



## Post-2014 Afghanistan Wargame Analysis STRATEGIC WARGAMING SERIES

14-15 January 2014



**UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE**  
**Center for Strategic Leadership & Development**  
**650 Wright Ave**  
**Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013**

The findings contained in this report are based on the results of an academic wargame conducted at the United States Army War College 14-15 January 2014. Except where expressly indicated, the ideas presented are derived directly from the comments of wargame participants. The views contained in this report are intended to inform senior Army leaders including, but not confined to, members of the Army Staff, Geographic Combatant Commands and Army Service Component Commands. This report does not express the policies or official views of the United States Government, the Department of Defense or the United States Army.

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**STRENGTH *and* WISDOM**

# Report Documentation Page

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**United States Army War College Strategic Wargaming Series  
Wargame 2-14 Post-2014 Afghanistan**

**Executive Summary**

The Afghanistan Futures Wargame conducted 14-15 January 2014 brought together specialists with expertise on Afghanistan, China, India, Iran and Pakistan, international relations and national security affairs from academia, government and private think-tanks to consider U.S. policy options for Afghanistan beyond 2014.

The overarching finding of this wargame is that, except for the issues associated with ungoverned space, the United States has relatively few national interests in Afghanistan going forward. U.S. national interests in Pakistan are greater than those in Afghanistan, and are centered on non-use, nonproliferation and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, combined with concern over internal stability and the presence of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). Future U.S. policy toward Afghanistan should be adjusted to match these interests, should seek opportunities for cooperation where the interests of other stakeholders converge with U.S. interests and should be part of a broader regional, less military-centric policy.

An important focus of the wargame was to identify the factors experts took into account (See pages 6-7.) to develop options for senior leaders to consider. Based on these factors, each group developed an option to achieve the policy ends they had identified:

Transitioning to a "New Normal"- the military is in the background and the diplomats are in the foreground. This requires a draw-down of traditional combat military forces and missions, a refined counter-terrorism approach within a regional context, and expands training and advising efforts to non-security entities within the Afghan government by non-DOD elements of the U.S. government. (See page 7 for details.)

Security through Multilateral Regional Economic Development - a multilateral regional approach focused on regional economic development as an indirect means to satisfy U.S. national interests. This requires a shift in focus from military to economic emphasis with significant diplomatic requirements, particularly pertaining to nuclear weapons. It would require a gradual reduction in military support of Afghanistan aimed at retaining the capabilities necessary to achieve objectives. (See page 9 for details.)

Risks to the success of these options include the perceived and actual stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan, other stakeholders' competing interests, limited U.S. domestic support for significant regional engagement and the influence multilateral approaches may give to other actors. (See page 10 for further analysis.)

Analysis of required capabilities and Landpower considerations determined that approximately 10,000 would be the minimal Army force level for necessary theater setting and enabling capabilities in post-2014 Afghanistan. The 10,000 does not include forces to execute Security Force Assistance (SFA) missions. (See page 10 for more insights.)



## Report on Game Afghan Futures Wargame

### Overview

The Afghanistan Futures Wargame conducted 14-15 January 2014 brought together specialists with expertise on Afghanistan, China, India, Iran and Pakistan, international relations and national security affairs from academia, government and private think-tanks to consider U.S. policy options for Afghanistan beyond 2014. Game designers divided the panel into two groups to elicit expert knowledge to inform policy makers regarding factors and considerations the experts deemed significant for policy formulation. Each group had a mix of theorists and practitioners; one group was weighted in favor of practitioners; this group will be referred to as the Practitioners. The other group was weighted in favor of theorists and will be referred to as the Theorists. During facilitated, non-attribution sessions each group answered four key questions:

1. What, if any, U.S. national interests exist in the region and to what level (survival, vital, important or peripheral)?
2. What other actors' interests impact U.S. interests linked to Afghanistan?
3. What options should the U.S. consider or pursue to achieve national interests in and around Afghanistan?
4. What risks are associated with the selected options?

