Chapter-IV
US Response to September 11: Implications for the Taliban
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US RESPONSE TO SEPTEMBER 11: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TALIBAN

While the contours of US foreign policy in 2001 can be divisible into two parts as pre and after September 11, in identifying those two periods as different, there is a need to separate substance from appearance as well as essence from rhetoric. It is not true that "everything changed" after the terror attacks in New York and Washington.1 The core US policy of "empire management of global domination and the consolidation of unchallenged strategic control"2 remained unchanged. Throughout 2001, the foreign policy of the US remained the policy of a strategically unchallenged superpower, at the apogee of its power and influence, rewriting the global rules for how to manage its empire. Post September 11, the policy frameworks asserted by political elites and the explanations designed to justify policy actions changed quite dramatically. However, the actions to maintain the power trajectory remained consistent, though earlier tendencies towards military aggression and unilateralism increased drastically after September 11, 2001.

Most Americans paid scant attention to global events, not even to the actions and policies of their own government around the world. The broad understanding of US foreign policy and actions around the world was perceived by the American public as noble goals of "nation-building" or "democratization," and that US foreign aid was generous and designed to uplift the poor and disadvantaged. Thus, few Americans considered that US policies abroad might be viewed as anything other than friendly and benign by most of the world. Neither, the attack on the World Trade Center mean an "end to innocence" as was widely projected. American policy makers were not "innocent" of the carnage US policies had wrought around the world and the resentment such policies had created. The Americans had a sense of security coupled with impunity and isolationism. Hence they

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1 Interview with Prof. William Zartman, School of Advanced International Studies, Washington DC, January 6, 2006.
took for granted that nothing US policymakers did around the world would ever have any serious consequences on their territory. As a result, many Americans were surprised by the attacks of September 11th. This period of shock and vulnerability also led to introspection on “why the hate us?”

The huge public support for the US war in Afghanistan seemed to be rooted in the sudden sense of vulnerability that accompanied with the loss of national pride. It was in this context of extreme ambiguity that ‘self-defense’ and ‘anti-terrorism’ took hold as the new twin pillars of US foreign policy. This framework supplanting not only the anti-communism of the Cold War and George Bush Senior’s New World Order, but laid to rest as well the global interventionism camouflaged as multilateralism at the heart of the Clinton’s foreign policy.

During Clinton’s years "assertive multi-lateralism"3 was the claimed basis for foreign policy. However, The commitment appeared rhetorical than real, and after the disastrous Somalia debacle of 1993, the rhetoric dropped but versions of it continued to resonate due to public appeal of such a framework. The idea of the US working in conjunction with the international community shaped a popular paradigm for post-Cold War foreign policy. Many were prepared to accept the Clintonites' claims that it was only because of "the congress" or "the senate" that the US failed to pay its UN dues, or to ratify treaties on the rights of children or the International Criminal Court.

When George Bush came into office in January 2001, it was against this rhetoric of the "multi-lateral" Clinton years that Bush foreign policy would be measured. George Bush took office following a campaign in which he condemned "nation-building," rejected most pending and a few existing treaties, and promised that US troops would never become involved in peacekeeping. It is also to be noted that US under President Bush was increasingly taking on an isolationist stance. Fareed Zakaria describes how "the United States has sought to use its great wealth and influence to insulate itself from the

troubles of the globe. In the month's preceding September 11, the Bush administration went several steps farther. All its initiatives and statements — national missile defense, the withdrawal from six treaties in as many months, the criticism of nation-building— were efforts to disentangle itself from the rest of the world. ... But the world comes back to bite you.". It was undeniably "the troubles of the globe" and their after-bite from which US elites sought to insulate themselves. But analysts like Zakaria also conveniently ignore the other half of the story of US global engagement. Gaining and maintaining control over the world's resources all remained central to the US national agenda.

Bush began his presidency with a policy of belligerent unilaterism, vis a vis Clinton's rhetoric of multi-lateralism. All major actors on Bush's foreign policy team were in agreement that American hegemony on a global scale was not only possible but also appropriate. But within that broad political agreement there was a big strategic debate over just how that US domination could best be achieved. The debate began right at the beginning, during the early 2001 confirmation hearings in the Senate for Bush's cabinet choices. The debate was drawn most sharply between Secretary of State Colin Powell on the one hand, and the Pentagon chiefs, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz on the other. Powell envisioned a US-dominated international "consensus," however militarized it might be, in whose name US policies could be imposed. The "Wolfowitz cabal," as the New York Times dubbed the deputy secretary and his semi-official Defense Policy Board of hard-line rightwing hawks, demanded a

5 At 64, Powell had already sat in three of the seats in the White House situation room-national security adviser to President Reagan for a year, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the First President Bush during the Gulf War and now secretary of state to the new Bush for the last nine months. Bob Woodward, Bush at War, (London: 2003), p.11.
6 Earlier in the year, when Rumsfeld was in discussions about becoming Bush's secretary of defense, he had a talk with the president-elect, a little test of sorts. He told Bush that during the eight years of Clinton, the natural pattern when challenged or attacked had been a "reflexive pullback" — caution, safety plays, even squeamishness. The Clinton weapon of choice was the standoff cruise missile. Rumsfeld left no doubt in Bush's mind that when that moment came, as it surely would, that the Unites States was threatened, he, as secretary of defense, would be coming to the president to unleash the military. The president could expect a forward-leaning action plan. Bob Woodward, ibid., p.20.
7 Phyllis Bennis, ibid.
unilateral assertion of military power as the first-choice option. They viewed the US as an unchallenged superpower that needs to pay little attention to the views of its allies.

By the end of the year, 2001, the Bush administration's increasingly unilateralist position had been consolidated while maintaining a highly public effort to don the mantle of international coalitions and partnerships as the seeming linchpin of the Global War on Terrorism during the Afghan war. It was a claim by a few top officials in the generally unilateralist Bush administration and a broad swath of similarly inclined US policymakers, but it was a claim that most of the world understood to be false.

United States Response to September 11: Global War on Terrorism

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, four hijacked commercial airliners launched the most devastating attack in US history. Two of the planes struck the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the third crashed into Pentagon and the fourth in Somerset County. The number of casualties was initially thought to be as high as 6,700, but was later estimated at about 3,000. President Bush was reading to second graders at the Emma E. Bookers Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida, when the news that a plane had hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center reached him. President Bush appeared before the

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8 To elucidate this fact, barely 100 days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, an international poll was released demonstrating just such a disparity. "A sampling of the political, media and business elite on five continents said that they believe the United States is mostly acting unilaterally in the fight against terrorism. By contrast, 70 percent of American opinion-makers in the survey said the United States is acting jointly with its friends and is taking into account the interests of its partners in the war on terrorism." Not for the first time, Washington's power-brokers seem to have fallen victim to their own propaganda. Phyllis Bennis, ibid.

9 At 8:46 a.m. American Airlines Flight 11, with 92 passengers and crew, crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center and at 9:03 a.m. United Airlines Flight 175, with 65 on board, crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center. 9:40 a.m. American Airlines Flight 77, carrying 64 people from Washington to Los Angeles, crashes into the Pentagon. At 10 a.m. United Flight 93, bound for San Francisco with 44 on board, changes course towards Washington, but crashes in Somerset County, Pa., 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. See http://www.indyinstitute.com/library/factfiles/crime/national/2001/sept11/timeline.html (Accessed on July 11, 2005)

television cameras in the Booker School's Media Center to make four-paragraph statement. He cautiously described what had happened as "an apparent terrorist attack" and that "Terrorism against our nation will not stand". Looking shaken, he promised that the full resources of the federal government would be employed to investigate and find "those folks who committed this act." When the planes attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, George Bush and his aides had a choice of how to respond. The choice they made was the immediate call for a military response, the call to war for the American people and for everyone else in the world who wished to be "with us," rather than treated as if they were "with the terrorists." The only choice offered was to go to war, to lay waste Afghanistan, relying on a coerced coalition and without a mantle of UN authority.

While the Security Council vote held within 24 hours of the attacks on the World Trade Center did not authorize any use of force, neither the Secretary-General nor any UN diplomats spoke up to dispute the US claim that its war in Afghanistan was somehow authorized under the UN Charter and that no Council authority was necessary. The Bush administration invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter, allowing a nation to use military force in self-defense, legitimated its entire unilateral war in Afghanistan. But Article 51 is quite limited, and allows the use of military force by a nation under attack only "until the Security Council has taken measures necessary" to deal with the problem.

Washington specifically did not call for Council action to respond, or even Council approval of a US response. Instead, on September 12, the Council passed resolution 1368, unanimously and with enormous emotional fervor, to condemn the attacks. In the text the Council "expressed its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001," but it did not authorize any military response, whether by UN, coalition, or unilateral US military forces. The resolution was not taken under the authority of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, a prerequisite for any authorization of military force. And absent that authorization, the unilateral US military force launched

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11 Echoing the famous "This will not stand" formulation his father had used 11 years earlier when he faced his greatest challenge after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Bob Woodward, ibid., pp. 15-16.
weeks after the New York and Washington attacks, across the world against uncertain
targets of unproven responsibility with inevitable and disastrous civilian consequences,
remained a complete violation of international law and the UN Charter.

Thus, another choice was rejected. The choice made was for war. That choice would
have been to immediately deem the attacks a crime against humanity, and call for a new,
global coalition to find and bring to justice the perpetrators, while beginning a major
effort to examine root causes, within US foreign policy, of such atrocities.

At an Outfit Airforce Base in Nebraska, President Bush convened the first meeting of the
National Security Council for the terrorist crisis on the very same day of the carnage. CIA
Director, George Tenet reported with near certainty that Bin Laden was behind the
attacks. Passenger manifests showed three known al Qaeda operatives had been on
American Airlines Flight 77, which had plowed into Pentagon. Al Qaeda was the only
terrorist Organization capable of such spectacular, well-coordinated attacks, Tenet said.
Intelligence monitoring had overheard a number of known Bin Laden operatives
congratulating each other after the attacks. Information collected days earlier but only
now being translated indicated that various known operatives around the world
anticipated a big event; none specified the day, time, place or method of attack. It was
pretty obvious there had been some kind of intelligence failure, and it looked like the FBI
and CIA were not communicating. The military, which seemed to have contingency

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12 One of them, Khalid Al-Midhar, had come to the CIA’s attention the previous year in Malaysia. A
paid CIA spy had placed at an al Qaeda meeting. They had informed the FBI, who put him on a
domestic watch list, but he had slipped into the United States over the summer and avoided
detection by the bureau. Bob Woodward, ibid. p.27.

