

The New Strategy in Afghanistan: Will it be a home run or strike three?

By

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After the terrorist attacks of September 11th the United States invaded Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban in a quick and decisive war, effectively destroying the terrorist safe haven in the country. However, eight years later the U.S. and members of the international community remain there trying to keep terrorists and extremists from reestablishing their base in Afghanistan. To date we have only reached a fragile stalemate between the insurgency, composed of the Taliban and supported by al Qaeda, and the ISAF and U.S. forces within the country.

Many argue we should give up in Afghanistan, believing our problems can be attributed to a poor strategy, a lack of resources, a lack of focus, or simply an unwinnable war. However, we now have a new President, a new commander in Afghanistan, and a new strategy that many have touted as a first step toward victory. This thesis examines the history of the battle for stability in Afghanistan, the history of insurgencies in the country, and other major issues challenging the rebuilding and stability of the failed state. The intent of this thesis is to contribute a further understanding of the conflict and challenges present in Afghanistan and its surrounding region. The effectiveness of the Obama administration's new strategy and direction in Afghanistan is also examined.

While the new strategy is a step forward in Afghanistan, it is far from a silver bullet. Any victory still requires a true long-term commitment to the fight for stability in Afghanistan, the proper resources for the security of the Afghan people and an effective effort to eliminate the safe haven that now exists in Pakistan. Significant progress is achievable within the region. However, even if the Obama plan works as outlined true stability and success will not occur unless the U.S. and members of the international community avoid past mistakes.

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60 65 70 75

SOVIET UNION CHINA

Dushanbe Kulyab Kurgan-Tyube Termez

Amu Darya

Fez Kashem Khorog Vakhsh

Lashkhar Baroghil Pass Karakoram Range

U.S. Mestoi Gupis Gilgit Chilas

North-West Frontier Province Muzaffargarh Srinagar

Islamabad Kotli Jamina

Chitral Kalam Dir Arandu Saido Dargai Mardan Peshawar Rawalpindi Mianwali Sargodha Faisalabad Lahore Gujranwala Bkara Abaz

1993 Treaty boundary (Durand Line) where differing from present boundary

Kabul Charikar Bamian Sheykhbad Parachinar Gardeyz Khoyest Miram Shah Wana Zhet Dera Ismail Khan Zhob Dera Ghazi Khan Khanpur

Sukaram Sar Khyber Pass Thal Kohat Bahnu Mianwali Sargodha Faisalabad Lahore Gujranwala Bkara Abaz

1993 Treaty boundary (Durand Line) where differing from present boundary

Kabul Chaman Chokaj Pass Toba Chaman Khojak Pass Quetta Khost Sibi Larkana Sukkur Jacobabad Jhauro Dera Ghazi Khan Khanpur

PAKISTAN

INDIA

Bikaner Jodhpur Pali Udaipur

IRAN

Meymaneh Kushke Qaleh-ye Now Herat Shindand Farah Delaram Geresht Dandahar Qalai Darakht-e Yahya Chaghai Hills Chagai Dalbandin Surab Nag Panjgur Malat Bela Pasni Gwadar Pasni Jiwani

Kuchnay Darweyshan Dasht-e Margow Rigistan Goud-e Zereh (marshy lake) Chagai Hills

IRAN

Khosh Iranshahr Sarbaz Pishin Badghis Beshhti

Arabian Sea

Scale 1:8,400,000

0 100 200 300 Kilometers

0 100 200 300 Miles

Legend:

- International boundary
- Other international boundary
- Railroad
- Road
- Track or trail

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

800909 (A05998) 9-9

ix

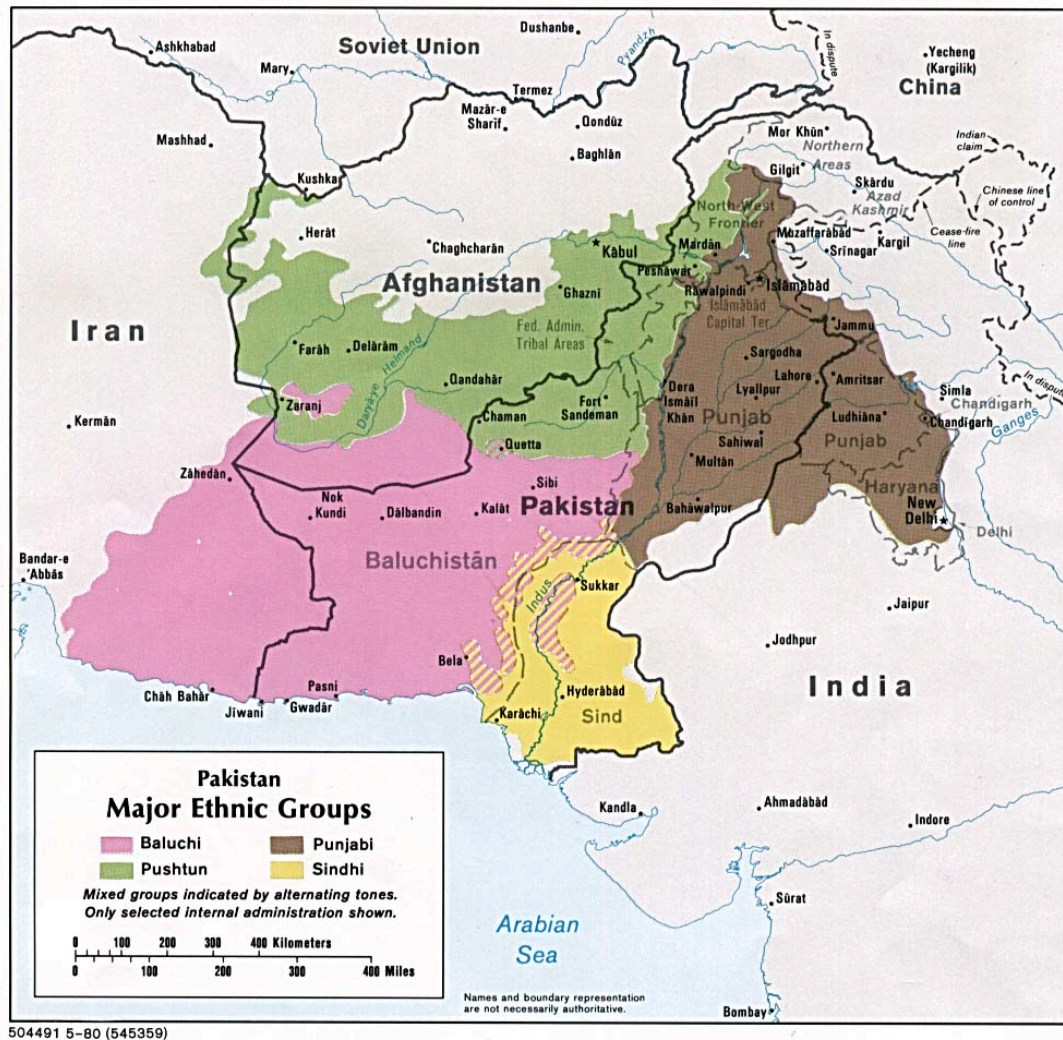


Figure 4: Map of Major Ethnic Groups of Pakistan (UT, 1980).



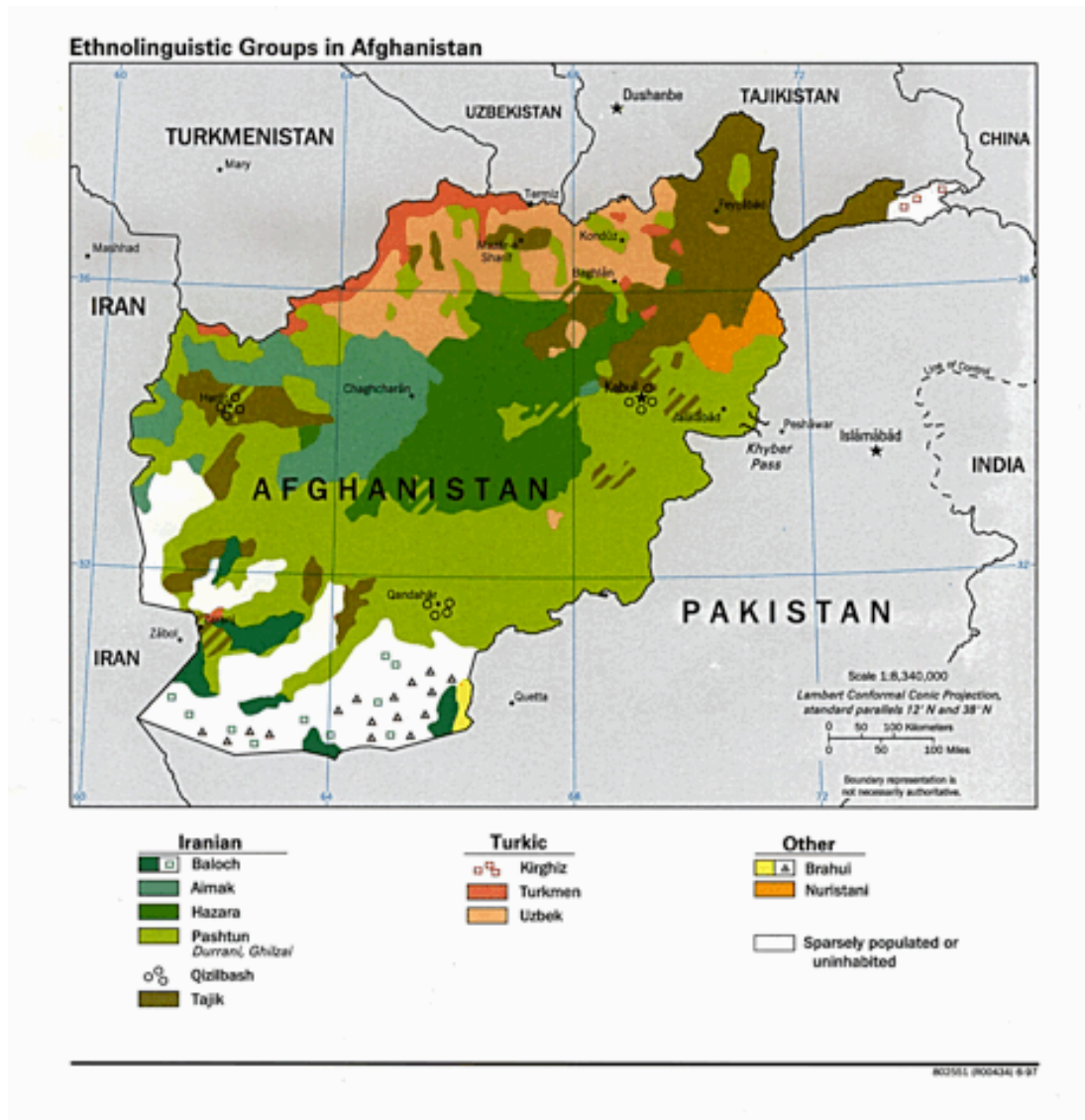


Figure 6: Map of Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan (UT, 1997).

INTRODUCTION

Since the outset the War in Afghanistan has suffered from a perpetual lack of resources and an absence of an effective strategy. Upon the overthrow of the Taliban Afghanistan officially became a failed state in desperate need of help. For the past several years the war has been ignored, under-resourced, and ineffectively implemented leaving an opening for the Taliban to regain control of the countryside. In the Taliban controlled areas they have created their own alternative administration, making the job of rebuilding Afghanistan much harder. The Obama administration upon coming into office put forth a new strategy meant to reverse the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and bring about a stable government and state.

However, the War in Afghanistan needs more than a new strategy, it needs the right strategy. The country of Afghanistan has slowly been destroyed as a result of three decades of war that started in 1978 with the Soviet supported coup. The effects of decades of war were a state without an infrastructure, economy, key institutions, and government (Eliot, Jr, 2008, p.284). Twice in the past quarter century the U.S. has squandered victories in Afghanistan by not following military victory with a long-term commitment to creating a stable government. This has caused previous gains to be squandered. This time the U.S. must follow through with the right strategy so the Afghan government can stabilize the country (Riedel, 2009b, p.1).

The ultimate goal of the Obama administration remains the same as that of the Bush administration before it; a stable Afghanistan free of terrorists. However, the current battle is no

longer within the borders of Afghanistan; it has now spread into the tribal areas of Pakistan where al Qaeda and the Taliban have found sanctuary. The long-standing safe haven in the tribal areas has become the base for a new insurgency providing al Qaeda, the Taliban and other militant groups a base from which they can undermine the government of Afghanistan. Any new strategy must address this safe haven in order to create stability (Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p.2).

The Bush administration began the war with a “light footprint” of troops. Rather than deploying a large contingent of forces to provide security, allowing them to fill the power vacuum in the countryside, they used the Northern Alliance supported by the CIA and Special Forces. As a result of the use of a light footprint and relying heavily on warlords the central government was severely weakened because it made the warlord’s de-facto local governors, creating a network of ethnic fiefdoms (Felbab-Brown, 2005, p.68). As a result the new Afghan government lacked authority beyond major cities leaving the countryside open to the re-emergence of the Taliban and a new insurgency (Curtis & Phillips, 2007, p. 1). After seven years of U.S. involvement security remains a concern in the lives of Afghans, especially in rural areas, while coalition forces remain stuck in neutral (Rotberg, 2007, p.57-8; Rennie, Sharma, & Sen, 2008, p. 28-30).

While the Afghans have supported the efforts to build a new Afghan state, they remain frustrated by a lack of progress due to: slow reconstruction, a corrupt government, and an absence of the rule of law in the country. Effectively addressing these problems will prevent the population from reverting to a cycle of internal war and revolt against the government. The key task must be a legitimate government with the capacity and support necessary for the state to function. In order for this to happen the Afghan people--the center of gravity in the struggle against the Taliban, al Qaeda, and the insurgency--must feel safe and be allowed to return to their

lives (Curtis & Phillips, p.1). This is the job of Gen. McChrystal, the new U.S. commander; to recalibrate the war effort so local people see the coalition as a positive force in their society and a provider of security. As Gen. McChrystal stated upon taking command “We will not win based on the number of Taliban we kill but instead our ability to separate insurgents from the people” (Thompson & Baker, 2009, p.30-1).

In order to move the effort in Afghanistan forward the new strategy of the Obama Administration includes a list of objectives that they believe must be met to achieve the ultimate goal of a self-reliant state. These objectives include the disruption of terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, developing a more capable and legitimate government, continued development of indigenous security forces, and improving the civilian control of both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Although the new strategy is a good start there are a number of questions that must be answered to know if it will work. Do the current plans of the administration properly address the current problems? Are they the most effective plans and strategies for addressing the war in Afghanistan and the growing instability in Pakistan? Have they corrected the mistakes of past efforts? These and other questions must be answered. Will this new strategy turn the effort around in Afghanistan or will it be the third strike and fail the Afghan population?

I will proceed in the following way in order to assess whether the new strategy will be successful. In order to understand the challenges in Afghanistan Section 2 presents a detailed history of relevant conflicts, events, groups, and issues in the country. This section begins with the last occupation of Afghanistan by a foreign power, the Soviet-Afghan war, then discusses the poppy trade, and examines the Taliban as major forces in the new insurgency. The section will then examine the current safe haven in Pakistan and the recent events since the U.S. invasion

which have led to the current challenges faced by the new administration. In the following section, Section 3, I examine the differences between the new strategy of the Obama administration and the strategy of the Bush administration in order to more fully understand past mistakes and differences in approaches. Section 4 serves as a description of where the efforts in Afghanistan currently stand and what environment the new strategy and commander will be facing as of 2009. Finally, in section 5 the likelihood of the new strategy's success will be analyzed in an effort to discern whether success will be achieved in Afghanistan or we will yet again fail the Afghan people.

HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

In order to regain the initiative in Afghanistan and make headway in addressing the threat of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, a new strategy must be effectively implemented. While a change of leadership and force structure are certainly necessary when changing directions they are not all that is necessary to be successful. It is even more important to make sure the goals being pursued will achieve the improvements we need and will eventually lead to victory. In order to arrive at the proper goals it is important to understand the relevant history of past conflicts as well as the history of other issues facing the country.

First, we must examine the history of the Soviet invasion and the resulting insurgency to understand how the Afghan people respond to a foreign invasion or reforms in their country that they do not support. There must also be a discussion of the poppy trade in Afghanistan and its significance in the economics and politics of the state. Additionally, it is important to examine the origins and history of the safe haven in the tribal areas that straddle the Durand Line demarcating the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹ Finally, to understand recent events the

¹ The border created by the British led to two centuries of friction since the Durand line in the Hindu Kush split the Pashtun tribal areas in an effort to reduce ethnic threats in the countries it controlled in the 19th century. This border has been rejected by leaders in both Afghanistan and Pakistan for more than a century but remains the border acknowledged by the international community (Rotberg, p.180-1; Loyn, 2009, p.137).

strategy used over the last seven years by President Bush and the events which occurred in Afghanistan must be discussed.

In the last quarter century the United States has let the opportunity to stabilize Afghanistan slip through its fingers twice by failing to follow battlefield successes with efforts to rebuild the state. Each time the cost of these failures has been high. First, in the lives of Afghans in the 1990's and lives lost on September 11th. Second, the innocent civilians and coalition soldiers lost during the invasion and subsequent insurgency. After the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980's the mujahideen lapsed into a civil war once their impetus for unity, the invasion of a foreign power, had vanished. The U.S. could have led an international effort to restore order and rally key players like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to end the conflict. Instead the U.S. ignored Afghanistan allowing the radical Taliban movement to take power in the late 1990's. They would soon become hosts to al Qaeda who would attack America in 1998 then 2000 and finally on September 11th (Riedel, 2009c, p.1). In examining the past in order to understand the present it is important to make note of both similarities and differences to understand what to do about a problem. For instance, in both insurgencies they originated in a safe haven in Pakistan's tribal areas and the areas surrounding the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Riedel, 2009b, p.1).

In the invasion following September 11th the U.S. used the Northern Alliance, with the support of the CIA and Special Forces, to topple the Taliban in late 2001.² The results were spectacular and quick, with the Taliban removed from power by early 2002 causing both the Taliban and al

² The Northern Alliance, also known as the Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, is an alliance of militia groups that were brought together by Ahmed Shah Massoud in order to combine their efforts to fight a common enemy, the Taliban. Basically the Northern Alliance was composed of all the major ethnic groups besides Pashtuns and was led by Massoud as military leader until his assassination on September 9, 2001. (Jones, 2009, p.xx; Tanner, p. 284).

Qaeda to retreat into Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). However, rather than putting forth a concerted effort over the next couple years to eliminate al Qaeda and develop a state that could exercise control over the tribal belt, the U.S. resources were shifted to Iraq and the Afghans got only marginal support. By 2006 the Taliban had returned in full force with increasing support and funding from the prolific poppy trade as well as new lessons learned from al Qaeda in Iraq with a new safe haven in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Despite the resurgence of the Taliban the resources of the U.S. remained concentrated on Iraq while the Taliban and their influence in Afghanistan continued to grow rapidly. By 2008 they controlled much of the rural countryside and had regained a great deal of confidence and support (Riedel, 2009a, p.1). As the situation deteriorated many became concerned the U.S. would meet the same fate as the Soviet Union if we did not learn from our mistakes and change our strategy in Afghanistan (Riedel, 2009b, p.1). In order to further understand where the current challenges in Afghanistan come from a brief history of each major part of the puzzle is presented in this chapter.

HISTORY OF THE SOVIET-AFGHAN WAR

Although Afghanistan has experienced three decades of warfare, this was preceded by a long period of peace during the 1960's and the early 1970's. The first President of Afghanistan, Mohammed Daoud Kahn, took power in 1973 after a bloodless coup overthrowing his cousin, King Zahir. The coup was initiated in response to how close Afghanistan had gotten to the Soviet Union and communism under King Zahir. Once in power he purged his regime of members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the country's communist party, and reduced the number of Soviet advisors in the Army. President Daoud used his time as president to attempt to implement a more progressive regime (Ewans, p.180). Throughout this period of prosperity, peace and development Afghanistan was as a member of the non-aligned countries in the Cold War bringing a number of development projects to the country which allowed it to become more self-sufficient than at any other time in history (Tanner, p.229).

During Daoud's time as president until his assassination in 1978 in the midst of the communist coup, he pursued political and social reforms which led to economic progress. Part of these efforts included a crack down on Islamic fundamentalism in the country. He also denied funds offered by Saudi Arabia to develop Kabul University in order to avoid the accompanying Wahabbi fundamentalism strings (Ewans, p.179-81).³ During his crackdown Daoud advocated a separate territory for Pashtuns, called Pashtunistan, which proposed a shifting of the Afghanistan

³ Instead Saudi Arabia invested the money in Pakistan which helped bolster the fundamentalist system of education in Wahabbi madrassas, these schools would soon attract fundamentalists from Afghanistan including Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar was a key player in the rejection of the Soviets in the 80's, prime minister in the 90's, and helper of the Taliban and al Qaeda after the U.S. invasion (Ewans, p.180).

border east to the Indus River, as a plan to bolster his domestic support.⁴ This proposal angered Pakistan and led them to recruit and train disaffected fundamentalists to fight against Daoud since he played the Pashtun card in order to garner support from the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and a major ethnic group in Pakistan (Loyn, p.136-7). These same fundamentalists would be used in the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980's (Fitzgerald & Gould, 2009, p.124).⁵ These are the tensions that would stoke the fires of 30 years long period of violence starting Afghanistan's long-unfinished nightmare. As a result of the simultaneous uprisings, Daoud was forced to crack down even harder on fundamentalism, beginning an escalating cycle of violence eventually causing the Soviet Union to intervene to support the communist government (Loyn, p.138).

The Soviet Union had supported military advisors in Afghanistan since 1954, helping train the Afghan officer corps, pilots and tank drivers. They were also the source of weapons and military technology for the Afghan Army (Franklin & Gould, p.90-2). However, loyalty in Afghanistan is not bought with supplies, as the Soviet Union would discover and the British discovered in the 19th Century, especially when used to impose changes that went against the society of the Afghans. Daoud's efforts to modernize the country included efforts at improved relations with the West; these overtures angered the Soviet Union and portions of the Afghan

⁴ Pashtunistan includes the FATA and areas adjacent to them in Afghanistan

⁵ The militia leaders backed by the U.S. in the anti-Soviet jihad are the same that fought the reforms of the Daoud government and the communist government. Ahmed Shah Massud, the lion of the Panjshir, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar would begin an uprising in 1974. Massud began the uprising from his home in the Panjshir valley which comprises a natural fortress which Massud would fight from until his assassination in 2001. While Hekmatyar would form his own party, Hezb-i-Islami – the party of Islam, and begin his own uprising (Fitzgerald & Gould, p. 124-5).

population contributing to the revolution that would remove him from power (Loyn, p .138).⁶

The Saur Revolution began in the spring of 1978 during which Daoud was murdered as the Communist Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) took power. Although the communist regime began slowly it gradually pushed closer towards communist goals, including rural land distribution, which greatly upset the clan and tribal system; a crucial source of support in Afghanistan. These actions provoked a new insurgency led by rural landlords, that rapidly spread across the country (Ewans, p.196-7).

During the ensuing insurgency 50,000 Afghans were killed while hundreds of thousands of technocrats, intellectuals, and political moderates and Islamists fled the country, including about 90% of university teachers (Loyn, p.139). Islamist guerilla forces, which were trained by Pakistan, quickly bolstered the insurgency in response to the shock tactics of the communists. The Afghan people went to war to defend traditional Afghan values against the spread of godless communism since they believed the intervention to be an assault on their Islamic values and way of life (Crews & Tarzi, 2008, p.90). The communist government of Afghanistan subsequently signed a Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighborliness with the Soviet Union to bolster their base of support further angering the Afghans as Afghanistan moved closer to Communism (Tanner, p.231-2).

Two bloody uprisings in Asadabad and in Herat forced the new Afghan Leader, Nur Mohammed Taraki, to ask for troops from the Soviet Union. However, direct Soviet involvement would not happen for another year (Ewans, p.196). By this time the United States and the Carter Administration had finally taken notice and began supplying Afghan rebels with

⁶ Daoud saw the Soviet Union's meddling as an unacceptable intervention in Afghanistan internal affairs, saying "We will never allow you to dictate to us how to run our country and whom to employ in Afghanistan" (Tanner, p.230)

arms consisting of old British Lee-Enfield rifles, a weak yet symbolic move. This alarmed the Kremlin as the U.S. began to become involved in the conflict, making Afghanistan the next proxy battlefield in the Cold War. The current regime would quickly lose support over the next two months as Afghan rebels continued to whittle away at the Afghan Army. On December 12 Brezhnev decided to send the Red Army into Afghanistan following the plan created by the Soviet General Staff (Tanner, p.232-5). From the beginning they attempted to force a vision of society and governance onto a population in which it would never work to fit a predetermined picture that was drawn abroad; a common mistake in past interventions in Afghanistan (Loyn, p.140). At the beginning Moscow's goal was to stabilize a communist regime on the verge of collapsing in the face of a national uprising, but it would soon turn into a counterinsurgency (Feifer, 2009, p.27-30).⁷ The Soviet leadership intended to intervene and create an Afghanistan that would be similar to other Soviet satellite states and would submit to virtual imperial rule in Moscow (Tanner, p.234). The invasion finally occurred on December 24, 1979 at the request of and with the intent of supporting the Communist Party of Afghanistan's current leadership; they wouldn't leave till nine years later after a long and bloody fight with the mujahideen.⁸ The invasion by the Soviet Union and the attempt to impose Communism on Afghanistan in a largely Islamic country with a history of xenophobia produced a predictable result that had occurred numerous times before; a mass national uprising of formerly warring tribes and groups working together to pushback a foreign invader (Riedel, 2009b, p.2).

⁷ It is now understood that Moscow stumbled into Afghanistan without a clear understanding of and appreciation for the difficulties it would face.

⁸ For more information on the Soviet War in Afghanistan please reference "The Soviet-Afghan War" by the Russian General Staff. The Hidden War by Artyom Borovik, or The Bear Went over the Mountain by Lester W. Grau.

From the beginning the Soviet Union portrayed the invasion as a case of assisting friends not as an imperial grab, with the Soviet defense minister initially arguing they would only be in Afghanistan for a year since they believed the mujahideen would throw down their weapons when faced with the Soviet Army (Loyn, p. 141-3). The initial aim of the troops once in Afghanistan was to aid the local population not to fight the insurgency. However, only pockets of the local population supported the invasion. These pockets were composed of urban middle class and a few minority regions closer to other satellite states, while the rest of the population violently opposed the new occupation a response they had not expected (Tanner, p.240; Riedel, 2009b, p.2).

In the 1980s Pakistani President Zia ul-Huq agreed to support the mujahideen insurgency despite the enormous risk it posed to Pakistan. This caused the Soviet Union to try and exert power on Pakistan even attempting to foment unrest (Ewans, p.224; Riedel, 2009b, p.3). Although the assistance from the international community and the U.S. began at low levels, it was a significant policy reversal for the United States that would become a significant effort under Reagan.⁹ Once it became clear that the mujahideen would not simply throw down their weapons, there was a shift in Soviet military policy towards Afghanistan (Loyn, p.145). As the mujahideen became the primary target of the military they shifted strategies from conventional warfare to counter-insurgency tactics. However, this new shift was not easily implemented since the Red Army invaded Afghanistan with a heavy army including soft skinned trucks susceptible to small arms and heavy armor that could not traverse the countryside. The lack of proper troops and equipment is another indication that the Soviets did not intend to fight the Afghans, just support the regime in place, but the mujahideen changed all this (Tanner, p.238).

⁹ For more information on how the U.S. support for the mujahideen changed see Charlie Wilson's War by George Crile.

Once the Soviet Union decided to face the insurgency and changed the force structure of troops from reservists to regulars they were dug in for the long haul facing the full force of the insurgents as the more of the population began to support the mujahideen. The only problem was this contingent of troops had no training for a counterinsurgency, nor did they have the equipment for the task (Loyn, p.144-6). Although they initially faced only a small contingent of insurgents they would soon be facing the true fighting strength of Afghanistan which lay not within the sedentary population but with its people in districts in the hills and the countryside who always remained attached to individual freedom and defiant of foreign power. The true enemy of the Red Army that would over power the Soviets would be the mujahideen (Tanner, p.238-41).

The mujahideen in Afghanistan had the perfect conditions for an insurgency, a tactic of warfare long honed by the Afghans with a number of victories in the 19th and 20th century. They had the support of the Afghan villages, mountains with access by narrow tracks, and a ready supply of young men willing to die for what was considered a holy cause. The mujahideen also possessed a unique mad courage, all of them were truly dedicated to the fight no matter the pain, sacrifice, or the end costs of battle. There was also a virtually endless supply of fighters (Loyn, p.146). In order for the population to unify and fight such a war they needed one thing that was rare in Afghan history, a unifying sense of political purpose. This was provided for them by the invasion and methods of the Soviet Union, causing groups to unite across tribal, ethnic, geographic and economic lines to repel the Soviets (Tanner, p.243). In order to concentrate the military effort Pakistan limited the number of insurgent groups to seven. Those selected were far more radical and extremist in their views of Islam in line with the views of President ul-Huq. This limiting of support to a select set of groups caused the effort to become more radicalized

with many refugees being recruited for war while children, especially orphans, attending the Saudi funded madrassas that had been established in the frontier region and in Pakistan (Loyn, p.147).

The invasion provoked a declaration of jihad from thousands of mullahs, bringing even those who had not revolted against the current regime into the fight to push back the Soviet Army, providing the jihad with a ready supply of troops. What the Soviets did not understand nor control even after their quick invasion was the true difficulty that was presented in the more populous rural parts of Afghanistan (Tanner, p.243; Ewans, p.218-220). It would be from these ungovernable rural portions of Afghanistan that the main force to fight the Soviets would materialize, from the hidden nooks of Nuristan to the wide and arid space of the Helmand basin with Afghanistan's tribes mobilizing as a result of the impetus created by the Soviet invasion and with the common ideology of Islam (Tanner, p.243-4). The fight was supported by countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan which used the ungoverned parts of the country to establish schools that taught a pure Wahhabi view of Islam that would provide the ideological bedrock for those who would create the Taliban. However, it was not until Congressman Charlie Wilson became involved in the fight that the strategy of the CIA moved beyond simply containment and bloodletting in revenge for Vietnam and moved toward victory to push the Soviet Union out of the country, bringing billions of dollars and thousands of weapons to the fight that would give the mujahideen the additional power to push the Soviets back (Loyn, p.146-8).

The support for the war was funneled through Pakistan at the behest of General Zia ul-Huq, due to a deal with the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) that gave it carte blanche to lead, coordinate and win the war. As a result Pakistan would establish itself as the safe haven for the mujahideen and other Islamic extremist groups as well as their logistical support and popular

advocate on the world stage. The groups supported were the more conservative and extreme since they were in line with the doctrine of Islamizing Pakistan as advocated by the President ul-Huq (Crews & Tarzi, p.91). In this fight the most important weapon was the support of the people for the mujahideen whether through care for the refugees, humanitarian aid, or military aid in order to keep the Afghans in their villages and providing the mujahideen the support they needed to operate. In response to the growing insurgency, the Soviets applied an intense amount of power in eastern Afghanistan to cut off their supply routes and discourage the villagers from supporting the mujahideen by attacking villages (Tanner, p.247-9). However, the Soviet Union never had more than 100,000 men in country, a force one-fifth the size of the U.S. in Vietnam--a country one-fifth the size. But the problem in this invasion was not the size of forces in Afghanistan but how the forces were used. To fight the insurgency the Soviets used a great deal of violence and a scorched earth policy to depopulate the countryside using jets and Hind helicopters (Ewans, p.220-1). This policy was a clear illustration that the Soviet Union did not understand the strategy of counterinsurgency and the importance of hearts and minds. As a result of the brutality by the Soviet Army more than 1.5 million Afghans were killed and another five million, if not more, fled to Iran and Pakistan (Tanner, p.255; Riedel, 2009b, p.2). The fighting resulted in a massive shift in a country that began the war as one of the poorest in the world to be systematically impoverished losing one out of three of its citizens and a great majority of its human capital. By angering the civilian population and not protecting them from harm they actually made the fight harder by increasing their support and number of volunteers; leading to their own demise (Tanner, p.248).¹⁰

¹⁰ A common mistake for all failed counterinsurgencies in the past, a mistake the U.S. would make as a result of their reliance on policies not appropriate for the fight at hand in Afghanistan after 2001.

Another problem in Afghanistan was the lack of proper equipment for the Soviet forces in country, which along with extremely low levels of morale, contributed to significant problems for the Soviet leadership to fight the war. However, as in every war in Afghanistan, the commanders of the Afghan army would show loyalty first to their own men and villages not the army or the government itself. Soldiers in the Afghan Army frequently shifted sides as the winds of victory blew back and forth from the mujahideen and the Soviet Union causing serious problems for the Soviet Red Army (Ewans, p.218). However, at the same time the mujahideen had their own tactical weakness. As a result of their regional loyalty they often remained close to home and would not leave familiar surroundings to push the Soviets back nor would they always cooperate with other regional commanders. Although conventional forces usually win an engagement with a guerilla force they usually inflict far more casualties on the guerilla force than they take themselves. However, in this case the mujahideen were capable of inflicting far more casualties on the Soviet Union than they could on the mujahideen, causing morale to drop significantly for the Red Army (Loyn, p. 149-55).

