administration had been in the process of reassessing counterterrorism policy when the 9/11 attacks occurred.³³ Prior to this time, the administration had continued a similar approach in dealing with Afghanistan as taken by the Clinton administration: continued requests for the Taliban to turn Bin Laden over to the U.S. to be tried for terrorist activities, but with little engagement on other issues.³⁴ By the end of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration had a new policy – go after known terrorists and those countries that harbor them. With the Taliban leaders' refusal

to extradite Osama bin Laden after the attacks on the American Embassies in Africa in 1998 and the *USS Cole* in October 2000, as well as the known financial support from bin Laden for protection and his use of terrorist training camps, Taliban culpability in the 9/11 attacks was manifest.³⁵ In one day, the Bush administration had established the most significant foreign policy decision in years.³⁶ Bush reiterated US demands to the Taliban in a 20 September 2001 address to the joint session of Congress and the American people. The Taliban still showed no signs of being willing to surrender bin Laden issue, so there was no recourse but military action. The Bush administration initiated a broad effort to establish a coalition for a new war on terror.

At the time of the terrorist attacks on America, there were no “on the shelf” military plans for operations in Afghanistan. Military planning began shortly after the 9/11 attacks for what would come to be known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) moved first to reestablish relations with anti-Taliban *mujahedeen* leaders from the Northern Alliance who had been fighting against the Taliban since before the fall of Kabul in 1996. By 20 September, CIA officers were on the ground in Afghanistan in contact with Northern Alliance leaders. The U.S. established a military coalition and initiated OEF starting on 7 October with air strikes on military targets in Afghanistan.³⁷ To balance the use of force, the Bush administration simultaneously started humanitarian relief efforts. Army Special Operation Forces (SOF) were on the ground by 19 October where they linked up with the CIA and Northern Alliance forces.³⁸ Other SOF units would link up with anti-Taliban forces in central and southern Afghanistan. The tactics for OEF actions against the Taliban were

to maneuver the Afghan anti-Taliban forces against objectives with the support of SOF and coalition air strikes.³⁹

Once U.S. forces were on the ground and had established relations with the Afghan anti-Taliban forces, combat operations proceeded quickly. By 10 November, the Northern Alliance and coalition forces had taken Mazar-e Sharif in the north and by 13 November had pushed the Taliban out of Kabul. Additional U.S. SOF forces linked up with other anti-Taliban forces in the south (Southern Alliance) and by 7 December had pushed the Taliban out of their last urban stronghold in Kandahar.⁴⁰

The Taliban and Al Qaeda forces would make one last major stand in the Tora Bora Mountains of eastern Afghanistan. U.S. combat forces would conduct Operation Anaconda from 2 to 19 March 2002 and successfully defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces. The remaining Taliban and Al Qaeda forces went into hiding in the mountains of Afghanistan or escaped into Pakistan. Neither Osama bin Laden nor the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, were ever captured or killed.⁴¹ Operation Anaconda was considered the last major military operation but minor operations continued throughout 2002-2003⁴² and it was not until May 2003 that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld declared an end of major combat operations.⁴³ Fighting would steadily decrease from 2003 through 2005, but the Taliban started a re-emergence in 2006.

Immediately after the Taliban had been forced from Kandahar and the Southern Alliance had moved into the city, efforts were started to establish an interim Afghan government. The U.S. had finally learned from its previous Afghan experiences not to leave the country in a "vacuum". The Bush administration's campaign promise, and early policy, that combat troops were not to be used for peacekeeping or nation

building, had to be revised to allow establishment of a viable interim Afghan government.⁴⁴ Several unsuccessful attempts – UN and non-UN – had been made to establish governance in the 1990s following the Soviet withdrawal, but they failed due to the lack of a robust peacemaking capability. With Coalition troops in control of the country, UN Security Resolution 1378, adopted in November 2001, outlined a feasible UN role in establishing an Afghan transitional government.⁴⁵

With the Taliban defeated militarily, the UN initiated an effort to include all the major Afghan ethnic and religious factions, to include the former King, at a conference in Bonn, Germany in December 2001. The outcome of the meetings was the Bonn Agreement, signed on 5 December, which established an interim government to be led by Hamid Karzai and laid the ground work for a multinational security force – the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) – to help provide security until the new government was stable. Karzai took office on 22 December as the leader of the interim Afghan government. The coalition had defeated the Taliban, recaptured the country and with the help of the UN achieved regime change in just over three months.⁴⁶ Subsequently, a *loya jirga* (Pashtu for “Great Council”) was called and a new constitution was established in November 2003. In November 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first elected President of Afghanistan.⁴⁷ Parliamentary and provincial elections took place in September 2005.