13 A 1999 report for the National Intelligence Council, which oversees government intelligence
analysis, saying ‘Suicide bomber (s) belonging to Al Qaeda’s martyrdom Battalion could crash­
land an aircraft packed with high explosives into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the [CIA] or
the White House.’ News papers began to reveal the contents of a Presidential FBI briefing from
August 6, just 36 days prior to the September 11 attacks. The top-secret briefing said that
Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda were going to bring the fight to America, according to the
Toronto Star, for past attacks upon its training camps in Afghanistan. John Miller and Michael
Stone eds., The Cell: Inside the 9/11 plot and why the FBI and CIA Failed to stop it, (New York:
Hyperion, 2002), pp.76-84. Also see Tom Flocco, Secret Hearings Hide 9/11: Terrorist Links To
12, 2006)
plans for the most inconceivable scenarios, had no plans for Afghanistan, the sanctuary for Bin Laden and his network. The United States was caught unawares and unprepared.

After the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, US pressure on Afghanistan became intense as President George W. Bush declared that the US "will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."14 “We have to deny Al Qaeda sanctuary”, Tenet said. “Tell the Taliban we are finished with them. The Taliban and Al Qaeda were really the same.” Tenet pointed out that Al Qaeda, though headquartered in Afghanistan, operated worldwide, on all continents. “We have a 60 country problem”.15 Rumsfeld said that they should employ every tool of national power, not just the military but legal, financial, diplomatic and the CIA to vanquish the Taliban –Al Qaeda nexus and nab Osama bin Laden.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM: GOALS, STRATEGIES AND OUTCOME

War can never be separated from political intercourse, and if, in considering the matter, this is done in any way, all the threads of the different relations are to a certain extent broken, and we have before us a senseless thing without an object.

Carl von Clausewitz16

Operation Enduring Freedom dramatically transformed the strategic landscape of not only Afghanistan, but also of South Asia. It did so in ways that were largely unforeseen and unplanned at the outset of the war and the deteriorating security situation continue to baffle the US policy makers. Rarely has the gap been so great between the clarity of battlefield victory and the uncertainty of its end result. The claim of victory against this

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14 The Bush doctrine pronounced, “We will make no distinction between those who planned these acts and those who harbor them.” It was an incredibly broad commitment to go after terrorists and those who sponsor and protect terrorists, rather than just a proposal for a targeted retaliatory strike. The decision was made without consulting Cheney, Powell or Rumsfeld. Afghanistan and The Taliban at http://www.indystar.com/library/factfiles/crime/national/2001/sept11/taliban.html (Accessed on January 12, 2006)

15 Bob Woodward, ibid., p.33.

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new terrorism is Afghanistan also remains doubtful. The Taliban have been vanquished from power and Al Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan has been supposedly destroyed. However, post Taliban Afghanistan is not as a stable place and its present set of circumstances resemble the period before the emergence of Taliban when Afghanistan was facing anarchy caused by the power struggle and infighting between the various mujahideen.

Operation Enduring Freedom being a "new war" in a unipolar power structure gave the Bush administration considerable choice in strategy and planning.\(^{17}\) The scale and extent of the September 11 attacks had unified the nation, the impulse to avenge clouded the attention of US policymakers to war's possible stability effects and broader repercussions. With the beginning of military action in Afghanistan, the measure of success in came to be defined narrowly on battle victories than on nation building and long term stability. Also, the Bush administration shift of focus from Afghanistan to Iraq war provided space for the remnant Taliban to regroup in the Pakistan–Afghanistan border from where they strike and hide. Thus, the initial battle victories have now led to deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan which continues to perturb the US policy makers.

US war goals and strategy in Afghanistan:
The primary goals of the OEF in Afghanistan was targeting and destroying the Taliban and Al Qaeda combine. The secondary goals the United States policy makers might have hoped that Operation Enduring Freedom would serve:

- to deter rogue states from supporting or harbouring terrorists
- to counter any notion that the September 11 attacks would compel the United States to reduce its military engagement abroad; and
- to advance the US position in Central and South Asia,

In relation to deterrence effects, the US policy makers perceived the treatment meted to the Taliban should intimidate rogue states to be more careful in their support to terrorist

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organizations like Al Qaeda, who might target the United States. The deterrent effect might not extend to transnational terrorist organizations, like Al Qaeda, who are not necessarily dependent on state support for their anti-US operations. The speed, scale, and intensity of the US response to the September 11 attack undercut any expectation that the attack might lead to a reduction in US military activism abroad. The subsequent expansion of US military engagement abroad, occurring as part of the war against terrorism, further counters such expectations.\(^{18}\) The OEF certainly advanced the US position in Afghanistan and Central Asia and South Asia. It also has consolidated the US hand in Pakistan with the Musharraf regime now substantially dependent on US support and it has created a new basis for cooperation with India. US renewed ties to Pakistan and India may involve the United States in Kashmir dispute and Afghanistan as well. Pakistan's increased dependency on the United States is double-edged; maintaining Musharraf against internal opponents will not come cheap or easy.

The goals and strategy of Operation Enduring Freedom underwent several revisions during the first three weeks. This turbulence reflected the difficulty of finding a strategy that could reconcile the Bush Administration's immediate war aims with a set of broader, longer-term strategic considerations -- such as stability in Afghanistan and in the region surrounding it. During the war's third week it became clear that there was no such strategy available, and this posed a choice: either the United States would have to accept the prospect of a longer war or set aside some of its broader stability concerns. Given the potential political risks associated with any long-war scenario, this was an easy choice to make: the broader concerns were set aside.

The Taliban become the target

Post September 11, the Bush administration asserted various near-term military objectives to bring the leaders of Al Qaeda to justice and destroy their organizational capacity. This called for a carefully focused response involving special operations units and limited air strikes targeting the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. The notion of a

\(^{18}\) Peter Grier, *A reluctant empire stretches more; As the US begins to establish semi-permanent bases in Central Asia, troops are now deploying in the Philippines*, Christian Science Monitor, January 17, 2002.
low-profile operation with a reduced risk of collateral casualties had strong appeal for most allies like Pakistan. And it was supported by counter-terrorism experts and "new warfare" advocates as well. 19

More controversial and demanding were the objectives regarding targeting the Taliban. After September 11, Bush Administration officials variously suggested two possible goals for military action against the Taliban:

- First, to 'punish' them in a limited manner for their association with bin Laden and 'coerce' their cooperation in bringing him to justice;
- Second, to vanquish the Taliban, both as a form of punishment and in order to open the way for a new government in Afghanistan that would fully cooperate with US action against Al Qaeda.

Both of these objectives implied military operations of greater scope and intensity than the option of just targeting Al Qaeda. Both would involve air campaigns; even the lesser 'punish and coerce' option might require action on the scale of the 1999 effort in the Balkans, Operation Allied Force (OAF). 20 Targeting the Taliban complicated the task of international coalition building and a substantial bombing campaign implied a higher level of collateral damage. An International Gallup Association poll conducted in 37 countries shortly after the 11 September attacks found large majorities in most favoring a legal response over a military one. 21 Concerns about civilian casualties and qualms about the polarizing effects of a big bombing campaign fed controversy. 22 The retributive

aspect of such a campaign also raised international legal issues. Action against an Islamic state was much more disconcerting for Muslim and Arab governments, than an attempt to neutralize a terrorist organization and it added no practical benefits for them. For states like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, it constituted an attack on a protégée.

The more ambitious of the US anti-Taliban options like regime removal generated additional concerns of replacement and on stability in Afghanistan and the surrounding region. The contentious issue of boots on ground in terms of numbers and duration had to be dealt with. However, none of these issues or questions posed a near-term problem in terms of US public opinion, which after September 11, gave the Bush administration a blank check. The principal problem was opinion in foreign capitals. However, the Taliban’s isolation and policies had done a good job alienating Western opinion.

In the weeks preceding the war, the Bush administration exhibited an artful ambiguity about the goals and nature of the prospective military operation in Afghanistan. While Osama bin Laden was in the cross-hairs, regarding the Taliban, the administration publicly emphasized the "punish and coerce" option, while Pakistan attempted to convince the Taliban to comply to the US demands and obviate a strike. These hopes were belied as The demands made of the Taliban leadership were non-negotiable: turn over bin Laden and the Al Qaeda cadre, shut down all their camps and sites, and open Afghanistan to US inspections. Even had the Taliban leadership been ready to rid

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26 For further details See Bob Woodward, ibid.
themselves of bin Laden and his top associates, several elements of the US ultimatum made their compliance unlikely.

By some accounts there were as many as 3,000 Al Qaeda volunteers in Afghanistan, the great majority of them involved as shock troops in the local civil war or as a Taliban security force. Thus, acceding to the Administration's demands would have probably meant losing the current civil war. Moreover, both the troops and the base infrastructure of Al Qaeda melded into those of the Taliban. Given this, the Taliban might have expected that an open-ended US inspection regime would be both intrusive and protracted. Finally, framing these demands as non-negotiable gave leverage to the hardliners in Kandahar, rather than the more flexible shura in Kabul.

Though the pre-war dealings with the Taliban did not yield result, they were essential to the coalition-building effort, especially with regard to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and other Muslim states. During the course of its banter with the Bush administration, the Taliban's idiosyncratic excesses became a focus of administration and media commentary and the failure of the Taliban to do as ordered had made them a more prominent target than even bin Laden himself.