The insurgency against the Soviet Union got an additional boost in 1985 from President Reagan who declared support for the Afghan resistance “by all available means” (Tanner, p.263). The war would continue for a few more years after Mikhail Gorbachev came into office as the Soviet Union increased troop levels in response to increasing casualties and support by the U.S. and others. Gorbachev’s assessment of the situation in Afghanistan was that it had become a “bleeding wound” as a result of the counter-revolution and imperialism (Ewans, p.225). In order to try and turn the tides he would change tactics a few times, even using the elite Spetsnaz to lead the counterinsurgency fight. However, such efforts were not sustainable causing the Soviet

Union to sign an agreement for a phased withdrawal in 1988, agreeing that the troops would leave Afghanistan in 12 months, finally withdrawing on February 15, 1989 (Feifer, p.251-2).

The war resulted in a devastated countryside as a result of the combined efforts of the mujahideen and the Soviet forces destroying more than a thousand schools, 31 hospitals, 11 health centers, and thousands of miles of telecommunications cables and other utilities. Although this war arguably caused the end of the Soviet Union and was the first battlefield defeat of the Soviet Army, it also had an unintended consequence that has been given the term Islamic blowback: creating Islamic warriors who turned on the society that had trained and financed them (Loyn, p.154-7). In fact it was during the early stages of the war in Afghanistan that two voices would start the ball rolling on what would become al-Qaeda, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam and Osama Bin Laden.

Once the war ended Islamic Radicalization in the region continued to grow as the United States turned a blind eye even as money, weapons, and resulting corruption continued to flow to the Northwestern Frontier and into Afghanistan. The aftermath left a bad taste in the mouth of Afghanistan since it was left to fend for itself and largely ignored by the rest of the world. The end of the Soviet Support for Najibullah also led to a new civil war; first between the mujahideen and the remaining communist government and eventually between mujahideen groups as they fought for control over the country (Tanner, 271-5; Loyn, p.157-159).

Upon the final withdrawal of Soviet forces, the countries that had been supporting the mujahideen lost interest in the country and failed to help the Afghans form a new government that they would support, most would simply continue shipments of weapons. As a result of the international community turning away, the warlords and militia commanders who had fought the Soviet Union were left to fight the Najibullah government with no help to rebuild the country

that had been destroyed by the war they had helped escalate. Within six months of the last soldier of the Red Army leaving Afghanistan the forces of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Ahmed Shah Massoud began to fight among themselves for power in post-Soviet Afghanistan (Tanner, p.272). Eventually the country and the fight began to look like it did during the Soviet Invasion with the mujahideen in charge of “liberated” areas while the government continued to hold the main towns and bases throughout the country creating a stalemate (Ewans. p.241-2).

During the fight against Najibullah’s regime one of the key players in the Afghan mujahideen was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar due to his use of control over the opium trade in Afghanistan and Peshawar to support his efforts as well as his assistance to help train the fighters supported by Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam’s Maktab al-Khadamat (the Services Bureau for the mujahideen). During the fight against the Soviet Union Hekmatyar had received the lion’s share of the U.S. funding and was even more revolutionary than the soon to be created Taliban; however, he had little support from traditional clan-based Afghans. The only funding that continued to flow from the U.S. were shipments of weapons and funding to Pakistan, which was being used to support the efforts of the mujahideen throughout the country. However, none of the aid was being used to rebuild Afghanistan or end the violence (Loyn, p.163-4). By 1991 it was clear the mujahideen were not going to introduce U.S. style freedom in Afghanistan. Instead they were increasingly fighting each other, causing aid workers and others to leave the country, further impoverishing the people of Afghanistan and perpetuating the cycle of violence. While warlords fought for control over the government and cities, life in the Afghan countryside returned to warlordism with different ethnic groups ruling different areas, like the Pasthuns ruling Kandahar and Khan taking over Mazar-i-Sharif with the help of Iran. The mujahideen

increasingly looked to poppy cultivation as a source of revenue for their new fiefdoms since it had already become many people's sole means of survival (Feifer, p.262; Loyn, p.163-5).

Despite Najibullah's admissions that communism was not for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia continued to supply weapons and other support so the mujahideen could fight and create a government more amenable to their needs. Eventually the forces of Hekmatyar, Massud and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, had arrived around Kabul and began to confront each other in 1992 (Fitzgerald & Gould, p.215). Despite a concerted effort by a number of militias with the support of Pakistan, Najibullah's communist-backed regime in Kabul did not collapse immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. His regime remained in power for a few more years, until April 16, 1992 when Najibullah finally resigned as a result of a lack of support from the Afghans and the collapse of the Soviet Union; he immediately sought refuge with the UN. Once there was no longer a government in place, the historical disunity between the mujahideen that had existed for centuries came back to the forefront as the fight against the government fell into a civil war (Feifer, p.260-1). As the civil war developed into a far more bloody and violent war than ever seen in Afghanistan, the world stood back and did nothing as the fighting continued. The same clan and tribal loyalties that have existed since before British occupation rose to the surface with even greater impact due to vastly increased firepower. In the new civil war heavy weapons, once used between opposing armies, were being used against people in their homes after Massoud assumed control of former Afghan Army positions from 1992-1995 (Loyn, p.168-70).

A new group also entered the mix in the form of Hezb-i-Wahadat, a combination of eight mujahideen groups combined into one in the Iranian supported region of Hazara in the west of Afghanistan. This new group would ally itself with Hekmatyar in a loose alliance of former

enemies in order to fight for power in Kabul. The war quickly devolved into a long stalemate of violent reprisals and battles between the mujahideen groups within the country (Fitzgerald & Gould, p.215). Absent a solid political solution agreed upon by the entire country and lacking a functioning political system, violence became the voice of debate and the use of the AK-47 and the local militia became the politics of the land (Loyn, p.170). By 1993 the country was controlled in regions divided up by ethnic groupings, with independent warlords now preying on traffic for loot or tolls, an independent administration in Mazar-i-Sharif led by Dostum and a new regime in Kabul led by Massoud and Mujadidi. As a result of this level of chaos, the government and the economy quickly collapsed and an armed populace that began to take advantage of a new crop turning Afghanistan into the center of the world's opium trade (Tanner, p.276-8).¹¹ Meanwhile, throughout the country reconstruction was at a stand still as disorder, criminality, and violence spread and remained throughout the country. (Loyn, p.170-3). This would change once the Taliban arrived; as a result of support from Pakistan, the poppy trade, and drug traffickers, as well as the imposition of their brand of Islam, peace was brought to the country that all the major powers had forgotten about, even though they preached a brand of Islam no Afghan wanted to live under. This connection would perpetuate the historical trend of a connection between opium and power in Afghanistan.

¹¹ As they were during the reign of Ahmed Shah in 1757.

HISTORY OF POPPY

Pakistan was designated the frontline of the cold war after the Soviet invasion, this opened a spigot with billions of dollars of military and other aid flowing across the border as the international community embraced the Mujahideen in the fight against the Soviet Union. However, this involvement also had another effect. As the mujahideen came together in the nine-year push against the Soviets, thousands of Islamic radicals came to together to join a holy cause. A cause that would also be funded by the cultivation of poppy in refugee camps and border areas controlled by the mujahideen, with poppy fields and heroin labs appearing across the tribal areas of Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. However, opium and poppy were hardly a new development in the region. Poppy had flourished across the Golden Crescent of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran throughout recorded history (Rashid, 2009, p. 319). Upon the ouster of King Shah in 1973 during a coup, Washington was concerned about the drug trade in Afghanistan; however, Pakistan's tribal areas, were a far greater concern to the U.S. (Peters, 2009, p.29-31). At the beginning of the Afghan resistance Pashtun tribes in the tribal areas of Pakistan were growing more poppy than all of Afghanistan. Once the civil war began, the U.S. government again became concerned about the dangerous mix of heroin smugglers and Islamic extremists that may emerge from the post-war Afghanistan landscape. However, they never committed sufficient resources to combat it. As a result the fledgling opium industry soon became the largest source of opium in the world, creating a new industry that now fosters terrorism, violence, debt bondage, and organized crime so large that it undermines the effort in Afghanistan (Rubin, 2004, p.1).

Since the beginning the production, refining, and trafficking of opium has been a primary source of funding which has funded conflicts and insecurity for decades. Since the Soviet

Afghan war, taxes collected on the opium trade in Pakistan and Afghanistan have provided funding for the anti-Soviet resistance fighters, the warlord rule from 1992-96, the regime of the Taliban, and now the insurgency as well as many Afghan officials and militia commanders (Ewans, p. 255-6; Rubin, 2004, p.2). However, the opium industry was not solely used to foment violence and extremism in region. It was also a key source of income that helped many poor people survive in a chaotic and violent environment with no formal economy due to years of warfare. Prior to the Soviet Afghan war Afghanistan was self-sufficient in food production with agriculture accounting for 30% of exports and earning the country nearly \$100 million annually in foreign exchange (Rubin, 2004, p.3). This once abundant capability was quickly destroyed as a result of the mining of farmland pastures, bombing of irrigation channels, killing of livestock, destruction of road systems, and destruction of the human capital and other labor needed for the cultivation of food crops (Felbab-Brown, p.56). In order to bring in the foreign exchange needed to pay for the imports the country needed to survive opium production was a necessary evil in order to generate the proper level of revenue. Opium was also used as collateral for loans for food and cultivation costs to compensate for an economy lost as a result of more than 20 years of internal conflict (MacDonald & Mansfield, 2001, p.1).

Once the Soviets withdrew, Afghanistan became fragmented between different militia groups within the country. At the same time the reduction in aid for the mujahideen and the curtailing of support of commanders deemed too extreme, like Hekmatyar, forced these leaders to search for new sources of revenue; most would choose poppy. Simultaneously efforts by Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan were attempting to reduce illicit production causing supply of opium to decrease and the price to increase, driving traffickers to seek a new source of poppy. This led to a shift of production and cultivation to Afghanistan (Rubin, 2004, p.3). One of the main

reasons why poppy continued to flourish as a staple crop in the region was a shortage of workers and quality land making poppy the ideal crop since it is a sturdy, drought resistant crop with few pests or ailments and it does not rot so it is far easier to handle with limited numbers of workers and less than ideal land to grow in (Rubin, 2004, p.3). This trend would dominate the remainder of the resistance and was exacerbated by the way Pakistan the ISI would funnel money to favored commanders during the anti-Soviet jihad. It was also spurred on by private donations to the more fundamentalist groups. Those who were not given funding began to rely on the opium trade or other illicit activities for funds so they could continue to function. The tax structure created during this time by commanders continues to be used today. Mujahideen commanders were generally satisfied collecting a 10 percent tax on the crops grown in their area of control (Peters, p.23). However, many commanders eventually created a system of production quotas and loans to farmers to control the spread and growth of opium. The most common system became the salaam system where farmers pre-sell their crops at planting time at a price lower than the market value for which it would be sold at harvest and allowed them to feed their families over the winter (MacDonald & Mansfield, p.2-3). This system is still in place today and routinely traps thousands of poor families into a crippling cycle of debt which forces them to either use daughters for payment or simply traps them into an endless cycle of serving the needs of a drug lord or commander (Peters, p.32-4).

Many of the commanders who came to power during the resistance are fully dependent on the manipulation of the heroin trade as a source of revenue and power. In fact a number of the next generation of leaders of Afghanistan, including Mullah Omar and several other senior Taliban officials, would come from the ranks of these fundamentalist commanders and their use of opium to gain political and military power (Rashid, 2001, p.119). By 1984, 70 percent of the

world's supply of high-grade heroin was produced or had been smuggled through the tribal areas of Pakistan. Despite the wealth of evidence and intelligence that showed mujahideen fighters engaged in drug trafficking there was never a systematic effort put forth to map out let alone cripple the problem. The only true effort put forth was in the tribal areas of Pakistan. In a seven-year campaign the U.S. and officials in Pakistan stamped out 80% of production within Pakistan. The only problem is this effort shifted the trade to Afghanistan making it even harder to monitor, control, or stop (Peters, p.37-43).

The United States did not attempt to address the drug problem in Afghanistan until it was sure the Soviets would actually leave the country. By that point a powerful and well-connected drug mafia had taken root on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border making it far harder to address. The problem was further exacerbated by a new competition for a stake in the new Kabul government and the resulting civil war that erupted between mujahideen commanders. Many of these Afghan commanders would become even more dependent on opium profits and growth in their areas of control for funding resulting in continued resistance to foreign efforts to curb the cultivation of poppy (Rashid, 2009, p.319). By not proactively addressing the spread of opium the U.S. and the international community allowed narcotics and reliance on drug money to become integrated into the politics of Afghanistan. In 1988 as Pakistan got a new President, Benazir Bhutto, USAID launched its first counternarcotics pilot program in Afghanistan. The program was intended to be a blend of forced eradication with support for the growth of alternative crops, an effort to mirror a program that had been successful in Thailand (Peters, p.50-1). However, Pakistan's growing population of addicts that had emerged during the Afghan war continued to expand as Pakistani authorities remained reluctant to tackle the problem. Although the program had some initial successes in the Northwest Frontier Province, the effort

was quick to lose steam as production exploded in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2001, p.122). With the Soviet Army now out of the country agriculture and trade began to rebound in the Afghan countryside. However, a majority of this renewed production took the form of poppy growth, opium and heroin refining, and smuggling with strengthened alliances between mujahideen parties, Pakistani military officers and drug syndicates. The problem was further exacerbated by commanders in the country becoming feudal lords rather than allied members of an army causing a new threat to arrive in Afghanistan that became the primary concern of the U.S.; Arab radical Islamist fighters with their own regional and global ambitions hostile to the U.S. (Peters, p. 47-53).

The efforts to curb opium in Afghanistan was further put on hold by the increased violence in the country during the civil war while at the same time Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the collapse of the Soviet Union pulled America's attention away from Afghanistan. This occurred just as the war entered a new bloody and complex phase with the connections of mujahideen to drug running and Islamic extremism making support of their efforts rather distasteful causing the U.S. and others to lower their involvement in the region (Peters, p.55-59). At a time when reconstruction funding may well have provided many poor Afghan farmers with a solid alternative to poppy farming, U.S. funding for the mujahideen and Afghanistan in general dropped off significantly and left poor farmers trapped in endless debt cycles (Rubin, 2004, p.4).

By the end of the 1990's the heroin trade was booming in Afghanistan and had begun to affect the politics and economics of the entire region. Opium and other narcotics began to cripple societies, distorting the economies of already fragile states and creating a new narco-elite, which became the new political power in many states leading to increased poverty throughout the region. All of this was due to the booming opium cultivation and trade in Afghanistan now

controlled by the Taliban (Rashid, 2001, p.123). By 1997 the World Bank estimated that the illegal smuggling trade in legal goods was worth \$2.5 billion and Afghanistan was now the world's leading opium. At the same time the heroin trade in Pakistan was estimated to be worth \$8 to \$10 billion, more than Afghanistan's annual budget and approximately one-quarter of Pakistan's GDP. As the drug trade continued to flourish in the countries powerful smugglers and drug lords even obtained seats in the National Assembly and were connected to the major political parties in Pakistan (Peters, p.60).

The situation in Pakistan would change as the U.S. began to crackdown on the Bhutto administration, convincing them to launch an aerial spraying campaign in the tribal belt, create a counternarcotics force, and raid Afghan refugee camps for opium. By the end of the 1990's Pakistan had its act together, but this only forced the opium trade into Afghanistan. However, just as the Taliban were gaining more control of Afghanistan and Pakistan was succeeding against opium, the U.S. would turn a blind eye when Pakistan was found to have been developing nuclear weapons (Ewans, p.276-8). During this same period in the 1990's the U.S. launched a program to recover Stingers used by the mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan war fearing they would be used for terrorist attacks and began to reduce support for them. At the same time Pakistan fell back into its reliance on the opium trade to support the state, stopping just short of becoming a narco-state since they lost U.S. support (Peters, p.61-3). By the end of the 20th century both Pakistan's military and intelligence apparatuses were heavily involved in narcotics even using the money to finance operations. Meanwhile in Afghanistan the opium trade had only continued to flourish with the Jalalabad Airport becoming the central clearing station for smuggling in the country including opium and gemstones (Rashid, 2001, p. 123; Peters, 63-7).

From the beginning of the Taliban's ascent to power they have been dependent on the opium network and traffickers spanning Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, this time the opium trade was proliferating for use in a new context. Once the Taliban asserted control over most of the country they were able to use the revenue stream created by opium to finance their own government (Ewans, p.278; Rashid, 2001, p.122-4). As the movement spread throughout the region the opium trade served as a crucial revenue stream, via the taxes collected on trading, which helped keep the country functioning despite economic sanctions in response to their treatment of Afghans and harboring of Al Qaeda (Rubin, 2004, p.3). The revenue from the opium trade also served as funding for the military campaign that was being waged against the remaining opposition in the country, the Northern Alliance, and as a means of supporting the global ambitions of Osama bin Laden. Because of this connection, Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban quickly became the world's first narco-terror state (Peters, 67-9).

Afghanistan and Pakistan's cross-border smuggling trade has a long history in the region, but it was not until the Taliban came to power that it held a crucial strategic role (Maley, 1998, p.77). For the Taliban the revenue generated and support of other groups that came with it was crucial. During their reign of power they taxed and regulated the opium trade by collecting a 10% tax (ushr, a tax collected and spent at the local level) from the farmers who grew poppy, they also collected a 20% zakat (an Islamic levy) on the truckloads of opium that were being transported out of the farm areas (Rashid, 2009, p.320). They further benefited from heroin refining moving into Afghanistan as a result of the crackdown by Pakistan. From this new segment of the trade the Taliban charged between \$50 and \$70 per kilo depending on whether the final product was morphine base or heroin. These sources of revenue were rather lucrative for the Taliban and helped build their base of support and keep them well supplied. When

combined with their controls on road exports and funds from the use of the Afghanistan national airline for smuggling the Taliban easily generated between \$30 to \$200 million per year from the illegal trade especially narcotics, though some estimates put the figure even higher (Felbab-Brown, p.56; Peters, p.81-3). The Taliban also received supplies from traffickers, traders and visiting Arab sheiks, including vehicles and weapons, which were worth millions of dollars. Under the control of the Taliban the opium trade continued to expand, from just over 2000 metric tons in 1996 to more than 3600 metric tons before the Taliban outlawed the cultivation of poppy in an effort to raise the price raw opium held by the Taliban and to garner international assistance and recognition. By this time 97% of the poppy crop was grown in Taliban controlled areas of Afghanistan (Rubin, 2004, p.3; Peters, p.81). Their ban on cultivation was highly effective causing the only remaining poppy cultivation to be in the areas under the control of the Northern Alliance around the Panjshir valley (Felbab-Brown, p.57). They did not attempt to stop trafficking or processing, which resulted in a significant boost in revenue for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Rubin, 2004, p.3-4).

This ban also had a secondary effect. It put many poor farmers deeply in debt as a result of the salaam contracts that they made with wholesalers or moneylenders before planting. In these contracts the farmer agrees to pay the lender with a set amount of opium gum after harvest, and in return the lender pays the cultivator half the value of the future crop at the market place at the time of the loan (Rashid, 2009, p.320). This cash allows the farmer to buy food in the winter. When the Taliban enforced their ban the poor farmers were not able to pay their debts beginning what would become an escalating debt trap (Rubin, 2004, p.4). At the same time opium began to serve as a currency in the more remote areas of the country. However, it wasn't only the Taliban that contributed to the bustling poppy trade in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden

played a part as well with a number of their training camps located near heroin labs. However, the connection was not nearly as direct as that of the Taliban some of the funds were used by groups associated with bin Laden and lower level members of Al Qaeda to fund their own activities (Peters, p.85-100).

After the U.S. invasion it was the debt trap that led to the resurgence of opium cultivation. A sudden influx of U.S. dollars breathed new life into *salaam* contracts allowing those in debt to try and climb out of debt without having to give their daughters or wives to the traffickers (Rubin, 2004, p.5; Rashid, 2009, p.320). Although the British pushed for the drug traffickers to be targeted, the U.S. resisted since many of them now belonged to their new allies, the Northern Alliance, and the U.S. declared that the war on terrorism had nothing to do with counter-narcotics (Peters, p. 101). Drug lords were even told they would not be targeted as they were questioned during the effort to find bin Laden. This new autonomy and power allowed them to tax and protect the opium traffickers, providing the trade with a new powerful protector and causing opium production to continue its growth (Rubin, 2004, p.5; Rashid, 2009, p.320-1).

The British would take the lead on the development of a counter-narcotics strategy since 98% of heroin sold in London came from Afghanistan. Their first attempt involved the payment of farmers to destroy their crops, but this was a disaster. What resulted from this attempt was an \$80 million program that lacked a fundamental understanding of the opium economy and was quickly mired in corruption since the Afghan officials who received funds distributed the money to their tribes or clans and did not eradicate their crops. Some farmers used it to increase cultivation of poppy while those who actually did eradicate their crop never received any money. The biggest portion of the money ended up in the hands of the warlords (Rubin, 2004, p.15).

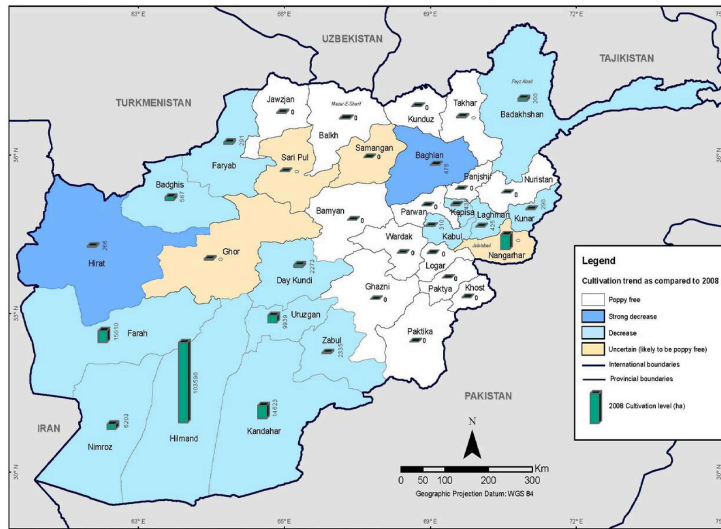


Figure 7 – Expected Poppy Cultivation in 2009 compared to 2008 (UNODC, 2009a).

As a result of increased cultivation and the disastrous first attempt by the British, the opium harvest in 2002 had grown to 3,400 tons, up from 185 tons the previous year—a historical low due to the crackdown by the Taliban. Since that time drug policy has largely been in disarray with few new policies directed at reducing the poppy cultivation (Rotberg, p. 178-9; Rubin, 2004, p.15). Although not all those funds are given to the farmers, they still make far more from poppy. Within Afghanistan the center of the country’s drug trade is in Helmand province, this partially due to a USAID project completed in the 1960’s creating miles of irrigation canals to create 250,000 acres of arable land to boost agriculture in Afghanistan. However, during the Soviet invasion this system collapsed but the land remained arable and farmers quickly turned to the cultivation of poppy at the request of the Alizai tribe, which dominated the province. The poppy trade has continued to expand since as poppy spread across

the country (Rashid, 2009, p.321-2). The predicted cultivation in 2009 compared to cultivation in 2008 can be seen in Figure 1.

As the Coalition worked to form a new government and establish a stable state, the opium trade remained a problem and has continued to grow as a result of the resurgence of the insurgency in Afghanistan. At the same time the attempts by the Afghan government and coalition forces to rebuild state institutions, curb warlordism, and create a viable legal economy within the country have been seriously hindered by the massive amounts of illicit cash generated by drug traffickers (Felbab-Brown, p.58). As the drug epidemic continued to worsen, the country began to suffer from high volumes of crime and inter-clan feuds which undermined security in the country and gave the Taliban the opportunity to adjudicate between tribes. Another problem the opium trade also exacerbated is corruption within the local administrations. This deterioration of governance led to the spread of Talibanization in the southeastern portion of Afghanistan as they re-established control over the region and used their ability to establish security and vast monetary resources to gain support and encourage the spread of opium. Through their efforts they turned Helmand province into the primary conduit for opium sales in the country. Their efforts were made even easier since the international community lacked an agreement over how to proceed with the eradication of opium and stopping the drug trade for the first several years of the occupation of Afghanistan (Rashid, 2009, p.318-23).

The efforts to stop the trafficking of opium were made worse by the lack of a judicial system within the country. As a result of this deficiency police officers are not able to gather evidence against drug dealers let alone prosecute them since they lack the training and technology to do so. Security forces also lack the training, arms, or vehicles that would enable them to capture traffickers while judges are unable to try traffickers since they do not know the

proper procedures. Although there has been an anti-drug infrastructure created within Kabul, the impact on the ground remains minimal (Rashid, 2009, p.324). As the problem continues to worsen the finance minister, Ashraf Ghani, warned of the danger of a narco-state, urging western donors to fund alternative jobs, crops, and livelihoods for the farmers. He said that “Poppy farmers will accept the loss of their crops, their land, their livelihood only if they believe in an alternative future.” (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008, p.214). If the Afghan government can stop the growth of opium production and encourage alternative livelihoods that provide a good living for the Afghan people it will be a big step in stopping poppy cultivation (Rashid, 2009, p.324).

Unfortunately, the U.S. did not address the problem of opium in Afghanistan until after the 2004 harvest which produced 4,200 tons of opium, the farmland used for cultivation increasing to 64%, and for the first time poppy was cultivated in all thirty-four provinces. By this time 2.3 million Afghans or 14 percent of the population in rural areas were involved in cultivation with farm laborers earning \$10 a day, five times the average daily wage, in an opium economy now worth \$2.8 billion. In 2004 opium represented 60% of the country’s legal economy with more than 80% of the opium being refined into heroin inside the country (Felbab-Brown, p.57). Only when the size of the harvest served to politically embarrass the U.S. and London did they debate what to do about it. The U.S. wanted to institute a program of aerial spraying in order to eradicate the crop. However, the British and Afghan governments were adamantly opposed, fearing such an effort would damage other crops and livestock and would drive angry farmers into the hands of the Taliban (Rashid, 2009, p.325).

One of the main problems with eradication is the livelihood of the poor that it destroys without affecting the profits of the warlords, traffickers, or government officials who keep the peasants in debt bondage. The enforcement of this policy only reinforces the image of the U.S.

as a bully and an occupier and drives people toward the Taliban (Rubin, 2004, p.15). Instead the Afghan government and British wanted to implement a much slower but more discriminatory ground eradication program. This failure by the U.S. and coalition forces to reach a consensus to address the problem resulted in a worsening insurgency. Even upon a change in the Secretary of State for the U.S., the internal debate in Washington continued for another year while the U.S. continued to commit larger sums to counter-narcotics (Peters, p.184). In 2004, \$780 million was allocated with only \$120 million allocated for the creation of alternative livelihoods, the most important ingredient to help wean farmers away from poppy cultivation. Even while poppy cultivation grew it only used 3% of arable land while the rest was used to grow a number of other crops. As a result of the underuse this presented the potential for improving yields of other crops and the incomes of farmers if the aid had been directed to the support of alternative livelihoods (Rubin, 2004, p.7). However, developing alternative crops and livelihoods was not a serious part of U.S. policy and the debate continued to center around aerial or ground eradication, causing any whole-hearted effort to languish for another year (Rashid, 2009, p.326).

While the U.S. remained distracted by the crops themselves and of the use of eradication, some ground eradication efforts had begun but they were highly ineffective and often made things worse. Among farmers the efforts were often seen as unfair since the poor farmers would be targeted first, since they could not bribe their way out of trouble with local officials, and ground eradication was often used by powerful tribes and officials to weaken their rivals, with the tribes out of power targeted first, forcing them to seek protection from the Taliban (Rubin, 2004, p.15-6). The traffickers actually preferred eradication since it raised the price of opium, which had plummeted as a result of three massive harvests since 2002. While the debate over eradication continued the main problem was ignored. In ending the poppy trade it was not

cultivation that was the problem but the drug money that undermines local institutions, encourages corruption, and helps fund the Taliban and Al Qaeda. In the opium economy farmers only receive approximately 20% of the revenue while traffickers, who rely on the Taliban and Al Qaeda for protection and support, receive 80% of the revenue. As a result the first efforts should be aimed at the traffickers to stop the money from reaching the extremists and inhibit the drug trade within the country itself. Only then, after strengthening local security services, removing corruption, and letting American troops fight the traffickers, can efforts at eradication and alternative livelihoods be used effectively (Rashid, 2009, p.326).

One of the main reasons why poppy cultivation remains a serious problem throughout the country is the fact that those who profit from it are in all levels of government, all the way up to the national government (Felbab-Brown, p.58). President Karzai has long tolerated suspected drug traffickers since they have either been political allies, close friends, relatives, or have been crucial to him remaining in power. There have also been numerous reports of the minister of tribal affairs and Karzai's brother being heavily involved in the drug trade. Many of the Northern Alliance warlords as well as ministers and governors in the North also remain heavily involved in the trade of poppy. In fact the Interior Ministry, rather than weed out the traffickers and keep them out of the government, has actually become a major protector of them since Karzai refuses to weed them out. After warlords were disarmed by the UN many of them bid on positions as police chief in poppy producing districts, some offering as much as \$100,000 for a six month job paying \$60 a month in order to be able to continue poppy cultivation (Rashid, 2009, p.326-8). Without an effective strategy to deal with this level of corruption within the government it will continue to remain a serious threat to any further attempts to improve governance or stop the drug trade in Afghanistan.

It was not until 2005 that the Pentagon and the CIA officially recognized that drug money was fueling terrorism. A major-counter-narcotics plan was finally formed during a G8 summit in June 2005 calling for the U.S. to provide airlift and training for five Afghan commando teams to conduct interdiction missions. The plan also included DEA agents being embedded with U.S. troops and providing them helicopters to conduct raids. However, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, warning of mission creep and distraction from our central mission, refused to implement the plan. Upon the arrival of NATO troops and the switching of command to ISAF in 2006 nothing changed since none of the NATO countries would allow their troops to interdict drug convoys or catch drug traffickers as a result of national caveats. It was these caveats that prevents the troops from most contributing countries concentrated on nation-building efforts and away from the violence and counter-narcotics efforts (Peters, p.212-3). Despite the G8 plan that had been created, nothing was actually done about the problem.

Over the next two years the poppy harvest would continue to grow reaching 6,100 tons in 2006 and then 8,200 tons in 2007. At this time opium accounted for nearly half of the country's GDP, estimated at a total of \$6.7 billion. During the summer offensive of 2006 it became clear that the Taliban was significantly aided by the income accrued from opium trafficking. In response the U.S. finally worked with the UNODC in 2007 to implement a new scheme which was a reward program that provided increased development funds for those governors and provinces which reduced production. By 2007 13 provinces were declared drug-free with the U.S. and European countries now spending one billion dollars a year on counter-narcotics. However, little has changed in the south with Helmand province accounting for 50% of the crop in 2007, this growth of cultivation is possible since the region remains unstable and controlled by

the Taliban (Rashid, 2009, p.329). In fact, the largest levels of cultivation occur in regions where the Taliban are in control and instability is rampant, as is illustrated in Figure 8.

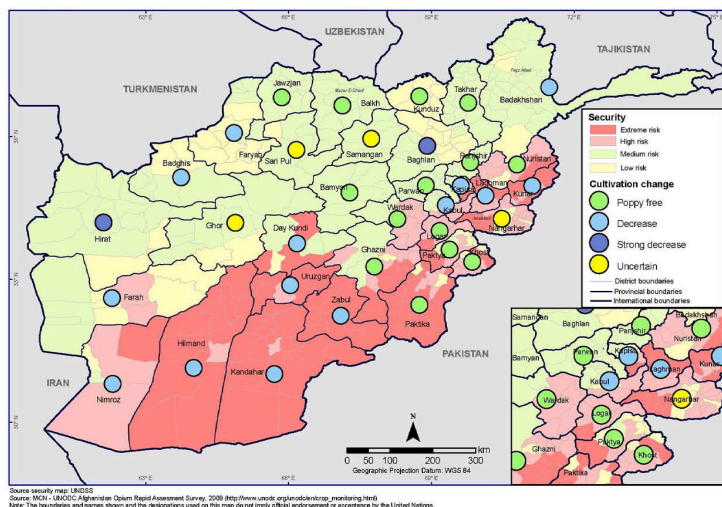


Figure 8 – Poppy Cultivation vs. Security Situation (UNODC, 2009b).