The groups rejoined for a final plenary session during which each group presented a recommended policy option to afford the full panel an opportunity to question and challenge each option.

### Results

#### U.S. National Interests

Participants were asked to list potential U.S. national interests in Afghanistan and the surrounding region and then to refine the list and assign an intensity of interest to develop a national interest matrix.<sup>1</sup> The following matrix shows the results for both the *Practitioners* (*italicized*) and **Theorists** (**bold**).

Basic Interest	Intensity of Interest			
	Survival	Vital	Important	Peripheral
Defense of Homeland <i>Practitioners</i> <b>Theorists</b>	<i>Homeland, US Interests and allies secure from terrorist attacks [AQ and other VEOs]; Stable Pakistan with secure WMD</i>	<i>Stable Afghanistan within a stable region (with emphasis on Pakistan)</i> <b>Regional nuclear non-use, non-proliferation and no expansion of nuclear capabilities</b>	<b>No nation in the region serves as a terrorist threat to the U.S. Homeland and allies; Regional stability - not a place of conflict</b>	
Economic Well-being			<i>Regional commitment to</i>	<b>Viable, self-sufficient region</b>

<sup>1</sup> Game designers followed the methodology for developing a national interest matrix introduced by Dr. Donald E. Nuechterlein in 1979.

Basic Interest	Intensity of Interest			
	Survival	Vital	Important	Peripheral
			<i>Afghanistan/Pakistan economic sustainability</i>	through economic integration
Favorable World Order		<i>Viability of NATO</i>		Peace between Pakistan and India and Pakistan and Afghanistan; Pakistan remains a functioning state; No regional hegemon emerges; Regional institutions handle regional issues; viability of NATO
Promotion of Values			<i>Promotion of universal Human rights and democracy/rule of law</i>	Promotion of human rights, including women's rights and democratic values

Both groups reduced the scale for intensity of interest from four tiers to three for developing their policy options. the Practitioners discarded the low end by deciding that peripheral meant ‘not worth expending any resources.’ the Theorists decided that (a) there was no survival interest from a US perspective associated with Afghanistan and (b) there was going to be insufficient time to address how the multiple peripheral US interests could/would/should impact future policy—but that any impact wouldn’t/shouldn’t outweigh the impact of the vital and important interests. Taking this difference into account, the results for both groups are similar: they rated the security or potential employment of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal as the most important U.S. national interest in this region, ahead of protecting the Homeland from terrorist threats, and regional stability. The Practitioners included economic, world order and values interests, ranking them lower in intensity than the security interests, although they identified linkages between each of the retained non-security interests and regional stability, identifying them as necessary conditions for regional stability. In contrast, the Theorists initially considered and then discarded non-security interests when they cut the list of interests to the top three. During the closing plenary, members of the Theorists challenged the Practitioners for including the viability of NATO as a vital national interest and challenged the notion that the intensity of any identified interests rose to the level of “survival.” Although formal consensus was not achieved among the combined groups, the members of the Practitioners appeared to cede the point regarding survival interests but held their ground on including the viability of NATO as a U.S. national interest because of the implications beyond South Asia. A notable difference between the groups in developing their U.S. national interest matrices and in subsequent discussions was that the Practitioners tended to operate from a global framework whereas the Theorists focused more specifically on the region.

The most significant finding regarding U.S. national interests is that the nexus of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal, the presence of AQ Central and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and threats to the internal stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan significantly heightens the importance of this region to the United States. A second significant finding is that both groups viewed the stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan as inextricably interlinked. A third finding, identified during post-wargame analysis, is that the logic of

categorizing regional stability as a Defense of Homeland interest is only valid under a very specific set of circumstances that rarely occur together. That reasoning appears to have been valid for Afghanistan in the period leading up to the 2001 AQ attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and until the Tora Bora operation pushed AQ into Pakistan. During that period, the lack of security and stability in Afghanistan created a safe haven for AQ, which combined with AQ's virulent anti-U.S. agenda led to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. A more appropriate categorization for regional stability in most circumstances would be Favorable World Order. Unless specific direct linkages between regional stability and an extant threat to the U.S. Homeland can be established, in regions non-contiguous to the United States regional stability should be considered a Favorable World Order interest, not a Defense of Homeland interest and as such should not be considered a survival or vital interest.