Although before the war the Bush administration had publicly emphasized the limited "punish and coerce" option against the Taliban, it also began soon after the September 11 attack to build support among its European allies for the more ambitious goal of forcing a regime change in Afghanistan. By late September the Bush administration was openly encouraging indigenous resistance to the Taliban and pledging indirect support to the Northern Alliance. With the commencement of OEF, the administration's declared war aims transmuted rather quickly into the overthrow of the Taliban regime. What remained

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to be determined was replacement to the Taliban and the process of affecting that change.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{Initial war strategy: Split the Taliban}

At the outset, the goal of regime replacement did not imply unleashing the Northern Alliance or completely uprooting the Taliban in the south. Instead, the United States aimed to pressure, weaken and split the Taliban through a combination of air attacks, special operations, and limited support to the Northern Alliance war effort. The United States also aimed to induce a split in the Taliban by killing off the most intransigent elements of the movement and those linked closely to Osama bin Laden including Mullah Omar, defense minister Obeidullah Khan, and justice minister Mullah Nooruddin Turabi.\textsuperscript{31} A more agreeable "rump Taliban" might then link up with other Pushtun elements being assembled by the United States and Pakistan. The final step would be the creation of a unity government incorporating the Northern Alliance, all under the tutelage of King Zahir Shah and the auspices of the United Nations.

The US plan came together hastily in the aftermath of September 11 attacks. This contrasts sharply with the experience of preparing for operations Desert Storm and Allied Force, wherein four-to-six months of diplomatic work preceded the onset of offensive action. The decision to launch such a politically ambitious campaign soon after the September 11 attack put an impossible set of tasks before the US State Department. Not only did it have to assemble a multi-national political framework in weeks rather than months, it had to do so under conditions of a war whose objectives and direction were unclear.

The chief dilemmas with the Bush administration's initial approach involved faulty notions about:

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\item \textsuperscript{30} Anne E. Komblut and Bryan Bender, \textit{Time Is Running Out: Bush Shifts Focus to Taliban}, Boston Globe, October 7, 2001.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Pamela Constable, \textit{US Hopes To Attract Moderates In Taliban; Powell Sees Them In 'New Afghanistan'}, Washington Post, October 17, 2001.
\end{itemize}
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(i) The time frame in which a representative Pushtun alternative to the Taliban could be assembled,
(ii) Pakistan cooperation in the Taliban's decimation when this goal threatened Pakistan's own security and stability,
(iii) The disintegration of Taliban by means of an air campaign that lacked a sufficient complement on the ground, and
(iv) Reliability of the Northern Alliance to bleed the Taliban and yet not give them their primary objective of uncontested control of Kabul and the northern half of Afghanistan.

2.1 Romancing the Taliban

Assembling a Pushtun alternative to Taliban while conducting military operations that were killing hundreds of Pushtuns and aiding their northern adversaries in Afghanistan was next to impossible. 32 King Zahir Shah's office felt under supported. Afghan expert Barnett Rubin's review of the effort made on the political side is categorical, “They've got one part-time upper-middle-level figure [Richard Haass] working on the political side, and they've got all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff working on the military side. And they can't find half the price of a cruise missile to support Zahir Shah's office in Rome”. 33

Many elements of the Taliban's domestic coalition might have defected to a viable alternative Pushtun coalition, if one had been available. But none could be constructed in the time allotted. The deep and abiding divisions within the Taliban could have been better exploited under different conditions. 34

The internal divisions within the Taliban had been evident before the war, pertaining especially to dealings with the West, and they became apparent again during the Taliban's

These divisions pitted the Kandahar shura against more practical Kabul shura, which had direct responsibility for government administration. Although it is a misnomer to call this group "moderate", they were no more extreme than many members of the Northern Alliance. Unfortunately, this group lost a potential leader when the long-time head of the Kabul shura and Taliban Council of Ministers), Mullah Mohammed Rabbani, died in April 2001. If an organized internal challenge to Mullah Omar was to arise after 11 September, it would have had to be assisted from the outside.

Pakistan's Dilemma
Ironically, Pakistan which played a contributory role in the emergence of the Taliban had been called upon by the Bush administration to participate as a frontline state in the Afghan war which would result in the decimation of the Taliban. Pakistan was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. In its national interest, it snapped ties with the Taliban and joined the US alliance. Pakistan's military and intelligence establishments maintained links to the Taliban at multiple levels, reinforced by personnel inside Afghanistan, who were working side-by-side with Taliban cadre. These various linkages and relations of dependency gave Pakistan potential leverage to pressure the Taliban on bin Laden and weaken or potentially split them which Pakistan failed to utilize. The explicit targeting of the Taliban compromised many of Pakistan's assets in the country, requiring their quick withdrawal. To be effective, the attempt to assemble a moderate Taliban opposition would have had to precede not follow any signals that the United States was planning removal of the Taliban.

Although the Musharraf government supported the operation, popular opinion opposed it by an 82 percent to 8 percent margin. The most likely outcome of the operation the
collapse of Pushtun dominance in Afghanistan ran obviously counter to critical Pakistani security interests in the west as also losing its 'strategic depth' in that country.

Soon after the commencement of bombing Musharraf began expressing his ambivalence and calling for restraint in the conduct of the operation. Even less consistent was the support of Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment. Religious, ethnic, and institutional ties between the Taliban and Pakistan's military and intelligence services (the ISI and smaller Intelligence Bureau) militated against any quick divorce and therefore hard to break. In fact, some elements worked at cross-purposes to OEF, materially supporting Taliban resistance and undermining efforts to assemble an alternative to the Taliban inside Afghanistan. Thus Pakistan role in the War on Terrorism is being constantly being questioned in the US policy making circles.

Role of Air power in decapitating the Taliban

The US military campaign increased the dilemma of the Taliban leadership as it sought to maintain its military front in the north and control of the population elsewhere. Bombing disrupted leadership functions in the cities and it affected the Taliban's core, which included no more than 5,000 Taliban veteran and Al Qaeda cadre. Nevertheless, throughout October, the Taliban seemed resilient, with the aim of surviving until winter conditions would ease the pressure on the military front. Through the end of October the air campaign failed to either compel Taliban cooperation or disintegrate the movement. During most of this period air attacks focused largely on air defense, command and control, political, and infrastructure targets as well as military bases and storage sites. What should have been clear from the experience of Operation Allied Force was that the "lever" of air power requires a "fulcrum" on the ground. The available ground fulcrum

42 Interviews with officials in the State Department and Pentagon in Washington DC, November 2005.
43 Edward Gargan, Taliban Hang On; US finds they are not so easy to defeat, Newsday (New York), October 26, 2001.
44 For further details see Robert S. Tripp, Kristin F. Lynch, John G. Drew, Edward W. Chan, ibid.
in Afghanistan -- the Northern Alliance was regarded initially as unlikely to produce the desired political outcome, should it come to power. Thus, support for the Alliance's war effort was minimally configured to sustain their front and pressure the Taliban without enabling a rapid Alliance sweep. The only completely reliable fulcrum would have been US troops on the ground in large numbers. But practical and diplomatic problems precluded this option -- at least in the chosen time frame. In terms of operational capability, the United States would have been able to deploy, shake out, and advance into combat a division-equivalent of light- and medium-weight forces within a month. However, gaining reliable access to secure bases for a force of this size would have been more problematic. Also, the distances involved and the geostrategic circumstances made uncertain America's capacity to sustain such a force.

For its part, the Northern Alliance was hesitant to risk its troops, assets, and power in vigorously attacking well-defended Taliban positions unless the United States provided more air support. 45 The mid-October failure of the Northern Alliance's first attempt to take Mazar-i-Sharif exemplified the stalemate in the north. This and the apparent resilience of the Taliban elsewhere, prompted a process of questioning and re-orienting America's strategy. 46 The administration's initial response to the difficulties during the second week of war was not to unleash the Alliance but to increase the intensity of bombing. This also increased the rate of civilian casualties and elicited a new round of international criticism. Essentially, the war effort became a race between the cumulative effects of bombing and the international disapprobation that this incurred. However, through the end of October, the air campaign was no more effective than a lever without a fulcrum.

Aerial bombardment proved more successful in agitating America's partners and alienating world opinion than in coercing or collapsing the Taliban during the operation's first month. It also proved a harmful for the American cause inside Afghanistan. Even in

Uzbek and Tajik areas, public opinion doubted the wisdom and necessity of the American approach.  
besides claiming hundreds of civilian lives by early November, the bombing campaign exacerbated an already severe refugee problem and disrupted relief efforts.

The American use of cluster bombs, which began in during the last week of October, also drew sharp criticism from human rights and de-mining groups. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and other Pentagon spokespersons routinely responded to criticism about civilian casualties by arguing that the United States had taken great pains to limit collateral damage -- but that some amount of it is inevitable in war. On 29 October, for instance, Rumsfeld told reporters that, "War is ugly. It causes misery and suffering and death, and we see that every day. But let's be clear: no nation in human history has done more to avoid civilian casualties than the United States has in this conflict."  

A faultline in support for Operation Enduring Freedom centered precisely on the question of whether the response to the 11 September attacks should have taken the form of a broad "war" rather than a much more limited military operation -- a "police action" of some sort -- focusing narrowly on the perpetrators of the terrorist attack and their cohorts.

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49 The idea of international "police actions" implies the use of military force for limited goals under the auspices of an inclusive international agency and in strict accord with international law. This approach, while recognizing that the use of force is sometimes necessary, aims to minimize its negative repercussions. The idea, which rose to prominence with the formation of the United Nations, borrows from the principles of domestic law enforcement in several ways. It seeks to:

• reframe justifiable uses of force in terms of community interests and collective action, rather than in terms of a clash of parochial interests and prerogatives;
• focus remedial acts of force precisely on transgressors and transgressions of law and norms;
• limit the degree and methods of force to that which is strictly necessary to accomplish consensual ends; and
• extend to civilians in war zones the same types of protections that domestic law enforcement agencies ideally grant to the citizens they serve.