Up to 2005, it appeared that everything was moving towards the goal of a stable, secure governed country, but over the last four years, the situation in Afghanistan has started to deteriorate. The U.S. goal of removing the Taliban government and eliminating the al Qaeda safe haven in Afghanistan had seemingly been accomplished.

However, remnants of the Taliban have been waiting patiently and are now taking advantage of the lack of progress in southern Afghanistan. The Taliban have re-emerged as an insurgency with the goal of driving foreign occupiers from the country. With the rise in the insurgency, increases in the opium economy, perceived increases in civilian casualties resulting from Coalition air strikes, and inequality in economic development; some Afghans are beginning to question whether they are indeed better off with their new government.

The strategic goals established by the Bush administration for Afghanistan have been marginally successful.⁴⁸ The Taliban is now taking advantage of the protracted war and lack of progress to fuel the current insurgency. The Taliban is testing the limits of the U.S. national resolve and those of the coalition partners in its effort to drive foreigners from the country. If the U.S. strategy is not adjusted, it is likely that the Taliban may succeed. It has now been over seven years since the defeat of the Taliban government and it is unclear if an endgame is in sight. The new Obama administration has assessed the situation and based on military and political advice has agreed to increase the U.S. forces by 17 thousand over the next year.

Analysis of the U.S. Strategy Towards Afghanistan

To understand the current situation and how the U.S. should adjust the strategy towards Afghanistan requires a historical analysis of the success and failures of past strategies. The U.S. is at a critical tipping point with the current situation in Afghanistan - what is done in the next several years will determine the success or failure of meeting the strategic goals. The question remains: Can we learn from our past successes and failures to determine how to our strategy and reach the desired end

state? US successes and failures in dealing with Afghanistan have been a very mixed bag.

In the Cold War era, the U.S. did initially provide economic support to Afghanistan but opted to not get in a head-to-head race with the Soviet Union to earn the favor of the Afghan government. While it is possible that higher levels of U.S. investments and involvement could have prevented the Afghan government falling prey to Soviet expansionism, higher priorities led to a somewhat *laissez faire* attitude and lack of focused US attention to Afghanistan. After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the only interest the U.S. had was getting the Soviets out. Once the Soviets withdrew, again the U.S. lost interest in Afghanistan and gave little concern and direct attention to establishing proper governance, relying on Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to make that determination. Once the U.S. had achieved its containment goals in Afghanistan, it wanted no further direct involvement.

The virtual disengagement of the US from Afghanistan in the 1990s was a contributing factor in the rise of the radical Islamic movement in the region as US disinterest allowed growing instability, a deterioration of security, and economic regression. The U.S. strategy of minimal involvement in Afghanistan was a risk that successive administrations took based on limited U.S. interest in the country and its people. It is very unlikely that the Bush, or succeeding US administrations, would have again become deeply involved in Afghanistan if it had not been for the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the direct link to Al Qaeda terrorist training in the country. The U.S. did not care for the Taliban form of governance, but the radical Islamic form of government was

providing stable and secure conditions for the Afghan people, something not seen in Afghanistan for close to twenty years.

The U.S. had fitfully tried to use economic and development influence, but failed to fully utilize its political and military power to deal more effectively with the Taliban government. Before 9/11, the U.S. was still the biggest contributor (through the UN and other IOs) to humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan and was involved in the new negotiations to establish an oil and gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan. However, after the al Qaeda terrorist attacks on the American Embassies in Africa in 1998, the only response taken by the U.S. were cruise missile attacks on terrorist training camps even as covert U.S. forces were in position to conduct attacks to capture or kill Osama bin Laden within Afghanistan.⁴⁹ Diplomatic and military actions should have continued until the Taliban succumbed to the U.S. demands to turn over custody of Osama bin Laden and shut down the terrorist training camps. The U.S. had the capability but the Clinton administration was risk adverse and would not give approval for the operations. The al Qaeda attack on the *USS Cole* in October 2000 was another chance to exercise U.S. military and diplomatic power, and once again, no firm action was taken. The U.S. weakness was the inability to take action and the terrorist took advantage of that weakness. In the early months of the Bush presidency, the administration was also aware of the threat, but failed to act in time to prevent or dissuade the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The failure of the U.S. to take appropriate actions against al Qaeda in the period of 1998 to 2000 highlighted the lack of strategy to counter terrorist acts on U.S. interests outside the country.