### **Other Actors' Interests**

Participants were asked to list other stakeholders in the future of Afghanistan and to identify their respective national interests regarding Afghanistan. The matrix at Annex A shows detailed results for both the Practitioners and the Theorists. The participants were given a short list (China, India, Pakistan, Russia and Iran) of countries to consider and were allowed to add other actors they believed to be significant stakeholders. Both groups considered the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) as a key stakeholder and added the Central Asian States<sup>2</sup> (CAS), Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states, and NATO/ISAF force providers as external stakeholders in Afghanistan's future. In addition, the Practitioners added the European Union and the Theorists added two non-state actors, the Afghan Taliban and AQ.

The interests of other stakeholders in the future of Afghanistan provide potential opportunities for cooperation and also reveal sources of potential friction that could generate future conflict if ignored. Increased prosperity within Afghanistan and across the broader region was the most widely shared common interest with the least opposition. Although it was not explicitly identified as an interest for every participant during the discussion of interests, both groups viewed increased prosperity as a universal interest across the region during the subsequent discussion of policy options. Almost all of the state actors and both international organizations were considered to have a common interest in keeping their countries (or member states) safe and secure from terrorism. The two outliers that the participants did not identify as sharing this interest are Iran and Pakistan. Both have histories of using terrorist groups as proxies against their adversaries, yet both suffer from attacks by groups that they label as terrorists and go to considerable efforts to protect themselves from terrorist acts. Mitigation of narcotics trafficking was also a widely shared interest with only the Afghan Taliban among the stakeholders considered not identified as sharing this interest. As opium trafficking is a major source of revenue for the Taliban, they are unlikely to support policies aimed at advancing this interest. These widely shared common interests provide potential opportunities for cooperation and could be a basis for advancing U.S. interests within a multilateral framework.

Afghan internal stability and security and regional stability were also identified as national interests for most of the stake-holding countries although both groups identified significant nuances and differences in what they believed each country would view as acceptable security or stability and noted that in some instances what would be acceptable to one country might well be unacceptable to another; thereby creating a situation in which the satisfaction of one's country's interest would be perceived by the other country as deleterious to

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<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan



its interests. Such differences appear most likely between India and Pakistan, and Pakistan and Afghanistan. Other interests identified were shared by only a few stakeholders or not at all. Furthermore, interests such as maintaining or increasing influence were viewed in a competitive, sometimes zero-sum framework and thus are sources of potential friction that could generate future conflict if ignored.

### **Observations on Other Stakeholders**

Significant differences emerged over whether AQ would seek to regain a safe haven in Afghanistan following U.S. withdrawal. While some supported this view others held that safe haven in Afghanistan may be not so important because AQ has other options such as Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Syria or North Africa and others believe that Afghanistan remains important to AQ only because of the U.S. presence there and that once the U.S. forces are gone it will not seek to return to Afghanistan.

Because the participants held that after 2014 Pakistan will be a higher priority effort to the United States than Afghanistan, they identified Pakistani national interests not directly connected to Afghanistan in addition to those connected to it. The central tenet of Pakistan's national security elites is that India is an existential threat to Pakistani security. All other national security issues, including the relationship with Afghanistan and internal security challenges, are viewed through the lens of Pakistan's relationship with India, the most important aspect of which is Pakistan's conventional military inferiority. Another significant point regarding Pakistan is that some participants asserted that U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan would be perceived by Pakistan as in its national interest. This assertion appears to be based on dual assumptions that the United States and Pakistan compete for influence in Afghanistan and that competition for influence is a zero-sum game.

Russia and the CAS were seen as sharing the perception that Afghanistan is a source of narcotics trade and extremism affecting regional stability. For Russia this concern is focused on the Caucasus and for the CAS manifests as concern about the 'bleed-over' of Afghan instability.