Within the framework of domestic police or law-enforcement action, "collateral" casualties and damage are strongly proscribed. In accord with this, domestic authorities may limit police resort to high-speed chases and set restrictive rules for the use of firearms -- even though this may complicate law enforcement activities and add to the risks faced by police officers.
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A review of commentary on the war depicts critics expressing little surprise about the fact that large-scale military action and aerial bombardment entailed unintended civilian casualties, collateral damage, and other negative effects. What they had questioned was the necessity of conducting a large-scale bombing campaign that included civilian areas in its sweep. Such disagreements may have been suppressed temporarily by the shared desire to bring the perpetrators of 11 September to justice. But they were re-activated as soon as civilian casualties begin to increase.

For the Bush administration the darkest moments of the war came between its third and fifth week. Indicative of the apparent troubles on the battlefield was bad press coverage. The bombing campaign had been intensified during the second week, daily sorties rose from about 25 to 90, after the Taliban had proved more resilient than initially expected and the Northern Alliance had failed in its initial effort to take Mazar-i-Sharif. But this was still consistent with hopes that the Taliban might be split and co-opted. The truly significant shift was the decision to cast America's lot with the Northern Alliance military effort. This gained substance during the last week of October when B-52s began to carpet-bomb Taliban positions opposite the Northern Alliance and US Special Operations troops assumed a bigger role in guiding both the air attacks and the Alliance's efforts. Throughout the first ten days of November air support for the Alliance grew in tandem with criticism of the war's slow progress and its mounting civilian costs. Alliance air support was accentuated by bringing into play 15,000 pound slurry bombs (the BLU-82 "Big Blue" or "daisy-cutters") and by increasing the expenditure of cluster bombs.

In the Northern Alliance's troops, US air power found its required ground fulcrum. But it costed US leverage and control on the strategic level. The contradiction inherent in fully supporting the Northern Alliance military effort was two-fold: First, the Alliance's goals beyond unseating the Taliban from Kabul were not the same as America's;

50 A gateway to critical commentary on the war is provided by Antiwar.com http://www.antiwar.com/.
51 Taliban Hang On; US finds they are not so easy to defeat, Newsday, 26 October 2001.
52 Christian Caryl and John Barry, Facing a long, cold war: The White House is casting its lot with the Northern Alliance, Newsweek, November 12 2000.
Second, American leverage over the Northern Alliance would decrease as Alliance troops closed in on the victory that US air power made possible. Thus, fully supporting the Alliance meant losing control over it. The Alliance, fully aware of both these facts, quickly discarded their promise of restraint once it became possible for them to ride into Kabul without further American assistance.

The sudden devolution of the Taliban and the lightening ascent of disparate anti-Taliban factions and tribal warlords, which began 10 November, was not anticipated by the architects of Enduring Freedom. This development resulted from: (i) the remarkable synergy of US air power and Northern Alliance ground troops, (ii) the opportunistic strategy of the Northern Alliance, and (iii) the unique structure and strategy of the Taliban.

The beginning of the end for the Taliban came in early November when the United States more fully synchronized its military efforts with those of the Northern Alliance. The resulting synergy was something the Taliban could not withstand. The synergy of US air power and Northern Alliance ground troops (guided and assisted by US special operations forces) broke the Taliban defensive positions outside Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul in two steps:

- First, air power tore gaps in the Taliban defensive line, which were widened by group defections. The Taliban regularly rotated and redeployed troops at the front with the aim of filling gaps and maintaining morale. However, their capacity to reinforce diminished with time, while the pace and intensity of US aerial bombardment increased.
- Second, Northern Alliance troops exploited the growing gaps in the Taliban line to attack the flanks and rear of Taliban positions, which broke the morale of Taliban troops and induced panic, at least locally.

When these tactics are applied effectively, an opponent finds it difficult to withdraw in an orderly fashion. The goal for the attacking ground force is to maintain the engagement
until the defending force disintegrates and flees, at which point it is easier to interdict it (from the air) or overtake and capture or destroy it on the ground. In the case of the battles of Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul, it seems the Taliban had enough presence of mind to foresee the inevitable and begin withdrawing select troops and cadre before their lines collapsed completely under pressure.

The dissolution of the Taliban involved:
- the defection or desertion of allied troops,
- the intentional withdrawal of Taliban cadre and high-value foreign troops,
- the release of local Taliban adherents and conscripts, and
- the abject abandonment of Pakistani seasonal volunteers.

Thus, when the Taliban forces finally and fully quit their positions, it gave the appearance of their having simply disappeared. The Northern Alliance forces were not perceptive, vigorous, or agile enough to overtake those Taliban units that departed in order. Nor was US air power able to detect and fully interdict their movement. This pattern was repeated throughout Pushtun areas that the Taliban had decided to surrender. But the disposition of the released and retreating Taliban troops was quite different in the north and the south of the country. In the south, those Taliban who did not retreat to Kandahar were able to melt into their surroundings. This process was evident in Jalalabad, for instance, where former mujahideen leader Younis Khalis negotiated the turnover of the city from the Taliban. The Taliban leadership fled the area, but lower-level Taliban fighters with local ties remained behind, many presumably joining Khalis’ militia. Khalis’ had headed one the traditionalist parties during the anti-Soviet war -- a faction of Hezb-e-Islami -- with strong Pushtun tribal connections. Mullah Omar, among other Taliban leaders, had been a member of this faction. Khalis had allied himself at different points in the past with both the Taliban and the Rabbani government. Now he claims independence from both.

In the north, those Taliban coalition troops left behind could not easily re-integrate locally. This was especially true for Pakistanis and Arabs. Many were pursued into Mazar-i-Sharif, Konduz, Khanabad, and Taloqan, surrounded, pummeled by US power,
and killed or captured. More than 800 Taliban coalition troops were killed in reprisals or after capture.

More than a tactical military retreat, the Taliban had executed a strategic withdrawal and reorientation during the second week of November, relinquishing any pretense to power in three quarters of the area previously under their control. In essence, when they withdrew their core cadre, they removed the solder that held their political-military coalition together. Their apparent strategy was to reconstitute with their best fighters in and around their home areas in the south, where they might conduct a combination of positional defense and guerilla warfare. The Taliban also effected a separation from most of the Al Qaeda care, many of whom took refuge in the Tora Bora fortified base near Jalalabad, about 350 miles from Kandahar.

Retreating armies usually try to fall back on their lines of supply, if they can, and return to their base areas, where their control and support is (presumably) greatest. This is what the Taliban attempted, although in their case they sought principally to fall back on their lines of political power. The Taliban political-military organization -- essentially a coalition of local militias built around a sect -- was prone to catastrophic collapse when put under extreme pressure. Likewise, the Taliban's precipitous withdrawal from Kabul and retreat to Kandahar reflected the movement's nature. It had never substantially outgrown its regional roots or its religious-charismatic orientation. The Taliban was a spiritual vigilante group that had been "called" into politics and Kabul, but had never managed to settle in either place except as an occupying force. Its spiritual leader, Omar, and its soul remained in Kandahar. Retreating to that place was as much a spiritual tactic as a military one.

The Taliban's rapid divestiture of power also followed the logic of Afghan tribal warfare. The Taliban might have hoped that their surrender of the capital and retreat to their provincial base, together with their separation from Al Qaeda, would satisfy the war objectives of their opponents. In the Afghan way of war, such an accommodation might permit the re-integration of the Taliban as a provincial party.
But these stratagems were flawed for several reasons:

First, the United States did not operate within the logic of tribal warfare; it sought the complete destruction of the Taliban as a force in Afghan society, including the southern provinces. Moreover, their separation from bin Laden did not matter: the Taliban had been virtually identified with Al Qaeda in the US war discourse since shortly after the war began. The US mission was no longer simply to pressure, split, or topple them, but to destroy them. The “logic of tribal warfare” is not as alien to the West as it might first seem. Something like it prevailed in superpower military relations during the cold war, when the prospect of protracted, indecisive, and highly-destructive warfare between two blocs dictated limited means and objectives. Of course, the logic that might prevail between two superpowers or between two tribes does not apply in a contest between the world’s sole superpower and one of the poorest states on earth -- especially if the former is able to prosecute war from a fairly safe distance. The Taliban grossly underestimated the effective imbalance between their military capabilities and those of the United States. But this was not simply a matter of their having deficient powers of calculation. As the leading faction of the Taliban leadership perceived the contest, it involved the core interests and values of their movement, which they could not surrender without a fight.

Second, the Taliban’s retreat to the south and their adoption of a positional defense made the job of US air power easier. Although retreat allowed the Taliban to concentrate its best assets in the defense of a much smaller area, it also allowed the United States to better concentrate its air power. Moreover, Kandahar is much closer than Kabul and Afghanistan’s northern towns to the Arabian sea. This implies shorter flight times for America’s carrier-based combat aircraft, which translates into more sorties, bigger weapon payloads, or more time (and flexibility) over target areas. Clearly, the Taliban’s strategic retreat did not solve the problem posed by US air power.

Finally, the Taliban underestimated the effect of their retreat on their political authority. The growth of Taliban power had been based on two things: a core of disciplined, dedicated cadre and forward momentum. But just as forward momentum had served as a
"soldering agent" during their rise, defeat and retreat acted as a solvent during their decline. They could not reconstitute their power in the south, not even with their best cadre, because the fact of their having had to retreat transformed political conditions in the south: It robbed them of their charisma and authority.

Outcome:
The Alliance victory and Taliban collapse profoundly altered the national and regional strategic situation in several ways -- none of them auspicious in terms of long-term stability:

First, the rapid victory of the Alliance and collapse of the Taliban released centrifugal tendencies throughout Afghanistan, giving warlordism, banditry, and opium production a new lease on life. 53 This essentially erased the one positive feature of the Taliban period. An immediate effect was the aggravation of the country’s humanitarian crisis.54 A longer-term effect will be greater difficulty in building a unified polity and resilient civilian authority. Second, the advance of the Alliance and defeat of the Taliban altered the principal lines of opposition in Afghan society. Rather than following a "Taliban versus anti-Taliban" axis, conflict reoriented along purely ethnic, tribal, and sect lines. Within this, the position of Tajik and Uzbek minority interests advanced disproportionately. This will likely lead to a new bipolar configuration in the country: Pushtun versus non-Pushtun. The ethnic reframing of the Afghan struggle altered the political implications of US military operations in the country, which had focused almost exclusively on Pushtun areas since late-November. Third, the increased salience of ethnic, tribal, and sect lines of division also increased the centrifugal pressures on the international coalition supporting the operation. Notably, the Alliance victory had substantially increased Russian influence in Afghanistan, contrary to US interests and to the dismay of both Pakistan and Iran. Indian interests (tied to the Tajik militias) also advanced substantially. These developments increased the prospects for intensified regional contention over Afghanistan.