Drug money has paralyzed the creation of a strong legal economy because no industry, agriculture, or trade is able to compete with drug profits (Felbab-Brown, p.61-4). It has also allowed the Taliban to pay and arm its troops, compensate families of suicide bombers, and import new weapons while Al Qaeda has been able to re-establish terrorist training camps (Rashid, 2009, p.330). Although countries are now paying attention, the U.S. and NATO forces still lack a coherent strategy for interdiction or eradication. At the same time, amidst greater funding and increasing support of the people of Afghanistan, a worsening insurgency was spurred on by drug money and new tactics learned in Iraq.

As the occupation continued Karzai was increasingly portrayed as an American stooge by the Taliban, causing his support and credibility to be damaged even further. As Karzai's government and image continued to weaken the Taliban insurgency grew stronger and more violent. Eventually the insurgency evolved into an international conflict as Pakistan allowed the

Taliban to rearm and recruit in the tribal areas and use the porous border with Afghanistan to fuel the insurgency. At the same time Al Qaeda provided increasing support to insurgents causing the security situation to deteriorate rapidly. Although opium cultivation is largely confined to the more insecure provinces in the south of Afghanistan, the opium industry continues to threaten efforts to establish security, governance and a licit economy throughout the country (Office of National Drug Control Policy [ONDCP], 2009, p.106).

HISTORY OF TALIBAN AND ARRIVAL OF AL QAEDA

As a result of the world's turning away from Afghanistan the country quickly fell into a civil war. It was not until the Pakistan supported Taliban began to take over Afghanistan that control began to come back to the country (Rashid, 2001, p. 212).¹² The support of the Taliban by Pakistan was part of the country's efforts to have a hand in the political realities of Afghanistan ensuring a friendly government on their western border.¹³ Another reason for Pakistan's support was the desire for access to the oil and gas rich states of the former Soviet Union. In order to have access they needed to be able to conduct business reliably with and within Afghanistan. However, as a result of the civil war there was an absence of law and order in Afghanistan, a large number of checkpoints on all the highways that harassed drivers, extorted money, and even raped women and young boys. To deal with the chaos in Afghanistan the ISI and Pakistan supported and developed a new militant group to exert influence and bring stability to Afghanistan (Crews & Tarzi, p.104). In order to develop this new group Pakistan began to develop many of the Deobandi-Wahabbi influence groups, a combination of Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun Talibs, into a coherent group which they would support with the ISI and the Pakistan military to help install a friendly government in Afghanistan. They would be known as the Taliban (Hussain, 2005, p. 180-5).¹⁴

¹² For a thorough discussion of the origins of the Taliban, please read Taliban by Ahmed Rashid or Fundamentalism Reborn? Edited by William Maley

¹³ For a more thorough discussion of the Civil War in Afghanistan see: Tanner, S. (2002). *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*. Cambridge: De Capo Press or Goodson, L. P. (2001). *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

¹⁴ Talib meaning student

The primary group the Pakistan government focused on was the Mullah's Front, which was begun by Mullah Abdul Razzaq, Mullah Mohammed Rabbani and Mullah Borjan. This group existed for nearly six years before Pakistan and the ISI, at the direction of Benazir Bhutto, became heavily involved in its growth (Markey, 2008, p.15). However, the Taliban leadership was born among the anarchy that existed in southern Afghanistan when a local strongman raped a number of girls over the summer of 1994. The local people turned to the help of Mullah Omar who called upon some of his religious students who caught and executed the criminal and intimidated his followers. Afterward the talibs responded to other calls from people victimized by lawlessness. As a result of these efforts to bring justice and security the followers of Omar grew now that they had a leader to be revered and the people increasingly relied upon them to restore order (Tanner, p.279). The Pakistan would then call upon the Taliban to rescue a convoy they had sent into Afghanistan that was captured despite assurances of security by Afghan warlords. The Taliban found the Afghan warlord who had taken the convoy, killed him and then turned against Kandahar, taking it after two days of minor fighting. After these successful trials the Taliban began to receive even more support from Pakistan and began their full push across Afghanistan (Peters, p.70). The ISI would be the critical factor in the creation and development of the Taliban on a larger scale; it would not distance itself from its creation until after 9/11 under enormous pressure from the United States (Riedel, 2009b, p. 3). Pakistan continue to attempt to exert a great deal of influence over the direction of the Taliban once they came to power, often gaining protection for shipments across Afghanistan (Peters, p. 79).

As the Taliban gained strength and support they continued to work their way through the country, capturing more and more territory, imposing their brand of Islam on the population while bringing order to a people who suffered from nearly 20 years of instability. As the

Taliban's control continued to grow, their spread of influence included the expansion of opium cultivation as a source of revenue throughout their regions of control (Rashid, 2001, p.123). Eventually the Taliban would control a majority of the country after co-opting, bribing or destroying a number of rival warlords eventually facing one enemy, Ahmed Shah Massoud. However, despite the Taliban's strength and support from state actors they would not be able to take the Panjshir valley nor any of the region controlled by Massoud and his loyal Tajik militia (Tanner, p.280-3).

The men who would come to form the Taliban in the mid-90', all originated in the Pashtun south and were not connected with the fundamentalist parties used during the war against the Soviet Union. Instead they were from a new generation of fundamentalists and developed a creed that attempted to reach all the way back to the seventh century philosophy of Islam (Loyn, p. 177). The Taliban are like no other Muslim group before them; they are not inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood nor do they base their brand of Islam on the ulema, the educated class of Muslim scholar. Instead they use a brand of Deobandi Islam imported from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. However, their popularity in Afghanistan is not based off of tribal loyalties. Although, they find sanctuary among Pashtuns most of the tribal elite actually refuse to recognize them and have fled the country.¹⁵ Rather, a majority of the support is derived from a need to restore order, reopen the roads, and end the constant fighting between warlords that had plagued the country (Rashid, 2001, p. 210). From the time they came to power the Taliban were a contradiction, claiming that they revered women when created, but came to oppress them once in power, opposed the use of heroin, but were financed by its cultivation and trafficking, and as

¹⁵ Some of their popularity in the region has been based off the need for a revival of Pashtun nationalism in the face of Tajik control of Kabul; the Tajik is the other major ethnic group in country and has had a long time rivalry with the Pashtuns.

leaders they cultivated an insular world view, looking inward to Afghanistan, but harbored Osama Bin Laden, a man with a far different view of Islam in the world (Loyn, p.174; Tanner, p.286).

The decade of war against the Soviets had helped tighten the grip of Islamic fundamentalism across Afghanistan and Pakistan; at the time President Zia encouraged this shift especially in its application in education and Sharia law. During the war thousands of madrassas had sprung up throughout Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. The new madrassas became factories for turning out and indoctrinating Taliban fighters, many of whom were orphans who knew no other life. This new system became a key network that provided the Taliban with the strength and flexibility needed in order to allow them to fight and take control of Afghanistan. The men who would become the Taliban took it a step further; rather than trying to be political revolutionaries, they concentrated far more attention on controlling morality and personal behavior. Once in power the Taliban created a religious authority filled with highly trained and dedicated mullahs rather than the complex layers once used throughout Afghanistan (Loyn, p.179-80). The Taliban were highly successful in restoring order to the country and gained a great deal of support despite their tough interpretation of Islamic law and their heavy hand as rulers. They would not have an international Islamic agenda until they met up with Osama bin Laden and began hosting other allied foreign militant groups.¹⁶

¹⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan please read: Rashid, A. (2000). *Taliban*. New Haven: Yale Nota Bene or Crews, R. D., & Tarzi, A. (Eds.). (2008). *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, or Marsden, P. (1998) *The Taliban*. London: Zed Books.

When the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989, the country quickly fell into a long civil war between the ethnic groups, causing the country and its institutions to become even weaker. The takeover by the Taliban completed the process of disintegration of the once reasonably solid state as they instituted their own brand of Islam on the different ethnic groups of Afghanistan who were simply looking for peace (Singh, 2004, p.546). Although the form of governance and values imposed by the Taliban appeared extreme to observers in the international community, the values they imposed were no more extreme than normal the values of conservative Pashtun villages in the countryside, the same values that the communists had sought to change and thus became a primary source of rebellion that had created the revolt which led to the invasion by the Soviet Union (Loyn, p.183). Although the people of Afghanistan may not all have agreed with the brand of Islam and the enforcement of strict conservative Islamic values on the country, the Taliban provided something they found far more valuable, peace and security.

Once in power Mullah Mohammed Omar read a statement on Kabul Radio proclaiming no quarrel with the outside world and a desire for the Taliban to have good relations with other countries. “We represent Afghanistan. After 14 years of jihad against the communists, the victors betrayed the nation and took up arms. Now there is order...” (Loyn, p. 188). However, there was one region of the country that never came under the control of the Taliban, the Panjshir Valley. It is this region that was under the control of Ahmed Shah Massud, a natural fortress that Massud and his forces were capable of easily holding off the Taliban and maintaining a sanctuary free from Taliban control for the Tajiks and the other groups that would become the Northern Alliance. However, the Taliban would soon become party to a global jihad movement that would take up sanctuary within the borders of Afghanistan.

The arrival of Al Qaeda and bin Laden in 1996 included not only the entire operation of Al Qaeda but also tens of thousands of Pakistani militants, Central Asians, Arabs, Africans, East Asians and others who shared their own brand of global Islamic radicalism with the Taliban. It would be these bands of affiliated fighters who have fought for the Taliban since their arrival.¹⁷ Shortly after his arrival bin Laden and his men reopened the camps they had built during the Soviet Afghan war and returned to the miles of cave complexes in the Southeast as bin Laden continued to build up al Qaeda for major attacks on the West and other apostate regimes in the Middle East (Tanner, p.287). The Taliban quickly became dependent on Al Qaeda and the foreign fighters to expand their ideology and these groups all relied on the Taliban to provide them sanctuary (Rashid, 2001, p. 211).

On April 3, 1996, the Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar sent a delegation to Osama bin Laden convey a message; he would be “honored to protect him, because of his role in the *ji*had against the Soviets” (Gunaratna, p.53-4). This officially meant that Afghanistan and the Taliban would become a safe sanctuary for the needs of Osama’s organization, and Al Qaeda would soon start expanding and would quickly step up his efforts in the fight against America. Mullah Omar viewed the world beyond the borders of Afghanistan with indifference rather than hostility; he preferred to not engage the world at all but rather to concentrate solely on the status

¹⁷ Bin Laden’s decision to return to Afghanistan was influenced by a few reasons beyond concerns for his safety; these included increased international pressure for his arrest and the risk he faced in Pakistan. In Afghanistan Salafist militants were viewed favorably by the Taliban. Bin Laden enjoyed the serenity of the country. The serenity of the country reminded him of his childhood and he had already built complexes in Afghanistan from which to run his new terrorist organization. Afghanistan’s vast expanses, rugged terrain, and the Pashtun code of honor all served as his best chances to regain his feeling of security and safety for himself, his family, and his organization as it continued its fight (Migaux, 2007a, p.320). For more detail on the origins and development of al Qaeda please refer to the appendix.

of Afghanistan. However, his new ally Osama bin Laden looked at the outside world with contempt and desired to change the structure of the world creating a new Islamic caliphate through lands formerly occupied by Islam and removing apostate regimes under foreign influence in the Middle East (Loyn, p.174). One of the first encounters between Mullah Omar and bin Laden included his first investment in the Taliban regime when bin Laden gave the Taliban \$1 million in cash to help them take control of Kabul. Their relationship would continue to develop and the goals of al Qaeda would soon benefit from Taliban rule, as they would receive revenue from their control of and taxing of smuggling of goods and drugs on the highways (Crews & Tarzi, p.106). As the Taliban's hold on the country grew stronger they continued to impose an ever more strict and conservative version of Islam on the population, becoming ever more xenophobic and eventually turning away from the world. The Taliban and al Qaeda became even closer as a result of actions initiated in response to terrorist attacks in 1998 and 2000 when the Clinton administration launched cruise missile attacks on bases and camps of al Qaeda within Afghanistan. However, many of these attacks were unsuccessful in finding their true target and brought the Taliban and al Qaeda in a mutual hatred of the U.S. In al Qaeda and bin Laden the Taliban found a well funded international network of fighters and scholars dedicated to jihad while the Taliban helped bin Laden use religious schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan as recruiting stations to bolster their ranks, it was a mutually beneficial partnership (Tanner, p.286-7).

In Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and the rest of Al Qaeda's leadership were given an opportunity to build a solid terrorist. As a failed state Afghanistan provided bin Laden with the right combination of anarchy, instability, and antipathy toward the West to allow its construction and expansion to continue (Gunaratna, 2002, p.73). Al

Qaeda is a new type of terrorist group, it does not rely on a state for survival, like Hamas and Hezbollah do, rather it relies on the weakness of a state's institutions and the support of a friendly regime to allow it to grow and do whatever it needs to pursue its goals. When a terrorist group is able to find sanctuary within the borders of a state that either relies upon the group or is indifferent to the group their ability to grow and develop is unheard of. Al Qaeda did not become the group it is today until it arrived in Afghanistan in the mid-90's. Once Al Qaeda arrived in Kandahar it almost immediately reverted back to their previous home bases in Tora Bora in their cave complexes and shortly included an expansion into more and more camps and bases and began to truly grow the organization in breadth and strength and power allowing it to commit acts of terror unheard of in history.¹⁸

On August 26, 1996, bin Laden issued his first official Fatwa from Afghanistan. It was his final warning to American forces to leave Saudi Arabia and identified the United States as an enemy and urged Muslims to kill American military personnel abroad (Migaux, 2007a, p.321; Gunaratna, p.56-7). Later that year in the Second Taliban Offensive resulted in the fall of Kabul, and this caused Hekmatyar to flee to Iran and bin Laden consolidated his ties with the Taliban and suggested rapprochement with Shi'ite Iran in the struggle against American imperialism. The Taliban, led by Mullah Omar (veteran of the war against the Soviet Army), now controlled 80% of the country and had the people's confidence. Despite the successes of the Taliban and support from the ISI they still lacked funds and know how to improve the country, they received these from bin Laden, al Qaeda and opium trafficking (Migaux, 2007a, p.321).

¹⁸ For more information on the Cave Complexes in Afghanistan see

After the invasion by the U.S. and the subsequent push to overthrow the Taliban they were severely crippled and many believed them to be on their last legs. However, the Taliban soon became far more dependent on revenue from trafficking and used the funds from the booming opium harvest to rebuild the organization and transform it into a more fragmented, transnational force at home in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan with bases in the Northwest Frontier Province. What would emerge has often been termed the “Neo-Taliban”, although the group has changed as a result of its forced respite in Pakistan it still remains largely the same.¹⁹ However, its goal is to now counter the state-building efforts of the new Afghan government and challenge its authority (Crews & Tarzi, p.275). While the leader of the core group remains Mullah Omar the larger umbrella movement now spans both sides of the Durand line and includes fighters loyal to local warlords and other troublemakers who engage in everything from hardcore fighting, to terrorism, and even racketeering and kidnapping.

Although the Taliban were not destroyed when removed from power, the first years of state building in Afghanistan provided a number of chances for the coalition to reduce the possibility of an insurgency from the Taliban and other Pashtun groups by making sure they didn't feel marginalized. Although the new Afghan government was far more ethnically varied than others before it, the Pashtuns continued to feel alienated and impotent. While they may not have wanted the Taliban back in power for their religious ideology they certainly enjoyed being the ethnic group in power and the security they provided. As a result, the most extreme of those feeling shunned began to align with the Taliban to fight against the new government that had excluded them. The Taliban that re-emerged was far broader in its membership and promoting a

¹⁹ For more information on the Neo-Taliban and their role in the insurgency and instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan please see Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop by Anotonio Giustozzi.

new wider agenda and looser organization. As a result the new Taliban can be divided into two groups: the first are those who align themselves with al Qaeda and the beliefs of Mullah Omar, while the other are more traditionalist Muslims working toward bringing back those values to the country – some have even participated in the political process (Crews & Tarzi, p.300-305). While the funds from opium played a key role in the rebirth of the Taliban, and Al Qaeda as well another factor that was overlooked for years by the Bush Administration was the sanctuary provided by the area surrounding the Afghanistan-Pakistan border known as the Northwest Frontier Province or the tribal areas. It is in this region where little government exists, the light footprint approach was useless, and the lack of effective support from Pakistan allowed the Taliban and Al Qaeda to regroup (Peters, p.104-5).²⁰ For too long the U.S. remained focus on a singular goal in the country and ignored others. By forgoing a fight against the poppy trade, not eliminating the Taliban, forgoing a more effective approach to government reform, and not properly securing the border the U.S. allowed the country to remain highly vulnerable and made the home for the extremists it was fighting not disappear but simply shift southwest to straddle the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This made the situation far more complex since the U.S. would now have to find a way to fight the insurgents better in Afghanistan but also attack their bases in Pakistan without destabilizing Pakistan's new civilian government (Peters, p.106-8).

²⁰ It was through this very region from Tora Bora that Osama bin Laden and many other members of the Taliban and Al Qaeda were able to slip into Pakistan and avoid capture. Upon the invasion in 2001 both groups scattered and largely left the country but they were not destroyed. Rather than mounting a nationwide invasion with a large number of troops the U.S. and allies opted for a light footprint using foreign troops and local proxies which was highly effective at clearing them out but not at destroying the groups. While the main leadership escaped to Pakistan, many other leaders found hiding places in Southwestern Afghanistan and even in Helmand and west of Kandahar allowing them to maintain ties to the poppy trade. The footprint was even lighter in the southwest as the primary target for the first few years were major members of Al Qaeda, often providing money to local warlords and Taliban with connections to the drug trade (Peters, p.105-6).

Just like in the Soviet invasion when counternarcotics was placed secondary to fighting the Soviets the fight against drugs was again forgone for a fight against terrorists and the Taliban, allowing both groups to rebuild and grow through dissatisfaction with the new government and the foreign occupiers as well as a re-energized drug trade providing millions in funding for the Taliban and al Qaeda (Crews & Tarzi, p. 354-5).

The Taliban now composes the largest portion of the new insurgency in Afghanistan. While the Taliban's core leadership and their primary goals have not changed their membership composition has changed with the addition of new members recruited at madrassas and other locations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.²¹ The organization now has two main tiers; the top tier is composed of the leadership structure and key commanders, the bottom tier is composed of Taliban guerillas including thousands of local loosely affiliated fighters. As the Taliban have re-emerged they have created their own parallel Afghan government including governors for Afghan provinces and ministers for the cabinet (Jones, 2009a, p.230-2). Even though the Taliban were overthrown, they continue to use the extended network of Pakistani Islamist groups to regain control of Afghanistan. As a result of local conflicts and a lack of progress in reconstruction the Taliban have been provided new access to a center of gravity, the population in the districts of the rural countryside, from which they can recruit human and capital resources as they work on regenerating and pushing the U.S. out of Afghanistan. Their growing influence on both sides of the border is not due to their religious ideology; rather it is in response to the deepening crisis of democracy in a region where its people suffer from a lack of political

²¹ The senior leaders of the Taliban remain motivated to impose a radical interpretation of Sunni Islam derived from the Deobandi school of thought. In order to do this they intend to overthrow the new Afghan government, break the political will of the U.S. and NATO, and coerce foreign forces to withdraw (Jones, 2009a, p.230).

representation and basic opportunities needed to emerge from the long and violent crisis (Crews & Tarzi, p.117). There have also been some notable changes in the Taliban's religious ideology since the invasion. During the 90's they discouraged the use of the Internet, shutting down all sources in Afghanistan when taking power. Since being overthrown they have leveraged al Qaeda's media enterprise to distribute video propaganda. They have also adopted a new tactic for the insurgency; they now use suicide bombing as a tactic against Afghan and international forces with the assistance of al Qaeda (Jones, 2009a, p.233). As a result of this new evolution of the Taliban have become a strong insurgent and terrorist force against the new government and coalition of Afghanistan; however, they were aided by a new sanctuary and the missteps of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

HISTORY OF U.S. INVASION

In the invasion of Afghanistan the U.S. decided to use a CIA led and Special Forces supported effort with the Northern Alliance to topple the Taliban (Riedel, 2009, p. 2). This strategy created an elaborate and highly lethal package that would quickly bring down the Taliban. The key alliance needed to conduct the invasion was the support of Pakistan, due to its strategic location and its government's long history of involvement in the country. Pakistan cooperated by helping supply the effort to overthrow the Taliban, stopping al Qaeda operatives at the border, and providing intelligence and immigration information. In return Pakistan requested diplomatic assistance with India over Kashmir as well as economic assistance and assurances that no bases in India would be used during the invasion (Tanner, p.294-6; Jones, 2009a, p.87-90).

The invasion began on September 26, 2001, with the insertion of the first CIA teams followed by a concerted bombing campaign beginning October 7 in support of the Special Forces teams joining the CIA on the ground (Jones, 2009a, p.90-1). At the beginning the justification for the invasion was self-defense against a government that had allowed its territory to be to plan and carry out an act of war against another state (Riedel, 2009, p. 2). From the outset the U.S. had no ambition to dominate or subjugate the Afghan people or to stay in Afghanistan once the Taliban and al Qaeda were defeated. However, the effort to stabilize Afghanistan was not so simple.

The effort to defeat the Taliban and al Qaeda was not completed after the initial invasion, nor was it completed upon the completion of the provisions of the Bonn agreement. As a result of initial mistakes and a poor understanding of past events the U.S. did not successfully address all aspects of the effort required to stabilize the country. For instance, from the beginning U.S.

officials believed the key lesson of the Soviet experience was the use of too large a footprint in the country causing the Afghan people to revolt.²² In reality Afghans do not automatically oppose foreign troops in their country, the Afghans have allowed foreign countries and other groups to have influence over their country but only if it serves their interests. The level of animus held by the Afghan people against foreigners is a result of the intentions and actions of the foreigners, not their general presence in their country (Maley, 2002, p.267). As a result of this misperception the U.S. blended American and Afghan forces together to limit American exposure in Afghanistan, effectively making us the insurgents using speed and agility to dislodge an emplaced foe (Jones, 2009a, p.90). This was a successful strategy for the overthrow of the Taliban with Mullah Omar and the senior Taliban leadership going into hiding, effectively ending the Taliban rule in Afghanistan by December 6, 2001. However, it was not until the end of the battle in Tora Bora on December 17th that the last elements of al Qaeda were forced to take refuge in Pakistan that the country was free of terrorists (Tanner, p.210-1). Since the beginning of the invasion, the Afghan people have supported the coalition forces that overthrew the Taliban during the initial invasion since we removed an oppressive regime (Riedel, 2009, p. 2).

As the Taliban collapsed the coalitions attention shifted to state-building and the reconstruction of the country. However, the fight against remaining pockets of extremists remaining in the country continued even as the U.S. attempted to capture Kabul and other cities in January and February 2002. These efforts led to hundreds of militants fleeing to Pakistan after a long and deadly fight as they sought safe haven in order to regroup (Jones, 2009a, p.94-5).

²² General Tommy Franks and Secretary Rumsfeld repeatedly used this argument as reasoning for the light footprint and no further conventional troops (Jones, 2009a, p.117-8). The real mistake was not the size of the footprint; it was the use of the large force in brutal and violent tactics against the population as well as the attempted subjugation of the people of Afghanistan into the communist state, an atheist society. For this they earned they ire of the full force of all militia groups as a combined mujahideen force (Riedel, 2009, p.2; Jones, 2009a, p.130-2).

While the last pockets were routed out Afghan leaders were attending the Bonn conference, which set forth a timetable for the creation of a new government. Under the Bonn Agreement the parties agreed to establish an interim authority comprised of a 30-member administration that was led by Hamid Karzai, a Supreme Court, and the Special Independent Commission for Convening of the Emergency Loyal Jirga (a traditional meeting of Afghan tribal, political, and religious leaders to discuss the next steps in their transition). The new leadership took power on December 22, 2001 (Crews & Tarzi, p.115-6).

Although the defeat was quick and the assistance of Pakistan had allowed them to remove their label as a pariah state while working to establish security in Afghanistan the U.S. caused a massive exodus of fighters from Afghanistan into Pakistan. This exodus created a new web of alliances among the Taliban, al Qaeda, the Pakistani military, and the ISI, which would soon become an insurgency in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The main leadership of al Qaeda and the Taliban found sanctuary in Pakistan since Pakistan failed to seal the border while local Afghan forces and the Pakistani military did nothing to stop them (Tanner, p.309-11). During the flight to Pakistan, the Pakistan Frontier Corps-the country's paramilitary force on the border; caught a number of fighters who were handed over to the U.S. providing valuable intelligence. As a result of this early intelligence the CIA learned that al Qaeda operatives were infiltrating Pakistan's tribal areas with many going to remote locations such as the Shakai Valley in South Waziristan hoping to settle among local tribes and avoid the Pakistan government. However, occasional raids by Pakistan in South Waziristan caused the militants to spread into North Waziristan making it even harder for the Pakistani military to reach them and spreading the safe haven throughout the tribal areas (Jones, 2009a, p.96-8).

Over the next several years the extremists would use the new safe haven as a base for the future insurgency that would target NATO, U.S. Forces, and the Afghan government. The region's geography and the local population made the tribal areas ideal for the groups to plot, recruit, proselytize, raise money, rest, and allow the fighters to recuperate. It was also ideal since it was in close proximity to the remaining Taliban and al Qaeda strongholds in eastern and southern Afghanistan giving them a better position to overthrow the Karzai government. The local population was important in the sanctuary as a result of the large concentration of Pashtuns in Pakistan having been sympathetic to the Taliban since they were created. By taking advantage of the natural fortress created by the tribal areas mountainous and difficult terrain and the autonomy of the region, the groups were afforded superb protection from any force trying to attack. Ever since the creation of Pakistan the tribal areas have maintained a level of autonomy allowing them to remain beyond the reach of the Pakistan or Afghan governments (Markey, 2008, p.7). In fact the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has long been disputed with no modern government of Afghanistan ever formally recognizing the British drawn border that was used to divide the Pashtun territories in order to weaken them and allow the British to pacify them. In what would become Pakistan in 1947, the British political officers with the help of tribal chieftains created autonomous tribal regions and left them alone on the frontier to run their affairs in accordance with their Islamic faith, customs and traditions (Jones, 2009a, p.97-102). These tribal regions have become a key objective that must be dealt with in order to properly secure Afghanistan, an issue that will be discussed later in this section.

While the U.S. invasion was intended to overthrow the Taliban, and destroy al Qaeda the only objective completed was the overthrow of the Taliban. Although key training camps in Afghanistan were destroyed, the Taliban, al Qaeda and other militants slipped over the border

and established a new base of operations using camps and support in existence since the anti-Soviet jihad. They were further aided by the Pakistani military's willingness to pursue foreign fighters and their refusal to pursue senior Taliban leaders. However, Pakistan is not the only one to blame; the U.S. government wasn't intent on pursuing the Taliban, only al Qaeda (Tanner, p. 309-11). By taking a serious gamble and neglecting the Taliban they allowed insurgents to regroup and direct their campaign against Afghan and NATO forces from within Pakistan while also training fighters in combat, communications, IEDs and suicide operations (new tactics imported from Iraq through al Qaeda) (Jones, 2009a, p.101).

After resettling in Pakistan the Taliban began to re-establish political, military and religious committees in Quetta, a city with critical access to southern provinces including Kandahar, which would become a key stronghold in the insurgency. The State Department recognized this new problem, but knew it would take a far larger commitment of forces and effort by Pakistan to address it. However, Pakistan remained reluctant to fully pursue the extremists in these tribal areas (Rashid, 2009, p.223-8). As the Taliban recouped it improved its strategic information campaign using support from al Qaeda allowing them to produce far better videos and to use the Internet to dramatically increase the spread of propaganda and their recruitment of fighters. The Taliban also relocated their financial base to Karachi, the financial and commercial center of Pakistan while creating new publications to garner support and spread their message. At the same time both the Taliban and al Qaeda reconnected with a number of criminal groups, including drug-trafficking organizations, making their ties even stronger since they now were based in the same area and wanted to regain control of Afghanistan to allow their use of the country to continue. Rather than pursuing these remnants after a quick victory in

Afghanistan and putting forth a full effort to rebuild the country they did it on the cheap, a mistake that continues to plague the efforts in country (Jones, 2009a, p.105-8).

Trouble began in Afghanistan once the NATO force took control in 2003. As a result of a continuing debate within the U.S. government over the use of the military in state-building the light footprint strategy was carried over to the ISAF causing them to be stuck in Kabul awaiting approval to move out into the countryside. The State Department believed the answer to stabilizing Afghanistan was to expand ISAF in order to help Afghans establish their own security as allowed for under the Bonn Agreement. However, Secretary Rumsfeld and others in the Pentagon made it clear that they wanted U.S. troops out of Afghanistan as quickly as possible since they were already looking toward Iraq and believed cleaning up Afghanistan was not the responsibility of the U.S. (Jones, 2009a, p.110-2). As a result of this debate, while ignoring strong objections from the State Department and James Dobbins (the Bush Administration envoy to the Afghan Opposition), the U.S. deployed only 8,000 troops to Afghanistan in 2002 with orders to hunt al Qaeda and the Taliban, not engage in state-building, while the 4,000 member ISAF force did not leave Kabul. This continued restriction of ISAF further contributed to the undermining of the government as a result of low troop levels, which made it impossible to establish law and order throughout the country while warlords used their autonomy to gain power and influence as they created their own patchwork of control, reducing the legitimacy of the central government (Felbab-Brown, p.58). This restriction on troop strength was further perpetuated as a result of the decision by the U.S. to invade Iraq causing forces that could have been deployed to Afghanistan to be committed elsewhere. As a result of this lack of resources and military strength the U.S. and NATO forces could clear territory but not hold it, especially in

the South. They also were unable to provide enough crucial development assistance in rural areas leaving the Afghan people struggling and searching for help (Jones, 2009a, p.114-8).

This lack of resources and funding due from 2002 to 2003 caused the U.S. to miss its best opportunity to truly stabilize and rebuild the country. During this period with low levels of violence restricted to small areas, a new regime of competent Afghan government officials, and a supportive local population was the ideal moment to begin reconstruction projects to improve the capacity and quality of governance while earning the support of the Afghan people. As a result of the light footprint approach the U.S. was only able to overthrow the Taliban, not secure the rural areas of Afghanistan since they lacked sufficient forces. This deficiency along with low numbers of indigenous forces in the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) limited their ability to secure rural areas and pursue groups into Pakistan preventing them from defeating the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, and al Qaeda forces (Rotberg, 2007, p.68-71).

Before the end of 2003 the U.S. significantly downsized its troop commitment while shifting its most skilled counterterrorism, Middle East, and paramilitary operatives to Iraq while Afghan warlords continued to increase their control of their own villages and regions. As a result of the security vacuum created by depleted resources in Afghanistan local warlords began to fill the void and those remaining assets in Afghanistan began to rely on them even more heavily to maintain security (Markey, p. 7-8). The primary obstacle to the rule of law quickly became the local militias and the warlords who commanded them, not the insurgency (Maley, 2002, p. 276-8). This result was also anathema to past experiences where local forces are needed to take the lead in order to achieve long-run stability effort and preventing the foreign force from undermining local power and legitimacy. In the case of Afghanistan there were no competent

government forces remaining in Afghanistan so the U.S. was forced to work with indigenous forces, training them and mentoring them to create a new police and security force while filling the needed gap with sufficient numbers of U.S. and international forces. However, these efforts were not fully resourced making such goals for security impossible as a result of concentration on Iraq. As a result the initial gains made in Afghanistan, including presidential and parliamentary elections and low levels of insurgent violence, were squandered (Jones, 2009a, p.124-136).

In their efforts to rebuild Afghanistan the U.S. attempted to avoid the appearance of occupying Afghanistan or installing a puppet government. One attempt at such a strategy occurred in January 2002 when more than four billion dollars were pledged for reconstruction efforts and the implementation of a Security Sector Reform strategy which used a lead nation approach for the five key areas of reconstruction: counternarcotics – Britain, Army – Germany, Police – Germany, Justice – Italy, and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of former Combatants – Japan (Jalali, 2006, p.9-11). Hamid Karzai was chosen as president of the transitional administration and head of state in 2002 through a loyal jirga, which also approved his nominations for key posts in the administration. Many of these officials were western educated, leading to resentment from Afghan officials who had never left (Jones, 2009a, p.136-9).

In 2003 the U.S. shifted strategies to counterinsurgency. This shift in focus included placing military and civilian contingents in the south and east achieving positive results at the beginning. The ANA also made progress during initial operations with U.S. forces throughout 2003 and 2004, leading to improvements in law and order in some areas. The next year Afghanistan adopted a constitution, in January 2004, and held its first presidential election where

Hamid Karzai was officially elected president in October 2004. In September 2005 Afghanistan held its first parliamentary elections creating a new parliament, which included a number of ex-Taliban ministers. Despite a lack of resources the gains in Afghanistan looked promising compared to Iraq; however, this would soon change after the Taliban and other extremist groups finished regrouping and began a new insurgency (Jones, 2009a, p.141-6).

