

The Future of Afghanistan: Democracy, Islamic Caliphate or Warlord Principalities

A Predictive Study on Possible Afghanistan, United States and Taliban Responses

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“We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master.”

- Elderly Afghan Tribal Leader

“The pious Caliphate will start from Afghanistan”

- Osama bin Laden

“This has to be a point in time in which we begin to write a new chapter on improved governance, a much more serious effort to eradicate corruption, joint efforts to accelerate the training of Afghan security forces so that the Afghan people can provide for their own security.”

- President Barack Obama

Introduction

Afghanistan is based on a tribal society; it has never been completely conquered by any outside force, nor has it ever fully been made into a confederation of tribes. This is due to the numerous ethnic groups that make up the tapestry of people who call themselves Afghan; with Pashtuns being in the majority followed by Tajiks, Hazari, Uzbeki, Turkmeni and Nuristani. These varying ethnicities shed light on the differing interpretations of Islam and the blending of local customs. Afghanistan's unique terrain along with its tribal customs and social structure has prevented the Afghan people from unifying into a stable government, just as it has prevented Afghanistan from being overrun by an invading force.

The current efforts by the United States and NATO Forces aim to have Afghanistan transition from a corrupt oligarchy into a stable democracy, at the same time, religious fundamentalists, Al Qaeda and the Taliban view Afghanistan as the first step in recreating the Islamic Caliphate. The Afghan population has dealt with war for over two centuries; the vast majority of the public is looking for security, and the removal of corrupt rulers.

Prior to the U.S. invasion, the Taliban had begun to lose some of its Pashtuni-majority support due to corruption within the Taliban. The Taliban controlled Afghanistan through fear tactics, but was ill-prepared to govern administratively the entire nation (Rasanayagam 2005, 197). The Taliban has started out as an Islamic reform movement, but has no real connection to the Islamic ideas in Afghanistan (Rashid 2000, 87). It's refusal to recognize other forms of Islam isolated it from the rest of the Islamic world.

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The Bonn Agreement was signed in December 2001, and placed a transition government in place with Hamid Karzai as the President. The new government was unable to prevent warlords and regional leaders from reemerging. The United States Institute of Peace published a special report in 2003, entitled "Unfinished Business in Afghanistan, Warlordism, Reconstruction, and Ethnic Harmony," the report estimated that warlords controlled seventy-five percent of Afghanistan. This lack of unity hinders the chances of Afghanistan ever becoming a strong enough country to withstand attempts by the Taliban to regain power. The porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has allowed for the Taliban and Al Qaeda to regroup, just as the Mujaheddin did during the Soviet Afghan war in the not so recent past.

Afghanistan's neighboring nations have offered limited assistance to Afghanistan as a developing nation. Pakistan has, in the past favored the concept of a pure Islamic state in Afghanistan, this allows for the continuation of jihadist training to continue the fight in Kashmir as well as neutralize the Pashtun irredentism (Weinbaum 2006, 6). Iran, on the other hand is strongly opposed to the Taliban regaining control of Afghanistan and persecuting the Hazaras. The Post-Soviet states to Afghanistan's north follow a similar policy to Russia, try to contain Islamic radicalism.

There has recently been an increase in debate "back at home" among the citizens of countries currently fighting in Afghanistan, as to how much longer they will continue providing troops to Afghanistan. After eight years of fighting against Al Qaeda, and the Taliban, the allied forces are no closer to capturing Mullah Omar or Osama bin Laden. The lack of new information on the whereabouts of these two individuals, combined with the rising number of casualties and the increasing cost has led to

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greater public awareness and opposition to the war. These new voices speaking out against the war are forcing the governments of the allied forces to reexamine their objectives and goals for the near future in Afghanistan. The British government has recently suffered heavy casualties due to their patrolling of the opium fields in Helmand and Kandahar, which were traditionally heavily Taliban. President Obama has faced the same pressure from the United States public.

The presence of Allied forces has not prevented continued attacks from Afghanistan, however, as a result of the war in Afghanistan many of the Taliban are in the Northwest Frontier in Pakistan. This surplus of Taliban insurgents has placed Pakistan in a situation of dire consequence, there is a strong need to eliminate the risk of the Taliban before Pakistan, a nuclear armed country, is seen by the Taliban and Al Qaeda as the next potential center for an Islamic Caliphate. The Pakistani government has begun to fight back against the insurgency, prior to this new initiative, the Taliban moved their militants from the Swat Valley, which was controlled under Shari'a law, to Buner, which is ninety-seven kilometers from the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. This kind of threat to the stability of a state, especially one that has nuclear capability is not allowable for the safety of the rest of the world.