These outcomes were largely the result of America's having augmented and unleashed the Northern Alliance, a force over which it had insufficient control. This policy shift indicated the extent to which military expediency had come to dominate US strategic calculation. The Bush administration first sowed the seeds of this problem when it decided in September to pursue ambitious war objectives without giving enough time or attention to political preparation.

Once propelled into national power, the Northern Alliance set out immediately to prove itself incapable of bringing stability and the rule of law to Afghanistan. The new chieftains wasted no time before beginning to conduct reprisals and vie among themselves for power. With the Taliban gone, the Alliance had lost its unifying rationale. Usually, the relative success in war of each member of a war coalition would have determinate influence on the post-war distribution of authority and spoils. In this case, however, the advances enjoyed by the Northern Alliance had been unearned; so they did not reflect the northern militias' relative strength -- not individually or as a group.

The individual Northern Alliance militias rushed into their home power bases as the Taliban collapsed.\textsuperscript{55} However, none of the militias exercises firm or intensive control over most of the territory they hold. This, too, is indicative of the fact that the extent and rapidity of their recent victory did not reflect their true power.

The potential for future conflict among the militias resides in several factors: (i) none of the areas under their control are nearly so ethnically homogenous as the militias that control them and (ii) there are large zones in which no one exercises clear authority. Already the Uzbek general Abdul Rashid Dostum is contesting with Tajik militias for

\textsuperscript{55} The Northern Alliance had four main geographic power bases: (i) the Tajik areas of the northeast, controlled by the Masoud group; (ii) the Uzbek area of the north, centered on Mazar-i-Sharif and controlled by Abdul Rashid Dostum; (iii) the provinces around Herat, in the west -- a Pushtun area controlled by the Tajik warlord Ismail Khan; and, (iv) the Hazara area of central Afghanistan, controlled by the Shiite leader Mohammad Karim Khalili.
control of the provinces of Takhar, Kunduz and Baghlan.\(^{56}\) Throughout Afghanistan, north and south, adjustment to the sudden change in the constellation of power has entailed an increase and diffusion of ethno-religious, tribal, and factional conflict.\(^{57}\) However, the process of change in the Pushtun south has differed from that in the north.

In the Pushtun belt the effect of the Taliban’s collapse was to atomize political power and organization, reducing it to its local and tribal components -- which put the south at a distinct (although temporary) disadvantage vis a vis the north. When the Taliban fled Pushtun areas they handed power (and cadre) over to secondary religious and tribal leaders. Many of these had been warlords who had come to terms with the Taliban, joining their coalition as junior partners or retiring from political activity. Examples are Younis Khalis in Jalalabad and Mullah Naquibullah in Kandahar.

As a consequence of Taliban rule, these leaders and their organizations were relatively weak. A more formidable Pushtun leadership element was the expatriate tribal leaders and former mujahideen whom the Taliban had driven from the country after 1995. With the Taliban’s retreat these former leaders and warlords began returning hastily from exile in a competitive drive to re-establish old networks of power. Examples are Gul Agha Shirzai, centered in Kandahar; Haji Abdul Qadir and Mohammad Zaman in Jalalabad, and the new Afghan prime minister Hamid Karzai, whose power base is in Uruzgan province. Relative to their northern counterparts, however, these Pushtun leaders also were weak -- having been disorganized, separated from their power bases, and denied external support for the past six years. External support for this group is now reviving, with the West focusing on Pushtun royalists and Pakistan focusing on the former mujahideen.

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\(^{56}\) The United States may have been inadvertently drawn into this contest on December 14 when an Ismaili Hazara warlord, Sayed Jaffer, duped US aircraft into attacking Tajik positions in the town of Pul-e-Khumri in Baghlan province; Jaffer is supported by General Dostum. *Afghanistan: Peace Elusive for New Government*, Stratfor, December 19, 2001.

\(^{57}\) Significant armed clashes already have occurred in at least several places: the cities of Balkh, Gardez, Kunduz, and Pul-i-Khumri; and in Halmad and Pakhtia provinces. Major clashes have been averted narrowly in the cities Kundahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Herat. Sources on post-Taliban conflict: Pamela Constable, *Two Rebel Groups Vie for Control of Key City; Rival Guerrillas Move Into Power Vacuum Left Taliban Flight From Jalalabad*, Washington Post, November 16, 2001.

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In the north, the Alliance had dissolved into its constituent parts, which began consolidating their influence on a provincial and ethnic basis. In the south, smaller groups within the Pushtun community began competing for local hegemony. This process in the south should be seen as a first step toward reconstituting Pushtun power and filling the gap left by the departing Taliban. Should the relative organizational strength of Pushtuns be restored, Tajik domination of the government might be seriously challenged. Another concern is that an important part of reconstituting Pushtun power in the south and east is the absorption of former Taliban cadre (and even leaders) -- and this puts some Pushtun communities at odds with US policy on the disposition of former Taliban members.

Cost and Benefit Analysis

The accomplishments of OEF are easy to be captured in quantitative (numbers) rather than qualitative terms. In the immediate aftermath of OEF, around 3,000 to 4,000 Taliban were killed, including those killed in battle, captivity, and by strategic bombardment. In late November 2001, the US Central Command estimated that "several hundred" Al Qaeda rank-and-file had been killed during the first seven weeks of war including 600-800 "Afghan Arabs" affiliated with Al Qaeda. In addition, as many as 200 were killed in the subsequent Tora Bora battle.

Approximately 7,000 Taliban and foreign troops were prisoners as of December 2001; less than 500 of these had been transferred to US custody. A significant number of the prisoners held by the Northern Alliance militias were foreign fighters, especially Uzbek and Pakistani. Most of the Taliban leadership has survived the war and are presently in Pakistan, seeking to destabilize Afghanistan. Of more than three dozen Taliban leaders on

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58 The Pentagon has been reluctant to give estimates of the numbers of foreign military or civilian personnel killed in the war. However, In late November 2001, the Pentagon personnel were estimating that several hundred Al Qaeda members had been killed during the first seven weeks of war. (Al Qaeda troops constituted less than 8 percent of the Taliban total force). Also, US special forces teams have been credited with the deaths of 1300 Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. Kirk Spitzer, Green Berets outfought, out thought Taliban, USA Today, January 7, 2002.

the Pentagon's "wanted list," more than 12 have been killed, injured or have defected. 60 At least eight of the 20 top Al Qaeda leaders and aides pursued by the Pentagon in Afghanistan are believed dead. However, only two had been reported captured as of 15 January 2002. 61 Eleven training camps affiliated with Al Qaeda, and many other Al Qaeda facilities in Afghanistan, have been destroyed or overrun.

The Northern Alliance and Afghan militias allied with the United States probably suffered less than 600 combat deaths during the period 7 October 2001 to 10 January 2002, with most of these occurring during the long siege of Mazar-i-Sharif. The US Defense Department, the first three months of the war cost the United States $3.8 billion, which the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, an independent NGO, found roughly consistent with its own estimates. 62

Translating these achievements into qualitative terms is not an easy task. The Taliban have been vanquished from power in Kabul, though not discredited as an ideological movement. These remnant Taliban are likely to re-assume a role in the Afghan polity -- some as insurgents, others as members of other formations in a process of metamorphosis. Al Qaeda infrastructure and operations in Afghanistan have been destroyed and their capacity to act globally has been disrupted significantly though not completely.

The former acting assistant director of the FBI's counter-terrorism division, J.T. Caruso, has aptly concluded that as a result of Operation Enduring Freedom, Al Qaeda's capacity to commit "horrific acts" has been reduced by 30 percent. Caruso expects that the capture of bin Laden would cause a "stuttering" in Al Qaeda operations, but not necessary a "pause" due to the decentralized nature of the organization. 63 The US policy makers

61 Bradley Graham, Strikes level Al Qaeda camp; three terrorist leaders captured or dead, Washington Post, January 8, 2002.
might have hoped that Operation Enduring Freedom would have had a greater debilitating effect on Al Qaeda's global capabilities -- given the US expenditure of 12,000 bombs and missiles. However, most of the troops killed or captured in the operation were only indirectly related to Al Qaeda's global terrorist activities.

The Taliban regime, which absorbed most of US policy makers attention, bore only a contingent relationship to Al Qaeda's activities outside the region. In fact, most of the Al Qaeda facilities and most of the foreign troops under their control in Afghanistan had to do with the civil war there. Most of the organization's capabilities to conduct far reaching terrorist acts resided and resides outside of Afghanistan, and thus fell beyond the scope of Operation Enduring Freedom.

However, the essential importance of Afghanistan to the extra-regional goals and activities of Al Qaeda was not that it provided a sanctuary and training site for terrorists. Instead, Afghanistan served the organization's global activities principally as a recruiting ground for future cadre. The capacity of Al Qaeda to repair its lost capabilities for global terrorism rests on the fact that attacks like September 11, do not depend on the possession of massive, open-air training facilities. Large terrorist organizations have proved themselves able to operate for very long periods without state sanctuaries among sympathetic communities exist like the popular support found for the Taliban Al Qaeda in the Pakistan-Afghanistan region. Thus, Al Qaeda may be able to recover from its losses by adopting a "state-less" approach to its operations as in the Pakistan Afghanistan border where the writ of the state does not exist.