The U.S. has been successful in applying covert and overt military power to situations in Afghanistan to achieve desired goals, but this has come with some unintended consequences. Covert operations to supply military equipment and training to the *mujahedeen* was a major factor in defeating the Soviet forces, but has been blamed for some of the “blowback” resulting in the rise of militant Islam in the region. The radical Islamists among the *mujahedeen* were a concern to the US policy establishment, but as long as the militants were helping to defeat the Soviets, the U.S. was willing to look the other way. The U.S. had relied perhaps too heavily on the decisions of the Pakistani ISID in distributing equipment to the *mujahedeen* of their preference, since one has to assume that the Pakistanis were more concerned with their own, rather than US, interests. With the fall of the communist government in Kabul, and the beginning of the Afghan civil war started, the U.S. discontinued support for the *mujahedeen* because the equipment was being used for infighting between the various *mujahedeen* factions; this does not account for the discontinuation of direct humanitarian and development aid.

The U.S. was successful in applying military power in conjunction with anti-Taliban forces to quickly defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda after 9/11. With minimal Special Operation forces, the U.S. was able to topple the Taliban in just over 100 days and make way for the establishment of an interim government. The U.S. military is one of the most capable in the world dealing with conventional forces, but was unprepared to deal with the unconventional counter-insurgency fights that developed in both Iraq and Afghanistan. With time, U.S. forces have developed the techniques and equipment to deal with the evolving situation. However, in both campaigns, Combatant

Commanders felt they had inadequate force levels to deal with the situation. An “economy of force” approach was not sufficient for a counter-insurgency fight.

The Bush administration was successful in establishing an international coalition in the fight against terrorism and the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. However, implementation of the coalition military, political, humanitarian and economic activities has been highlighted by a lack of coordination, efficiencies and effectiveness in terms of improving the conditions in Afghanistan. The lack of security and stability is making it difficult to establish a viable Afghan government. The U.S. and coalition countries were successful in eliminating the terrorist safe havens in Afghanistan, but the terrorist organizations have adjusted by moving to new safe havens along the border in neighboring Pakistan.

Applying Lessons Learned to Future Situations

The lessons learned from U.S. experiences in strategic engagement in Afghanistan can and should be used to make adjustments to the current strategy. From today’s virtual stalemate, the U.S. is gradually slipping back into conditions unfavorable for the development of a viable, stable and secure Afghan government.

One of the most important lessons learned from Afghanistan is the need to stay engaged in the situation and not allow conditions to slip into disarray. The U.S. gradual disengagement in the Cold War years allowed the Soviet Union to gain a strong foothold in the country that eventually led to future military actions. The total U.S. disengagement after the Soviet withdrawal from the country was even more severe because the country was left in an ungoverned state. Minimal economic and military investments would have, at least, given the Afghans some sense of security and would

have sent a message to the Soviets of a show of commitment. The U.S. Cold War strategy in the region also relied too heavily on alliances with Iran and Pakistan, advantages which either disappeared after the Iranian revolution or were used to exploit US desires in the case of Pakistan. The lesson learned – stay engaged with as many countries as possible in the region. Theater security cooperation agreements are our most economical means to stay engaged in regions around the world.

The U.S.-led coalition has the potential diplomatic, economic and military power to be successful in Afghanistan, but these resources need to be applied in an effective and efficient manner. Based on the protracted conflict, the will for all the coalition partners is starting to wane. It is imperative that the coalition acts in a coordinated sequential manner to get the job done as quickly as possible. All the insurgencies in Afghanistan must be defeated. Combat operations must be sequenced with follow-on security and stability operations to hold and secure the area for local reconstruction activities. Caveats for coalition combat forces need to be adjusted or those forces need to be reorganized and moved to peacekeeping or other supporting operations. Time is not on the coalition's side, and the enemy is going to take full advantage of that factor.⁵⁰ Lesson learned – coalition building is important, but even more important is being able to get the coalition to work effectively with unity of effort to achieve the desired goals in a timely fashion.