In discussing the interests of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States, participants identified Saudi concern over its ability to influence U.S. policy in areas about which it cares as a key driver of Saudi policy toward Afghanistan and South Asia more generally. They believed that the Saudis perceive their influence on the United States is declining because of development of U.S. domestic energy resources that reduces U.S. dependence on imported oil.

### **Considerations for the Development of Policy Options**

Although the structure of the wargame forced the participants to consider U.S. and other actors' national interests in Afghanistan, it was apparent that the participants readily accepted the need to consider what is at stake for whom as the foundation for any viable policy option. In addition, both groups adopted multilateral approaches that addressed the future of Afghanistan within the context of a coherent policy toward the broader region. Both groups, based on overarching concern about the security or potential employment of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, clearly considered Pakistan a higher priority effort than Afghanistan going forward. Both groups also distinguished between long-term, steady-state policies and appropriate policies for a transitional period that would evolve from the existing Afghanistan-centric, military-centric policy to a regional Pakistan-centric policy with a more balanced application of all elements of national power. These approaches acknowledged U.S. budgetary reductions, anticipated reductions in military force structure and increased emphasis on East Asia in overall U.S. national security

policy as significant constraints on U.S. policy options for Afghanistan. The Practitioners group was particularly concerned that the United States needed a carefully crafted narrative for the transition period to counter what they believed to be an inevitable AQ/Taliban narrative that U.S./ISAF military withdrawal represents their victory and strategic defeat for the United States and its partners. The counter- or pre-emptive message must be: we are reducing our support to Afghanistan because it is succeeding and needs less support. Both groups explicitly considered and—although a few participants disagreed—rejected sunk costs as a justification for significant future investment of U.S. resources into Afghanistan and assert that past investment in Afghanistan is a poor rationale for future policy. Finally, both groups consider conflicting interests among the stakeholders as sources and potential triggers for future conflict and they consider converging interests as bases for future cooperation with other stakeholders. Recognition of the breadth of potentially converging interests among multiple stakeholders led the Theorists to adopt a multilateral regional approach as their preferred option.

## Range of Options

A significant portion of the wargame focused on options available to the United States as we proceed beyond 2014. While the exercise did not allow time to fully develop and analyze multiple options, each group selected one option to present in the plenary session. The groups adopted slightly different approaches for developing options. The Practitioners addressed each of the six U.S. national interests they accepted individually in turn, identifying objectives (ends) for each, and then identifying ways and means for each objective. In contrast, the Theorists addressed their identified U.S. national interests as a set and developed objectives to support that set of interests.

**Option 1: Transitioning to a “New Normal”** in which the military is in the background and the diplomats are in the foreground. This option proposed by the Practitioners requires a draw-down of traditional combat military forces and missions<sup>3</sup>, a refined counter-terrorism approach within a regional context, and expands training and advising efforts to non-security entities within the GIRoA by non-DOD elements of the USG. The primary effort would be to establish a multilateral regional consultative forum consisting of important regional actors to facilitate resolution of contentious issues such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan border dispute. Developing a new narrative for the transition period is a critical piece of this option. This group offered six interests with subsequent ends (objectives), ways and means.

- Stable Pakistan with secure weapons of mass destruction (survival)

Ends: Internal Pakistani insurgency defeated, Pakistani economic growth, address Pakistani ‘insecurities’, establish good governance, legitimize the Durand line, limit production of weapons of mass destruction, and eliminate proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Ways: The United States would accomplish this by developing a regionally endorsed peace process that would explicitly include steps to address Pakistan’s high priority security concerns that align with U.S. interests. Additionally, the United States would reinvigorate the strategic dialogue with Pakistan. The United States would need to explore economic incentives and investment opportunities as well as continue to build Pakistan’s whole-of-government capacity.

Means: Primarily a diplomatic effort; however, it could involve significant levels of funding for Foreign Military Financing, Economic Support Funds and Development Assistance for Pakistan.