Beginning in 2002 and 2003 insurgents began offensive operations to overthrow the Afghan government and coerce the U.S. to withdraw forces. These attacks continued through 2004 while the Taliban continued a low-level insurgency from bases in Pakistan including a rocket attack against President Hamid Karzai in September 2004. As the insurgency gained strength and support insurgents also began to attack international aid workers as well as those assisting the coalition forces in Afghanistan. By summer of 2004 security had deteriorated significantly for Afghans and foreigners, especially those in the east and south with the level of criminal activity remaining high throughout the region. This insecurity was made worse by inter-factional fighting among regional commanders while the U.S. continued to ignore the growing strategic threat posed by the reborn Taliban (Rashid, 2009, p.360-7). However, despite the growing insurgency the levels of coalition casualties remained low compared to Iraq and most Afghans continued to see the security situation as better than that under the Taliban, with many believing their lives had improved as of 2005. However, at the end of 2005 these positive gains would quickly be lost as a growing insurgency and a shift in focus by the U.S. would soon lead to an exponential drop in security as well as a growth in violence (Jones, 2009a, p.147-50).

Starting in 2005 the fragile national security architecture established in Afghanistan after the invasion began to come apart as the Taliban continued to mount increasingly aggressive offensive operations and it quickly became apparent that local Afghan forces were incapable of

protecting the population and pursuing the insurgents (Rashid, 2009, p.361-4). The lead nation approach was partially to blame for this failure, since few countries followed through with their commitments to rebuild state institutions like the judiciary and the police force. This led to weak, ineffective, incompetent and sometimes corrupt institutions unable to fulfill their duties and protect the people and establish law and order. For instance, Germany's slow and ineffective program for training the police led to the U.S. taking over and hiring a contractor, DynCorp, to train the police with NATO and the U.S. eventually taking a more systematic approach to the training along with rebuilding the Ministry of Interior. This ineffective process and the lack of a previous national structure became significant challenges in the effort to improve the police force since they quickly were permeated by a culture of corruption including portions of the Afghan police who directly collaborated with the Taliban (Jones, 2009a, p.165-72). The efforts at an effective police force, key to maintaining security throughout the country, especially in rural areas, were further neglected as a result of an over emphasis by the U.S. on the Afghan National Army. The light footprint continued to contribute to the deterioration of the ability to protect the people when U.S. forces were unable to fill the vacuum once it became apparent the Afghan security forces couldn't protect them. This caused a serious reduction of local support as those who cooperated with the government and coalition forces were killed, intimidated into silence, or forced to flee the country. Through these tactics and the Taliban's ability to protect and provide for the Afghan people they gained control of increasing amounts of territory with rural areas becoming sanctuaries for the Taliban. The Taliban also began to establish a shadow government, including an administrative structure and courts, while the Afghan government continued to lose legitimacy (Rashid, 2009, p.362-5).

This growing culture of corruption and incompetence in the Afghan government led to a loss of faith in the government by the Afghan people. The problem wasn't that the U.S. and other countries didn't understand the importance of improving governance; they simply never had the proper resources or support to finish the job. The effort of reconstruction was further inhibited by a lack of effective coordination between PRTs, local governments, and the national government. The efforts were made even harder by not addressing the lowest levels of governance in the country; the districts often composed of tribes or clans (Johnson & Mason, 2008, p.36-7). The absence of governance in rural areas and the lack of progress in the ability of the Afghan government to provide key services resulted in increasing frustration within the Afghan population. The Taliban quickly took advantage of these failures in recruitment propaganda, causing support for the Taliban to grow across more and more of the south with local populations revolting against the local government. When the Taliban weren't supported in a region they often resorted to intimidation to gain control of the region. The growth of support for the Taliban was further aided by high levels of unemployment throughout the country, high levels of poverty, and a continued lack of essential services. These deficits led to an increasing portion of the population to seeing the life of a fighter as the only option (Jones, 2009a, p.183-192).

For others, there was another way out of the crushing poverty, debt, and unemployment rampant throughout the country since the invasion; through the cultivation of poppy. After the invasion the cultivation, production and trafficking of poppy skyrocketed, having a debilitating effect on the quality of governance and caused corruption throughout the Afghan government. According to a number of military intelligence officers drugs, especially the cultivation of poppy, are critical for the survival of insurgents in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2009, p.320-3). The

Taliban were and continue to be involved at all levels of the drug trade from the farmers to the lab operators as well as the smugglers and drug traffickers. They also continued to rely heavily on the taxation of poppy farmers for revenue (some estimates put 30% of Taliban's revenue from trafficking), offer farmers protection from the government's eradication program, and pay drug-trafficking organization to provide security along key routes. The impact on governance was further inhibited by the involvement of government officials in the drug trade, causing the Afghans to believe their government was corrupt as illustrated in an editorial in the *Daily Afghanistan* which stated:

“People definitely do not trust the government. Governors warn that nobody should cultivate poppies and say the poppy fields will be destroyed, but they encourage poppy cultivation by any means because the government officials make most of their money from poppy cultivation.” (Jones, 2008, p. 14)

Despite the challenges posed by the drug trade there were a number of bright spots including a significant drop in poppy cultivation as a result of efforts by Afghan leaders with the help of international support. There were also a number of successful efforts, like those in Nangarhar, where locals were jailed to coerce farmers to plow under their fields, creating a 96 percent reduction in cultivation. These efforts were made more effective by the ability of these provinces to use new funds for alternative development projects. Although these successes illustrated an effective strategy for the reduction of poppy cultivation, its ability to be used nationally was inhibited by a broader problem in the justice system; a corrupt judiciary remains a serious impediment to a successful counternarcotics campaign. This corruption and the crime associated with the drug trade continue to proliferate in society leading to increased support for the insurgency (Jones, 2009a, p.195-201).

As a result of the endemic corruption throughout society, the Afghan people are losing faith in their government and instead placing their support and need for security with the Taliban and the insurgency. Not because they agree with the Taliban on religious ideology, but because they are able to provide them with security and income (Rashid, 2009, p.356-8). The illegitimacy of the Afghan government was made worse by the coalitions emphasis on a top-down strategy intended to create a strong national government. However, the strategy of creating a strong state has yet to work in Afghanistan as a result of the heterogeneous population and the difficulty of extending government power from the capital to the provinces and districts. The central government of the Afghan state has historically been weak as a result of the nature of local politics and a population deeply intolerant of outside forces interfering in their lives. This requires strong local governance able to serve the people and complement the national level governments efforts. These efforts were made worse since the U.S. government spent little time trying to gain the support of Pashtun tribes, clans and other local institutions in the south and east. There was also virtually no bottom-up strategy to help the central government (Jones, 2009a, 201-3). In 2006 all of these trends came to a head when the security situation deteriorated rapidly and an ever more powerful insurgency emerged.

Violence in 2006 reached the highest levels since the U.S. forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001. This spike in violence was a result of operations conducted by the Taliban and al Qaeda from bases in Afghanistan, lagging local governance, escalating narco-trafficking, and poor or non-existent implementation of critical economic infrastructure projects. These deficiencies were multiplied by the United States neglecting to respond to the worsening situation. These same years also witnessed some of the most intense battles since the Taliban was overthrown in 2001, making the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand the stronghold of the Taliban

and the insurgency. However, as NATO forces worked to contain the spread of violence due to the insurgency complaints from local villagers were made that harkened back to those made during the Soviet-Afghan war as civilians lives were being unnecessarily impacted by the killing of large numbers of livestock and destruction of vineyards causing a significant amount of economic damage and fostering resentment toward NATO and coalition forces (Jones, 2009a, 208,-219). Things became progressively worse in 2007, when the year ended with a controversial ceasefire agreement between British troops in Musa Qala and the Taliban. However, like other attempts at ceasefires with militants in Pakistan, this effort only served to strengthen the resolve, legitimacy, and hold of the Taliban while weakening the opposing army and government (Jones, 2009a, p.215-221). However, the war in Iraq continued to siphon funds and the attention of the U.S. away from the worsening situation in Afghanistan.

Not only was the situation becoming increasingly violent but the ability to resolve the conflict also became increasingly complicated as the command-and-control locations for the Taliban were now solidly headquartered in FATA and the violence and expansion of the insurgency was now being used against cities in Pakistan and the government of Pakistan itself (Jamestown Foundation [JF], 2009, Rashid speech). The changes that occurred in 2006 and 2007 also led to an increase in the number of insurgent groups taking sanctuary in Pakistan as they became increasingly diffuse and complex, making them harder to defeat. This new system of insurgency included five different groups:

- Insurgent groups –those motivated to overthrow the Afghan government
- Criminal groups – groups involved in drug trafficking and other illicit activities
- Local tribes – that allied with insurgent groups
- Warlord militias – which became even more powerful after the 2001 invasion
- Local or central government forces - complicit in the insurgency such as the Afghan National Police and the Pakistani Frontier Corps.

The insurgency is also now spread on three different fronts:

- Northern front – Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province to Afghan Provinces Nuristan, Kunar and Nangarhar (largest group on this front is Hezb-i-Islami)
- Central front – farther south along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border stretching from FATA in Pakistan to the eastern Afghan provinces of Paktika, Khowst and Lowgar (Haqqani’s group was prominent as well as the Pakistan Taliban led by Baitullah Massud)
- Southern front – southern Afghan provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, and Baluchistan in Pakistan (largest group is the Taliban led by Mullah Omar).

Although there was evidence of some coordination among the major groups at tactical, operational, and strategic levels as well as through shuras in Pakistan, there was no unified leadership (Markey, p.4-10; Jones, 2009a, p.212-27).

These groups largely concentrated on guerilla warfare promoting disorder among the population, disrupting the economy, undermining the legitimacy of the government and decreasing security. Afghan and Pakistani insurgent groups have also been successful at adapting their tactics, techniques and procedures to improve the resilience of their organizations. Rather than battling coalition forces for population centers they choose to base their operations in the key rural areas of Afghanistan (Jones, 2009a, 227-30). The largest group in the insurgency is the newly rehabilitated Taliban. However, other groups involved in the insurgency such as Hematyar’s Hezb-i-Islami, have influence among Pashtun communities in northeast Afghanistan and have also become involved in politics with some members being elected to parliament in September 2005 suggesting an organization without a unified structure (Rashid, 2009, p.333-5). Despite the apparent structure and coordination of the insurgency as it fights a common enemy there remain tensions and ideological differences between the groups though all are motivated by religion and want to remove the new Afghan government through jihad. As these groups work

together they have mounted an increasingly effective insurgency across Afghanistan's south and east through 2007, confronting NATO forces that struggled to keep pace (Jones, 2009a, p.233-8).

The expanding insurgency accompanied another shift in Afghanistan, the expansion of the role played by NATO in counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, especially in the more violent south. However, these efforts by NATO continue to be hampered by national caveats, which restrict their forces from engaging in combat operations. As a result of this conflict between different countries and the resources they contribute the fight in Afghanistan the ability of NATO and the ISAF forces to effectively fight the insurgency and protect the Afghan government has been hampered (Curtis & Phillips, p.2).²³ The recent expansion of its responsibilities throughout the country was the most for ISAF force since the invasion of Afghanistan.²⁴ As NATO tried to cover a majority of Afghanistan the organization soon found itself under-resourced since NATO leaders failed to force nations to fulfill their materiel requirements causing them to be severely lacking in equipment and capabilities. These shortfalls only became worse throughout 2007 as NATO continued to lack resources and were hampered by the refusal of most countries to allow their troops to be involved in combat operations (Jones, 2009a, p.248-50). As NATO gained more responsibility the national caveats and the continued use of a light footprint had a debilitating impact on NATO's ability to conduct counterinsurgency

²³ An example is the "lead nation" approach used to reform the security sector in Afghanistan. Five countries were assigned their own pillar, each nation was supposed to contribute significant financial assistance, coordinate external aid, and oversee reconstruction of its sector. However, this approach was a disaster due to differing national priorities, a complex bureaucracy, and conflicts between donors commitments and actual contributions (Jones, 2009a, p.239-242).

²⁴ In August 2003 NATO took control of the ISAF force based in Kabul. Then in October the UN Security Council authorized the mission to expand beyond Kabul using a staggered expansion plan intended to take full command of Afghanistan in 2007, divided into five Regional Commands (RCs): RC Capital in Kabul, RC North in Mazar-e-Sharif, RC West in Herat, RC South in Kandahar, and RC East in Bagram. For a map of the plan see the Appendix (Jones, 2009a, p.243-248).

operations and put undo strain on countries that chose to pursue combat and development. This was problematic since success in previous counter-insurgencies was achieved through the defeat of insurgent forces and their political organization in an area, holding it, and implementing reconstruction projects.²⁵ Due to serious limits on the numbers of troops this strategy could only be applied in a few sectors of the country, this strategy was impossible in the south of Afghanistan (Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p.1-2). As 2007 came to an end there were growing signs of distress for NATO as the violence continued to increase, especially in the southern portion of the country. Meanwhile, recent insurgencies that have gained sanctuary and support from neighboring countries have significantly increased their probability of success in the long run. As a result Pakistan is just as crucial to security in Afghanistan as the drug trade is (Jones, 2009a, 249-56). The tribal area in Pakistan is the safe haven for the insurgency; it is this region and its relevance to the current instability that will be examined in the next section.

²⁵ A strategy shown to be very effective during recent operations in Iraq.

HISTORY OF TRIBAL AREAS IN PAKISTAN

Since its creation, Pakistan has grappled with the role Islam should play in the state.

When Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, called for the establishment of the state he believed Muslims and Hindus were two nations who could never live together. This has led some to argue that Pakistan was intended to be a purely Islamic state while others argue that Jinnah was simply trying to create a country where Muslims could live safely. Those who oppose an Islamic state do not want to live in a theocracy, they want their country to be a moderate, modern, tolerant and stable state. While others want to live in a state where Islam is the guiding force, it is this division that bore the creation of the FATA and NWFP regions in Pakistan (Jones, 2002, p.xxv).

After several years of debate of the direction of the new state of Pakistan there was a decision made in 1955 to declare West Pakistan as one unit, separating the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan, NWFP and the Punjab into a separate unit. At the time this creation of a “Pashtunistan” in the NWFP was supported by the King of Afghanistan since he believed that the Pashtun homeland, which had existed prior to the arrival of the British, should remain. He also wanted to allow the Pashtuns in the eastern region of Pakistan to be able to decide whether they wanted to be a part of Afghanistan or Pakistan (Jaffrelot & Beaumont, 2002, p.21, 31-2; Jones, 2002, p.136-7). This decision was necessary since the Pashtun homeland had been split in two with the enforcement of the Durand Line by the British in 1893, to demarcate the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The border runs through 1,640 miles of difficult, widely differentiated terrain from the south in Baluchistan to the mountains in the North West Frontier Province. Although the NWFP was originally created to give the Pashtuns the opportunity to have an Islamic state within Pakistan, the tribal belt of Pakistan has served both as a safe haven

for a core group of nationally and internationally networked terrorist groups and as a hotbed of indigenous militant groups threatening the stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan since its creation (Jones, 2002, p.267).

Though the previous Pakistani government of Musharaff had been reluctant to pursue them it has now become clear more than ever that these militants pose a threat to the stability of Pakistan. The views of the Pakistan government changed when a new civilian leadership was elected in 2008. Since taking office they have begun a number of efforts to eliminate the safe haven currently exploited by al Qaeda and the Taliban in the tribal areas, especially FATA (Markey, p.3-5).²⁶ Throughout history Pashtun tribes have often been sharply divided in the tribal areas on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. However, under a charismatic leader combined with an external threat to their way of life the groups will unite to fight the threat as a highly effective guerilla force, a capability honed for centuries. An example of the strength of the unified Pashtun tribes is the success of the Anti-Soviet jihad in the 80's (Jones, 2002, p. 321-2; Markey, p. 3).

The tribal area in the Northwest region of Pakistan has not only played a key role in the history of Afghanistan but it also has been the source of a key strategy of Pakistani foreign policy--the training and use of militants to exert influence in Afghanistan (most notably with the Taliban) and to fight India in Kashmir (Jones, 2002, p.321-2). This has led to an evolution of a mix of groups throughout the tribal areas. Most recently, in the post-September 11th period, a younger more radical generation has taken over and is now working to fight both the Pakistani government and the new Afghan Government. As a result of this new mix of groups in the tribal

²⁶ The FATA region in the tribal area of Pakistan is the poorest and least developed region in the country with the entire tribal region filled with various Pashtun tribes straddling the border (Markey, p.3-5).

areas of Pakistan they have now become a central front not only in the fight against terrorism but also in the fight to stabilize Afghanistan and Pakistan as well.

Incredibly a number of these groups continue to receive support from the ISI and the Frontier Constabulary (FC). due to the continued belief by some elements in the Pakistani government that they are needed as a hedge to against India upon the withdrawal of NATO and U.S. forces from the region (Riedel, 2009, p.3). The threats posed by the militants hiding in the tribal region are made even more difficult by the rise of anti-American sentiment throughout the tribal areas and Pakistan since the invasion of Afghanistan since the people of Pakistan blame the current instability on cooperation with the U.S. efforts at counterterrorism (Curtis, 2008, p.2).

The tribal areas consist of four different mechanisms of governance: the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), and the provincial governments of Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). The FATA is composed of seven tribal agencies, including Khyber and North and South Waziristan, as well as six frontier regions such as Peshawar. The PATA is comprised of seven of the 24 districts of the NWFP and five in Baluchistan. Like the FATA it also has a weak level of governance, see Figure 4 (Markey, p.6-8). It is to these regions that insurgents are free to retreat and regroup. This has led to an additional strain on the Pakistan security forces in the region (Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p.2). The FC is the primary policing organization in the tribal belt tasked with securing the territories just outside of the FATA and serving as a counter-smuggling and border security force for Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Army has intervened in the area rotating between heavy military occupation and political negotiations since the invasion of Afghanistan. This rotation of efforts in the tribal areas is in response to public resistance to these efforts since

they believe these incursions violate the promise made by the founding fathers to resolve disputes with negotiations and jirgas (Markey, p.9-10).

Although the Pakistani government has been stepping up efforts to root out the militant groups in the tribal areas these groups continue to receive the support of members of the ISI and the FC, especially the Taliban. The ISI has been a key supporter of the Taliban, supporting them since the beginning (Riedel, 2009, p. 3). The ISI has also played a significant role in the tribal areas acting as liaison to the militants used for Pakistan's longstanding interest in projecting influence in Afghanistan and India. Since 2006, as the situation deteriorated and the U.S. pressured Pakistan to address the tribal areas, Gen. Musharraf and now President Zardari have attempted a number of operations. Under Gen. Musharraf these efforts were often coupled with political overtures and development assistance in an effort to combat the underlying causes of militancy and improve the legitimacy of state institutions in the tribal areas. However, these efforts have been haphazard as a result of recent events in Pakistan (Markey, p.11).

As a result of years of political instability two opposition presidential candidates returned to Pakistan to remove Musharraf. In response Musharraf declared a state of emergency and removed uncooperative justices in the Supreme Court who would not allow him to remain President and a General in the Army at the same time. Eventually, he would resign from the military in an effort to retain his job as President. The country was put into a true state of distress upon the assassination of Benazir Bhutto by a suicide bomber during her campaign for President (Ali, p. 2008, p.182-4). As a result of this political instability the approach to the tribal areas have been fragmented with the FC being placed on the frontline against the militants and with new civilian leaders only exercising loose command (Markey, p.12-3). Since September 11th Gen. Musharraf occasionally used the army to take back territory, though none of the efforts

were long-term or consistent. This lack of follow through in the tribal areas allowed al Qaeda to continue planning attacks around the world and for an insurgency to be born against Afghanistan.²⁷

The most frequent tactic used to control the militants in the tribal areas has been negotiated settlements. Gen. Musharraf negotiated a number of settlements in South Waziristan in April 2004 and February 2005 and in North Waziristan in September 2006. However, these negotiations have often backfired since they suffer from an inability to be enforced, allowing terrorists to remain unmolested, and give the groups legitimacy in the eyes of the local population (Markey, p.11-12; Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p.4). Some believe the reluctance to pursue militant groups stem from questions regarding the commitment by the U.S. to long-term efforts in stabilizing the region.²⁸ They were also responding to the continued efforts by Afghan officials to make India a long-term strategic partner. To hedge against these developments Pakistan continued to support militant groups to balance the strengthening of India's position in the region (Jones, 2009a, p.270-3). The dual efforts, of support and pursuit of militant groups, provides Pakistan with an unusual amount of leverage on both sides of the war.

In order to improve the stability of the region this policy of hedging needs to be addressed since Pakistan now faces its own challenge of Islamic extremists from the tribal areas as the Pakistan Taliban and al Qaeda have brought the fight to the Pakistan government in response to cooperation with the U.S. (Riedel, 2009, p.3). However, Pakistan has not been the

²⁷ The new attacks from their safe haven in Pakistan included the July 2005 attack in London, the 2006 attempt to bomb planes on transatlantic flights, as well as the support of a number of cells and attempts foiled where evidence was found indicating these terrorists and their plans originated in Pakistan. This has also been confirmed by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan where evidence was found indicating that the tribal areas are the source of recent terrorist plots and the insurgency currently plaguing the region (Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p.4)

²⁸ This perception was been supported by the waning commitment of the U.S. to Afghanistan and the shifting of troops from Afghanistan to Iraq during the Bush Administration.

only state helping the insurgents; they have received money from the United Arab Emirates as well as material and logistic support from Iran and other countries in an effort to try and undermine U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq (Jones, 2009a, p.275-7).

This support of the Taliban and other groups has not helped the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan relations have always been tense since Pakistan has tended viewed the politics of Pashtun ethnicity as a threat to their national sovereignty. These threats have often been escalated as a result over the Afghan governments refusal to recognize the Durand Line since it splits the Pashtun areas, which they believe should be part of Afghanistan, in half. (Rubin, 2004, p.11). As a result of the autonomy of the tribal areas the Pakistan government has frequently avoided putting forth a concerted effort to control over the tribal areas. This lack of engagement in the region has led to a consistent flow of money, arms, and people between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Such an easy flow across the border has influenced the dynamic of militants in the FATA and led to a connection between smugglers, militants, and drugs; now perpetuating instability in the region (Markey, p.14-15).

The FATA has been an incubator for the Pakistani Taliban and other militants groups since the invasion of Afghanistan. Militants have found this an ideal safe haven allowing the leadership and structure of these groups to remain intact and functioning despite fleeing Afghanistan (JF, 2009, Rashid speech). Though Pakistan cooperated at the beginning and had a few initial successes the efforts were often in response to political pressure from the U.S. or on the eve of visits by U.S. officials to Pakistan. Part of the reason for this lack of success is institutional within the Pakistani, which is trained for conventional war against India not counterinsurgency operations. This has made their limited efforts even less effective if not counter productive since they were heavy handed with the population, often leveling a town to

root out the militants, creating more supporters not less or they would make no progress at all. In order to improve their efforts they have needed the assistance of the U.S. to retrain and support their units (Markey, p. 12). For the first several years the Pakistan government resisted any concerted effort by the U.S. to track down terrorists in their borders, including training to improve counterinsurgency operations. It was not until the last couple of years and a change in civilian leadership that Pakistan was able to muster the political will required to maintain the necessary operational tempo of counterinsurgency operations in the face of opposition of the country. The shift in political will in the country was spurred on by the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, a popular figure in Pakistan, frequent attacks on major cities in Pakistan, and the siege at the Red Mosque in 2007 (Ali, 2008, p.182-4; Markey, p.11-12).

As a result of al Qaeda and the Taliban's ability to escape Afghanistan and regroup in the tribal areas new threats now exist in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The leadership of al Qaeda leadership continues to find sanctuary in the border region where plans, funds and inspires new attacks around the world. The Afghan Taliban have regrouped and have been directing operations from inside Pakistan since 2002 after following the Pakistani Taliban, formerly the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), across the border to evade the U.S. and coalition forces. The leadership of the Afghan Taliban is now based in Quetta in Baluchistan and coordinates with a major Taliban affiliated network led by Sirajuddin Haqqani based in North Waziristan (Khan, 2009, p.4). The network led by Haqqani has been leveling attacks on U.S. and NATO forces as part of a Pashtun movement concerned with the re-conquest and dominance of Afghanistan and only secondarily with the goals of al Qaeda (Markey, p.16-17).

The Pakistani Taliban is a loosely defined mix of tribal militant groups united under TTP in December 2007. The Pakistan Taliban's structure includes representatives stationed

throughout the NWFP and FATA and is led by Baittulah Mehsud, the mastermind of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. In practice the Pakistan Taliban maintain close ties to the Afghan Taliban and al Qaeda including a sworn allegiance to Mullah Omar, they have also frequently used the rhetoric of al Qaeda for global jihad. The Pakistani Taliban led the Afghan Taliban and al Qaeda into Pakistan and became their protectors as they became radicalized with their own agenda to support the Afghan Taliban and attack the Pakistani government (JF, 2009, Rashid Speech). Although they support and have participated in the efforts of the Afghan Taliban they are more focused on concerns closer to home such as the implementation of Sharia and a defensive jihad against the Pakistani army of occupation in tribal areas and the country of Pakistan. In order to pursue their stated desire to overthrow the Pakistani government they have been responsible for suicide bombings throughout Pakistan. These actions and new alliances have made the Pakistan Taliban greatest threat to the stability of Pakistan now that they are part of a new loose structure of extremist groups in the tribal areas (Markey, p.17).

Within the tribal areas a new structure has developed, with al Qaeda at the top of the pyramid giving strategic direction to the other groups and working with the leaders of other groups to strategize and perform attacks and other jobs for al Qaeda (JF, Rashid Speech). Upon arriving in their new base in Pakistan, al Qaeda quickly developed a new plan with three objectives in Afghanistan. These objectives are to overthrow the regime of Karzai, to replace the regime with one following the vision of Islam envisioned by Sayyid Qutb, the final objective is a war of attrition to force the U.S. and other western governments to withdraw like the Soviets.²⁹ Another effect of being forced out of Afghanistan was the reorganization and creation of a far more decentralized and nonlinear network based out of Pakistan. According to Bruce Hoffman,

²⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the origins of thought behind al Qaeda and its partner terrorist organizations as well as the origins of al Qaeda refer to the Appendix.

al Qaeda now exists in four categories: al Qaeda central (includes the remnants of the pre-9/11 organization and the core leadership), affiliated groups (formally established insurgent and terrorist groups affiliated with al Qaeda), affiliated cells (small dispersed groups of adherents who have a tenuous connection with al Qaeda, often self organized such as those who committed the London bombings July 2005), and the informal network (which includes individuals with no direct contact with al Qaeda central but were inspired to join the jihadi cause due to western attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, including those who performed the Madrid bombing in March 2004) (Jones, 2009a, p.280-7).

Although the organization has evolved and key leaders of the pre-9/11 group have been killed or captured, the core leadership remains the same and is now even harder to find since they have found safe haven deep in the tribal areas of Pakistan and reorganized communications to overcome the lack of direct access due to the operations by the U.S. and Pakistan (Markey, p.16). While al Qaeda is alive and healthy in Pakistan, they truly wish to return to Afghanistan as it provided such a convenient home with links to other groups and states for assistance in their cause. This has caused al Qaeda and bin Laden to provide a great deal of assistance to Afghan fighters and other groups working to push the U.S. out. This help includes the use of the fighters in propaganda from al Qaeda, providing them technological and strategic knowledge gained in Iraq, and spreading techniques that proved deadly in Iraq (such as IEDs and suicide bombing). Al Qaeda has also been helping to increase the strength and capabilities of insurgents in Afghanistan in order to make the situation even more dangerous and deadly for the coalition forces (Jones, 2009a, p.287-95).

Ever since the completion of the overthrow of the Taliban militant groups have been crossing back and forth over the border of Pakistan to attack coalition forces and the Afghan

government. In order to effectively defeat the insurgency the U.S. must not only properly resource the fight in Afghanistan but must also work with Pakistan to ensure they are no longer able to find sanctuary in Pakistan. Since al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their affiliated militant groups found sanctuary in Pakistan the U.S. strategy in Pakistan's border areas has had two major components. The first was the capture key al Qaeda leaders. The second component was that Pakistan must conduct the bulk of the operations since the U.S. was over-stretched and did not want to threaten Pakistan's stability (Khan, 2009b, p.1). In order to assist with this strategy the U.S. government provided more than \$1 billion per year to Pakistan's key national security agencies for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. These include the Pakistani Army, the Frontier Corps, the Frontier Constabulary, and the ISI. The Frontier Corps, the largest of the forces with almost 100,000 members, is in charge of securing Pakistan's western border (Jones, 2009a, p.255-60).

At the same time Pakistan has been suffering from a highly unstable political and economic situation due to a growing militant threat and severe economic imbalances caused by high oil and food prices (Curtis, p.1-2). In the past Pakistan and Afghanistan officials have blamed each other for the Taliban, al Qaeda and other militants ability to freely cross the porous border before and after attacks. Recently the U.S. has largely placed blame on Pakistan as a result of their support for the groups in the past, their lack of willingness to address the problem, the ineffectiveness of a Pakistan military built to fight a conventional war with India, a lack of strong individual commanders committed to Pakistan, and a coherent policy in the region (Phillips & Curtis, p.5; Markey, p. 12). Deciding who is to blame should not be the central concern; instead a new working partnership must be created to address what has become an international threat--extremism in the border areas.

In order to address this source of instability a great deal of effort must be put forth to tackle the structural gap in the border regions, including FATA, so that government institutions can be improved and become able to provide tangible benefits to local communities and improve social and economic conditions in the area. For these efforts at stabilization to be effective there must be a change in how politics in the tribal areas function. Part of the longstanding problem in politics and governance in the tribal areas has resulted from a longstanding agreement instituted upon the creation of Pakistan in 1947, which created a restriction on political parties in the FATA allowing religious groups to be dominant (Jones, 2009a, p. 321-4). In order to gain traction on the instability created within and from this region Pakistan must be persuaded to move away from its longstanding reliance on militants to exert influence in foreign policy in the region. Pakistan has long viewed Afghanistan as a strategic asset against Iran and India, leading to Pakistan seeking a friendly regime in Kabul. One example was Benazir Bhutto's support of the Taliban and its development in the 90's. Since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan the Pakistan government has been suspicious of Indian activities causing them to continue supporting Kashmir militants (Markey, p. 15). They must be encouraged to implement concentrated efforts to root out the militants and insurgents while being supported and encouraged in constructive engagement with both Afghanistan and India so they remove the need for militants to be given safe haven in Pakistan (Khan, 2009b, p. 2-3). The best way for the U.S. and the international community to remove the strategic need for these groups is to demonstrate a true commitment and dedication to the region, unlike previous examples after the Soviet Invasion and even during the recent invasion by the U.S. when they got distracted by Iraq (Riedel, 2009, p.3).

In order to address the problems in the tribal areas there is a need for a far more comprehensive strategy that addresses more than the hunting of militant leaders and other

targets. It must also include a substantial amount of economic and developmental assistance that is not inhibited by the minutia that can prohibit aid from being distributed to the military and the people who need it in the region (Khan, 2009b, p.5). A portion of the Pakistan Army also needs to be trained in counterinsurgency using the Petraeus doctrine to protect the people in the tribal areas of Pakistan so their efforts will succeed (JF, Rashid Speech). Most importantly we need a joint U.S. – Pakistan strategy to address the tribal areas. This must include the continuation of targeted military operations to eliminate the leadership, the ability to plan for future attacks, and to disrupt future operations. The tribal areas need to be addressed with continuing and targeted military operations to target the leadership, plans, and operations and avoid promoting a negotiating process that only serves to legitimize extremists and boost their images with the local population and their ability to consolidate authority (Phillips & Curtis, p.4-5; Khan, 2009b, p.4).

FORMER VS. CURRENT STRATEGY

For the first several years after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan the primary emphasis was placed on the use of military power with a minimal commitment to long-term investment and reconstruction. As a reaction to failed attempts at nation-building during the Clinton administration, the Bush administration was weary of committing military forces to nation-building efforts that they believed were doomed to fail. As a result they tried to contract out and minimize the involvement and exposure of the U.S. military in the rebuilding Afghanistan. However, the U.S. eventually became engaged in nation-building since the country lacked the basic government institutions necessary to prevent the return of al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other militant groups. The Bush administration strategy for rebuilding Afghanistan involved contracting with a number of NGO's and private firms as the primary actors in the rebuilding of the institutions and the country itself (Jones, 2009a, p.316). However, a great deal of this money was spent on staff and not on actual projects, those projects that were completed were neither needed nor wanted by Afghanistan. By not devoting the proper resources to the fight, post-conflict security, and rebuilding the extremist forces were able to return and the effort became a long-term quagmire that must now be refought. This fight will require far more resources and attention to properly secure the country and reduce the threat it poses to the U.S and the international community.