It has become apparent that a solution to the problem of the insurgency in Afghanistan must take a regional approach.⁵¹ The approach must include the countries where the insurgency is operating – Afghanistan and Pakistan – and the surrounding regional powers – Iran, Russia, India and China – which have a vested interest in

defeating radical Islamic insurgencies. A successful insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan could lead to other problems with these regional powers. The coalition needs to include these regional powers and their respective diplomatic, information, military and economic powers to put pressure on the situation. Just as the insurgency is banding with other radical militant groups across the Afghanistan border, so should the surrounding regional powers band together to defeat the insurgency. All the regional powers have a common interest to defeat this insurgency. Lesson learned – The U.S. needs to go beyond our standard set of allies and include regional powers even if we have not had the best relationship with these countries in the past. The U.S. has a common interest with these regional powers, and that needs to be exploited.

The opium economy is directly correlated to the insurgency, corruption, and the lack of governance.⁵² The illegal drug business must be eliminated for there to be progress in Afghanistan. The approach taken should be a combination of top-down and bottom-up efforts. The top-down approach should go after the high level operators dealing in the drug refinement and trade. The necessary legal system needs to be in place to prosecute the criminals.

The bottom-up approach to eliminate opium poppy cultivation would involve efforts to discourage farmers from growing the illegal crop and provide them alternatives such as crop substitution programs. A crop substitution program encourages the farmer to grow legal high valued crops as an alternative to opium poppies. A harsh crop eradication program to destroy crops would be counter productive at this time and would only turn the Afghan people against the government and the coalition. Opium is a high value easily transportable product and is subsidized by drug dealers which the

farmer may be in debt to for loans and seeds.⁵³ By destroying the opium poppy crop, the main ones hurt are the farmers, and it puts them in a bad position with the drug dealers, endangering the farmer, family and community. A more beneficial approach would involve several years of a crop substitution program⁵⁴ followed by a crop eradication program. Crop substitution programs have been shown to be beneficial in eliminating opium cultivation in Pakistan, but it does take time to convert the farmers. In order to implement a crop substitution program, the farmers need assistance with loans and seed, vines or trees to start their new crops. Other things necessary for a successful crop substitution program in Afghanistan would include improved irrigation systems and a secure transportation system.⁵⁵

The U.S. and Afghan government can also learn from the approach taken by the Taliban who knew that a strict ban on opium cultivation would cause an uprising among the farmers.⁵⁶ It was not until 1998 that the Taliban started to restrict the cultivation of opium poppies - mainly done to satisfy the UN and gain international recognition as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.⁵⁷ Lesson learned – Be willing to take the time to address root issues, rather than going for the quick fix.

Economic programs are needed to improve living conditions in Afghanistan. The Afghan people want to see improvements in their living conditions and would probably be glad to get back to where they were in the 1970s before the Afghan-Soviet War. Before the war started, Afghanistan produced enough agricultural products to supply the Afghan people and enough for export. Agricultural developments in concert with the opium elimination should move the country toward recovery. The Afghan people want to see benefits associated with their new government and their new freedom.

Economic developments in the area of oil and gas and other natural resources also show prospects. Recent explorations in Northern Afghanistan are projecting 18 times the oil and 3 times the natural gas reserves as previously reported.⁵⁸ These oil and gas resources could be used to help Afghanistan generate its own electricity where now it has to import energy and electricity. Making the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline project a reality would also provide needed revenues for the Afghan government to improve condition in the country. One key requisite for any development in Afghanistan is security, so projects like the pipeline can be built and maintained when operational.

The new Obama administration has conducted an assessment on Afghanistan over the first two months of the administration in an effort to develop a comprehensive new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan – with “clear, concise, attainable goals”. The assessment has identified that a strategy for Afghanistan must also include Pakistan - treating them as “two countries but one challenge”. On 27 March 2009, the Obama administration unveiled the new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The main goal of the new strategy is to “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and its safe haven”. The new strategy has drawn on the lessons learned over the last eight years in Afghanistan and are highlighted in the new strategy “white paper”.⁵⁹ Many of the topics discussed in this paper are mirrored in the new strategy.

The new strategy draws on all the elements of national power – diplomatic, informational, military and economic- and provides the resources to achieve the objectives. Diplomatic efforts will seek a regional solution to the situation, involving regional partners for security and economic solutions. An information campaign will be

addressed at stopping the spread of the insurgency and winning the moderate elements of the Taliban back into the Afghan mainstream. The military forces will be increased by 17 thousand troops over the next year based on the request by General McKiernan to fight the insurgency and train the Afghan National Security Forces – Army and Police. Economic assistance will continue and be increased in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but with controls and measures to monitor the progress of the various programs. Using all these elements of national power will be necessary to achieve the desired goal of a secure, stable and prosperous Afghan state.