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<sup>3</sup> See the section below entitled “[Army Force Structure Implications](#)” for an estimate of required forces.

- Protect the Homeland, U.S. interests and allies (survival)

Ends: Defeat core AQ, disrupt and contain the remainder of AQ, disrupt other extremists, prevent safe havens, and maintain a security relationship with regional partners in Central Asia.

Ways: Transition from counterinsurgency military operations to a counter terrorism (CT) strategy with regional partners. The United States and its regional partners would maintain a forward military presence, including ISR, and focus on security assistance and security cooperation, including Train, Advise and Assist (TAA) missions to enable the GIRoA to provide sufficient security to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a host for AQ or other anti-U.S. VEOs.

Means: Continued funding and forces for CT and SA/SC/TAA missions.

- Stable Afghanistan within a stable region (vital)

Ends: Ensure a stable Afghan government; prevent a Taliban overthrow, enable a capable Afghan National Security Force (ANSF), mitigate the ability of adversaries to use proxy forces and other means to impede achievement of U.S. and Afghan goals, and ensure an inclusive political settlement.

Ways: A regionally endorsed peace process would be central; continue funding the Afghan government and ANSF and support a NATO-led TAA mission.

Means: Funding commitment; significant diplomatic resources; appropriate leadership; and U.S., NATO, and other coalition partner presence.

- Regional commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan economic sustainability (important)

Ends: Regional cooperation process, more open regional trade, improved transportation infrastructure.

Ways: Enable a regional economic cooperation process that seeks commitments from economic stakeholders and international organizations. Additionally, the United States must seek to remove or reduce barriers to trade and improve the transportation infrastructure. Free trade may not be a possibility, but reducing the obstacles would move the process forward.

Means: This effort would require a significant diplomatic commitment and economic development funds.

- Viability of NATO (important)

Ends: Agreed post 2014 NATO presence, Taliban/AQ narrative that U.S./ISAF withdrawal is a victory for them and a defeat for the United States and its NATO partners effectively countered.

Ways: The United States must assist NATO in successfully handing over security to the ANSF, ensure NATO limits its approach to a post 2014 Afghanistan, and deliver a positive narrative describing the sustainable gains achieved. Achieving these objectives will require an agreement on the NATO presence after 2014 and working diplomacy to get a bilateral security agreement (BSA)-like agreement with Afghanistan that provides a basis for both U.S. and NATO assistance in the future.

Means; Diplomatic effort to consummate BSA and keep NATO/ISAF partners engaged and willing to commit resources, funding and troops for residual U.S. presence.

- Promotion of universal human rights and democracy or rule of law (important)

Ends: Afghan government does not collapse, civil society groups grow, police and judicial reform advances.

Ways: The United States supports civil society groups beyond 2014, works to prevent government collapse, promotes a positive Afghan identity, assists in reforming the police and judiciary and develops a plan for transition of power to the Afghan government.

Means: The U.S. Department of State would develop an integrated country strategy to build capacity for good governance and civil society and would require sustained funding, diplomatic engagement and non-government organization involvement.

**Option 2: Security through Multilateral Regional Economic Development.** The Theorists proposed a multilateral regional approach focused on regional economic development as an indirect means to satisfy U.S. national interests. This option requires a shift in focus from military to economic emphasis with significant diplomatic requirements, particularly pertaining to nuclear weapons. It would require a gradual reduction in military support of Afghanistan aimed at retaining the capabilities necessary to achieve objectives. This group offered four objectives with accompanying ways and means believed necessary to address these interests.

#### *Interests*

- Regional nuclear non-use, non-proliferation and no expansion of existing arsenals (vital)
- No nation in the region serves as a terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland and allies (important)
- Regional stability—not a place of conflict (important)

#### *Ends (Objectives), Ways and Means*

End: Promote regional diplomatic and information integration.

Ways: Developing multilateral diplomatic institutions and building and increasing cooperative behavior among actors in the region.

Means: Diplomacy involving India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, potentially including a summit meeting of heads of state. Additionally, the United States should encourage and participate in technical, economic and regulatory workshops.