Upon entering office the Obama Administration requested a study of the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The results of the study were presented in a report on the situation in the region summarized in the White Paper released by the President on March 27, 2009. From this report the administration developed a list of objectives and a plan through which to achieve their goals of promoting a more stable government in Afghanistan capable of providing security and protecting the people. More than seven years after the Taliban were overthrown the war continues to rage on with insurgents now controlling parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan and attacking coalition forces with increasing frequency. While the Karzai government is partially to blame for some of these deficiencies, the U.S. and the international community shares a majority of the blame. One of the primary weaknesses in the international coalition that must be addressed are the issues that arise with NATO as it is tested by its first out of area combat mission. As a result of the structure of the organization and the sway held by donor countries, there have been frequent instances of countries either contributing too few troops or plenty of troops with too many caveats on the missions the forces can be involved in. For instance, Britain has frequently contributed large numbers of troops and advocated for more NATO countries to contribute more to the ISAF in Afghanistan. However, countries such as Germany and France, despite their support for the effort itself, have often sent troops but restricted them from deploying to volatile regions and limiting the operations they are involved in (Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p. 1-3). Deficiencies such as this as well as a lack of well trained troops for counterinsurgency make the NATO mission far less effective than it should be. This is an instance where diplomacy to back up military strategy is an important component of the effort. President Obama will need to find a way to convince other countries to increase their

commitments since they share in responsibility for the region and the potential risks that would result from failure (Khan, 2009a, p.2).

The leadership of President Hamid Karzai, on the other hand, has been seen as ineffective at providing security or promoting an environment of good governance. This has caused growing levels of dissatisfaction and resentment as well as a plummeting level of public support for the regime, not to mention the foreign forces that support it.³⁰ Karzai has also been losing the support of the international community with many calling for a new president in the upcoming elections in August 2009. Whoever wins the next election, the U.S. and NATO must work them to strengthen the government and make it more effective, root out corruption, deal with opium trafficking, increase the quality of governance, and improve the level of cooperation and support for Pakistan in dealing with extremists in the region (Khan, 2009a, p.1-2). Beyond the leadership of Afghanistan there are a number of things that must be dealt with from the safe haven of terrorists to developmental goals needed to rebuild state institutions and the economy.

Since both Afghanistan and Pakistan continue to remain hosts to al Qaeda and its allies, the efforts in the region are crucial if we wish to eliminate the use of the region as a base for terrorism. The future of Afghanistan is inextricably linked to the future of Pakistan since the extremists that threaten Afghanistan now have a safe haven in Pakistan and threaten its stability as well (Obama, 2009, p. 1). The Obama administration strategy lists a number of objectives intended to stabilize both Afghanistan and Pakistan while eliminating the threat of terrorism. These include the disruption of terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, promoting a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan, developing increasingly self-reliant Afghan security forces, enhancing civilian control and a stable constitutional government

³⁰ For more detail on recent levels of support see Analysis of Current Strategy and the recent poll of the Afghan People performed by the Asia Foundation (Rennie, Sharma, & Sen, 2008).

in Pakistan as well as a vibrant economy, and involve the international community more actively for the long-term. The Obama Administration believes that in order for Afghanistan and Pakistan to remain stable, al Qaeda's sanctuary must be removed, there must be an effective government in Pakistan, and a self-reliant Afghanistan must be developed that will enable combat forces to be withdrawn with the promise of sustained commitment to political and economic development (Obama Administration [OA], 2009, p.2).

One of the first they propose to complete is the creation and implementation of a more integrated counterinsurgency strategy that will secure Afghanistan's south and east in order to prevent a return of al Qaeda and provide space for the Afghan government to establish control. The indigenous forces must also be given the mentoring and experience necessary so they will be prepared to take the lead in the counterinsurgency and allow external combat forces to be withdrawn. For the counterinsurgency strategy to be effective the NATO and U.S. forces must provide population security and work to build effective local governance and support the creation of robust economic development. In order to pursue this objective, President Obama order an increase in troop levels by 30,000; however, this number is far short of many estimates of the number of troops that would be needed to properly quell the insurgency. According to estimates by NATO and the U.S., the effort may take as many as 400,00 troops total. When you add the surge to the current level of U.S., NATO, and Afghan Forces we are still 100,000 short, so this may be a problem as we continue to expand the Afghan forces (Khan, 2009a, p.2).

They also propose taking a page from the strategy that worked in Iraq under the supervision of General Petraeus, stating that the U.S. must create an effective strategic public relations plan to counter the propaganda that is used by the Taliban and al Qaeda to influence the local populace. The new strategy also proposes to use the clear and hold strategy that was used

in Iraq. Now that there has been a significant increase in troop levels many believe the troops will be able to clear a town, hold it, and keep the enemy out (Silverleib, 2009, p. 1). However, this task will be far more difficult than Iraq and it won't necessarily be towns that are targeted but the lower levels of governance that need support in the nearly 400 districts of Afghanistan where the population is primarily that of a clan or tribe.

Another task that must be completed is an improvement in the level of human capital within the country. By increasing the civilian capacity governance can be improved as well as the level of involvement and understanding of state affairs of the Afghan population which will help strengthen the relationship between the government and the Afghan people. Such an effort will aid the development of systems and institutions, especially at the provincial and district levels. This will provide Afghanistan with the basic infrastructure and economic alternatives to the insurgency needed at all levels of Afghan society. In order to complete this task the U.S. must play a role in promoting the improvement of education in the country, and further incorporate allies, partners, the UN, and other international organizations and NGOs to increase their role in developing the level of human capital within Afghanistan (Khan, 2009a, p.2; Obama, p.2).

This goal is not without its challenges; this will take a great deal of diplomacy and political will to sustain the long-term effort that these goals and tasks will require. In order to meet this proposed goal, President Obama has claimed the effort will need an additional \$1 billion in non-military aid every year from a combination of U.S. funds and international donations. These funds will be focused on improving and supporting education as well as basic infrastructure and human services. Through a focus on long-term investment, reconstruction, development and improving the lives of the Afghan people, the Obama administration believes the lives of the Afghan people,

the level of trust and support of the foreign forces and local government will be greatly improved (Khan, 2009a, p.2). This is a crucial and long-term task since without effective development of indigenous capacity to increase the self-reliance of the population the country can not grow and become more stable. To be successful the U.S. and international community must make a long-term commitment to the region.

Another key objective crucial to the counterinsurgency and the level of security within Afghanistan is an expansion of the Afghan National Security forces making them capable of assuming the security mission from U.S. forces, especially in the south and east. In order to be able to do this both the Army and the police force must be increased in size and capability. The Obama administration has proposed plans for each unit in Afghanistan to be partnered with a U.S. unit as well as additional trainers from the NATO allies. Right now the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) currently stand at a force of 70,000. As part of the new military commitment, efforts are planned to build an Afghan army of 134,000 over the next five years by investing more than \$20 billion to strengthen and increase the capacity of the ANA to a more ethnically balanced force with airlift capability (Khan, 2009a, p.2). This commitment also includes a police force of 82,000 by 2011 in order to speed up efforts to turn over security responsibility to the Afghans (Obama, p. 2-3). While the U.S. will be mentoring units of both the police and army in active missions throughout the country the international community must also assume responsibility for the funding and enhancement of the security forces along side the U.S. In order for these forces to grow and remain incorruptible their salaries must be made more competitive with those being paid by the insurgents to help increase the size of the force and its quality. Over time as the security situation in the country changes the

forces of the Afghan National Security forces must be reassessed to adjust the size, scope, and capabilities of the force (Khan, 2009a, p.2; Obama, p. 3).

In order to improve the legitimacy of the government and its ability to engage the people there must be international support for the election to allow for a successful outcome and make sure it is legitimate in the eyes of the people of Afghanistan. This includes efforts to ensure the security and legitimacy of voter registration, elections, and the tabulating of the votes. In order to do this the international military presence must be used to help the national Afghan security forces provide security throughout the election process and to support the international monitoring effort that will ensure legitimacy and oversee Afghanistan's polling sites. However, this is not all that must be done in order to improve the legitimacy of the government. The rampant corruption and its inability to provide even the basic services must also be addressed (OA, p. 2-5). For the past seven years those systems and institutions within Afghanistan that have received high quality assistance have had great success. However, the support for these institutions needs to be far more consistent across the breadth and width of the government. These efforts must include the advising and monitoring officials, pushing the efforts down from the national level of government to the local levels, and providing support for the institutions throughout government to restore and maintain the legitimacy of the government in Afghanistan (Obama, p. 2-3).

Another task the Obama administration intends to complete is the integration of reconcilable insurgents with the government. Though many believe the Taliban's hard core and the head of al Qaeda are not reconcilable, they believe the war in Afghanistan cannot be won without winning over non-ideologically committed insurgents to lay down their arms, reject the aims of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and accept the Afghan Constitution. In order to do the Obama

administration intends for the effort to be Afghan-led without instituting medieval social policies that would reverse efforts at gender equality and improvements in human rights. In order to do so they plan to exploit differences between the insurgents to divide true believers from less committed fighters, those fighting for income or survival. However, without a sincere and honest political reconciliation there is little chance of improving peace in Afghanistan so domestic and international political will are crucial (Khan, 2009a, p.3). The administration plans to create an office in every province, and the international community must support efforts to develop a reconciliation effort targeting mid-to-low level insurgents led by provincial governors and also explore ways to rehabilitate captured insurgents based off of experiences from Iraq and other countries (Obama, p. 3). They also must work to help bridge the gap of some of the ethnic gaps existing within the country, one of the most significant of these differences is related to the alienation of the Pashtun in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.³¹ However, these efforts face a concerted challenge since so far the Taliban's demands have remained steady on principle demanding the complete withdrawal of foreign forces and the enforcement of Sharia law and those non-ideologically connected are continuing to join the Taliban as a result of anger at U.S. forces and the Afghan government (Khan, 2009a, p.3).

³¹ Tensions between the Pashtun in both Afghanistan and Pakistan have been an issue for decades, ever since the British decision to delineate the formal border of Afghanistan along the Durand Line which effectively split the Pashtun population between countries. While some speculate this was a decision made to remove cohesive challenges to British power in both countries the motives are not crucial to this paper. One of the crucial points is that the area where the Pashtun hold the greatest amount of control in both Afghanistan and Pakistan are currently the areas where the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other extremist groups have found a safe haven and are supporting the current insurgency. In the areas of the Northwest Frontier Province, the FATA, and Southeastern Afghanistan in areas like the Helmand Province the efforts to address Pashtun alienation would be most beneficial in all aspects of the current insurgency and instability (Jones, 2009a, p.160 & 191).

As part of this and other governance efforts, one of the keys will be to include the provincial and local levels of government to build governance capacity in Afghanistan. Without such an effort we will be left with a strong central government whose power rests solely in the city with little to no consistent governance throughout all levels of government and throughout the entire country. Civilian assistance and capacity building programs to build competent provincial and local governments to more directly serve the people and connect them with their government (OA, p. 3; Kahn, 2009a, p. 3).

Another crucial task is the severing of the link between narcotics and the insurgency. Until the last couple years the connection between narcotics and the insurgency was not made nor pursued. In fact it was not until 2006 that a formal acknowledgement was made of the connection, but there still was no policy implemented to address this issue. As part of his new strategy President Obama stated that to address this problem they will increase support for alternative livelihood programs in the country and exert more pressure on President Karzai to clamp down on those members of his administration, including his brother, who are involved in, benefit from, or allow the expansion of the poppy trade (Khan, 2009a, p.4). This is a crucial part of the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan since the narcotics trade has ties to the insurgency, is the major driver of corruption in the country, and severely distorts the legal economy (Kerry, 2009, p. 1-3). In order to address this problem the administration has proposed that U.S. and ISAF forces use their authority to track down and interdict narco-traffickers. They also must have the authority to destroy labs, drug storage facilities, processing equipment, and drug caches (OA, p. 4-6; Winfield, 2009, p.1).

There also must be significant efforts made to break the drug-insurgency funding and the corruption associated with the opium trade. The key strategies needed to complete this task are

the use of crop substitution and alternative livelihood programs to encourage Afghan farmers to move away from poppy cultivation with methods that up until this point have been underdeveloped and under-resourced (Kerry, 2009, p. 5-8). However, the problem will persist until these programs allow the Afghans to reclaim their land and use it for licit agriculture. In order to be successful the efforts must target the higher level drug lords, not just the farmers. As part of their new strategy the Obama administration plans to phase out funding for opium-eradication programs while significantly boosting funding for alternate-crop and drug-interdiction efforts. The aim of this new policy is to try and deprive the Taliban of tens of millions of dollars in drug revenues that are being used to fuel the insurgency while increasing efforts to promote viable crop alternatives for Afghan farmers and cracking down on the illicit cross-border heroin trade. This shift is partially a result of the negative reactions to the previous programs that concentrated solely on eradication that were driving Afghan farmers into the hands of the Taliban and unfairly harming poor farmers and not inhibiting the trade at all (Khan, 2009a, p.5; OA, p. 4). The new drug strategy must be concentrated in Afghanistan's southern provinces where the Taliban is strongest and the drug trade earned the insurgents an estimated \$50 to \$70 million in the past year. The Obama administration also proposes coordination of efforts to crackdown on drug trafficking across the border of Afghanistan before it reaches Europe, Russia, and Iran. This will require a regional intelligence network to prevent opium trafficking and keep the chemical precursors to process it out of Afghanistan. If implemented properly the support of sustainable farming in Afghanistan and Pakistan should boost incomes, create jobs, improve rural development and lower the levels of regional tensions (Dreazen, 2009, p. 1).

The new efforts of the Obama administration also include an increase in the engagement with Pakistan and other allies for assistance in the efforts. These efforts require

institutionalization of stronger mechanisms for bilateral and trilateral cooperation to serve as a basis for increased cooperation and efforts by Pakistan to address the tribal areas and the border region. Since it is impossible to disaggregate the issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan the Pakistani, Afghan, and Coalition forces must make a concerted effort to help Pakistan in the fight as well as in Afghanistan (Gates & Mullen, 2009, p.2). The main tool of this effort for President Obama is the pursuit of a regional diplomatic strategy that includes countries with “legitimate national interests” in Afghanistan. These include Pakistan, Iran, India, the Central Asian States, China and Russia. By pursuing regional agreements with these nations, Richard Holbrooke, special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, believes these neighbors will have a stake in the settlement and thus will help in the current effort to stabilize Afghanistan (Khan, 2009a, p.4). The primary emphasis of the new regional approach will involve Pakistan and Afghanistan through intensive negotiations to get them to cooperate with each other, as well as with NATO and the U.S. forces, in order to defeat the extremist elements in the region, especially in the FATA region and Pakistan’s border areas (Obama, p. 1-2; Khan, 2009, p.4).

For its part Pakistan must demonstrate a strong commitment to rooting out al Qaeda and the violent extremists that now live within its borders. The terrorists within Pakistan are not simply the enemies of Afghanistan and America but Pakistan as well. The government’s ability to destroy these safe havens is directly related to the strength and security of the government of Pakistan. In order to bolster it the U.S. and NGO’s must continue to assist the country to improve its governance and capabilities (Obama, p. 2). These efforts include engaging and focusing Islamabad on the common threat presented by the safe havens that house extremists. This will require consistent and intensive engagement with the Pakistani government leadership in both the civilian and military realms in a way that respects and enhances the democratic civilian

authority. Part of this assistance must include efforts to strengthen and develop Pakistani security forces so they can succeed in sustaining counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in the FATA and other tribal areas; including increased U.S. military assistance including helicopters to provide air mobility, night vision equipment, and training for Pakistani Special Operations forces. This also will include an increase and broadening of assistance to Pakistan to promote longer-term economic stability. This includes enhancing bilateral and regional trade with Reconstruction Opportunity Zones and encouraging foreign investment (Markey, p.20; Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p. 5-8). Along with international partners the U.S. should promote the development of regional organizations to focus on economic and security cooperation and foster productive political dialogue. By increasing direct budget support, development assistance, infrastructure investment, and technical advice including the strengthening of trade relations the economies of both Afghanistan and Pakistan will improve. Developmental assistance to Pakistan should focus on long-term capacity building, increased job creation in the agricultural sector, education and training, and boosting the infrastructure and utilities throughout the country. The capacity of the Pakistani government is also crucial, including the fostering of reform of the provincial and local governance in the FATA and the NWFP to help Islamabad enhance the services and support in areas cleared of insurgents to remove the safe haven they have created for themselves. By improving the civilian authority and long-term economic stability of Pakistan along with the ability of the military to clear and hold as part of a counterinsurgency to help fight extremists, the stability of the country will be greatly improved (Jones, 2009b, p.2-3; Phillips & Curtis, 2008, p. 7-10).

A cornerstone of the current strategy from the Obama Administration is a far heavier footprint including a surge of 17,000 troops to be deployed to the southeastern region of

Afghanistan (Obama, p. 3; Barnes & Miller, 2009, p. 1). These troops have already begun to be deployed and are intended to take the fight to the Taliban in the south and the east allowing the rest of the forces of the U.S. and ISAF to have greater capacity to partner with Afghan Security and to pursue insurgents along the border (Obama, p.3). President Obama and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates also recently replaced General McKiernan as commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan with Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal. According to the Obama administration this change is intended to emphasize a fresh approach in Afghanistan and added counterinsurgency experience so the new strategy will be implemented effectively (Gates & Mullen, 2009, p. 2-3).

According to Gen. McChrystal the eight year war in Afghanistan requires a new focus on counterinsurgency to reduce violence and build local support; "...the measure of success will not be enemies killed. It will be shielding the Afghan population from violence" (Silverleib, 2009, p. 1)). Rather than looking for private businesses to serve as the buyers for the goods created by the people of Afghanistan, as the Bush administration did, the Obama Administration, USAID, and other groups intend to use more government subsidies and support of the farmers and other workers in order to get them working and combat the unemployment and need for funds which push people toward the Taliban.

Right now, Afghanistan is at a crossroads, one road will lead the country to peace and prosperity while the other will lead to the loss of all that has been achieved and fought for. Which road the country will go down depends on the level of international commitment to help Afghanistan emerge from three decades of instability and violence to a new era of peace and stability. It will also require the right strategy for security and reconstruction to be implemented. Unfortunately lost opportunities and failures are the hallmarks of the history of Afghanistan

(Jalali, 2006, p.4). The crucial test of the new strategy put forth by the Obama administration is whether it will address the fundamental problems that have, so far, been perpetuating the violence and inhibiting the ability of the government from becoming legitimate. In order to evaluate whether it will succeed we first must understand the current situation and then apply the new strategy to it to see what it will do.

CURRENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

During the past several years Afghanistan has made progress toward democracy while reconstructing the country's political, social, and security institutions. However, Afghanistan is still hovering somewhere between a failed state and a weak state as it continues to face significant state-building challenges including combating the Taliban, widespread poppy cultivation and trafficking, and the deterioration of many state institutions despite international and local efforts at reform (Fund for Peace [FFP], 2009, p. 2). However, some positive steps have been made despite the remaining challenges. Some of the important landmarks include adoption of a constitution in January 2004, a presidential election held in October 2004 with another scheduled in August 2009, and parliamentary elections held in September 2005. At the same time the coalition forces and the new Afghan government have worked together to create a national army and police force, worked to dismantle factional militia units, rebuilding a national economy, expanding the education system and improving it, and improving the status of women in Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan has not yet reached its ultimate goal of bringing an end to the conflict and establishing sustainable peace and stability (Jalali, 2006, p.4).

There remain a number of challenges that must be overcome for the administration's goal to be reached. In order to overcome these problems, more resources must be invested in developing the institutions of the state in order to provide job opportunities for the citizens of Afghanistan as well as public services and security (FFP, p. 2-3). One of the primary shortfalls

currently hampering progress in Afghanistan has been an inability to provide security for ordinary Afghans. The people must feel secure in order for them to trust their government, but also so they will contribute to the economy, not the insurgency. Eventually we should be able to hand over responsibility for law and order and security to the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army so foreign troops can leave the country. We must continue to work with the President of Afghanistan, not against him, in order to improve governance, reduce corruption, and eliminate factionalized local governance (Christia, 2009, p.39-45).

GOVERNANCE

One of the most fundamental challenges faced by Afghanistan is a lack of good governance, an essential element in the establishment of security and economic recovery. As a result of the country's prolonged period of insecurity, warlordism, factional infighting, and life in a country filled with extremists, there is a widespread desire by Afghans for a strong government capable of providing security in the post-conflict environment and offer the services needed by a population and their devastated livelihoods and communities (Jalali, 2006, p.5). However, this does not exist yet due to the geographical challenges and ethnic challenges posed by Afghanistan. As the past community coping mechanisms have become less reliable and the use of cash more necessary, families and communities throughout Afghanistan are increasingly looking to the state for their livelihood and other public services including education and health care. The longer the state is unable to answer these calls the longer the process will take. Afghanistan is also the most rapidly urbanizing state in the Asian region; this has also placed a significant strain on the public services and political participation in the country (Thier, p.17).

As a result of these deficiencies, other efforts within the country continue to be hampered by corruption and incompetence at all levels of the government, leading to a loss of the legitimacy in the state, especially in rural areas (ONDCP, p.109). In order for the country to meet its goal of a strong government control of the rural areas and the ability to deliver required services must be improved. The legitimacy of the state continues to remain an issue as a result of the government's inability to combat corruption, militant violence, and drug trafficking. Until the government addresses the corruption within its own institutions, and improves the public services, including security, and the basic infrastructure of the country, its legitimacy will remain in question and hinder the ability of the state to improve and become more stable (FFP, p. 2).

While the central government has extensive constitutional authority over the provinces, Kabul's current inability to intervene and its continued reliance on local power brokers have left factional chiefs in control of the local governments. This is simply a continuation of the status quo created after the breakdown of the central government over the past few decades as local leaders or warlords wielded the power and created patronage networks through access they had to foreign aid, weapons, revenue from taxes, natural resources in their area, and the poppy trade (Jalali, 2006, p.5). This system was perpetuated by the invasion and the U.S.-led Coalition forces reliance on Northern Alliance in order to defeat the Taliban in 2001 and help conduct stability operations. This further empowered the factional commanders while fragmenting power over the country and creating a significant roadblock to the reform process.

This problem has been allowed to persist due to the previous administration's preoccupation with Iraq and their continued reliance on warlords to fight the Taliban and maintain peace, thus reducing their incentives to remove those who defy the new government in Kabul. Although provincial and local governments are supposed to be working toward improved

development and the ability to secure their area of responsibility themselves, the PRT teams that are part of the ISAF are reluctant to move against defiant warlords since they are reluctant to risk their own safety or are restricted by national caveats from their home government. Since the central government has limited coercive capacity and little assistance from ISAF, the government has been forced to integrate militia leaders and former warlords into the central government, further weakening it and its ability to maintain local security (Jalali, 2006, p.6).

The parliamentary elections held in 2005 illustrated one further weakness within the government of Afghanistan. Since these elections were held on a non-party basis a politically fragmented legislature has emerged. Although there is a positive result of this since it allows members of different political, ethnic and regional interests to wage their political fight peacefully in parliament, it has its drawbacks as well (Jalali, 2006, p.7; Thier, p. 42-3) . By conducting elections without organized political blocs the new parliament has become a wild card with the ability to either weaken or strengthen the political process since support of lawmakers on initiatives grants them legitimacy and the emphasis on populist or parochial themes impede government decision-making. This problem has often put President Karzai at odds with the diverging interests of Afghanistan's international partners (Jalali, 2006, p.6-7).

SECURITY

Security is another fundamental issue facing the Afghanistan government and the international community. While the most common security threat mentioned in the news are the extremists and terrorists still residing in the country there are additional threats that must be dealt with. These other threats include rogue militia commanders, drug traffickers, corrupt

government officials from the provincial and district level all the way up to national, and incompetence within the government. Many of these threats often harm the public far more than the actions of the Taliban or al Qaeda. One thing lacking within the country are opportunities which are needed far more than new policies and promises. Opportunities lead to a freedom from fear and a freedom from want which creates human security. In order to develop this, the people need more than stronger security forces; they need good governance, social security, economic development and the protection of their human and political rights (Jalali, 2006, p.7).

The primary physical threats remaining in Afghanistan originate from the Taliban-led insurgency and the poppy trade, particularly in the south and east. It is this insurgency which is the primary threat created by the lawlessness and safe haven existing within the Northwestern Frontier province in Pakistan. With training camps, staging areas, recruiting centers and numerous safe haven areas within Pakistan the Taliban and others have a strong base from which to carry out cross-border terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. In order to remove this threat it requires more than military action. Efforts to create a Tri-Partite U.S.-Afghan-Pakistani Commission are key to coordination and assurance that Pakistan is not playing both sides of the game, leading to animosity in Afghan-Pakistani relations. Another critical step is creating a system to control the border.

In recent years the level of violence has escalated as a result of better and more violent tactics imported from experience in Iraq as well as increases in capability and support from al Qaeda. The insurgency has also been aided by increased funding from the poppy trade as both the Taliban and al Qaeda continue to regroup and the Coalition and Afghan forces continues to initiate more active military actions against the groups. Although they do not yet pose a strategic threat they create a pervasive sense of insecurity, hinder the reconstruction of the economy, and

weaken the influence of the government in rural areas. As the insurgency becomes stronger groups of Afghans continue to turn to the Taliban for security while the government becomes increasingly marginalized since they lack the capacity to protect the population. This has already happened in Helmand province where the poppy trade is most fertile and powerful. In many cases the strength of Taliban violence is a result of government inability to stop it rather than strength and ability of the insurgents (Jalali, 2006, p.7-9).

Before the U.S. invasion state security institutions were non-existent as a result of war, and numerous factional militias and non-state armed groups had emerged during the period of foreign invasion from 1979-89 and the extended civil war from 1992-2001. While the Taliban successfully defeated many of the warring factions, often incorporating them into their own ranks, it also failed at creating a viable state or security structure. Those remaining militias that were part of the Northern Alliance were enlisted during the invasion to push the Taliban and al Qaeda out of the country. As a result of this strategy these factions were able to establish themselves as the backbone of a security structure with these positions being legitimized during the Bonn process in 2001. However, these factions quickly began to consolidate their positions and disrupt the maturation of a formal, effective institution for security, leading to a massive security vacuum. The first effort to address this vacuum came through Security Sector Reform (SSR) at a donors' conference in Geneva in 2002. However, these efforts have suffered from insufficient donor investment, an inefficient use of funds, and the absence of a cohesive and integrated framework to make it all work together, leading to a perpetuation of the security vacuum that must be addressed (Thier, p.23-4).

A recent U.S. National Intelligence Estimate from October 2008 noted that Afghanistan is currently in a “downward spiral” with a government struggling to contain the influence of the

Taliban while at the same time provide for the people of Afghanistan. These trends will continue until Afghanistan's security forces have been freed of the culture of corruption, poor leadership, and a continuous lack of human and physical resources (Thier, p.33). In order to improve the government's ability, more attention needs to be paid to the ANP than the Army, since an overreliance on the use of military force to tackle challenges has been taking a toll on a population sick of war and battles. The development of the ANP has also been severely affected by the decade long civil war and its destruction of the core national police force. Since the police are at the forefront of fighting terrorism, illegal border incursions, the poppy trade, warlords, and organized crime, their strength is far more likely to improve security than the expansion of the Army (Peters, p.207-8; Thier, p.25-6). The ANP is also crucial to the protection of reconstruction projects such as highways and other infrastructure. Because of this the ANP has lost far more men than the ANA, Coalition Forces, or the ISAF in the fight against the insurgency and criminal activity in the country (Jalali, 2006, p.9-10). In order to improve these capabilities the Coalition and ISAF forces need to improve the effectiveness of their actions in coordination with both the ANA and ANP while also increasing the level of responsibility and action undertaken by the ISAF forces and their PRT teams from member countries by reducing national caveats and being able to use more forces for the larger threats to security. The Afghan government, the ANA, and ANP have been inhibited by the inability of the government to maintain a monopoly on the use of force by illegally armed groups formed into private security firms and the continued efforts by the warlords to gain power. Once successful the legitimacy of the forces will breed sustainable security and sustainable security will open the door to a new Afghanistan capable of real growth and development (Thier, p.25-33)

DRUG TRADE

Another significant issue still prevalent within Afghanistan is the drug trade, a problem largely ignored until a few years ago. Though recognized for the past couple of years it still lacks a cohesive and effective strategy to reduce the drug trade in Afghanistan. Many consider the problem of drugs, primarily the cultivation and trafficking in poppy and heroin, one of the most challenging threats to long-term security and development since they are so deeply entwined. Nearly all of the significant cultivation now occurs in insecure areas with active insurgent elements. Most of the poppy cultivation, approximately 95%, is limited to five contiguous southern provinces: Helmand, Farah, Kandahar, Oruzgan, and Nimruz (ONDCP, p.107). Right now Afghanistan produces more than 90% of the world's opium with revenue accounting for between 50 and 60% of Afghanistan's licit GDP. However, only one percent of the revenues generated by drug sales on the international market go to the Afghan farmers and less than ten percent to Afghan traffickers and traders. The remainder, nearly 90% of the revenue, is kept by the traders and distributors outside of Afghanistan; this makes opium not just a national problem but a regional and international problem that requires national, regional, and international efforts to overcome (Jalali, 2006, p.12).

Reduction of cultivation is possible with improved governance and security, though it can be greatly helped by shifts in market prices and weather. A shining example of the type of counternarcotics effort needed in the country is that which was implemented in Nangarhar province where it shifted from the second highest prevalence of poppy cultivation in 2007 to poppy free in 2008. This occurred as a result of high profile law enforcement efforts and incentives provided by the provincial governor with the support of USAID and other

development funds. The essential elements of Afghan counter-narcotics strategy are composed of an eight-pillar plan that is based on a comprehensive, long-term, and sustainable approach toward the elimination of production, consumption and trafficking. Poppy remains a popular crop as a result of its profitability, resilience and low-risk, since it faces few natural hazards while being grown. It is also popular since it serves as a source of credit in some areas allowing farmers to receive advance credit from narco-traffickers that makes it possible for them to support their family while growing the crop (ONDCP, p.106-7).

By combining law enforcement, eradication, promotion of alternative livelihoods, economic assistance, criminal justice and regional cooperation the drug trade could be effectively removed from Afghanistan. However, there remains considerable disagreement between members of the international community as well as between NATO, the US, and the Afghan government on the best approach and priorities to be used in the struggle against the drug trade (Jalali, 2006, p.12). Part of the reason for this conflict is the prevalence of narcotics revenue in the pockets of high level government officials. This involvement is the primary source of corruption in the country since Afghan officials, especially at the local and provincial levels of government, facilitate the drug trade and benefit from the revenue created by it (ONDCP, p.110). Not until recently did the U.S. describe and put in place a coherent strategy against the poppy trade within Afghanistan, not only that but it is a policy President Karzai can support which focuses more on the trafficking and the market rather than the farmer.

The narcotics industry continues to threaten security, governance and the licit economy in Afghanistan since the anti-government insurgency continues to exploit the narcotics trade for financial gain. The insurgency also receives material support from the traffickers they protect helping them gain weapons and supplies for the insurgency while also earning revenue making

the narcotics trade key to their survival since they have lost a great deal of state support.³² In order to continue the efforts and become more successful more government officials need to be arrested and the efforts at development throughout the country must also continue.³³

DEVELOPMENT AND THE POPULATION

Once the problems of security, drugs, and governance are made manageable, the next emphasis, though concurrent with the other issues, is development in Afghanistan. Despite recent improvements in economic growth, the country and its recovery remains fragile and unsustainable without long-term and significant aid from the international community. The subsistence economy has been destroyed, and Afghanistan now relies on imports of food and exports of agro-based commodities such as opium and heroin. The country has also become increasingly reliant on cash transactions and the use of poppy as a form of currency. This has empowered ideological groups like the Taliban and al Qaeda as well as regional warlords leading to an inability of the central government to govern the state (Thier, p.17).

Many estimate that, in the years since the invasion and removal of the Taliban, the Afghan economy has grown by 80%, with a majority of the progress a result of foreign assistance and the illegal drug economy. However, the majority of Afghanistan's population continues to suffer from multidimensional poverty that includes inadequate access to productive assets, social services, health services, and education. In order to boost economic development,

³² In return for support traffickers provide revenue and material support such as vehicles, weapons, and shelter to groups that provide protection (ONDCP, p.106).

³³ In 2008 many mid-level government officials were convicted of narcotics related charges including commanders of the ANP, but corruption still needs to be pursued at all levels of government (ONDCP, p.111).

the challenge of state-building must be met, since economic growth is intertwined with security and political reform. Recovery in Afghanistan currently hinges on the ability of the international coalition and Afghan government to establish the rule of law and implement effective governance, since lack of progress in just one of the areas can significantly hinder improvements in others. The Afghan government also needs to widen its revenue base through taxes and collecting of state revenues in order to fully support institution-building and to meet the public demand for public services. Right now the Afghan government remains critically dependent on international funding for its costs, and will remain as such for several more years. This is due to the extensive costs associated with the counterinsurgency and army that the country will not need to pay once stability is improved (Jalali, 2006, p.14-15).