The humanitarian cost of the war

Operation Enduring Freedom was intended to be a punitive operation against Taliban and destroying Al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan (primary goals) and was not designed be a humanitarian or stability operation. Thus, the principal purpose of toppling the Taliban was realized in the round-up of foreign Taliban volunteers by the Northern Alliance, the ground deployment of US military personnel near Kandahar, and the joint pursuit of Al
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Qaeda cadre by US and allied Afghan forces. Stability and humanitarian goals (secondary concerns) were clearly subordinate to the primary goals. This can be perceived from war planning, strategy and outcomes. Although Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) has decimated the Taliban from power and uprooted the Al Qaeda organization in Afghanistan, substantial human losses were associated with these outcomes. A minimum of 3000 civilian deaths attributable to the impact of the bombing campaign and war on the nation's refugee and famine crises.

Stability costs

A variety of "stability costs" - revival of warlordism, banditry, and opium production in Afghanistan were incurred as a result of OEF. By using militia in the fight against the Taliban, Military power is more decentralized and has fragmented along ethnic and tribal lines. Many of the militia and party leaders responsible for the murderous chaos of the 1992-1996 period have resumed positions of authority. The effective power of the national government extends over only the capital region. Aiding the Northern Alliance is in opposition to the Leahy law. In some areas insecurity prevails as the aid workers are increasingly targeted by the remnant Taliban, impeding the resumption of humanitarian relief programs. Thus, new Afghanistan remains unstable and the task of stabilization is dependent on substantial, long-term support from the international community.

64 Ahmed Rashid, How my friend outwitted the mullahs, Daily Telegraph, December 8, 2001, p. 4.
65 These costs include: 1000-1300 civilian deaths due to aerial bombardment; 800+ troop deaths due to post-war reprisals and mismanagement of prisoners. Alex Perry, Mass Slaughter of the Taliban's Foreign Jihadists, Time, November 26, 2001, p. 60.
67 The Leahy Law prohibits assistance to units of foreign security forces that have committed gross violations of human rights. This law consists of two provisions in the appropriations acts for Fiscal Year 2001. The Leahy Law applies to the Islamic State of Afghanistan and its military arm, the United Front, because the ISA remains the internationally recognized government of Afghanistan. Section 563 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001 prohibits the provision of funds available under the act "to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights, unless the Secretary determines and reports to the Committees on Appropriations that the government of such country is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice." Military Assistance to the Afghan Opposition, Human Rights Watch Backgrounder, October 2001 http://www.hrw.org/background/asia/afghan-bck1005.htm, (Accessed on June 1, 2006).
68 Naveed Ahmad, Donors doing very little for Afghanistan, admits UN, The News (Lahore), January 16, 2002.
The outcome of the war increased conflict potentials among the nations neighboring Afghanistan, who are now competing to adjust the fluid power balance inside the country. By inadvertently advancing the position of some Afghan ethnic groups over others and by creating local power vacuums, Operation Enduring Freedom destabilized the regional coalition that had supported it. The war in Afghanistan hardened anti-US sentiments throughout the Arab and Muslim world. 69

Regional winners and losers

The greatest benefit of the US military efforts accrued to the Uzbek and, especially, Tajik military factions within the Northern Alliance, under the command of Abdul Rashid Dostum and Mohammad Qaseem Fahim, respectively. Although competitors, these militias share two things: Russian sponsorship and an antipathy toward the West. 70 Their advance is Russia's as well. The rapid takeover of Kabul against US wishes by the Tajik forces was reminiscent of the Russian drive on Pristina at the close of the Kosovo war. Russia moved quickly to consolidate its gain, setting up a temporary mission and flying 12 cargo planes filled with humanitarian supplies into Bagram airport on November 26 -- which is more than the United Nations was able to manage. 71 Along with the humanitarian supplies have come several hundred armed Russian personnel, at least.

India, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan also benefited significantly from the advance of the Northern Alliance. Pakistan's interests, by contrast, were almost entirely displaced. The Pakistan-supported Peshawar Convention won only 10 percent of the positions in the new government. For Iran, the outcome was mixed. Like Pakistan, it is not happy with the

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69 A survey of attitudes about the war conducted in November and December by Gallup International found 82 percent of Pakistanis opposing the US effort versus 8 percent in support. A leadership survey conducted between 12 November and 13 December by the International Herald Tribune and the Pew Research Center found that six in ten of the leaders surveyed in Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan thought the US attack on Afghanistan was an over-reaction. Brian Knowlton, How the world sees the US and Sept. 11, International Herald Tribune, December 20, 2001.

70 Akbar Borisov, Putin rules out Taliban, reasserts Russian role in Afghan future, Agence France Presse, October 22, 2001.

71 Robert Fox, Putin is succeeding where Brezhnev failed; Arms and tanks in Kabul streets are evidence of Russia's influence, Sunday Telegraph, November 25, 2001.
increased role of Russians in Afghanistan, nor is it happy with the prominence of royalists in the new government. The specific Afghan leaders and factions supported by Iran -- some belonging to the Northern Alliance and some belonging to the "Cyprus group" -- constituted a chorus of dissent from the agreement reached in Bonn. While welcoming the outcome in Afghanistan and Bonn, the Iranian foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi, also noted "weaknesses" in the Bonn agreement, warned against "illusions", and predicted that "Afghanistan is facing grave hurdles ahead."  

Afghanistan looms large in the security calculations of both Pakistan and Iran, and both are likely to work energetically to "re-balance" the distribution of power there. To their advantage they share close cultural and institutional ties with 57 percent of the population. And 65 percent of Afghanistan's border abut either Pakistan or Iran. Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom the two countries have been more closely coordinating their policies on Afghanistan. They presently maintain a joint committee on the post-war development of Afghanistan.

The structure of post-war Afghan instability

The potential for instability in post-Taliban Afghanistan resides in three systemic features of the new strategic environment. The present distribution of national and provincial authority in Afghanistan bears little relationship to the balance of interests and resources within and around the country. Instead, it is a collateral effect or byproduct of Operation Enduring Freedom. Long-term local and regional players disfavored by the war's outcome will mobilize resources and try to compel an adjustment. The post-Taliban balance between warlords and civilian authority decisively favors the former, although,

72 Within the Northern Alliance Iran has lent support to Mohammad Karim Khalili, leader of the Shiite Hazara; Ismail Khan, the governor of Herat; Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader; and, former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani. It also has supported the Cyprus group of expatriates led by the Iran-based former mujahideen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. All were critical of the outcome of the Bonn meeting.


no central or single indigenous military authority yet comes close to exercising reliable or predominant control over the country, which remains a patchwork of fiefdoms and contested or lawless areas.

These features of post-Taliban Afghanistan imply a significant potential for internecine conflict, including terrorist activity. Two steps that might have mitigated this potential were (i) the early formation of a well-balanced government of national unity and (ii) the early deployment of a large-contingent of peacekeepers to support it. The aim would have been to shunt conflict into a non-military -- i.e. political -- process. Although the 2001 Bonn meeting produced both a new government and a peacekeeping force for Afghanistan, neither of these really fill the bill, for several reasons.

The interim government fashioned in Bonn essentially reflected a compromise between the predominant Tajik interests -- who gained the powerful defense, interior, and foreign ministries -- and those of Prime Minister Hamid Karzai, a Pushtun royalist. But neither Karzai nor the other (much weaker) Pushtun members of the administration can reliably command the loyalty of all the Pushtun factions -- not even all the decidedly anti-Taliban ones.

Karzai lacks significant military power that he can reliably call his own. (The final defeat of the Taliban in the south was mostly due to the action of US air power and the ground forces of Gul Agha Shirzai, the former and now restored mujahideen boss of Kandahar.) Karzai is dependent militarily on US forces, whose continuing operations in Pushtun areas -- especially bombing runs -- have been a divisive, not a unifying factor there. So there is tension between Karzai's source of military power and his need to build his ethnic political base. And this weakens his position vis a vis the other interests represented in the government.

Karzai's relative weakness parallels that of the interim government. It is dependent on the ethnic and warlord militias allied with it -- most of whom are not entirely reliable. In 2002, there are in Afghanistan at least six centers or clusters of indigenous military power
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beyond the reliable control of the government. The principal power clusters in Afghanistan are:

1. The central government, which has at its disposal those Tajik militias directly commanded by Defense Minister Fahim and the Pushtun militias immediately loyal to Karzai; these together may involve as many as 12,000 fighters presently -- the majority of them Tajik.

2. The Uzbek Northern Alliance general Abdul Rashid Dostum, based in Mazar-i-Sharif, who controls five provinces in the north and a military force of 5,000 to 8,000 fighters; he was awarded the position of deputy defense minister, but remains strongly independent -- and volatile.

3. The Tajik Northern Alliance warlord Ismail Khan, based in Herat, who controls five western provinces and perhaps 5,000 fighters;

4. Northern Alliance warlord Mohammad Karim Khalili, leader of the Shiite Hazara party coalition, Hizb-Wahdat-i-Islami-yi; Based in Bamiyan province, he controls a larger swath of the Afghan interior and commands as many as 8,000 fighters;

5. Burhanuddin Rabbani, former Afghan president and leader of the Northern Alliance, who is allied with Abdul Rassoul Sayyaf, a Pushtun leader of the Saudi-backed Ittihad-i-Islami party.

6. Pushtun fundamentalist leaders and groups outside the government or on its sidelines: the Peshawar group led by Pir Syed Gailani; followers of former Afghan prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who control Logar province; Haji Abdul Qadir, former Northern Alliance council member and head of the Pushtun Eastern Council, which controls Nangarhar province and incorporates three other warlords: Mohammad Zaman, Hazarat Ali, and Younis Khalis; and, the party of former-Taliban dissidents, Khuddamul Furqan, which has influence in four eastern provinces. Abdurrab Rasul Sayyaf, currently allied with former Afghan President Rabbani, might also gravitate toward a radical Pushtun alliance.

Gul Agha Shirzai, the notorious warlord governor of Kandahar, who controls four southern provinces; devoted to the king, but highly sectarian, he is a competitor of
Karzai's for influence among southern Pushtuns. He may command 3,000 to 5,000 fighters.