End: Promote a multilateral regional economic integration development plan.

Ways: Develop trade infrastructure, effective alternatives to narcotic trade, and promoting foreign investment.

Means: Foreign aid, open access to U.S. markets, develop trade policy and leverage international financial institutions.

End: Improve the ability to monitor and react responsively to nuclear and terrorist threats from the region.

Ways: Conduct military to military engagement with regional actors, retain an optimal intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and analysis capability as well as retain the ability to deter and punish aggressors.

Means: Basing and access agreements, security assistance and security cooperation agreements, and the maintenance or creation of required force structure and capabilities to achieve this objective.

End: Prevent short term insurgent overthrow of the Afghan government.

Ways: Continue some minimal, necessary level of support to the GIRoA and encourage the reconciliation process with or without the U.S. in the lead.

Means: Gradual draw-down of economic and military support and persistent engagement with Afghan leaders.

## **Risk Assessment**

Both groups identified risks associated with the option they briefed.

The Practitioners identified these risks associated with the option of Transitioning to a New Normal. Other stakeholders pursuing their own interests that are incompatible with U.S. interests could undermine success. The perception that the GIRoA has only limited legitimacy could also undermine success. Within Afghanistan power could devolve from the central government to regional warlords. A viable Afghan government could evolve into one that does not support U.S. interests in the region. If U.S. policy fails, terrorist groups could reemerge, instability could spread to Central Asia, threatening trade access and energy supplies for Europe, the United States and NATO could lose credibility, access and influence, and extremism and narcotics trafficking could expand. These direct effects would increase the risk to the U.S. homeland of terrorist attacks by VEOs; a breakdown of central government in Afghanistan leading to civil war would increase the risk of violence spreading across borders into other parts of the region, generate a new flood of Afghan refugees and increase the cost to the United States if it has to reengage. There was significant concern that a breakdown in Afghanistan would fuel greater instability in Pakistan, increasing the risk of a loss of control of Pakistan's WMD and that some of those WMD could fall into the terrorists' hands.

To mitigate these risks, this group recommended creating new partnerships with other actors with vested interest (e.g., Iran, Taliban), continuing conditions based International funding, an orderly phased transition, re-invigorated diplomacy to address unresolved historical issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan, confidence building measures between them, conclude the BSA, maintaining CT and intelligence cooperation, and persistent and consistent engagement to broaden and deepen relationships.

The Theorists identified risks associated with adoption of its option of multilateral regional economic development: Uncertainty over the stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan, limited U.S. domestic political support for a high level of engagement in the region, the multi-lateral approach may allow other major powers to increase their influence, the international community may not step up to support the effort, Asian economic growth may stagnate, undermining economic development, and the underlying premise that economic prosperity may significantly mitigate risks may be wrong.

## **Army Force Structure Implications and Landpower Considerations**

Following the wargame the U.S Army War College Concepts and Doctrine Division (CDD) was asked to validate a participant assertion that 10,000 would be the minimal acceptable force level in post-2014 Afghanistan. CDD analysis revealed that the wargame participants did not foresee the hidden manpower cost for maintaining even a small footprint in

Afghanistan. It would require approximately 10,000 Army personnel to operate two joint bases in Afghanistan, such as currently exist at Bagram and Kandahar. One location would serve as the main Security Force Assistance center, and the other a special operations base. This number reflects computations from the rules of allocation for the Total Army Analysis Process and is not just an “above the line calculation.” It predominantly represents enablers. The total also does not include additional troops as required for mission-tailored packages or an estimate for contractors that the mission demands for certain logistical functions. Current doctrine also insufficiently captures force structure that supports the Security Cooperation mission. Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs) do not have assigned units to execute mission command for security cooperation tasks within its Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF).<sup>4</sup>

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Afghan presidential election results in April 2014 could significantly alter the likelihood of success going forward. If the process is perceived as reasonably open and fair and the winner supports conclusion of a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) that allows a residual U.S. military presence after 2014, then future success is more likely than if one or both of these conditions is not met. Clouded election results would undermine the winner’s legitimacy and could trigger renewed political violence and insurgency. Failure to conclude a BSA would undermine minimally necessary levels of security and necessitate termination of efforts to build and sustain ANSF capabilities and capacity. Were either of these to happen, the conclusions of this wargame would have to be reassessed.