Due to the conditions of increasing external and transnational threat and mounting demand from the domestic population, the stability and security of the state requires far more resources and capabilities than at any time in the past and far more than the government can afford to fund with the current economy. As the country exists now, it continues to suffer from a great deal of pressure due to the demands of and limits of its population. Almost half of the population is less than the age of 15 and the lack of effective health care within the country has led to a high infant mortality rate, a large number of orphans, and a large population of people on the verge of hunger. The country also has a large number of internally displaced refugees and millions of refugees moving back to their homes in Afghanistan while millions remain in Pakistan after fleeing the decades of violence. Many educated and middle class Afghans continue to leave and live outside of the country, with one of the highest rates of such migrants in the world (FFP, p. 2-3). All of these issues are directly connected to the level of development, or lack thereof, within the government and its institutions.

The Afghan government currently is capable of extracting approximately 7% of licit GDP in revenues; this amounts to approximately 1 billion dollars, an amount that is insufficient to cover the recurring nondefense costs. Due to this lack of revenue, the entire defense and development budgets are financed by foreign assistance with an even greater amount spent by aid donors off the government budget for a wide range of projects. This has led to a number of problems including a high unemployment rate, more than eight billion dollars in external debt and a GDP per capita of only \$800, making it one of the poorest countries while also suffering from a large population in poverty with nearly 18 million people living on less than \$2 a day (FFP, p.2-3). What is more, the size of Afghan security forces needs to increase further since they must assume full responsibility for security in the future (Thier, p.17-18).

In order to work toward covering a higher level of their country's cost, the government of Afghanistan is working to increase its revenue base as donor countries are working to guarantee secure levels of aid so there is predictable funding for the next several years so the governments efforts can be concretely measured and evaluated. However, this aid is highly contingent on the perception by the international community of the costs of failure within Afghanistan as well as the progress made in political, economic, security, and administrative reform (Jalali, 2006, p.15-16). Under the Bonn process most of the aid money was outside of government control. This practice needs to shift to government control using local institutions and entities, since this off-budget assistance hinders the building of the state and undermines the government. It also causes a great deal of the money to be used for contractors, lowering the amount of funds actually used in country. However, control of the money is not the only problem with development assistance. Due to two decades of war, Afghan state institutions were paralyzed and needed to be rebuilt, a problem inhibited by a lack of qualified Afghans (Rotberg, 2007, p.68-9).

In order to correct this trend, there also must be a substantial investment in human capital. Nearly 60% of the population is under 18 with little opportunity for employment (Jalali, 2006, p.16). Efforts must be made to train and use local labor for construction and other projects and further work must be done to improve the education system in order to rebuild the decades of skilled labor and intellectuals lost over the past three decades of war. There must also be an effort made to not only remove those corrupt officials from government, but also to create a system that prevents them from entering it and manipulating as the government continues to evolve. Afghanistan must also place emphasis on the private sector, since it is a key requirement for involvement in inter-regional trade (Jalali, 2006, p.16).

REGIONAL ISSUES

Afghanistan's long-run stability and that of the broader region will depend on how effectively the overlapping security dilemmas and the long held patterns of distrust can be dealt with. Afghanistan's boundaries were created out of the great game between Russia, Great Britain, and Persia, due to their understanding of the benefits of a buffer state in order to avoid direct border confrontations and their ability to dominate adjacent territories. However, the boundaries that were set as a result of this confrontation did not pay much attention to the interests of the local populations; the most glaring example of this lack of attention was the division of the Pashtun ethnic group with the establishment of the so-called Durand Line, as seen in Figure 3 (Thier, p.81-3). For the past several decades Afghanistan has suffered from interference by neighboring and regional states, including two occupations by the British, one by the Soviet Union, and now one by the U.S. with Pakistan meddling in domestic politics, most

notably by supporting the Taliban. Despite the current presence of NATO troops and the commitments made by the United States, the United Kingdom, and NATO to uphold the independence, territory, and sovereignty of Afghanistan, it remains vulnerable to its neighbors since it continues to serve as a transit bridge between Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. In order to address this role and help the economy and the building of a private sector the country would benefit from inter-regional economic ties, bringing the countries prosperity together and remove incentives to meddle (Jalali, 2006, p.17). The crucial relationship to be resolved is the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In order for this relationship to improve and distrust to be removed, a few issues must be resolved during the fight against extremists and the rebuilding of both states. The first concern is the effective resolution of the border dispute surrounding the Durand line and the appropriate extension of the rule of law into the territories on both sides of the border. Next, a solid agreement must be reached to not only combat the insurgency and extremists, but also to expand the level of trade and energy cooperation, since the countries could greatly benefit from such cooperation in an effort to further expand their economies and make the countries more stable (Thier, p.93-101).

Each of these issues continue to impede the progress of the state-building of Afghanistan must be addressed and properly dealt with in order for the progress to continue and security to be re-established. Now that the new administration has set forth a new strategy for addressing the needs of the country of Afghanistan and its rebuilding, it will be interesting to see how progress on the objectives set forth in the new strategy comes about and whether the new strategy will make the overall situation better or worse. In the coming pages I will evaluate the current strategy with regards to past history, current situations, and the dimensions of the Obama Administration's approaches to Afghanistan. With this information I will try and reach a

conclusion as to whether the new leadership and direction being put forward in Afghanistan will improve the problems in the region, simply hold it steady at the status quo, or make it worse.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STRATEGY

In recent months there have been a number of changes in the current effort in Afghanistan. However, these changes have not been without controversy or their own doubts. For example, upon the announcement of an increase in troop levels in Afghanistan many analysts compared such a strategy to previous efforts by the Soviet Union and the British. While the new strategy is not without its risks, the problem with the commentaries are the same as previous efforts at addressing the systemic problems that exist within Afghanistan; they lack a fundamental understanding of the country, its people, and the problems they face.

For the last thirty years Afghanistan has struggled from two problems; a lack of legitimate and effective state institutions and endless conflicts that have left the Afghan people to fend for themselves and forcing them to tolerate and align themselves with the powers most likely to bring order to the country. As a result a number of challenges remain in the country and a number of lessons must be learned from other countries' experiences, failures, and missteps in Afghanistan in order for our current effort to be more successful. We must also gain a better knowledge of what the Afghan people want more than anything else--the ability to live in peace and make a living without being threatened by an encroachment on their livelihood or values—and work to bring that to the country.

In order for these improvements to come about there must be functioning and trusted state institutions, as well as a legitimate government capable of enforcing law and order,

protecting the people from external influence, an economy capable of employing the Afghan people, and a legitimate state the Afghan people can trust and do not want to overthrow.

However, the territory of today's Afghanistan has never sustained a state without international aid to the economy and security forces. In the past Afghanistan, has frequently collapsed in the face of invasion, external meddling or political contestation and violence. In order to provide the basics needed to create a more stable state in the future the state must have a minimum level of income and legitimacy capable of providing basic public goods and services.

In the current Afghan environment the creation of a stable state and government is no simple task, since decades of war and conflict have paralyzed the state and its institutions. It has also been affected by the dramatic shift in the relationship between Afghanistan and the international community, causing the state to need to be rebuilt from the ground up in a long and difficult process even in the best of circumstances. However, the recent use of Afghanistan as a base for terrorists, a widespread narco-state, and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan has caused every major international and regional actor to become involved in the country and integrated a number of other conflicts into one, making the issues involved in state-building that much harder to address. Currently in Afghanistan the U.S. and coalition forces are in the midst of rebuilding the state, fighting the war on terrorism, mediating the India-Pakistan conflict, and dealing with the Sunni-Shia conflict. The U.S. is also dealing with a strain on its relations with NATO as well as its relationships with Russia and Iran, while also dealing with tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan as a result of historical grievances and the current use of tribal areas as a safe haven for extremists (Thier, p. 13-16).

As a result of the inherent complexity and significance of the situations currently coming together in Afghanistan, the ability to win the war and succeed there does not rely solely on the

level of resources and the strategy being implemented, though still important, it also depends on the level of commitment of the international community and regional partners to complete the job. Counterinsurgency and state-building missions, as shown through past experience around the world, are less about perfect strategies and more about the levels of domestic and international will and commitment to the task at hand. This challenge makes the new strategy created by the Obama administration not just harder, but also ever more crucial, since so much relies on the success in Afghanistan and the stability of the region itself.

Due to the Bush administrations stated desire to avoid state-building and use minimal troops, the most important objective in a counterinsurgency and the rebuilding of a state was lost: the security of the people of Afghanistan (Petraeus, Amos, & Nagl, 2007, p.101). By allowing the hearts and minds of the local population to be lost, increasingly large sections of the population have begun to support the insurgency causing more and more regions to become ungovernable due to increasing strength of local warlords, weak security forces, and a revitalized insurgency led by the Taliban and assisted by al Qaeda. If the Taliban are successful in separating the population from the government and coalition forces, they are more likely to win the war for the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. The Afghan people want law and order first and foremost, something the Taliban can provide and the U.S. has yet to prove they are capable of.

In evaluating the situation in Afghanistan, there must be a redefinition of the key to success. Instead of being colored by the number of insurgents killed or the number of poppy fields destroyed or regions controlled it will need to be a measure of the support of the population for the local government and the coalition forces. Since the Bush administration neglected this crucial part of the battle, they allowed Afghanistan to languish with weak and

ineffective governance and an inability to secure the borders or establish the rule of law. This neglect of Afghanistan has set the stage for a classic resurgence of Afghan battles in a country ideal for insurgents since it is landlocked with mountains along the border, has a dispersed rural population, and a primitive economy with a long history of insurgents fighting larger more powerful armies and soundly defeating them over the past two centuries (Jones, 2009a, p.152-5).

This mistake created a large disgruntled group of locals eager to find others to protect them and allow them to live their lives. This new source of support opened the door to the Taliban, allowing them to take advantage of weak governance and assuming state-like functions (such as raising tax revenue), administrative structures, as well as providing basic public services. By fulfilling the gap left by the Afghan government and the Coalition forces the Taliban were able to gain the support of the population and weaken the national government. In order to fix this error it will take far more effort by the coalition forces to repair the damage of past mistakes. This task is made even harder as a result of the poor record held by the U.S. and international community in its commitment to the region, having disappeared after the Soviet Invasion. We then left the job half done and under-resourced after the initial invasion after September 11th, allowing ourselves to be distracted by the invasion of Iraq.

While the support of the population is a broad objective, the challenges that must be dealt with to gain the support are not. In order to move the state from a failed state to a weak state or even a stable state, a few key weaknesses must be addressed to allow the government to provide for the people of Afghanistan. These key weaknesses are a large illicit economy dominated by the poppy trade, porous borders and weak security institutions, interference and meddling by Pakistan, a difficult state composition that doesn't allow for a strong central government, and a long history of violence as politics.

In Afghanistan today, poppy trafficking constitutes a serious threat to the state on a number of levels including corruption of all levels of government, a well funded insurgency, the rampant trafficking of heroin, and a large illicit economy that crowds out legal economic activities due to a deteriorating security situation and a distorting level of revenue from opium. Unfortunately, like the rest of the previous efforts by the Bush administration in Afghanistan, poppy cultivation was largely ignored for several years, and when finally addressed the strategy to eliminate poppy cultivation was approached with little consideration for the after effects of using forced eradication. As a result of the use of this policy, the only effects which were created was an alienation of the population that led to a confrontation between the local government and the poor farmers who were often targeted, since rich farmers could bribe officials and rival tribes often used eradication to target enemies. In order to address the past deficiencies and improve the situation in Afghanistan the Obama administration, upon coming into office, put forth a new strategy for the fight in Afghanistan. Will this effort work? Will it actually turn it around or simply be a continuation of past failures in state-building and counterinsurgency?

At first blush the new plan from the Obama administration has addressed a few of the deficiencies left by the previous administration. Unlike the strategy from the Bush administration the new strategy focuses on alternative livelihoods, targeting of traffickers and drug labs, development projects, and improved local governance and far less on forced or aerial eradication. It has also attempted to address the deficiencies created by the light footprint by increasing the number of forces in Afghanistan. Since this new strategy is directed more towards the trafficking networks and less towards destroying the livelihoods of poor farmers it makes progress in addressing the problem that perpetuates the cultivation rather than expanding

the insurgency. This new strategy's increase in U.S. troop levels will allow there to be greater effort in the Southern portion of Afghanistan where the insurgency and poppy cultivation are most prevalent. Due to the higher level of boots on the ground they will be able to follow a strategy similar to what was successful in Iraq: clear, hold, build/rebuild. However, the terrain of Afghanistan makes this job much harder. There are not a lot of cities and local governments already in existence, rather than rebuilding them we must create them from scratch in order to improve control of the rural countryside. However, this is not enough for the effort to be turned around. While more troops will help secure the population a key deficiency of the Obama strategy is that it simply is increasing the troop levels while maintaining a strategy that has failed the U.S. over the past several years and the Soviets in the 80's. They are concentrating on the cities not the rural countryside; they are trying to strengthen a central government not build up governance from the local populace up to the national government. Rather than following a strategy that has been shown to be a failure in the past the efforts instead must be directed at the districts and the individual clans and tribes that compose them.

By working at the most direct level of governance throughout the country they will strengthen the local tribal elders and jirgas, they will remove the ability of the Taliban to gain support throughout the countryside, and they will be emulating past eras prior to the Soviet invasion where there were several decades of peace and stability. The Obama administration should also work to put forth a new structure of the teams that are used to secure and stabilize the country before they go into the districts. Rather than being heavy in coalition forces they should be filled with portions of the new larger ANA and ANP to put the Afghan government on the forefront of the effort. Through these changes the coalition forces will not only expand control over the country but will expand the control of the Afghan government within its own borders.

Although the Obama administration has put forth a new strategy for dealing with the cultivation of poppy in Afghanistan, the current plan has yet to address the breadth of the problem of poppy and drug trafficking in Afghanistan. While the new strategy states a need to improve control of the ungoverned regions full of poppy fields, this is not a simple task and the Obama administration has not put forth a plan to truly address the problem. The quality of local governance in these areas must be given the needed space to improve, allowing efforts like those used in Nangarhar province to be repeated throughout the country. In order to do so more effort must be made to address and improve the governance of the most fundamental pieces of the Afghan population, the district, or the effort will continue to struggle. Until security and governance improve the door will remain closed to the coalitions ability to complete more development projects and the distribution of higher levels of economic assistance to reach all regions of the country. Without these improvements they will force the Afghan people to continue to wait for the reconstruction and other improvements in their daily lives that they have been waiting for. Since the Obama administration has not addressed what is needed to make the proposed boost in assistance more effective it will not serve to help encourage farmers to not grow poppy and pursue alternative livelihoods, while simultaneously reducing support for the Taliban and the insurgency. Instead it will leave the Afghan people waiting for the help they have been promised for decades. Although the new strategy by the Obama administration is thought to have a great deal of promise it, like any other strategy tried in Afghanistan, it has its own deficiencies and will require not only a better understanding of the country but also a long-term commitment that includes a concerted effort to improve security and the legitimacy of all levels of government.

In an effort to address the instability currently present in Afghanistan, the Obama administration must address the deficiencies of the current strategy and work to significantly improve the level of security throughout the country. However, in order to do this they do not need to simply speed up the process of building the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) as proposed by their new strategy. Instead they must do two things: reconfigure the current mix of indigenous security forces by placing emphasis on the ANP to secure the population and they must reconsider the level of government they are addressing with their PRT's and development projects.

The effort in Afghanistan requires an increased emphasis on reforming and developing the ANP as well as the Ministry of the Interior and less on the ANA to improve the enforcement of the rule of law in the country. In counterinsurgency one of the key security institutions is the indigenous police force. Unfortunately, the people of Afghanistan have been left with a corrupt and ineffective police force due to ineffective efforts by the Bush Administration. This has caused serious problems, since the police are often a greater source of fear than security in a number of regions (Straziuso & Gutfenfelder, 2009, p. 1). A crucial dimension of the new strategy includes efforts to accelerate the growth of Afghan security forces, both the ANA and ANP, increasing both forces to 134,000 and 82,000 respectively by 2011, so they can take the lead in securing the country (OA, p. 3). While the need for more security forces is crucial, there should be far more attention paid to the police force since it is far more crucial to counterinsurgency and must receive the bulk of the effort in order for the rule of law and protection of the population to improve quickly. Without an effective police force to secure the population the counterinsurgency will continue to be hampered by a population far more vulnerable to corruption, attacks by the insurgents, and the continued proliferation of poppy

trafficking. The expansion of the police force is key to counterinsurgency and securing the country, but this is a difficult task since the U.S. does not have a national police force to train the Afghan National Police.

In order to boost the size and capabilities of the ANP the U.S. must gather an international collection of civilian police forces that can be used to train the ANP. By improving the effectiveness and size of the ANP the police force will be capable of protecting the population, pursuing organized crime, and fight drug trafficking in Afghanistan (Petraeus, Amos, & Nagl, p.229-31). Once Afghanistan has an adequately trained and staffed police force stationed throughout the country alongside PRT's they will be able to protect the population and assist the provincial governors, other local officials, coalition forces and NGO's, eliminate poppy cultivation, pursue drug traffickers, and fight corruption in the government. It is crucial that corruption is rooted out, the opium trade and its involvement with politics is reduced or eliminated, government officials who participated in the drug trade are prosecuted, and the distorting effects of the illicit economy the country's stability and security are removed if the country is to improve. However, this effort, like others that are needed in Afghanistan, it cannot be done on its own and have a great effect. Instead it must be accompanied by an expansion of development assistance, diplomatic and other efforts to improve governance, and working to encourage the elimination of the poppy trade in order for it to be successful beyond the short-term. By increasing the police force's effectiveness and size they will be able to work to halt the trafficking and money flows that are crucial to the poppy trade and that support the insurgency as well as other extremist groups. If successful these efforts will help protect the legitimacy of the government and improve their ability to govern.

Next, in addition to addressing efforts of development, security and governance improvements at the provincial level, the coalition PRT's and other groups must drill down to the most fundamental level of governance in the country: the district. One of the biggest problems with past efforts in Afghanistan was the flawed assumption the strategy in Afghanistan was crafted on: stability will be created through the building of a strong central government capable of establishing order and the rule of law in the rural countryside. However, this flaw illustrates a key misunderstanding of Afghan culture and politics that has crippled our efforts from the outset (Jones, 2009b, p.1). Afghanistan is a collection of disparate tribes and ethnic groups with several straddling key borders. In order to bring these tribes together under a common cause for the good of the state of Afghanistan, they need to be approached for their support just as the Taliban did (Rotberg, 2007, p.181).

In the past the U.S. has engaged in state-building in countries with a strong central government already in place, thus allowing them to build from the top down, this is not the case in Afghanistan. In fact the most stable periods of Afghan history, the Musahiban dynasty from Zahir Shah in 1929 to Daoud in 1978, were the periods when they understood the importance of local power. Even today masses of Afghan's reject a central power, some do not even know the name of the President, while others consider the central government a foreign entity. The loyalties of Afghan's are to their family, their village, their tribe, their sub-tribe; for many rural Afghans the government plays no meaningful role in their lives: in order to be successful the U.S. must face this reality and deal with the Afghan population on the right level--the district (Jones, 2009b, p.1-3).

As in Vietnam the U.S. has yet to lose a tactical engagement with the insurgency, yet it continues to grow more and more popular each year, a problem that must be addressed or risk

being stuck in an endless quagmire. Many have noted that the current engagement by the U.S. is beginning to look a lot like that of the Soviet Union. In not addressing the districts, it is copying another fundamental mistake made by the Soviets, concentrating on urban centers and provincial capitals while ignoring the crucial support of the rural countryside. In order for the U.S. to be successful they must compete with the Taliban for the support of rural villages, offering to protect them against the insurgency rather than turning them towards the insurgency. Instead of using the surge in troop levels in the same strategy but with more troops, an effort must be made to actually fight the Taliban where they hide. Rather than creating more Provincial Reconstruction teams, we must address politically and strategically the most important and fundamental level of governance in Afghanistan, the *woleswali* – the districts within each province that are typically home to a single clan or tribe (Johnson & Mason, p.36).

Ever since Alexander the Great, unrest has bubbled up from the districts as it has most recently against the United States and coalitions forces. Instead of concentrating high numbers of troops in Kabul and other major cities, we must improve the contact with the villagers in remote areas where the Taliban operate (a lesson to be learned from Iraq and Gen. Petraeus). In the current effort in Afghanistan the Taliban are aware that the center of gravity lies in the rural Pashtun districts and villages, an area where coalition and Afghan forces rarely visit. Since we do not provide the tribal elders in these areas with a viable alternative the Taliban are free to threaten them and at the same time offer them assistance. Though these people are not predisposed to the West, they are also not interested in what the Taliban offers either. Rather than allowing the Taliban to exploit these districts as their center of gravity for the insurgency, we must gain the support of these districts and remove their center of gravity, a key tactic of counterinsurgency. By doing so we will severely cripple the insurgency by removing their

support base and destroying their long-term effectiveness (Petraeus, Amos, & Nagl, p.100-1). In order to gain the support of the *woleswali*, we must provide the elders with the support, assistance, and protection they need in order to turn the insurgency around in Afghanistan and truly improve security. In order to do so we should create a couple hundred district-based reconstruction teams composed of coalition forces, support staff, and ANA troops to secure each of these crucial districts. By doing so the elders would have a steady security presence, a stronger position, and better protection of their people. Not only will regular contact with the districts greatly bolster the local police against the insurgency, but it will also provide the entire coalition force with better intelligence for the overall battle (Johnson & Mason, p.38). By actually supporting the most crucial link in the chain of the society in Afghanistan we can use it to hold up the state rather than allow the Taliban to use it to bring it down back into a period of chaos and extremism.

While the new strategy from the Obama administration places more emphasis on addressing the safe haven in Pakistan and the porous border between the two countries, it relies primarily on diplomacy and air attacks; two tactics that are insufficient for counterinsurgency. Since the beginning of the effort in Afghanistan the safe haven in Pakistan has largely been ignored often relying on ineffective or politically inhibited efforts in the region to remove the sanctuary with little pressure consistently placed on the Pakistani government to improve their efforts. As a result of these incomplete efforts the tribal areas have remained a safe haven for al Qaeda, the Taliban, and the insurgency since the successful invasion of Afghanistan. Although al Qaeda and the Taliban were quickly thrown out of the country, forcing them to re-establish their base in Pakistan's tribal areas including FATA and NWFP, once the U.S. removed the terrorists' previous safe haven from Afghanistan it created a new problem that must be

addressed. This safe haven is now home to the insurgency composed of the Taliban, al Qaeda and other militant groups, as well as a newly re-generated al Qaeda terrorist organization as evidenced by all recent attacks from al Qaeda and affiliate groups originating from Pakistan. The U.S. must improve the indigenous security forces of Afghanistan, improve coordination with the Pakistani government and military's efforts to remove the safe haven, improve the capability of Pakistan's security forces, and improve the stability of Pakistan. At the same time issues in Pakistan must be addressed while addressing Afghanistan, since their futures are linked and an improved relationship between the countries is key (Obama, p. 1-2).

As the Obama strategy is currently structured, it is a positive first step toward turning around the current stagnant effort in Afghanistan. By improving the support and livelihoods of the people they will continue to remain tolerant, if not friendly and supportive, of the coalition forces, but doing so requires more than just correcting basic parts of a failed strategy. The struggle remains dependent on the ability of the police and military forces in country to create a necessary level of security. While the new Obama strategy addresses this problem by improving the level of troops, it does not do anything to correct the true problems with the troops already in the country. On one hand, the current U.S. forces continue to be limited by the strategy they are asked to implement, addressing cities not the rural countryside and on the other the current NATO forces are rather limited due to inherent issues with the organization of NATO itself.

As illustrated by the lessons learned from the Soviet Invasion as well as earlier attempts after September 11th, an insurgency from the Afghan population is not created simply by the presence of a large force in Afghanistan, but rather what that force does while in the country. As long as our efforts protect the people and do not threaten their values or their way of life, they will support them; if they distrust us or do not think we are working in their best interest, they

will support if not participate in an insurgency to push us out of the country. Unfortunately, the common misperception that the size of the force was the reason for the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980's was followed by the Bush administration leading them to insist on a light footprint with minimal U.S. special forces and CIA involvement while relying heavily on local warlords and militant groups. Though this light footprint had its nexus in the need to get a ground force on the ground as quickly as possible and to start the fight after September 11th, its perpetuation under the Bush administration was a result of a misunderstanding of previous efforts and the distraction of Iraq. It is as a result of this "light footprint" that the invasion lacked enough troops to secure the country during the invasion, it also created another serious problem: the elevation of the power and importance of the warlords creating a far more fragmented governing structure in Afghanistan, diminishing and inhibiting the legitimacy of the new central government.

If a proper number of troops had been used to overthrow the Taliban government then the ability of the Taliban and al Qaeda to escape to Pakistan would have been greatly inhibited and the level of security maintained after the invasion would have been far higher than was created. Right now the situation in Afghanistan requires the use of far more troops since the current Afghan security forces are incapable of providing security in the country. Upon taking office President Obama signed an order for the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan; these troops have already allowed coalition forces to gain an increasing level of control of the southern portion of Afghanistan. If we are able to reach the necessary troop level often cited as the minimum needed to secure a country, 400,000 troops, then the efforts in Afghanistan should be able to prove far more effective, and it may even speed up the process of rebuilding. However, the war in Iraq has put a serious strain on the forces of the U.S. military, restricting the number of troops available to be deployed, thus putting a greater emphasis on

troops from NATO and indigenous forces. Rather than waiting for indigenous forces to be trained and troops to rotate from Iraq, the U.S. needs to place greater emphasis on the allocation of troops from NATO countries without national caveats and be sure to use those already in country as effectively as possible.

While the discussion of NATO could be a book in and of itself, the current challenges created by its deficiencies are easy to outline. Right now a great deal of NATO troops are severely restricted by national caveats, which either prohibit them from any mission but state-building or limit the portion of the country they can be deployed in. This severely limits their effectiveness and efforts must be made to correct this deficiency. The effort in Afghanistan needs to be presented to the people and the governments of the NATO country's as their war, since the threats of an instable Afghanistan are threats to the world not just one state. The effectiveness of NATO troops is another diplomatic issue crucial to success and the promotion of security. The U.S. must work with contributing NATO countries, in the alliance's first use outside of Europe, and NATO itself, to remove the national caveats that have long inhibited the use of NATO troops in ISAF from being able to assist Afghanistan and do the most they could do if fully committed. This will take a great deal of diplomatic effort and may not be possible since the contributing countries are still answerable to their constituencies, but any improvement that allows NATO troops to take part in a greater portion of the mission at hand would be beneficial. By improving the commitment of NATO countries in resources and equipment, as well as that of the international communities commitment to development and economic aid, the efforts in Afghanistan will be greatly improved and success more likely. Without an appropriate concentration of troops in a country facing an insurgency, the ability to secure the country and rebuild the state is severely limited.

While these efforts are tactically important to the fight, there are two other issues that are strategically important to overall success in Afghanistan. In order for the efforts in Afghanistan to be truly successful we must use diplomacy to assure Afghanistan and Pakistan of our long-term commitment to rebuilding and stabilizing Afghanistan. Our past in the region has too often shown the U.S. to have only a passing interest in the region until our interest wanders elsewhere and ends our involvement often leaving the job half done and under resourced. After the support of the anti-Soviet jihad, we abandoned Afghanistan and Pakistan to deal with the aftermath of a war torn state, a group of militant groups falling into a civil war, and left Pakistan with a burgeoning group of militants in the tribal areas. The ending of all assistance to Pakistan and the treatment of Pakistan as a pariah state, as a result of Pakistan's creation and testing of a nuclear bomb, until they were needed after September 11th, further illustrated our lack of commitment to Pakistan. We then turned away from the region to invade Iraq. In order to be successful in Afghanistan the U.S. must work to convince and demonstrate to Afghanistan and Pakistan our long-term commitment to the region. This is the most crucial part of our counterinsurgency since the local population must trust us to protect them and make their lives better, or else they will never fully support the coalition or the new Afghan state. If they don't then any efforts in Afghanistan would be useless and success fleeting. This is also the hardest part of a counterinsurgency, since it relies on the political will of the foreign government and forces as well as that of the domestic government.

While the Obama administration has put forth a better strategy on paper than was seen during the first seven years of the war under the Bush administration, the most important part of the success of the strategy is dedication to the task. Not only will it take more than a year for the strategy currently being implemented to show real results on the ground, but many estimates of a

timetable for success in fighting the drug trade and improving the government have estimated a decade before true success is achieved. The U.S. and NATO must be committed for the long haul in order for the successes achieved to be maintained in the long term.

The country of Afghanistan has suffered from violence, instability, and uncertainty for too long. As a result of the neglect of the past administration, the situation was allowed to deteriorate significantly until the invasion had almost been undone before a change in strategy was implemented. So far the Obama administration's new policy looks good on paper, but the true test will be its implementation on the ground and the willingness of the U.S. and NATO to follow through on the strategy to complete the job and bring a stable government to Afghanistan and stability back to Pakistan. Through a thorough examination of the new strategy I have already noticed a number of weaknesses apparent in the plan as laid out to the country, whether these deficiencies are corrected or simply the result of holding back strategic information is not clear. However, one thing is clear, if the Obama administration fails to turn Afghanistan around it will be because they repeated the mistakes made by three major countries over the past two centuries. If the new strategy fails to address the key failures of past efforts from the Soviet Union to the Invasion after September 11th, while improving upon past successes then it will fail as well. If, on the other hand, the Obama administration learns the lessons of Afghanistan's past, as discussed in this paper, and sticks with the plan then the situation in Afghanistan should improve. If the task is completed properly then international security will improve; however, if we bend to political pressure leaving the job unfinished the U.S. will earn its third strike in Afghanistan and fail the Afghan people.

APPENDIX

The Origins and Evolution of al Qaeda: From Conception to 1998

By Jeff Beck

I. Introduction

On the morning of September 11th nearly three thousand people died in the most spectacular catastrophic terrorist attack in history. On that clear blue morning millions of people watched in horror as over and over again they were shown the images of destruction and murder caused by 19 men from a heretofore little known group called Al Qaeda. Not since the morning of December 7, 1941, when 2,350 civilians and service members died in the surprise attack by Japan, had anyone in the country seen such a death toll on our native soil in one attack. As the true devastation became known as that fateful day progressed many people wondered just who this group was and where they and their leader, Osama bin Laden, came from. These are all questions that can be answered if you look at the roots and history of the organization that perpetrated the attacks.

In the history of Al Qaeda there are several threads of history that weave together to make up the history not only of Al Qaeda but also of the radical Islamic terrorism it was born to execute. The first thread begins with the development of the ideas that influenced the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the writers who helped spread them throughout the Muslim community, primarily from Sayyid Qutb and Ibn Tamiya (Morgan, Mueller, Medeiros, Pollpeter, Cliff, 2008, p.134). It is from the ideas written and espoused by these men that radical Islamic terrorism was based and that Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam and Ayman AL Zawahiri drew their inspiration and religious justification for creating Al Qaeda. The second thread to be examined is the life and influence of Abdullah Azzam, the father of Al Qaeda and mentor of Osama bin Laden. He was the man who led the consolidation of and continued organization of the Afghan freedom fighters who had fought against the Soviet Union when they invaded Afghanistan. During the Afghan jihad and with the help of Osama bin Laden Azzam created the

initial organization that would become Al Qaeda. His work would not only form the basis for the current organization known as Al Qaeda but also inspire the leader who is currently the most wanted man in the world as he continues the work begun by his mentor.

The third thread to be discussed is the influence of its most radical leader, Osama bin Laden. Under bin Laden's guidance Al Qaeda transformed itself from a loose group of Arab volunteers during the fight against the Soviet Union into an almost a business like structure to become the current worldwide terrorist organization that is currently a threat to many countries today. Without the guidance and support of Osama bin Laden Al Qaeda could hardly have been created, let alone become the current worldwide terrorist organization it currently is.

The fourth thread to be laid out is from where and for what reasons the Taliban were created and how their protection influenced the development of Al Qaeda when Osama bin Laden moved them back into the Southwest region of Afghanistan. Without the support of groups like the Taliban and those before them, like Hussan al-Turabi and the National Islamic Front (NIF), Al Qaeda would have struggled to survive. A secondary part of this thread is the role played by the countries where these groups held power themselves. With the support of such groups or governments in weak or failing states it was far easier for Al Qaeda to expand their training camps and being so supportive of the government increased their ability to plan and execute their attacks with relative safety and autonomy.

Although the origins of the thoughts and motivations for the creation of Al Qaeda were found and nurtured in authoritarian states that doggedly pursued such ideas, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the movement took on new growth and life when moved to the Sudan with the help of Turabi and then when it moved to Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban, both weak states with like-minded governments. According to Jane Corbin, Al Qaeda, which is

fundamentally a product of the Arab world, could only flourish in a free and forgiving climate. Unlike that of many Middle Eastern countries which use strict authoritarian rule, where harsh regimes stick to the only form of rule recognized and respected by militant Islamic organizations (Corbin, p. XVII). Without such a form of rule, groups like Al Qaeda that deal in a currency of violence and intimidation are able to flourish and evolve into far more powerful groups that are difficult to find and stop. Al Qaeda is intent on creating an Islamic government according to its own ultra-orthodox government according to its own radical interpretation of Islam. Beyond fighting evil for God's pleasure Al Qaeda has more mundane short and long term objectives as an organization for their attacks. In the short term Al Qaeda wants to energize a war effort to convince a number of Muslims to join their cause and frighten the U.S. to leave Islamic lands. In the eyes of Al Qaeda and its operatives the apostate regimes they are fighting against exist purely because of the support of the U.S. government and other western nations (Rabasa, et al., 2006, xvi). In the long term they intend to convert all Muslims to their version of Islam and expanding the legitimate Islamic states until they contained any lands that have ever been ruled by their extremist Islam (Habeck, 2006, p.164).