Conclusion

The U.S. strategy towards Afghanistan has taken some interesting twists and turns over the past 60 years based on varying levels of interest and world conditions. Lessons have been learned in the process and need to be applied to future strategy decisions in Afghanistan. The U.S. has had some successes and some failures, and must learn from them both.

U.S. strategy is interest based, and that is apparent in the case of Afghanistan. The U.S. interest toward Afghanistan was driven by the desire to prevent countries from slipping under the control of communism. In the case of Afghanistan that U.S. policy did not serve address long-term concerns. The U.S. strategy to get the communists out of Afghanistan was indirect, and successful, but contributed to the unintended consequence of supporting the rise of radical Islamic power in the region. Once the communist government was driven from power in Afghanistan, the U.S. government lost interest and had limited means to deal directly with the country. The void cause by that

strategy did not work either, as Afghanistan slipped into civil war that ended with a radical Islamic government in power.

Current U.S. strategy towards Afghanistan is based on the vital interest of preventing countries from establishing safe havens for terrorists. This strategy has been partially successful in Afghanistan, but conditions are approaching a stalemate. A continuation of a protracted war will test the limits of the national will, not only of the U.S., but of all the coalition partners and the Afghan people. How the Obama administration adjusts and implements its new strategy toward Afghanistan in the next several years could determine the success or failure of the global war on terror. The U.S., coalition partners and the Afghan government must work in collaboration to establish an achievable strategy that leads to a successful “endgame”.

Endnotes

¹ Tom Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), 41-44.

² This is reflected in the following excerpt from the poem, “Passion of the Afghan,” by the iconic 17th-century Pashto poet Khusal Khan Khattak: “Pull out your sword and slay any one that says Pashtun and Afghan are not one! Arabs know this and so do Romans: Afghans are Pashtuns, Pashtuns are Afghans!” Excerpt provided by Richard H. Smyth, former US Consul in Peshawar, Pakistan.

³ Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 14-23.

⁴ For an excellent general review of Afghan history, including the background materials referenced above, see Sir Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A short History of its People and Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

⁵ Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 62-64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 76-89.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 94-105.

⁹ Ibid., 105-107.

¹⁰ Larry P. Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), 49-51.

¹¹ Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 107-109.

¹² Ibid., 114-117.

¹³ Ibid., 72-79.

¹⁴ Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War*, 49.

¹⁵ Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 72-79.

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¹⁷ Ibid., 125-127.

¹⁸ Ibid., 127-129.

¹⁹ Mary Anne Weaver, "Blowback," May 1996, <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96may/blowback.htm> (accessed September 24, 2008).

²⁰ Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 129.

²¹ Ibid., 141.

²² Ibid., 137-144.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 137.

²⁵ Ibid., 143-144.

²⁶ Ibid., 145-147.

²⁷ Ibid., 147-148.

²⁸ Ibid., 146-148.

²⁹ Ibid., 145-149.

³⁰ Ibid., 149-150.

³¹ Ibid., 149-151.

³² Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, CRS, RL30588 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, July 11, 2008), 5.

³³ Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 157.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

³⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 139.

³⁶ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, Center for Military History, "The United States Army in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom, October 2001-March 2002", CMH Pub 70-83-1, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Afghanistan/Operation%20Enduring%20Freedom.htm>, (accessed January 4, 2009).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest*, 169.

⁴³ Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance*, 7.

⁴⁴ Woodward, *Bush at War*, 192.

⁴⁵ Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance*, 8.

⁴⁶ Woodward, *Bush at War*, 315.

⁴⁷ Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance*, 9.

⁴⁸ G. K. Herring, *The War in Afghanistan: A Strategic Analysis*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 7, 2003), 19.

⁴⁹ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2004), 371-396.

⁵⁰ Richard deVillafranca, "Reconsidering Afghanistan: Time for an "Azimuth Check",
Parameters 38, no. 4 (Winter 2008-09): 78.

⁵¹ Catherine Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*, CRS, R40156 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, January 23, 2009), 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵³ Richard H. Smyth, U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, 1992-1996, with responsibilities for U.S. activities in NWFP and Afghan internal developments, interview by author, Carlisle, PA, March 16, 2009.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Rashid, *Taliban*, 118.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

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