The diffuse character of military power in post-Taliban Afghanistan constitutes a substantial limitation on the government's effective authority. Of course, the Karzai government can call on US support whenever it needs it. But US priorities are not identical to those of the interim government (a point further addressed below). Principally, the United States is engaged in a punitive expedition and a manhunt, not a nation-building exercise.

The long-term stability of Afghanistan, the authority of its government, the relief of its humanitarian crisis, and the country's prospects for reconstruction and recovery all depend on reversing the decentralization of military power and beginning a process of factional disarmament. Until these things occur, the rule of the Kalashnikov will remain alive.

**Peacekeepers for Afghanistan: too little, too late**

Under pressure, delegates to the Bonn meeting agreed to deployment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for Afghanistan. A military technical agreement was signed by the new government on 6 January 2002. But the agreed force is too small (4,500 troops) to accomplish the necessary stability tasks -- and it comes too late: it is supposed to fully deploy to five Afghan cities by mid-January 2002. Peacekeepers could have played an essential role much earlier -- as early as when Afghan cities began to fall to the Northern Alliance in mid-November. And, indeed, the British were ready to deploy several thousand troops in mid-November.

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Deployment of a large, outside stability force could have substantially mitigated the challenges faced by the interim government, dampened the potential for internecine violence, and facilitated humanitarian relief efforts.

Opposition to either a large or early-deploying peacekeeping force came from two quarters: The Afghan militias (especially the Uzbek and Tajikistan ones) and Russia generally opposed peacekeeping forces of any size other than symbolic -- understanding perfectly well that such forces would counter-balance their power. Pressed into accepting peacekeepers, they wanted to see them restricted to the capital and tucked away for emergency use only. Only some Hazara militias dissented from this position.

The United States also resisted the early insertion of peacekeeping troops. The principal reason for US opposition was concerns that such forces might become targets or crimp US freedom of action against Taliban and Al Qaeda suspects. By late November US opposition to the quick deployment of peacekeepers and the full restoration of humanitarian efforts had begun to fray relations with other international coalition partners. This "best option" (or anything like it) would have implied a different mission definition for Operation Enduring Freedom -- one in which stability and humanitarian goals held a more prominent position. Clearly, it also would have required more preparation.

4.4 A new game: US and Afghan interests diverge

The collapse of the Taliban dramatically altered the context and meaning of Operation Enduring Freedom. Inside Afghanistan, the military priorities of the United States and those of its indigenous allies began to diverge in critical ways:

For the United States, toppling the Taliban regime and shattering the local Al Qaeda organization were only the first two in a series of related goals. America's terminal goals were to capture and imprison the top Taliban leaders and all Al Qaeda cadres. Moreover, the United States wanted those rank-and-file Afghan Taliban who did not defect to be disarmed; foreign fighters generally were to be disarmed and interned. From the US perspective, there was no acceptable alternative to these terms, which meant a willingness to prosecute them to the death.

For the Afghans, however, the end of Taliban and flight of Al Qaeda meant the end of the war and the beginning of a post-war period governed by its own imperatives. Allied militias increasingly turned their attention to building their ethnic and factional power bases. In accord with this, conflict and cooperation no longer followed a simple Taliban versus anti-Taliban dichotomy, as noted above: ethnic and tribal allegiances became more important.

In the Pushtun areas especially, Afghan militias took a much more liberal attitude toward the disposition of captured Taliban (including top leaders) than the United States demanded. For the anti-Taliban Pushtun groups, the reason for pursuing the Taliban and their leaders was to force their re-alignment or retirement -- not to punish, imprison, or neutralize them en masse. In this there was a recognition that adopting an overly punitive posture might spark a protracted tribal conflict and detract from the rehabilitation of Pushtun power. (Notably, top Taliban leaders are also the clan leaders of the Ghilzai tribe -- the principal tribal competitor to the Durrani from which the prime minister and the king both come.)

At the national level, Afghan leaders responded to the Taliban surrender of power by shifting their emphasis to the goals of conflict limitation, reconciliation, and reconstruction. The new Afghan leadership also supported the capture and imprisonment of remaining Al Qaeda leaders and cadre -- but not with the single-mindedness exhibited by the United States. Instead, they gave priority to the tasks of building government legitimacy, averting communal violence, and relieving the nation's humanitarian crisis.
And no Afghan leader at any level -- national or local -- demonstrated a willingness to risk much political, human, or material capital in efforts that did not conform with local post-war imperatives.

Increasingly, Afghan cooperation with America's terminal war objectives became partial or irresolute, and it was accompanied by complaint and manipulation. This is less true at the national than at the provincial or local level -- but most of the effective power in Afghanistan resides at the subnational level. Examples of the recent problems include:

- The repeated, summary release of Taliban leaders and armed Taliban cadre in Kandahar province and elsewhere; 81
- The growing opposition among allied Afghan leaders to the continuation of aerial bombardment; 82 and,
- Several instances in which US bombing missions may have been co-opted by local intelligence sources in order to settle ethnic scores. 83
- Also, Status competition among local warlords who were assisting the search for bin Laden in the White Mountain range seems to have needlessly prolonged or misdirected the effort. 84

Behind the post-Taliban divergence of priorities among the allies is the reality that the US-Afghan coalition has been rife with differences from the start. Efforts converged, however, when the United States decided in late-October to throw its support more fully behind the Northern Alliance. This convergence facilitated the Taliban's defeat, gave Afghanistan to its present rulers, and won for the United States greater freedom to pursue bin Laden throughout the land. But the close parallel of US-Afghani efforts ended with the Taliban's defeat. Since then the United States has been increasingly on its own.
pursuing its terminal objectives with a ferocity that impacts some part of Afghanistan every day, but that bears little positive relationship to what Afghanistan's new rulers view as their most pressing problems.

4.4.1 A failure to adjust

The divergence of priorities within the US-Afghan coalition has been especially disruptive to the US campaign because it was premised on close cooperation between US and Afghan forces. More than cooperation, the effort required a degree of dependency on unfamiliar local fighters that set it apart from any of America's recent wars, including Vietnam. This dependency virtually guaranteed that, should priorities diverge, US mission capabilities would be seriously compromised. The problem lies not with the concept of "cooperation", per se, but rather with the expectation that a strong basis for cooperation, trust, and joint operations can be established overnight.

The change in strategic circumstances that followed the Taliban's demise challenged Operation Enduring Freedom in other ways as well. With the collapse of the regime, the immediate mission of US forces changed, exposing weaknesses in America's operational concept. The combination of US air power and thousands of mediocre allied militia (supplemented by US SOF units) had been sufficient to drive the Taliban from the field and from government. But the combination was much less effective in capturing or killing the 50 or 60 specific individuals on the Pentagon's "most wanted" list and also less effective in interdicting the majority of Al Qaeda cadres, once they had dispersed.

Toppling a regime is very different than interdicting small bands of guerilla fighters -- especially if the goal in the latter case is to get them all. Defeating large units who are attempting a positional defense is also quite different than capturing individual leaders who have gone underground or "taken to the hills." Notably, a nation's field army can be shattered if even less than ten percent of its members are quickly killed. In the hunt for Al Qaeda, however, a ten percent interdiction rate would not qualify as success.
Two parts of the OEF force mix -- local militia and aerial bombardment -- were wrong for the terminal phase of the war. Local militia posed problems not only of will and intent, as noted above, but of capability as well. They were not sufficiently agile, disciplined, or coordinated to effectively trap or fix small enemy groups when the latter refused combat.

As for aerial bombardment: it proved too blunt an instrument for interdicting small numbers of enemy personnel on the run. Often these were mixed too closely with civilians for this type of attack. And, as noted above, the quality of the local intelligence that provided bombing targets deteriorated when ethnic rivalries flared in the Taliban aftermath. As a result, the ratio of enemy to civilian casualties during the post-Taliban phase of the war may have been one-to-one. 85 This damaged the legitimacy of the new government at a critical time and caused friction both within the government and between it and the United States.

What was needed in the terminal phase of Operation Enduring Freedom was a greater emphasis on US special operations troops, elite and light infantry, and air assault units in the primary combat role. In pivotal operations, most local militia should have been relegated to secondary missions and supporting roles -- public affairs among them. And aerial bombardment should have become a rare thing. Several of the controversial attacks in which dozens of civilians were killed -- for instance, the late-December bombings of a convoy in Paktia province and the village of Qalaye Niazi -- would have been better handled by US special and elite troops.

The failure to adjust US operations in line with the post-Taliban change in theater conditions cost the United States some of the fruits of victory and imposed additional, avoidable humanitarian and stability costs on Afghanistan. Why the United States failed to adjust is unclear, but several possible explanations are reasonable: The Administration may simply have failed to notice that strategic conditions had changed, or it may have failed to appreciate the significance of these changes. More likely, it was deterred from

making more use of US troops by the prospect of increased US casualties that this would entail. America's acute post-cold war sensitivity to combat casualties may still prevail, 11 September notwithstanding.

5. The Tunnel at the End of the Light
5.1 The path charted by Enduring Freedom
The clearest achievement of Operation Enduring Freedom was forcing the Taliban from power. But this goal was secondary to the one of destroying the Al Qaeda network, which is down but not out. And, despite the change of government in Kabul, Afghanistan is less stable today than before the operation.