Al Qaeda is the most successful manifestation of a radical Islamic terrorist organization. They are a new breed of terrorist group that is very strong all by itself, unlike other organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas which rely heavily on the state for support. Although some of Al Qaeda's strength is derived from partnerships it has formed with states such as Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iran, it does not rely on them for its survival. Instead Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden are often the ones helping the states that provide them sanctuary, making this particular group even harder to track and disable. No other group has acquired the types of financial assets, independent resources, and supplies to the extent of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda has moved terrorism

beyond simply protest and resistance and has turned itself into a global tool with which to challenge Western influence in the Muslim world (Gunaratna, p.1, 17). It is these threads of history that I will examine in order to illustrate how these led to the creation and growth of Al Qaeda and made it capable of perpetrating the acts that caused September 11th and allowed it to continue to grow and gain influence with little challenge to their existence while continuing to create new sleeper cells and fronts on the war against America.

II. Sayyid Qutb and Early Islamic Radicalism Role and Influence

The ideology of Al Qaeda is rooted in a line of radical interpretations of Islam and is aimed at framing the fight between Islam and the West as part of a broader global struggle against “apostasy” and the infidel. Many have termed their ideology as “neo-fundamentalism” or “radical fundamentalism” or basically respect for and strict literal interpretation of the sacred texts with an absolute commitment to jihad in order to further their views, the most common term is Islamism. When examining the origins of Al Qaeda, ideology is central to the understanding of its development and goals. Many of the ideas articulated by Osama bin Laden and his associates echo the findings of the extremists they have studied and follow as part of their religious beliefs (Rabasa, et al, 2006, p.7-9). In recent decades the primary theorist has been Sayyid Qutb who not only expanded on the ideas of Islamism as developed by Ibn Tamiya but turned them into a doctrine and justification for terrorism. In order to understand the influence he had and the changes he made we must first examine the basic ideas behind Islamism.

From the outset Islamic Radicalism has been inspired by an age-old ideology and a fundamentalist line of thinking based off of a mythicized view of Islam. This version of Islam emerged toward the end of the 1970’s accompanied by a new generation of radical Islamists (Migaux, 2007b, p.255). Many of the new generation of radicals simply embraced the ideology in order to justify their resorting to transnational political violence. They considered it to be the only means of restoring the caliphate and reunifying the umma, Muslim community. Although based off of a radical view of Islam, the doctrine of Al Qaeda is a creation that embraces not only the sacred texts of Islam but also uses elements drawn from western revolutionary socialism and other antecedents. The backgrounds of many of Al Qaeda’s most violent extremists actually

originated in secular educational institutions. Several have studied in American universities. Many experts argue that these extremists combined their views of Islam with the revolutionary notions of scholars like those of Marxists and Leninists. Using this combination of views they paint a picture of the world in terms of a stark reality in an irreconcilable dichotomy between the forces of Islamist belief and non-belief. Thus is the form of Islam bin Laden has embraced in the role of leader of the international jihad vanguard he believes is needed to make it reality, Al Qaeda (Rabasa, et al., 2006, p.10-11).

Many of the views professed by this new form of radicals are based on the teachings of the Salafist school of Islam. The Salafist school of Islam believes in the revival of the “true” Islam of the righteous predecessors (the Salaf) which would empower their community to throw off European dominion and return to greatness (Habeck, 2006, p.27). Many experts believe it is this form of Islami with its Sunni origins that exists as the principle threat to the international community. Overall the mujahideen, armed fighters who subscribe to militant Islamic ideologies movement has utopian political beliefs, they believe that through martyrdom they can perpetuate what they believe to be an epic undertaking to restore the umma including all European lands once held by Islam, they refuse to negotiate, and they see political violence not as a weapon but as an objective in their fight. This makes it difficult for it to prevail since they have no solid vision for which they pursue beyond their ultimate goal, making the fight virtually never ending (Migaux, 2007b, p. 256-7). They believe the only acceptable society for the jihadis is a government that applies the tenets of Islamic law in a way that they believe is correct. The extremists argue that democracy, liberalism, human rights, personal freedom, international law, and international institutions are illegal, illegitimate and sinful. The United States is recognized by the jihadis as the center of liberalism and democracy because it grants sovereignty to the

people and allows them to make laws for their society rather than depending purely on the God-given legal system of Islam (Habeck, 2006, p.162).

The most common terminology for this brand of Islamic beliefs is jihadist Islamism, jihad by the sword. Today's Islamic terrorism is a form of anti-imperialism. Islamism is not theology it is a political use of Islam for their own purposes. It is distinguished from fundamentalism since it does not advocate a return to the founding texts of Islam, as many more fundamental groups of the religion do. Political Islamism is the beliefs of movements that endeavor to use Islam in order to reform the institutional structure and socio-cultural environment of the world around them. Islamist Terrorism is the new stage of Islamism in which Islamic activists use terrorism, whether indiscriminate or targeted, to impose their views or in the context of politics (Migaux, 2007b, p.259). This most recent brand of Islamism has its roots in the Egyptian Jihadist Movement and one man's writings, Sayyid Qutb.

Many of the ideas Al Qaeda is based on have a clear origin in the beliefs and writings of Sayyid Qutb, a prominent figure in radical Islamism. After all it was Qutb who did much of the early theoretical work in the twentieth century on how the course of Muhammad's life should affect the Islamic movement, in particular the thinking behind jihad (Habeck, 2006, p.139). Qutb was born October 9, 1906, in Egypt. As a child he memorized the Qur'an and was once a prominent bureaucrat in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. As a young man he held far more moderate views although they would become far more radical views through his experiences in his 30's. This would soon change because of the British occupation and his observations of life in the United States and the Americans, whom he often referred to as beasts, during his time studying English in the United States from 1948 to 1950 (Wright, p.15-20). It was during this time as a student in the U.S. that Qutb emerged as a prominent Islamic thinker with his book

Social Justice in Islam, and he would soon become one of the most cited authors of radical ideology. The change in his ideology occurred at about the same time as the assassination of his friend Hasan al-Banna, the Supreme Guide of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood. With the loss of his friend and his observations from his time in the U.S. Sayyid Qutb began to become even more conservative and that led him to join the Muslim Brotherhood himself. Although many of his friends had hoped his time in the United States would make Sayyid more liberal it had the opposite effect. He would in fact return more radicalized and would soon begin to shape Arab and Muslim perceptions of the new world as the leading intellectual of the Muslim Brotherhood (Wright, p.27).

At the time of Sayyid's return to Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood was a highly effective, though illegal, organization constantly acting in the best interests of the people creating social institutions, such as banks and medical clinics, to serve a base of true Muslims (Habeck, 2006, p.33). They acted not as a counter-government but as a counter-society garnering a great deal of support and power that they would later use to oppose the secular government of Egypt when Nasser choose a military society over a religious one upon coming to power. Even though the Brotherhood was a powerful organization aimed at helping the people of Egypt it always had a violent underside that would become rooted in the ideals as espoused by Qutb's writings over the years (Wright, p.28). This would set up a confrontation that would later cost Qutb his life in his own personal struggle against the secular government in Egypt. The writings and theories as espoused by Qutb are not only regarded as the guidelines for jihadists but also are the very theories that Osama bin Laden agrees with and uses to fight the jihad against the West with his new group, Al Qaeda (Habeck, 2006, p.143).

During the fight between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government of Nasser Sayyid Qutb would be thrown in prison multiple times. It was during these times as an author that his writings would become more and more radical and would form the basis for Islamic fundamentalism we see today. One of his most important contributions was his theory of “challenging and punishing the prince” (Migaux, 2007b, p.263). Many of the ideas written about by Qutb were argued for six centuries earlier by Ibn Tamiya; however, Qutb advanced them further, creating a doctrine and religious argument for the use of force. One of Sayyid’s key beliefs was his belief in resorting to violence as an obligation in any fight against political leaderships (Wright, p.35). He would elaborate on these ideas and make them his own, making them even more radical and skewed toward the use of violence for political gains.

Qutb believed that governing authorities were unbelievers if they did not follow strict Islamic law. In order to combat these unbelievers and their supporters he called for a civil war against them. He believed that jihad was no longer simply an individual obligation to protect the community from infidels as advocated by the Qur’an but instead as an individual imperative duty to fight against apostate Muslims. The radical ideas as perpetuated and elaborated on by Qutb gave all new momentum to the Muslim Brotherhood in their fight against Egypt (Migaux, 2007b, p. 263). In response to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood and their more radical ideas Abdul Nasser put them under surveillance to counter the threat they posed to his secular government. Qutb would eventually be arrested, and during his time in prison his writing became even more radical (Wright, p.36).

Before Qutb was arrested his primary ideas had been based on more Marxist social actions. It was during his oppression by the secular government of Egypt in prison that he wrote some of his most radical work, and his views became virtually inline with those of Ibn Tamiya.

One of his writings was a commentary on the Qur'an where he stressed that any political system that fails to recognize divine sovereignty (akkimiya) should be considered part of the age of ignorance. He also stressed that "jihad is not a defensive war, as some Muslims believe, it is an offensive one" (Migaux, 2007b, p.284). Qutb disagreed with the notion that the Qur'an advocated only defensive jihad to protect the community of faith. He believed that Islam is more than a 'belief,' he believed Islam is a declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men, thus it strives to abolish all other system that advocate the rule of one man over another (Wright, p.125). The best known work of Sayyid Qutb would become the basis for the new strategy of militant Islam. In this new work Qutb argued that Islamists must "wage total revolution against the sovereignty of human beings...we must provoke a total revolt throughout the world and drive out all the usurpers...that means the destruction of the kingdom of man so the kingdom of God can replace it on earth" (Wright, p. 37).

Qutb's writings helped to lay the groundwork for an extreme way of thinking. He argued that jihad was a cardinal Islamic Obligation, a virtual 6th pillar of the Islamic faith. At the time of his argument Qutb was not the only one to believe in jihad as the 6th pillar, another radical Abd al-Salam Farj believed in elevating the duty of armed revolt against an infidel political leadership to the standing of a religious obligation. Farj was another radical leader of the time, though his influence on Al Qaeda is unclear beyond his implementation of the ideals espoused by Qutb with his group al-Jihad Jihad. Farj was executed after his group assassinated Anwar Sadat. Qutb was convinced that jihad was not to be a defensive fight to protect Islam but instead an offensive fight to further the religion. He believed that Muslims would have to take the initiative and fight their enemies physically. This was a belief that Abdullah Azzam would

continue to argue during the war against the Soviets and Osama bin Laden would turn into a war against the US (Habeck, 2006, p.142).

Another one of Qutb's arguments was that life without Islam is slavery; therefore real freedom cannot be achieved until jahiliyya, the state of sin, ignorance, and moral darkness that had characterized society before the arrival of the Prophet, is eliminated. Qutb believed that Islam had completely disappeared from the earth and that meant that the world was once again steeped in jahiliyya. He came upon this belief since he felt that Muslims were facing the same situation Muhammad had faced in his life time (Habeck, 2006, p.141). He believed that in order to combat this he called for the creation of a violent revolutionary vanguard to wage jihad and bring about the restoration of Islam (Rabasa, et al., 2006, p.11).

One of the most important concepts proposed by Qutb in his view of Islam was the idea that Muslims whose conduct was tantamount to apostasy should be punished by death. This concept opened the door to attacks not only on Muslim governments but also on Muslim citizens. As a result of Qutb's continued writings and advocacy of these beliefs as part of the efforts of the Muslim Brotherhood he was soon arrested again, tried and sentenced to death. Qutb would be hanged during a purge in 1966 standing accused of conspiring against the state of Egypt. Before he was hanged he provided the theoretical underpinnings of "violent Muslim resistance to regimes that claim to be Muslim, but whose implementation of Islamic precepts is judged to be imperfect" (Rabasa, et al., 2006, p.11). After Qutb was killed, during the purge, the Muslim Brotherhood got new leadership and attempted to separate themselves from the more violent factions of the group in order to ensure their survival. However, the ideas of Qutb remained and the organization would split since long denied more militant portions of the Brotherhood disagreed with the new direction. A majority of the group would advocate restructuring of

governments through religious appeals and non-violence, the remainder would opt for direct involvement in political violence. It was this new group that would give rise to the “Egyptian Model” which gave rise to the two main branches of contemporary Islamic Radicalism--fundamentalism and jihadist (Migaux, 2007b, p.285).

One of the proponents and major members of the group in favor of political violence was Ayman Al-Zawahiri, a fan of the writings of Sayyid Qutb since he was a young man (Wright, p. 43). Throughout his time as a child then as a doctor, Al-Zawahiri was a follower of Qutb’s ideas and his writings. Ayman Al Zawahiri, one of the more radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood, was one of the main proponents in split of the Brotherhood to create his own group amid the crackdown by Nasser and other Egyptian authorities in order to combat its challenge of the government. He would later become the number two man in Al Qaeda after meeting bin Laden in Afghanistan in the 1980’s. It was this more radical portion of the Muslim Brotherhood that would produce another key figure in the development of Al Qaeda and the ideals of Osama bin Laden--Abdullah Azzam, a man bin Laden revered and would serve as a model for the man he would become (Wright, p.111).

III. Abdullah Azzam's Role and Influence

Abdullah Azzam was a Palestinian born in 1941 in Jordan. He would become the primary person working to unite the salafist mujahideen army in Pakistan during the jihad against the Soviets (Gunaratna, p.24). Before he went to Afghanistan he was an influential Palestinian Sunni Islamic scholar and theologian as well as one of the central figures arguing for a defensive jihad by Muslims to help the Afghan Mujahideen. At the time believing as many Muslims do that when Muslims attack it is their duty to engage in jihad to defend themselves. Before he became a noted scholar and organizer of the Mujahideen, Azzam fought in the 1967 Six-Day War. Shortly after Black September, a month of crackdown on the PLO by the King of Jordan, he broke with the PLO on the grounds that they had sacrificed the struggle against Israel to fight against the royal family for control of Jordan. He subsequently joined the Muslim Brotherhood and pursued his doctorate in Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Migaux, 2007b, p.293).

It was while studying in Egypt that Abdullah Azzam met Ayman Al –Zawahiri and other influential members of the Muslim Brotherhood and followers of Qutb. It was through these meetings and during this time that he adopted elements of Qutb's ideology including the necessity of a violent revolution against secular governments in order to establish an Islamic state and the need for a clash between the Islamic and non-Islamic world. As mentioned earlier Azzam was one of the first to try and put into practice the idea of jihad as a requirement for Muslims that had long been argued by Sayyid Qutb. During his struggles as a member of the Muslim Brotherhood he wrote several books which espoused violent rhetoric and zealotry (Corbin, p. 9). Shortly after obtaining his PhD in Egypt he returned to lecture at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He had wanted to teach in Jordan but his views were

too radical so he moved to Saudi Arabia as a part of King Faisal's acceptance of exiled teachers from other Muslim nations and soon became a part of the group of Saudi high school and university teachers who had become involved with the Muslim Brotherhood. It was during this time as a lecturer that he met Osama bin Laden while teaching the Qur'an at the university (Wright, p.109).

At the time of Azzam's emergence as a major figure in the birth of Al Qaeda and the furtherance of the ideas of Tamiya, Qutb and the Islamic jihadists, the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, sparking a precipitous rise in the numbers of the mujahideen (Migaux, 2007b, p. 285). It was during the jihad against the Soviet Union that many ties were forged between the Afghan mujahideen and Arab volunteers among others as they came together to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. During the jihad against the Soviets many countries sent volunteers on a voyage to fight back against the Soviets. Many of the volunteers were militants from different countries who would leave their countries to fight against the Soviets as means of escape from crackdowns of many governments in the late 70's and 80's. Many of these volunteers were responding to the writings of Azzam, the key to the formulation of and articulation of the jihad doctrine that mobilized them (Gunaratna, p.24).

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the events surrounding the growth of the Afghan mujahideen were an important period in the creation of Al Qaeda. On December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in order to protect the puppet government they had installed there as an effort to expand their influence during the Cold War. In response to the invasion of the Red Army into Afghanistan the Afghans quickly organized their own resistance to the invasion and the international Muslim community mobilized their own means of support of the

Afghan Freedom Fighters (Migaux, 2007b, p. 292). The mujahideen would receive support from many countries.

The U.S. waged a long-term covert war against the Soviet Union by providing crucial financing and weapons for the mujahideen as means of fighting the Soviet Union. Through this proxy war the US was attempting to halt the spread of the Soviet Union and Communism as they tried to contain the Soviet Union and keep them away from Iran. For their part Saudi Arabia would not only contribute a large number of volunteers from their population but also attempted to use their intelligence service to monitor and control the growing fundamentalist movement, a movement they had feared since the attack on Mecca during Ramadan in 1979. Pakistan was the logistical connection and the home base for a great number of the Mujahideen. Their participation was primarily for their own self-protection not only from the Soviets but also from the regional ally of the Soviets, India. In the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan the local resistance consisted of seven fractious groups of warlords and followers that formed the majority of the mujahideen that resisted the Soviet invaders. The Pakistani primarily served as the logistical support for the mujahideen themselves, the Pakistani government and the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) were the front men that handed out the weapons and helped manage the different groups of the mujahideen and their efforts. The US provided funds and weapons for the ISI to distribute and had some covert efforts to help Ahmed Shah Massoud in country. The Saudi government primarily matched what the U.S. was providing (Gunaratna, p.26; Migaux, 2007b, p. 292). One of the biggest issues facing Pakistan in their support for the mujahideen was how to deal with the thousands of Arab and other volunteers flooding into the country to fight the Soviets. The solution would be created by Abdullah Azzam and would become the pre-cursor to Al Qaeda.

When the Soviets invade Afghanistan Azzam issued a fatwa declaring that both the Afghan and Palestinian struggles were jihads in which killing the occupiers of the land no matter their faith was a personal obligation of all Muslims (Migaux, 2007b, p. 293). Azzam soon moved to Pakistan in November, 1981; where he was soon joined by Osama bin-Laden, and they would create the Mukub al-Khadimat to organize guest houses in Peshawar and training camps in Afghanistan to train all of the international volunteers to fight the jihad against the Soviets. At the same time as Abdullah Azzam came to Afghanistan, bin Laden followed his mentor to help finance and organize the mujahideen. It was at this time that Osama bin Laden together Abdullah Azzam would create the Muktab al-Khidmat al-Mujahideen al-Arab (Muktab al-Khidmat/Mukub), the Bureau of Services for Arab Mujahideen, in order to help organize the volunteers (Gunaratna, p.24). In articulating the struggle of Islam around the world to bring more support to the fight Azzam agreed with Qutb in arguing that it was a fight to eliminate *jahiliyya*, he argued that it must be eliminated before real freedom can be found (Wright, p.111).

Mukub was created to keep track of all the volunteers flooding in from all around the world, though primarily from the Middle East. Many came with assistance from their own governments but many did not. Mukub was created by Azzam to help provide considerable and predictable funding in order to accommodate and organize all of the volunteers and to provide them with combat training so they will be prepared to fight. Along with Mukub a number of Wahabi organizations were created in order to collect donations from Muslims and others around the world (Gunaratna, p.25). Hundreds of millions of dollars were circulating in circles of arms dealers, traffickers, and other groups supporting the mujahideen. This money needed to be managed by men who could be trusted and who could effectively support the mujahideen. This task would be undertaken by Abdullah Azzam and his organization (Migaux, 2007b, p.292).

Before bin Laden arrived in Pakistan he had been studying economics at university and had been studying under Azzam and the younger brother of Sayyid Qutb, Mohammed Qutb. Although he left before graduating he still had a strong connection to his family and was still active in the family business, a connection he would use to his advantage during the Soviet jihad and in the initial development of Al Qaeda (Migaux, 2007b, p.295). Some have speculated that bin Laden assisted Azzam at the behest of Prince Turki-al-Faisal (Head of Saudi Intelligence), since he was the son of a wealthy entrepreneur with close ties to the royal family, in order to keep tabs on the activities of Azzam and Mukub. This is feasible but bin Laden had other connections with Azzam so it may have just been something he did on the side to get money from Saudi Arabia (Migaux, 2007b, p.294; Gunaratna, p.25-6).

Soon after the organization was established the Mukub had a propaganda machine which included a regular publication of a magazine as a forum for Azzam to spread his theology and feelings on the jihad (Migaux, 2007b, p. 295). In a paper published in the Mukub magazine entitled "Join the Caravan" Azzam argued that the mujahideen combat in Afghanistan was an individual obligation for Muslims and if they couldn't participate they should provide funds for it. He also argued that when the enemy has penetrated into Islamic territory that Muslims must fight back. Azzam believed that in order for Muslims to fight back properly that they would need a standing international jihad arm, a concept he argued for frequently in his writings. He believed that jihad become an individual lifetime requirement. In reference to the fight against the Soviet Union he said, "obligation will not end with victory in Afghanistan and jihad will remain an individual obligation until we have recognized all Muslim lands and reinstalled Islam..." (Migaux, 2007b, p. 295). As the Afghan jihad proceeded into its later stages Azzam began to contemplate the future of the Mukub. He believed that once the jihad against the Soviet

Union had ended that the primary focus of the jihad should be on the struggle of Palestine, an assertion he and bin Laden would later disagree over. While Azzam continued to spread his writings using Mukub's propaganda machine and magazine a comprehensive training program for militants was being set up. When new volunteers weren't training at the new camps for the program, they attended various religious education classes, most of which were set up in refugee camps around Peshawar. In these classes the students acquired basic knowledge of the Qur'an and then moved on to more radical dogma teaching the views of the theologians of Jihad like Qutb, Tamiya, and Azzam himself (Gunaratna, p.24-5; Migaux, 2007b, p.295).

Despite the large numbers of volunteers appearing at these camps only small groups were seen as especially qualified or motivated would be allowed to fight. The rest would occasionally be allowed to support the mujahideen but they were generally not trusted by the Afghans (Migaux, 2007b, p. 295). Many of the Arab volunteers who would arrive in Pakistan were unwanted renegades in their own homelands who often found the door closed behind them as soon as they left the country. At the same time other young Muslims who volunteered became fanatics when they joined the fight, even when prompted by their governments to do so. Many of these volunteers were searching for a leader in their borderless cause against for God to defend the entire Muslim people; however, many of them never got to fight but they came anyway and were soon led by bin Laden and Azzam (Wright, p.122). Among those allowed to actually work with the Afghans were Osama bin Laden, Muhammed Atef, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, and Abu Sayef; these names would soon become famous when they became a part of Al Qaeda. Those volunteers who did not fight the Soviets or directly support the mujahideen would be assigned other duties such as logistics and support of the refugees. It was the shared experiences of these men and the excitement of the adventure that contributed to their establishment of a

strong brotherhood and led them to become Salafist Mujahideen in the vanguard of the warriors of Islam (Migaux, 2007b, p. 296). Many of the volunteers that responded to Azzam's message viewed Afghanistan as the beginning of Islam's return to international dominance, believing that once they defeated the Soviets they would soon regain control over all the territory from Spain to China that they once held (Wright, p.125).

In 1987 as the mujahideen continued to garner success after success Azzam began to conceptualize his version of the future of Mukub. He wrote:

“Every principle needs a vanguard to carry it forward and while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy tasks and enormous sacrifices. There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a vanguard that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve a victory for this ideology. It carries the flag all along the sheer, endless and difficult path until it reaches its destination in the reality of life, since Allah has destined that it should make it and manifest itself. This vanguard constitutes Al-Qa'idah al-Sulbah [Al Qaeda] for the expected society (Gunaratna, p.4-5).”

As the fight began to come to an end in the summer of 1988 and Soviet troops began to withdraw from Afghanistan, Azzam began working toward the “pioneering vanguard” he envisioned along the lines of those called for in the writings of Sayyid Qutb. He believed that this vanguard would constitute a solid base “qaeda” for the Islamic society that he wanted to create. Azzam believed the organization they created in Afghanistan was just the beginning; the vanguard he envisioned would soon become Al Qaeda (Migaux, 2007a, p.314). One of the keys to the formation of the base was the brotherhood being formed and organized by the database bin Laden and Azzam created of all the volunteers. Azzam and Osama bin Laden intended for this database to be used to form their private jihad army later (Hammes, 2006, p.131). During the time in the conflict the volunteers came into contact with an underworld populated by dealers,

theologians, and intelligence agents (most notably the ISI). When the Soviets finally left Afghanistan the volunteers truly believed that they themselves had brought the Russians to their knees, completely forgetting the assistance of the West and other groups that had helped them in their fight (Wright, p.149-153).

Even before the Soviet troops departed in 1989 the infrastructure of the Mukub had begun evolving into what we now know as Al Qaeda. Some of the resources at its disposal began to be diverted into regional conflicts where Islamist guerillas were involved in Kashmir, Chechnya, Somalia, Yemen, Egypt and elsewhere in order to spread the influence of the Mukub. Most of the governments in these locations were hostile to Islamist movements so Mukub used its humanitarian cover under the guise of an Islamic charity to infiltrate the conflicts and send fighters to train and participate in the fights. Those that would not be sent to these other fights would either choose to go to or return to Europe or return to their homelands to spearhead local movements to prepare for jihad against government (Gunaratna, p.6-7; Migaux, 2007b. p.297).

Once the Afghan jihad had officially ended Mukub was transformed from an organization to help the freedom fighters to a new organization more capable of addressing the future struggle, Al Qaeda. It was at this time that a debate began over the direction of the new jihadist plan. This soon caused a parting of the ways between Azzam (who knew the dangers of the strategy of using terrorist activities and wanted to concentrate on Palestine) and bin Laden (who had been convinced by the Egyptian al-Jihad, led by Al-Zawahiri, of the need to fight apostate regimes). At the time of the split Azzam was worrying many members with his desire to begin with Palestine while others including bin Laden and the Egyptians like Al-Zawahiri wanted to begin with Islamic governments like Egypt (Hammes, 2006, p.132-3).

However, the argument over the new direction of Al Qaeda became irrelevant later in 1989 when on November 24, 1989, the second assassination attempt on Abdullah Azzam was successful when a car bomb killed him and his two sons in Peshawar (Coll, p.340). Many think it was Osama bin Laden who had Azzam killed, since many knew of him as duplicitous and he may have wanted to remove a leader standing in the way of his vision (Gunaratna, p.32). Others believed it may have been Arab intelligence services that were trying to stop the leader of a new terrorist effort before he could attack them (Migaux, 2007a, p.314).

For whatever reason Azzam was murdered and Osama bin Laden became the new head of Al Qaeda. After his death and the end of their adversary in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, the future of Al Qaeda was uncertain. Shortly before the death of Azzam and during the withdrawal of the Soviets two new groups (Zawahiri's al-Jihad and Omar Abdul Rahman's the Islamic Group) had joined Al Qaeda, amidst many more volunteers (more then came for the jihad against the Soviets) due to the increasing popularity of Osama bin Laden among the jihadists (Migaux, 2007a, 315). It was shortly after Osama bin Laden took the reigns during this period of unease that he returned to Saudi Arabia with a plan he wasn't quite ready to carry out due to the current times. After the Soviets left Afghanistan most mujahideen had no choice but to return home to their old projects in their own countries (Migaux, 2007b, p.297). Over the next seven years Osama bin Laden would exert his influence over the organization created by his mentor and take it in an entirely new direction as he slowly rebuilt the Afghan jihad group to pursue his future plans, a more aggressive terrorist organization to fight a war with America (Gunaratna, p.2).

IV. Osama bin Laden's Role and Influence

Osama bin Laden was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on July 30, 1957, and was raised as a strict Sunni Muslim in accordance with Wahhabi practices due to his father's stern Wahhabism¹. Bin Laden's childhood was fortunate as his father, once a Yemeni laborer rose steadily till he caught the eye of the royal family and became the official builder for the Saudi Royal Family and a national hero (Corbin, p.6; Gunaratna, p.22). During the resurgence of Muslim thinking in the 1970's bin Laden was swept up while he was at university and he started to attend meetings of key thinkers of the Muslim Brotherhood and soon became a member (Wright, p.90).

While bin Laden attended university in Saudi Arabia he met Abdullah Azzam, his future mentor and the ideological figurehead for his future efforts. Although bin Laden entered university as a student of economics and engineering he soon became far more involved in religious affairs, often attending classes taught by members of the Muslim Brotherhood, many of whom were professors at the university (Gunaratna, p.22). In many of his classes Osama bin Laden read many of the writings of Sayyid Qutb. While being taught a highly politicized version of Islam which fused the state and religion into a single theocracy he read the most influential works of Qutb's such as *Milestones* and *In the Shade of the Qur'an*. During his time as a student he would become drawn to these professors since they were far more open minded than the Saudi professors he would also interact with (Wright, p.91).

Azzam and the professors were not the only people who helped shape Osama's views. Muhammed Qutb also played a significant part. Qutb (brother of Sayyid) was one of the most influential advocates in modern times of Jihad as a necessity for every Muslim (Gunaratna,

¹ For further information on Wahhabi practices and their connection to radical Islam please read: Allen, C. (2006). *God's Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad*. Cambridge: De Capo Press.

p.22). In fact during the time of bin Laden's studying of Qutb's works, Mohammed Qutb was zealously defending the reputation of Sayyid after he had contended that *Milestones* had empowered a new more violent group of radicals who were using his writings to justify their attacks on anyone they considered an infidel. Although Osama was reading more tolerant and moderate books in the late 1970's he would soon change his views in a fundamental shift to a far more radical view similar to Qutb's due to his experience in university. The experiences of bin Laden in college, the books he studied and the people he met, would open the door to terror (Wright, p. 92). One of the biggest moments in Osama bin Laden's life was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Now there was a true jihad in the world that was a fight between Islamic armies and secular armies of communism. In response to the invasion bin Laden was enraged and at his first chance Osama left for the fight, leaving university in his third year and never completing his degree (Gunaratna, p.22).

Bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan in the early 1980's, and one of the most influential people in his decision to go to Afghanistan was his mentor Abdullah Azzam (Coll, p.257). Once in Afghanistan bin Laden served primarily as a financier and organizer of the many Arab volunteers and other Muslims who came to the area to fight a jihad. Although he was young he soon became a talented fundraiser and would allow volunteers to stay in his home and run training camps during the summer. These efforts were encouraged and supported by the Saudi government. He provided aid to the fighters traveling from other Muslim nations and helped garner more financing from wealthy donors and other groups to help the fighters oppose the Soviet Union. During this time bin Laden worked a great deal with Prince Turki Abdul-Aziz, a member of Saudi Intelligence, who helped him in his efforts to secure money (Corbin, p. 18). However, there was no organized effort to help manage the Arab volunteers and others who were

traveling to Afghanistan for jihad. It was this gap that Osama bin Laden and his mentor Abdullah Azzam filled with the Mukub (Hammes, 2006, p.131). Although many of these volunteers didn't feel much of a connection to Afghanistan, they, like bin Laden and Azzam, were drawing a line against the retreat of their religion, which they felt was God's last word and the only hope for human salvation (Wright, p.112).

In 1986 bin Laden moved from Pakistan to Paktia Province inside Afghanistan in order to become more involved. He lived beside the men, sharing their rations, accommodations and work. During this time in Afghanistan he established himself as a leader who shared their hardships, his religious convictions deepened, and he became even more convinced than ever that all Islamic nations had to be unified under a single, borderless nation (Hammes, 2006, p.132). His time in Afghanistan would help build his legend, which would help him build his future organization. In this more active role bin Laden began to use his father's construction business and help build camps and other support; he even began to lead fighters though in limited engagements. During several of the major battles he participated in against the Soviets he displayed a great deal of courage and leadership and he increased his credibility with the Arabs and other volunteers who fought the Soviets (Gunaratna, p.27; Hammes, 2006, p.133).

According to Jane Corbin (2002), Al Qaeda's base in Afghanistan would begin its embryonic stages in 1987 during one of the earliest fights bin Laden was involved in. At a camp bin Laden had created at al-Ansar known as the Lion's Den, he and others fought an extended engagement to defend the base for nearly two weeks (Coll, p.290; Gunaratna, p.27-8). It was in these camps that bin Laden would construct, using his experiences and resources from his father's construction company, expansive cave complexes to serve as armories and hideouts for the mujahideen while they fought against the Soviets (Wright, p.128). Many of these complexes

would later become the home of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and the fighters who had fought with bin Laden in these early bases would soon become part of the Al Qaeda network.