#### Conclusions:

- U.S. budgetary reductions, anticipated reductions in military force structure and increased emphasis on East Asia in overall U.S. national security policy are significant limitations on U.S. policy options for Afghanistan and the surrounding region.
- The United States has relatively limited national interests in Afghanistan going forward.
  - The nexus of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal, the presence of Central and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs), and threats to the internal stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan significantly heightens the importance of this region to the United States over what it would be were any of these elements missing.
  - The stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan are inextricably interlinked; policies that attempt to address one without addressing the other are likely to fail.
  - Unless specific direct linkages between regional stability and an extant threat to the U.S. Homeland can be established, regional stability in regions non-contiguous to the United States such as South Asia should be considered a Favorable World Order interest, not a Defense of Homeland interest and as such should not be considered survival or vital interests.
- The interests of other stakeholders in the future of Afghanistan provide potential opportunities for cooperation and also reveal sources of potential friction that could generate future conflict if ignored.
- 10,000 would be the minimal Army force level for necessary theater setting and enabling capabilities in post-2014 Afghanistan and that number excludes forces to execute Security Cooperation/Security Assistance (SC/SA) and Train, Advise and Assist (TAA) missions.

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<sup>4</sup> Additional information can be obtained from Dr. John Bonin, Director, Concepts and Doctrine Division, U.S. Army War College, (717) 245-3457, email: john.a.bonin.civ@mail.mil

- Because Afghanistan is a land theater and the ANSF is primarily a land force, the Army should expect to provide the vast majority of forces for the SC/SA, TAA and CT missions during an extended transition period required for the ANSF to build and develop the capability to sustain their forces without external assistance.

Recommendations:

- U.S. policies should evolve from the existing Afghanistan-centric, military-centric policy to a regional Pakistan-centric policy with a more balanced application of all elements of national power within a multilateral framework.
- The United States should leverage the interests of other stakeholders in the future of Afghanistan by leading a multilateral effort that focuses on regional economic development, while maintaining minimal essential CT capabilities in the region.
- The United States should develop a carefully crafted narrative for the transition period to counter an AQ/Taliban narrative that U.S./ISAF military withdrawal represents their victory and strategic defeat for the United States and its partners. The message must be: we are reducing our support to Afghanistan because it is succeeding and needs less support.
- Sunk costs arguments should be rejected as justification for significant future investment of U.S. resources in Afghanistan.
- Carefully manage the transition period, including:
  - Continuing to build and sustain ANSF capabilities and capacity to provide security primarily through SC/SA including TAA missions.
  - Maintaining Congressional and public support for devoting sufficient resources for a successful transition in Afghanistan.
  - Maintaining a narrative that focuses on Afghan success.