At the regional level, one factor of instability -- the Taliban-Al Qaeda nexus -- has been displaced by another potentially more serious one: regional interstate contention over the direction of an unsettled Afghanistan. The war also left Pakistan and its president in a precarious position and it contributed to a dangerous escalation of the conflicts in the Mideast and Kashmir. Finally, the operation -- especially the bombing campaign and the post-war treatment of prisoners -- has fed anti-American sentiments throughout the Arab and Muslim world. For many observers there, the various effects of the campaign easily combine to give the impression that the war is precisely what the Bush administration says it is not: an assault on Arab and Muslim interests. 86

In sum: for a counter-terrorism operation, Enduring Freedom left an enormous strategic wake. Indeed, its inadvertent effects over-shadow its intended ones. Instead of stability, Enduring Freedom has produced residual management tasks of uncertain proportion. The Bush administration now proposes to handle these through a substantial additional investment of strategic capital -- notably, an expansion of overt military presence, assistance, and activism in central and south Asia. 87

86 War on Terrorism or War on Islam?, Reuters, September 26, 2001.
US Response to September 11: Implications for the Taliban

While US influence in Central Asia has been quietly growing for years, the post-OEF expansion of its military aspect will make it a more contentious issue for Russia and China -- not to mention for the region's Islamist movements.\(^88\) There is an irony in this that will be lost on the bin Ladens of the world: their jihad against US military influence in Muslim areas has prompted an expansion of precisely the thing that aggravates them. But we should not expect this outcome to deter them from continuing as before. They are as immune to deterrence as they are to irony.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has signaled a willingness to deploy to another 15 countries in pursuit of terrorists.\(^89\) But the method and path charted by Enduring Freedom would lead the United States into a thicket of civil, ethnic, and interstate conflicts involving much more than the issue of terrorism (as is already the case in Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Israel). In such complex circumstances, the single-minded exercise of US military power is bound to produce inadvertent and chaotic results. Moreover, it will implicate the United States as a partisan in local disputes in ways not originally intended.

The United States will not likely meet a foe that it cannot beat in war for some time. But other nations will seek increasingly to balance against a more activist US military in order to retain their own regional influence. In the meantime, the Enduring Freedom model will pose a problem of strategic over-extension for the United States. The rudiments of this problem are already evident in plans to substantially boost defense spending despite two years of projected budget deficits and a sharp decline in expected future budget surpluses. The 2003 defense budget has been set at $379 billion. This sum represents a 30 percent inflation-corrected increase over the 1998 budget and it is 93 percent as high as average spending during the cold war decade of the 1980s. Additional real increases in defense spending are likely during the decade. However, the projected budget surplus for the next ten years has declined 71 percent since last year, according to the Congressional Budget Office.\(^90\)

\(^90\) Mike Allen and Amy Goldstein, Security Funding Tops New Budget; Bush's Plan Marks Return to Deficits, Washington Post, January 20, 2002.
Enduring Freedom was also distinguished by the degree to which military expediency determined strategic choices -- such as the decision to unleash the Northern Alliance. This feature of US decision-making in the war contributed to the preponderance of inadvertent and unplanned outcomes. The US relationship with the Northern Alliance was governed by a mutual opportunism whose operating principle was: "the enemy of my enemy is potentially useful to me." Tactical alliances are not unusual in war, of course. But the degree of US dependency in this case, and the differences in the broader goals, interests, and values that separated the United States and its battlefield partners ensured that the American victory would be neither tidy nor complete.

More than an aberration, ad hoc reliance on disparate local partners has been heralded as an essential feature of the "new warfare". Like most aspects of the method of war demonstrated in Afghanistan, this is not entirely new; it finds a precedent in American cooperation with the Kosovo Liberation Army during the 1999 Operation Allied Force. In the Afghanistan case, however, the governor came off. This calls to mind an even earlier precedent for the use of local forces: US cooperation with the Afghan mujahideen during the late-1970s and 1980s. So in some respects US policy has come full circle. Of course, now there is a determination to remain engaged and police the results of such cooperation. As suggested above, however, this solution involves negative consequences of its own.

The decision to unleash the Northern Alliance came during the second week of the war. Some analysts have detected in this decision the resolution of a debate within the administration that had pitted the views of the State Department against those of Defense.\textsuperscript{91} At heart, the disagreement regarded the importance of providing for post-war political arrangements in Afghanistan, safe-guarding against negative stability effects, and attending to the strategic concerns of alliance partners, especially Pakistan and other Muslim countries. DoD was more prepared than State to unleash the Northern Alliance

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and less inclined to invest in splitting the Taliban. DoD also was reluctant to pace the bombing campaign to meet what the State Department regarded as political requirements. The turning point in the war supposedly came with the ascendancy of DoD's view, which reframed the rout of the Taliban as a rather simple matter.

The purported tussle between State and Defense has the feel of a familiar old tale and it may be true -- but what should we make of it? The facile conclusion is that political and diplomatic considerations had dominated military ones unnecessarily during the campaign's first month, thus hobbling the war effort. However, if we take a longer perspective on the war, something like the opposite appears true: The rush into an unnecessarily ambitious and complex operation so soon after 11 September made adequate political preparation impossible -- and this bred the operation's short-comings.

The historiography of the war holds that the Bush administration demonstrated judiciousness and restraint in waiting 25 days before responding militarily to the 11 September attacks. This would certainly be true if the action in question had been a limited one. By historical standards, however, three-and-half weeks are not a long time to pause before initiating a large-scale military campaign in a highly volatile region bordering Russia and China. Although it was necessary to take prompt, forceful action against the Al Qaeda network, it was not necessary to rush a regime change in Afghanistan. Nor, as it turns out, was it possible to do so without sacrificing important stability, alliance, and humanitarian interests. The two tasks -- destroying Al Qaeda and stabilizing Afghanistan -- although related, should and could have been pursued in parallel, each within its own appropriate time line.

While it is fair to say that alliance and stability concerns initially constrained the conduct of the war, they did so from an already subordinated position -- a position of trying to catch up to the war wagon and steer it toward a more balanced set of objectives. This proved an impossible task. Battlefield imperatives and broader strategic concerns could not be sufficiently reconciled within the chosen time frame. The results of this dilemma were evident both before and after the war's mid-November turning point. It was evident
before 10 November in the desultory progress of the operation. And it was evident afterward in a sudden "come-back" victory achieved by jettisoning important interests and stability concerns -- an act of simplification that later rebounded to haunt America's victory.

More important than the differences between State and Defense is the policy framework in which both operate. The conceptual apparatus that the Bush administration brings to the current crisis combines a naive Realism and a sturdy faith in the utility of military power as a political solvent. 92

Consistent with the administration's policy framework is a reduced emphasis on "humanitarian interests," international legal mechanisms, stability issues and operations (including peacekeeping), and attempts at nation-building. Especially relevant to Operation Enduring Freedom, the administration has placed a renewed emphasis on the role of states in supporting terrorism and a new emphasis on "regime removal" as a sanction for rogue behavior. 93

From the administration's security policy perspective the problem of terrorism admits a fairly straight-forward solution: one simply acts as quickly and decisively as one's power allows to remove the offending actors and those governments that consort with or tolerate them. The broader aim is to "drain the swamp" (of bad actors) and deter future flooding. Within this framework the possible negative and inadvertent repercussions of rapid, large-scale action -- collateral damage, destabilization, "blowback" -- are treated as entirely tractable. The decisive application of force in defense of national interests and the presumed deterrent effect of such action are supposed to be a sufficient palliative. Residual instabilities can be managed through an expansion of peacetime military engagement.

The administration's policy framework induces a kind of tunnel vision that makes precipitous action and ambitious war objectives likely. With regard to the goals of Operation Enduring Freedom, it dictated targeting the Taliban for extinction and minimized the effects of pursuing this course. With regard to the war's strategy, it led the United States to overestimate its capacity to quickly and reliably bend Pakistan to its purposes. And then, midway through the war, it led the United States to minimize the risks of unleashing the Northern Alliance. Throughout the war it led the United States to depreciate the negative repercussions of the strategic bombing campaign, the problem of post-war chaos, and the importance of measures to stabilize and rehabilitate Afghan society.

The administration's focus on states and state actors comports well with the structure of American military power and with prevalent concepts about its proper use -- including the application of decisive force and traditional notions of deterrence. But the administration's paradigm reduces attention to sub-national and transnational dynamics, where most of the answers regarding the new terrorism reside.

Terrorists are notoriously difficult to deter -- especially the suicidal variety; the same is true of social movements that are driven by visceral hatred or apocalyptic visions. States, however, are more amenable to deterrence -- at least in Realist orthodoxy, which treats them as unified, rational agents. Unfortunately, this axiom has limited application in the case of the fragile quasi-states in whose territory organizations like Al Qaeda often take residence.

At any rate, the proposition that transnational terrorist organizations need states in order to survive and prosper is simply false. None of the terrorist capabilities demonstrated on 11 September require a large infrastructure and none require an intentionally cooperating state.

What was most important to the genesis of Al Qaeda was a circumstance: the 20-year Afghan civil war -- and the Kalashnikov culture it produced. Although outside powers --
especially the Soviet Union, United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia -- played pivotal roles in this terrible.

A true appreciation of the new terrorism should draw our attention back to the "problem cluster" of which it is part, encompassing the phenomena of fragile states, war-ravaged societies, inter-communal and ethnic conflict, and associated regional rivalries. It should accentuate the importance of remedial steps: conflict reduction, humanitarian relief, and development assistance of all types. And it should sensitize us to the problem of inadvertency in the conduct of military affairs. But these issues and requirements fall largely outside the scope of Realist tunnel vision.

In December 6 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Richard Haass, the director of Policy Planning for the State Department, pledged that the United States would strictly limit its involvement in the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan. Other countries will do most of the work and provide most of the funds, he suggested, because the United States did the "lion's share of the world's work" in the military operation.94

But Haass' perspective and priorities are inverted. First, nation-building is too important to simply subcontract. Second, the military and non-military aspects of bringing stability to Afghanistan should be integrated, not dichotomized -- and certainly not along national lines. Finally, it is not nation-building that is likely to make America a target of Afghan resentment. More serious are the residual effects of the bombing campaign, which directly claimed the lives of Afghan civilians.

Effective action against terrorism depends on a unique synergy of military and non-military measures -- the latter including diplomatic, humanitarian, development, peace-building, and law-enforcement efforts. The synergy of the military and non-military aspects of response is that the latter serve to keep threat generation down to a level that military efforts can manage. In turn, military efforts serve to guarantee non-military

measures and help maintain the conditions in which they might hope to succeed. The ultimate aim and measure of success is the establishment of a self-sustaining stability -- one that does not leak terrorism. It is in the integration, balancing, and pacing of military and nonmilitary, unilateral and cooperative initiatives that Operation Enduring Freedom failed -- and the result is greater instability in Afghanistan and in several regions of the world.