Shortly after the death of Azzam, bin Laden found a new mentor, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, who would help make bin Laden even more radical as he continued to push for the fight to be taken to all apostate regimes (Migaux, 2007a, p.316; Gunaratna, p.32-4). In this new partnership he would eventually turn Al Qaeda into his own organization with a database to keep track of all the Arab volunteers, and this database would later be used as a fundamental piece of the structure Al Qaeda used to keep track of and manage its members around the world (Corbin, p. 20). As Osama bin Laden took the reigns of Al Qaeda he quickly changed the structure of the organization, developing several committees to handle the different portions of the needs of his envisioned terrorist organization. Al Qaeda soon had different committees in charge of the military, religious support and guidance, finance, and media relations (Gunaratna, 2002, p.77-8). Of these the hallmark of Al Qaeda would soon come from the military portion, with military training becoming a defining feature in all of the members of Al Qaeda.

As Osama bin Laden continued to expand his new terrorist organization he would use money from his family to supply them with weapons, and would continue to build a series of camps to train his new operatives (Coll, p.337). Bin Laden believed that his religious force could exert power and influence, politically, military and culturally over superpowers like America and other Islamic nations. He firmly believed that it was the actions of the mujahideen, supported by the Muslim world that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War. He also believed that the U.S. had achieved what he believed to be their goal of becoming the only superpower on the backs of the fighting performed by his mujahideen (Gunaratna, p.29; Corbin, p.22).

At the outset bin Laden wanted a Pan-Islamic organization rather than just a Pan-Arab group. In order to achieve this bin Laden has included members from Asia, the Far East, and western nations including the U.S., not just from the Middle East. In order to function at a global level Osama bin Laden invited the members of Islamist terrorist groups and political movements from around the world to join Al Qaeda's *shura malis*, its consultative council. These relationships would become more than consultation as he would also inspire and assist the terrorist groups in executing attacks at home and abroad. When bin Laden would meet resistance in his efforts to expand the influence of Al Qaeda as the attacks began he would use his network of established connections between other terrorist groups to establish bases in places like the Philippines, Sudan, Yemen, Chechnya, Somalia, and Tajikistan (Gunaratna, p. 7-8). By establishing such a wide ranging network to expand his reach and influence Osama bin Laden created an organization that was capable of pursuing its goals around the world.

As a group Al Qaeda and its leader bin Laden see two enemies standing in the way of their efforts- Muslim governments that are "un-Islamic" and the power which supports them, the U.S. (Corbin, p.23). Throughout bin Laden's time as head of Al Qaeda he has continued to believe that the main center of unbelief today is the United States, and he believes that once the puppet master (the U.S.) is destroyed all the other tyrants will follow. This has been a long standing argument between Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups as they try to convince them not to be tempted by other targets and instead focus all their energy on the U.S until they are defeated (Habeck, 2006, p.154).

Once Osama took the reigns of Al Qaeda he returned to Saudi Arabia to his family. Shortly after his return, Iraq and Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait (Migaux, 2007a, p.316-7). Upon learning of the invasion Osama bin Laden proposed to the Saudi Royals to allow his Arab

volunteers to be used to push back the invaders that were now threatening their borders. Osama bin Laden ardently opposed having the infidels, the American military, on his home soil, but he was denied (Coll, p. 376-8). The presence of American troops on Saudi soil quickly became a serious problem for Osama bin Laden, and before long he began talking out against the current Saudi regime who he saw as just as much infidels as the American military (Gunaratna, p.37). While in Saudi Arabia he gained cult status for his lectures against the royal family and used this status to gain Saudi volunteers to become members of Al Qaeda. As his status grew the royal family began to exert pressure on the bin Laden family to get him to stop his actions. It was this pressure that would soon cause the royal family to place serious restrictions on him. Due to these new restrictions he began to use his influence to get the royal family to allow him to leave the country on a “business trip.” When finally granted permission he used it to flee to Sudan in 1991 and continue his work in support of his vision of the Islamic caliphate (Hammes, 2006, p.133). After being exiled, bin Laden would soon find a new home in the Sudan following overtures made by Dr. Hassan al-Turabi and the National Islamic Front (NIF), to join their dream of a pure Islamic government across the Muslim world. In order to entice bin Laden to bring Al Qaeda to the Sudan al-Turabi argued that the Americans too could be taken on and defeated by the united force of Islamists bin Laden was creating and could expand with his support (Gunaratna, p.39-41).

When invited to Sudan he was asked to bring his entire organization as well as 1,000 to 1,500 Arab Afghan veterans from Pakistan to Sudan, where he would be free to continue his mission (Hammes, 2006, p.133). It was for the dream of an Islamic caliphate that al-Turabi invited bin Laden to the Sudan, since he saw bin Laden as someone who could not only help achieve his dream but help his country as well (Bodansky, 1999, p. 32-35). Before being forced

out, Osama's assets were frozen and he was allowed a passport to travel on a one-way ticket out of the country from Saudi Arabia to the Sudan. It would be in the Sudan where his next connection would help him continue to grow his organization and begin his fight against the U.S. and other countries (Coll, p.383). Bin Laden's exile from Saudi Arabia also had another consequence; he would join the ranks of Saudi dissidents claiming the country's rulers were false Muslims.

Once the decision was made bin Laden moved his recruits and veterans to the Sudan and continued to restructure the organization along corporate lines. The Sudan provided a good home for Osama bin Laden to use as a means of growing his organization and to begin their first series of attacks against the infidels. While in the Sudan bin Laden used his management and financial skills to create a multinational corporation structure of terror with financial and media arms. He also created holding companies for the money and supplies (Migaux, 2007a, p. 318-9). As the group continued to grow bin Laden offered pay increases, medical plans and other inducements for his jihadists in order to keep them engaged in the organization as he planned future attacks and other plans for the group (Corbin, p. 38).

While in the Sudan al-Turabi had an influence on the direction of Al Qaeda as it grew from infancy during the early 1990's. By the time Al Qaeda would leave the Sudan for Afghanistan it would become an umbrella organization for terror groups around the world (Gunaratna, p.41). In the Sudan Al Qaeda was able to take advantage of the weakness and the needs of the government itself, the presence of support for and other Islamic extremists in the country and its rampant ungovernability in order to use the state to continue its development (Rabasa, et al., 2007, p.147-168; Rotberg, 133-40).

Bin Laden was also able to take advantage of the strong ties Hussan al-Turabi had to the Islamists and the international jihad movement. Al-Turabi was Secretary General of the Popular Arab Islamic Conference (CPAI) which backed Islamist political movements and clandestinely supported militant Islamist organizations. This made Sudan and Al Turabi a perfect host and gave him a reason to want to not only protect but help Osama bin Laden in his efforts to continue to develop Al Qaeda. In the early 90's the Sudan was widely known as a hotbed of activism and on the border of an unstable Arab world and an Africa full of corruption, economic instability and ethnic conflicts, making it a prime spot for an organization like Al Qaeda to expand and gain strength (Migaux, 2007a, p.318). Upon arriving in the Sudan Osama bin Laden immediately began to work with the government, intelligence services, and the military of Sudan to not only coordinate with them in assisting their own actions within the state but also as a form of protection for Al Qaeda as it trained and planned its next attacks (Gunaratna, p.43-53).

In the Sudan Osama bin Laden cultivated a strong ally in the government, by maintaining business interests and using his resources with his father's construction company to complete basic infrastructure projects for the state like roads and housing, when not building their own complexes. By completing these projects he earned a great deal of good will that translated easily into favor upon the government and tracts of land to train and house his organization. This also translated into opposition to pressure to turn him over and allow any foreign governments to enter the Sudan and capture or attack bin Laden. By gaining such a powerful umbrella Osama bin Laden was able to continue to not only continue to grow the roles of his terrorist organization but he was also able to plan and execute numerous attacks and create a "solid base" for the global network he uses today to terrorize his enemies (Coll, p.405-7; Migaux, 2007a, p. 318).

Like Mukub, bin Laden even created a newspaper as part of the propaganda arm of the organization in order to spread the news of the group to keep all members updated. In order to protect himself bin Laden retained business interests and ties with Sudan's political leadership, the intelligence community and military. He also invested a great deal of money in the banks of the country and in the government's campaign in the south. All of these actions would gain Al Qaeda a great deal of respect and would lead the NIF and al-Turabi to allocate him land to expand his training camps (Gunaratna, p.43). It was in the Sudan that the momentum of Al Qaeda as a new terrorist organization came to a head.

Not only were many attacks perpetrated on behalf of or with the support of bin Laden during his time in the Sudan but the size of the group continued to grow steadily and bin Laden finally received "true" religious support to his calls for a jihad against the western world and infidel governments. In order for Osama to effectively bridge the credibility gap between his religious beliefs, the plans he had mentioned, and his lack of scholarly knowledge of Islam he associated himself with and created a religious authority in order to cover his developing philosophy of terror, the Islamic Study Committee (ISC). The ISC is composed of well-respected, famous Islamic scholars and its purpose was to debate Islamic Law and on the basis of that interpretation, issue the fatwas that provide the religious and propaganda underpinnings for Al Qaeda's actions. It was this newly formed religious authority, which helped created a self-serving fatwa that effectively covered their violent aims. It also was used to supervise the teachings and indoctrination used in the religious schools for the new recruits to Al Qaeda (Hammes, 2006, p.135). Not only did Osama bin Laden gain his own authority to provide religious authority for his goals but the ranks of his organization continued to swell due to the attraction of different types of people to the extremist views of al-Turabi (Corbin, p. 39). As the

organization continued to grow Osama bin Laden continued to reorganize the structure of the organization into an international threat.

As part of the continued evolution of Al Qaeda bin Laden sent representatives to learn from Hezbollah about what would soon become the first trademark of their own attacks in Africa and New York City--truck bombs. The alliance with Hezbollah would also make them experts in the art of bombing buildings, something they would prove in their early attacks (Gunaratna, p.16). Beyond the tactics being taught for actually executing the attacks on targets the recruits training for the preparation of their mission continued to evolve as bin Laden included lessons for those would be attacking interests abroad on how to blend in. For instance, men should wear cologne and western clothes while traveling in order to be able to attack more effectively. During a speech to his operatives he made prophetic comments when he spoke of cutting off the head of the (America) since their Army has come to the Horn of Africa (Somalia) and he believed they must stop them (Habeck, 2006, p.154).

Bin Laden believed the presence of U.S. forces in Islamic countries, as well as the U.S. intervention in Iraq, Somalia and elsewhere were a major threat. This threat allowed bin Laden to collapse the two enemies into one; in this view the U.S. became both the greater unbelief and the near enemy. Although a number of scholars disagree on what the Qur'an means by the near enemy, whether it is the non-Muslims that have invaded Islamic lands or the unjust rulers who must be overthrown and replaced with a righteous Caliph, Osama bin Laden believes the near enemy to be the non-Muslims who have invaded Islamic lands. However, he expands this interpretation to include those regimes in Muslim lands that he believes to be propped up by the Americans (Habeck, 2006, p.155). Shortly, after collapsing the enemies into one Al Qaeda sent operatives to support the warlords in Somalia as they fought back against American assistance

for the U.N. by sending deputies to the region. Bin Laden believed that the efforts of some of his members in Somalia were part of a continuing effort to prevent the Americans from taking control of the Middle East and destroying Islam. In one of the first contacts between Al Qaeda and American troops it was reported that in December 1992 Al Qaeda operatives attacked a hotel in Yemen that was the billeting location of American forces in transit to Somalia; however no Americans were killed (Hammes, 2006, p.134)

Although bin Laden continued to work to develop Al Qaeda, it was still in flux as he tried to determine how he would define and organize his own role in the international jihad. At the same time he was sending cells of fighters, smugglers and organizers to Somalia, Kenya, Yemen, Bosnia and elsewhere. These cells would later form the basis for some of Al Qaeda's first major attacks against the U.S. (Coll, p.409). In order to justify his attacks against the U.S. despite their collateral damage against civilians, they created their own religious justification when their bomb attacks began killing innocent civilians using the ISC. As bin Laden began the offensive jihad against the U.S. he began targeting the Americans and secular governments in the Middle East and also began openly denouncing the royal family of Saudi Arabia (Migaux, 2007a, p.318).

Osama bin Laden would later claim his efforts in Somalia as one of his first victories against his next superpower challenger, the United States. However, in bin Laden's first TV interview for American journalists he would not claim credit for the downing of the American helicopter and the killing of American servicemen but he would praise those who killed them for their actions. More significant than the comments Osama bin Laden made after this event was the impression it left him with and the impetus it gave him to press his attacks and continue to build his "base". When the Americans quickly withdrew shortly after the "Black Hawk Down" incident Osama believed the Americans to be even weaker than the Russians that he often

claimed he chased out of Afghanistan himself (Corbin, p.43). Although he felt he had won the first battle against the Americans in Somalia many American servicemen and women still remained on the Arabian Peninsula, a continued source of agitation for bin Laden. At the same time he was fighting the Americans in Somali Al Qaeda was providing support for the first attack on the World Trade Center. On February 26, 1993, a truck bomb was detonated in the parking garage of the building by Ramzi Yousef killing six Americans and injuring a thousand others. Like in other attacks, Al Qaeda would not claim responsibility. Bin Laden would often tell his operatives to give the credit to other groups in order to keep suspicion off his growing group. It was not until bin Laden would find a firm base from which to grow his organization that he would begin to directly speak out against and in support of the attacks perpetrated by his organization (Hammes, 2006, p.140).

During these first attacks bin Laden continued to build and evolve the organization he had assumed control over just a few years earlier. These first attacks would soon be followed by a list of new attacks around the world. Next, al-Qaeda operatives bombed Philippine Airlines Flight 434 flying from Cebu in the Philippines to Japan in 1994 in a test program for a future attack on 11 planes at once. Al-Qaeda continued to duck responsibility for their attacks, including this most recent one, until an operative was captured. The U.S. and others, although concerned by the developments and the threat to Saudi Arabia, still did not take aggressive action to eliminate al-Qaeda operations (Hammes, 2006, p.141). The next step of their continued fight against the U.S. and her allies would be a terrorist attack in Riyadh on November 13, 1995 at the American training facility for the Saudi National Guard. Although this attack did not cause any casualties for the Americans it did make clear a significant risk that may be popping up for the Americans overseas (Coll, p.432). As Al Qaeda continued to initiate the first of their attacks on

the near enemy, Osama bin Laden continued to develop the organization as he continued to work toward becoming a true international terrorist threat.

From the beginning bin Laden believed Al Qaeda should be a part of if not the leader of a loose association of militant Islamic Groups all fueled by their hatred for the superpower, which supported un-Islamic governments and is Israel's greatest protector. Osama bin Laden believed the strength of Al Qaeda would lie in its fluidity and its ability to form alliances, temporary or permanent, with groups and governments needed to help perform its attacks around the world (Corbin, p.44). Even as he continued to develop this more fluid model Al Qaeda continued to execute attacks during which the bin Laden family would frequently plead with Osama to stop speaking out against the Saudi Royal Family, stop his terrorist activities and return home. Eventually Saudi Arabia would freeze all of his assets and completely revoke his citizenship. While in the Sudan Osama bin Laden continued to speak out against the Royal Family and continued to support clandestine activities around the world, including in Saudi Arabia. These activities and the continued dissemination of bin Laden's radical ideology among radical parts of the Middle East became a tangible threat to the Gulf monarchies, i.e. Saudi Arabia; especially since bin Laden's denunciations had the tacit approval of certain religious circles (Migaux, 2007a, p.318). It was because of these perceived threats that it is reported that Saudi Arabia tried to assassinate him in February 1994. Although the Sudan provided a good home for Al Qaeda, bin Laden's ambitions quickly became too hard to contain and the pressure too great on al-Turabi for Al Qaeda to be able to stay. Eventually world pressure would become too much for al-Turabi and bin Laden would be forced to relocate the base of his terrorist network again in 1996. This time he would move out of the eyes of the growing international intelligence presence

attempting to monitor his actions to Afghanistan where he could be completely hidden (Gunaratna, p.51).

At about the same time as bin Laden was moving the troops from Sudan to Afghanistan one of Al Qaeda's cells in Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996, would detonate a truck bomb outside of the Khobar Towers in Dhahran killing 19 U.S servicemen in one of the most successful attacks by Al Qaeda so far. However, bin Laden and Al Qaeda still refused to accept credit for this attack and continued to develop the organization's strength and capabilities in order to continue the fight against the Americans and other apostate regimes (Hammes, 2006, p.142). Bin Laden's sense of safety was greatly affected by the capture of Carlos the Jackal in Khartoum and his being turned over to the French authorities in 1994 since he realized that even though he had a friend in the government he was still vulnerable to being caught. As the U.S., the Saudis and others continued to increase the pressure on Sudan to turn over bin Laden to Saudi Arabia, he continued to worry about his safety. In 1996 he eventually decided to return to Afghanistan. Despite warring clans still fighting in the country it was the last haven for Salafist militants since Pakistan had been increasingly pressured by the U.S. to turn over terrorist suspects, including Ramzi Yousef (Gunaratna, p.51-2). At this point bin Laden had already unofficially declared war on the U.S., but he would make it official when he moved Al Qaeda to a new base. Although states that sponsored terrorism generally controlled terrorist groups up this point, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda would be the first to truly create a "state within a state" when they would become the first terrorist group to control a state, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Gunaratna, p.82). The next move by bin Laden would be to return to Afghanistan where the efforts of Al Qaeda and its leadership to continue to grow and fight were not only greatly helped by the

geography of the country but also by those who currently had control of a majority of the country, the Taliban.

V. The Taliban

It was not until Pakistan began to support the Taliban in 1994 that control began to come back to the country in any semblance of order (Rashid, 2002, p. 212). The Taliban, under the guidance of the ISI, with tacit approval of other countries including Saudi Arabia, began to create and develop a new Muslim army charged with restoring internal security in Afghanistan (Gunaratna, p.52-3). In order to create the Army the ISI used sons of the Afghan Refugees that had been educated in the Deobandi Madrassas in Northwestern Pakistan (Migaux, 2007a, p.320). The Taliban are like no other Muslim group before them; they are not inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood nor do they base their brand of Islam on the ulema, the educated class of Muslim scholars, instead they use a band of Deobandi Islam imported from Pakistan. Their popularity in Afghanistan is not based off of a secure tribal base; they are Pashtuns but have no support from the Pashtun in Afghanistan. Most of the Pashtun tribal elite actually refuse to recognize them and have fled the country. Their popularity in the region would be based off the need for a revival of Pashtun nationalism in the face of Tajik control of Kabul; the Tajik is the other major ethnic group in country and has had a long time rivalry with the Pashtuns. It also came from a need to restore order, reopen the roads, and end the constant fighting between warlords (Rashid, 2002, p. 210).

The Taliban were highly successful in restoring order to the country and gained a great deal of support despite their tough interpretation of Islamic law and their heavy hand as rulers. They would not have an international Islamic agenda until they met up with Osama bin Laden and began hosting foreign militant groups². After two decades of war there were a number of

² For a more detailed discussion of the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan please read: Rashid, A. (2000). *Taliban*. New Haven: Yale Nota Bene or Crews, R. D., & Tarzi, A. (Eds.). (2008). *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, or Marsden, P. (1998) *The Taliban*. London: Zed Books.

lasting effects in Afghanistan. After a decade long conflict with the Soviet Union that strengthened the ties between various ethnic and religious groups within the country the unity was quickly undermined when the country became rife with a long-term Civil War once their common enemy had been removed. When the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989 the country quickly fell into a long civil war between the ethnic groups, causing the country and its institutions to become even weaker. The takeover by the Taliban completed the process of disintegration of the once reasonably solid state as they instituted their own brand of Islam on the different ethnic groups of Afghanistan who were simply looking for peace (Singh, 2004, p.546)

Once Al Qaeda and bin Laden arrived in 1996 it included not only the entire operation of Al Qaeda but also tens of thousands of Pakistani militants, thousands of Central Asians, Arabs, Africans, East Asians and others who have shared their own brand of global Islamic radicalism with the Taliban who they have been fighting for since that time. The Taliban quickly became dependent on Al Qaeda and the foreign fighters to expand their ideology and these groups all relied on the Taliban to provide them sanctuary (Rashid, 2002, p. 211).

Bin Laden's decision to return to Afghanistan was influenced by a few reasons beyond concerns for his safety in the Sudan and the risk he would face had he returned to Pakistan like originally planned. In Afghanistan Salafist militants were viewed favorably by the Taliban. Bin Laden enjoyed the serenity of the country. It reminded him of his childhood and he had already built a number of complexes within the country from which to run his new terrorist organization. Afghanistan's vast expanses, rugged terrain, the Pashtun code of honor in the Southeast all served as his best chances to regain his feeling of security and safety for himself, his family, and his organization as it continued its fight (Migaux, 2007a, p.320).

In Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and the rest of Al Qaeda's leadership were finally given an opportunity to build a solid terrorist enterprise with a significant degree of organizational coherence and efficiency. As a failed state Afghanistan provided bin Laden the right combination of anarchy, instability, and antipathy toward the West to allow its construction and expansion to continue (Gunaratna, 2002, p.73). Al Qaeda is a new type of terrorist group, it does not rely on a state for survival, like Hamas and Hezbollah do, rather it relies on the weakness of a state to give it the ability to grow and do whatever it needs to pursue its goals. Once it was begun it only came close to being state sponsored once, when Osama bin Laden moved the main apparatus of Al Qaeda to the Sudan at the urging of Dr. Husan al-Turabi. However, Al Qaeda only thrived when they were able to operate within the borders of a state with no ability to crackdown upon them. In an age of the emphasis on the importance of a states sovereign borders the ability to crackdown upon an organization generally depends solely on the government within the state barring an act of war or devastating attack accompanied with a trail of solid evidence to connect a terrorist group to the act. When a terrorist group is able to find sanctuary within the borders of a state that either relies upon the group or is indifferent to the group their ability to grow and develop is unheard of. Al Qaeda did not become the group it is today until it arrived in Afghanistan in the mid-90's. Once Al Qaeda arrived in Kandahar it almost immediately reverted back to their previous home bases in Tora Bora in their cave complexes and shortly included an expansion into more and more camps and bases and began to truly grow the organization in breadth and strength and power.

After bin Laden and Al Qaeda left Afghanistan the situation changed a great deal. Once the Soviet Union withdrew most countries once involved in the country lost interest in the fight in Afghanistan, allowing the tribal wars to come back into play with all the warlords formerly

fighting against the Soviets now fighting each other³. For a long time the government of Pakistan had been concerned about the lack of stability in Afghanistan and after a number of conflict and years of assistance of different groups and support for different warlords in Afghanistan, none of which would foster any true stability in Afghanistan or between Pakistan and Afghanistan, they decided to take a different approach. By the middle of 1994 Pakistan was convinced that stability was not possible in Afghanistan and that the current Rabbani-Masoud administration, created by two competing warlord groups at an attempt at unity, would not accept Pakistan's hegemony. In order to address these concerns Pakistan began to work to undermine the current regime and to develop many of the Deobandi-Wahabbi influence groups, a combination of Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun Talibs, into a coherent group which they would support with the ISI and the Military to help them take control of most if not all of Afghanistan to create their own government, they would be known as the Taliban (Hussain, 2005, p. 180-5).

When bin Laden arrived in Kabul in 1996 he was welcomed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar who had taken charge of the Mukub's activities following the assassination of Azzam and bin Laden had taken his own group of the Arab volunteers and turning them into Al Qaeda. Osama was quick to consolidate his ties with the Taliban and would soon, through the financing and material assistance of the regimes efforts, have widespread influence over them. Hekmatyar became Prime Minister after an agreement had been made with Ahmed Shah Massoud to end the long civil war that had consumed the country for the 7 years after the Soviets withdrew. On April 3, 1996, the Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar would send a delegation to Osama bin Laden to meet him and convey a message from him; he would be "honored to protect him,

³ For a more thorough discussion of the Civil War in Afghanistan see: Tanner, S. (2002). *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*. Cambridge: De Capo Press or Goodson, L. P. (2001). *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

because of his role in the *jihad* against the Soviets” (Gunaratna, p.53-4). This officially meant that Afghanistan and the Taliban would become a safe and plentiful sanctuary for the needs of Osama’s organization, and Al Qaeda would soon start expanding and would quickly step up his efforts in the fight against America.

On August 26, 1996, bin Laden issued his first official Fatwa from Afghanistan. It was his final warning to American forces to leave Saudi Arabia and identified the United States as an enemy and urged Muslims to kill American military personnel abroad (Migaux, 2007a, p.321; Gunaratna, p.56-7). Later that year in the Second Taliban Offensive resulted in the fall of Kabul, and this caused Hekmatyar to flee to Iran and bin Laden consolidated his ties with the Taliban and suggested rapprochement with Shi’ite Iran in the struggle against American imperialism. The Taliban, led by Mullah Omar (veteran of the war against the Soviet Army), now controlled 80% of the country and had the people’s confidence despite the extreme way they ruled because they ended the fighting and brought peace to the country for the first time in decades through the institution of sharia law. Despite the successes of the Taliban and their support from Pakistani ISI they still lacked funds and know how to improve the country for the long-term. This is how bin Laden and Al Qaeda became important (Migaux, 2007a, p.321).

Once bin Laden and Al Qaeda were in Afghanistan they were able to expand under the safe sanctuary as extended by the Taliban (Hussain, 2005, p.212-3). When bin Laden arrived in Kandahar in 1996 he provided what the Taliban needed in order to gain control, and he began providing financial and other support to gain the favor and continue his protection by the Taliban. Shortly after gaining the favor of the Taliban he received their permission to reopen training camps for Arab volunteers and handed over their management to bin Laden and his associates. Because of this expansion of infrastructure for their organization in Afghanistan it

opened the door for a new wave of volunteers and began a delicate network of alliances between the Taliban and bin Laden. In Afghanistan, as the Taliban continued to protect Al Qaeda and bin Laden, the internal structure was modified in order to better implement any attacks against the U.S., whose troops were still present on Saudi territory (Migaux, 2007a, p.321-2).

When Al Qaeda moved to Afghanistan they found a home in their second weak state and exploited it to continue the growth of their organization. Many states that are weak or failing are often marked by civil war or complete chaos and they can easily become havens for terrorists due to the lack of a government willing to or capable of opposing them (Rotberg, 2004, p.127-30). These states are very attractive to a terrorist group like Al Qaeda as sanctuaries, not only do they provide little opposition from the government but the government usually asks for their support (Rabasa, et al., 2007, p.49-61). By definition a sanctuary is an area where, without the hindrance of the government, they can create physical facilities where terrorists can conduct training, network and plan operations. These areas are most common within ungoverned areas where states can exert little or no control over what goes on within their borders, not to mention the ease with which groups can move their personnel, equipment, and funds across their borders. Al Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan gave the group's leaders the leeway to concentrate all of their efforts in growing the organization and planning future operations. By securing their sanctuary with support to the Taliban and their leader Muhammad Omar they increased their financial needs due to assistance to their host countries like the Sudan and then Afghanistan; however, it lowered its needs for covertness, eased their command and control, enabled extensive training and planning, and it allowed a generally lower marginal cost financially and operationally per attack. Without the benefit of the sanctuaries found in Afghanistan and before in the Sudan Al Qaeda would have been seriously hindered.

In their new sanctuary in Afghanistan Al Qaeda now had a viable base for their worldwide network, and inside of Afghanistan they were able to increase the training of terrorists as well as planning and supporting attacks by his personnel and by affiliated terror groups. The area controlled by the Taliban was easily large enough for al-Qaeda to establish and run full-fledged training camps and religious schools. By increasing the amount of space the organization was able to work within allowed for the rapid expansion of schools and their camps (Hammes, 2006, p. 139). In February 1997 he would issue his second fatwa that would include explicit support for bin Laden and Al Qaeda by the Taliban as they continued to consolidate their hold on the country (Gunaratna, p.56). Osama bin Laden's first call for the killing of all Americans would come in his third Fatwa in February 1998. In this declaration of war on the U.S. he not only announced to his followers the formation of his new alliance of terrorist groups called the World Islamic Front for the Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders but he also called for all Muslims to fulfill what he believed was their duty to kill all Americans and their allies, both civilian and military. He believed this duty existed partly because of the carrying of arms on their land, the troops stationed in Saudi Arabia, and that he had a legitimate and moral duty to oppose and kill these occupiers (Gunaratna, p.60, 122). Shortly after issuing this fatwa the deadliest attacks executed by Al Qaeda would occur simultaneously on August 7, 1998, when two cells would detonate truck bombs outside of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salam, Tanzania on the Eighth Anniversary of the attack on Khobar towers. Although he would not claim credit for this attack he would praise it (Gunaratna, p.62; Hammes, 2006, p.141).

VII. Conclusion

As can be seen by the evolution of these four threads through history it was not just one person who created Al Qaeda, nor was it one person responsible for the ideas and goals of the organization once formed; instead it was a combination of them. Al Qaeda came from the weaving together of four crucial threads in order to become the organization we know of today bent on fighting the West and non-believers until their goals are reached. Without the development of and the spread of the Islamist theology by writers like Ibn Tamiya six centuries ago and Sayyid Qutb in the 1960's the Islamist Terrorist theology may never have come in to being. By writing the words and making the arguments he did Sayyid Qutb created the idea of an offensive jihad as the 6th pillar of Islam for those extremist Islamist who choose to follow it. Once this concept became widely known and understood a whole new breed of Islamist terrorism was born under the guidance of what is known as the Egyptian model as made known by the Muslim Brotherhood. As the Muslim Brotherhoods influence spread and its membership roles grew it would soon give birth to the future thinkers and leaders behind Al Qaeda; Abdullah Azzam, Ayman Al-Zawahiri and in an indirect way Osama bin Laden.

It is through these new members of the organization that the ideology begun by Sayyid Qutb would be spread outside the borders of Egypt where the Muslim Brotherhood had been split during the crackdown on their actions. When Ayman Al-Zawahiri, the doctor, went to Afghanistan to treat the Afghan mujahideen and other Afghan jihad volunteers he became just one of a few individuals that would turn these volunteers into Al Qaeda. When Abdullah Azzam, along with other exiled members of the Muslim Brotherhood left Egypt and eventually found themselves teaching in universities in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere throughout the Middle East they not only spread the line of thinking as espoused by Sayyid Qutb but some would

become the mentors and professors of the man who would soon turn Al Qaeda into the deadly and massive terrorist organization it is today, Osama bin Laden.

Under the guidance of his professors at university, under the influence of the events of the day, and despite his own mothers objections to stay out of “politics” Osama bin Laden quickly became a radical ideologue and supporter of offensive jihad. Under the guidance of Abdullah Azzam, a professor and new mentor, he learned and read Sayyid Qutb’s works and traveled to Afghanistan where he and Azzam would create Mukub, the precursor to Al Qaeda, and later Al Qaeda itself once the Afghan Jihad had ended and under the influence of his new mentor Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

The development of Al Qaeda would continue as Osama bin Laden spent time in Saudi Arabia but it would experience its first growth spurt of adolescence while under the protection and assistance of Hassan al-Turabi in the Sudan. Under the guidance and support of al-Turabi and the NIF, with the benefit of bin Laden’s family construction company connections, and the expansive uncontrolled terrain of the Sudan Al Qaeda was able to take its first baby steps as a new model for terrorist organizations. While in the Sudan Al Qaeda was restructured and expanded under the guidance of Osama bin Laden into an almost International Business model capable of far reaching missions and long term stability even if under siege. Still other baby steps were taken as bin Laden directed the operatives of Al Qaeda to execute their first attacks and as part of his efforts to widen his network of terrorists began to work with other groups such as Hezbollah to develop new techniques and would send operatives to work with different groups around the world like the warlords in Somalia and Islamic extremists in the Philippines and Eastern Africa. Through this early expansion bin Laden’s first attacks were rather successful and began to put Al Qaeda on the list as a new terrorist group to be feared. However, international

pressure on the Sudan and Saudi Arabia during these first series of attacks would force bin Laden to move Al Qaeda out of the nurturing womb of the Sudan back to the place of its inception in Afghanistan, under the watchful eye of its next protectors, the Taliban.

Once Al Qaeda moved back to Afghanistan it was able to truly grow and evolve under the watchful eye of Mullah Mohammed Omar and the Taliban. As the new source of power and peace in Afghanistan, under the support and assistance of Pakistan, the Taliban had a firm hold over a large portion of the country capable of supplying Al Qaeda with all the access to its former bases and space for growth it would need. In a weak state like Afghanistan, where any government no matter how strict or powerful has the ability to control the entire region terrorist groups like Al Qaeda can flourish and grow. This is even more likely when the government supports their efforts; this is what happened to Al Qaeda once they arrived in the Southwest region of Afghanistan. Al Qaeda was further helped by the power held by the Taliban because of the origins of the Taliban itself, its members came from the very madrassas and families that had been created and run by the Mukub during the Afghan jihad. The Taliban had a great deal of respect for Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda and were happy to protect and support them as Al Qaeda grew through out the mid to later 90's.

As these four threads wove together over the past twenty years you can see the evolution and growth of Al Qaeda from inception to the pinnacle of its. Once they became one cohesive strand they became the most powerful and influential terrorist organization in the world today. Without any one of these four threads Al Qaeda would not be the organization it is today.

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