Annex A Other Actors' Interests

Actor	Interest Category			
	Defense of Homeland	Economic Well-being	Favorable World Order	Promotion of Values
<b>Afghanistan (GIROA)</b> <i>Practitioners Theorists</i>	Survival - government exists and remains in control; Strong partnership with the United States; <i>Autonomy, sovereignty; Ongoing security arrangement with the US and NATO; Peace, internal stability</i>	International resources, aid and investment; <i>Working economy; Sustained external resourcing</i>	<i>Cooperative/transparent relationship with Pakistan</i>	Limited foreign military presence in communities
<b>Taliban (Afghan)</b>	All foreign forces out of Afghanistan; Taliban control of government	Economic networks and revenue flows reestablished		Islamic Republic of Afghanistan independent of outside influence reestablished
<b>Pakistan</b>	Credible nuclear deterrent with India maintained; Fragmentation, expanded insurgency, and instability in Pakistan prevented; Afghan refugee population reduced; Afghan influence over Pakistani internal politics limited; <i>Internal security; Pakistani sovereignty; Territorial integrity</i>	Trade and investment	Keep India out of Afghanistan: Be the conduit for Chinese influence in Afghanistan; <i>Proxies able to exert influence over Afghan politics</i>	
<b>Al Qaeda</b>	Safe haven in Afghanistan regained			Status as the lead global terrorist organization achieved; Alliances built and sustained
<b>India</b>	Be safe and secure from terrorism; <i>Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan countered, Security; Status as an influential regional player maintained</i>	Economic influence in Afghanistan for raw materials; <i>Economic cooperation with China in exchange for Chinese support in other arenas</i>	Regional stability; <i>Radical Islam countered; Stable Afghanistan; Stable Pakistan</i>	
<b>China</b>	Be safe and secure from terrorism; <i>Spread of radical Islam into China and Central Asia prevented</i>	<i>Extraction of minerals and other economic resources; Mitigation of narcotics trafficking</i>	Regional stability; <i>Pakistani credible deterrent with India maintained; Stability of several regions near Chinese borders</i>	
<b>CAS</b>	Be safe and secure from terrorism; Mitigation of narcotics trafficking; <i>Breakdown of security</i>	Regional economic integration; <i>Access to resources</i>	<i>Insecurity prevented from bleeding over (north) from Afghanistan</i>	



Actor	Interest Category			
	Defense of Homeland	Economic Well-being	Favorable World Order	Promotion of Values
	<i>forces (ANA/ANP) in Afghanistan and reemergence of regional warlords prevented</i>			
<b>Iran</b>	<b>Taliban rule prevented; US influence in Afghanistan weakened; Shi'a supported in Afghanistan; Influence maintained; Reduced US presence</b>	<b>Oil trade expanded; Oil pipeline to India maintained and expanded; Sanctions lifted</b>	<b>Sphere of influence in Western Afghanistan maintained; Pakistani domination prevented; Stable and prosperous Afghanistan; Recognition of regional influence</b>	<i>Mitigation of narcotics trafficking</i>
<b>Russia</b>	<b>Safe and secure from terrorism; Regional hegemony; Mitigation of narcotics trafficking; Spillage of Afghanistan instability (arms and drugs) into the Caucasus Region avoided</b>		<b>Regional stability; Radical Islam countered; US goals undermined by struggling with its policy in Afghanistan; Influence maintained</b>	<i>Mitigation of narcotics trafficking</i>
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Safe and secure from terrorism</b>	<i>Economic expansion; Economic interests in Central Asia (gas, business, etc.)</i>	<i>NATO leadership role in Afghanistan assumed (but not as US surrogate); Increased regional influence</i>	<b>Status as a model modern Muslim nation achieved</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia<sup>5</sup></b>	<i>Threat from Iran countered; Stable Afghanistan</i>		<b>Leader of the Gulf States; Prosperous Afghanistan</b>	<i>Political and religious influence</i>
<b>Gulf States</b>	<b>Safe and secure from terrorism; Threat from Iran countered</b>	<b>Trade and investment</b>	<b>Regional stability; Prosperous, stable Afghanistan</b>	<b>Peaceful Islamic nation; Sunni dynamic</b> <i>Political and religious influence</i>
<b>NATO ISAF (-US)<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Demonstrated partnership with the US; Relevance of NATO Safe and secure from terrorism; Mitigation of narcotics trafficking</b>		<i>Afghanistan and regional stability achieved; Failure avoided; Coherence and relevance attained</i>	
<b>EU</b>	<i>Afghanistan and regional stability and security</i>	<i>Energy</i>	<i>Diplomatic influence</i>	<i>Mitigation of narcotics trafficking, Respect for human rights and rule of law</i>

<sup>5</sup> the Practitioners discussed Saudi Arabia as one of the Gulf States, the Theorists separated it from the other Gulf states

<sup>6</sup> The Practitioners used ISAF (-US) for this; the Theorists Heavy Group used NATO.