Throughout Afghanistan's history, there has been a lack of unity among the ethnic groups that has hindered their ability to live peacefully under one government. The current international attention on Afghanistan has removed any chance of it becoming the starting place for the next Caliphate. The Afghan population has suffered greatly throughout history from heavy handed tactics from foreign nations. Adam Khan from Jalalabad stated the Afghan belief best when he says "we want democracy in the

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country but not at the expense of our culture and religion. I believe they all could be reconciled and that is what should happen” (Army Press 2004, 194).” The people of Afghanistan have shown that they are looking for an environment free of war that will allow them to rebuild their country. The ethnic divisions and inability for a central democratic government to gain control of a majority of Afghanistan has led many Afghans to deal with their judicial, military, and economic needs on a local level. The inability of the current central government to control the majority of Afghanistan has enabled the continuation of Afghans reverting to their local traditional leaders to deal with and punish local criminals; this process is all done outside of the criminal justice system (Stewart 2008, 33).

Afghanistan has never been conquered by a foreign power. In August 2009, Major-General Zahir Azimi, the Afghan Army spokesmen stated “where international forces are fighting, people think it is incumbent on them to resist the occupiers and infidels. This feeling is strong in the South and East and it may spread to other places” (Anonymous 2009, 22). As long as the Afghan central government is unable to maintain control and extend their control beyond the capital, local tribal communities will look for protection and leadership from proven leaders and heroes in their communities. Despite past history with warlords and corruption, the Afghan people are tired of war, Ghafoor, from the Ahmadkhei village in Paktia captured this best by stating “We’re caught in the middle and we’re sick of it. We need security. But the Americans are just making trouble for us. They cannot bring peace, not if they stay for 50 years” (Anonymous 2009, 21). This is quickly becoming the consensus across Afghanistan.

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This study examines the potential scenarios that could occur in Afghanistan. The main actors for this study include: the United States, the Taliban and the Afghan population as a whole. This study will focus on the stability of Afghanistan to stand on its own: will the attempted democratic government being supported by the United States and NATO Forces remain in control; will Al Qaeda and the Taliban regain their control over the country and continue toward their goal of the new center for the Islamic Caliphate; or will the Afghan people turn to their tribal traditions and resort back to warlords.

The majority of the available literature on Afghanistan's current state, and history is written by Western or American authors. The biases of the authors must be taken into consideration when reading their literature regarding Afghanistan and Al Qaeda. With the advent of the war on terror, authors from Central Asia have begun to write on Afghanistan giving a different perspective on the events and conditions in Afghanistan.

Literature Review

Michael Scheuer is the former head of the CIA's Bin Laden Unit. Mr. Scheuer spent nearly two decades in the CIA focusing on national security issues related to Afghanistan and South Asia, as well as authoring three books and over 10 articles concerning Al Qaeda and terrorism. His book, Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror, was mentioned by bin Laden in his September 2007 video, where bin Laden stated, "If you want to understand what's going on and if you would like to get to know some of the reasons for you losing the war against us, then read the book by Michael Scheuer" (Kelly and Block 2007). Mr. Scheuer's article "The Pious Caliphate

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Will Start From Afghanistan:’ Is al-Qaeda’s Long-Held Strategy Now Unfolding?” (2005)

this article focuses on Osama bin Laden and the message he released concerning his visions for Afghanistan’s future.

Mr. Scheuer also touches on the foreign conspiracies as to Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar’s locations, and the connection Pakistan might have. Mr. Scheuer closes with the need for a country-wide military initiative and a massive increase in economic aid to the Afghan people. Throughout Mr. Scheuer’s books and articles he brings forward his experience as a CIA agent. He does not shy away from disagreeing with the mainstream theories on how the current war is going, or how the search for bin Laden is going.

Seth Jones is an adjunct professor of Security Studies at Georgetown and a political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He is viewed as an expert on Afghanistan, and has written eleven books and over fifteen articles. His book, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, (2008) is the fourth volume in the RAND Counterinsurgency Study.

Mr. Jones focuses on the counterinsurgency operations within Afghanistan, and relied on primary sources and personal fieldwork for his writing. Within this book, Mr. Jones focuses on the misleading notions of trying to use the same counterinsurgency strategies in Malaya in Afghanistan. Seth Jones states that the current war effort needs to transition from winning the hearts and minds to redirecting efforts to the military and political strategy to ensure state building and security within Afghanistan. Mr. Jones’ chapter on the “Success in Counterinsurgency Warfare,” highlights the impact from external actors (U.S. military), indigenous lead (insurgents) and the indigenous government.

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Ahmed Rashid is considered an expert on Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. With over 20 years of experience as a correspondent and three best seller books, he has travelled the world addressing universities, think tanks and international meetings on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mr. Rashid's Taliban (2000), focuses on the rise of the Taliban to power, and their ideologies. Included in this book is the connection between Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Al Qaeda's monetary, political and ideological influence over the Taliban led to the eventual invasion of Afghanistan. Prior to the invasion, the Taliban had gained control over 90% of Afghanistan, following their downfall, they have regrouped their forces in Pakistan and continue to recruit and attack United States and NATO forces in an effort to regain control of their territory.

Stephen Tanner is a military historian who has written several pieces on Afghanistan. One of his most well known is Afghanistan: A Military History From Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban (2002). Unlike the other authors, Mr. Tanner not only highlights the war on terror in Afghanistan, but also focuses on the other armies that have entered the Afghan borders. This work covers the period of history from the time of Alexander the Great through the British and Russian Empires.

Afghanistan is located in the crossroads of Central Asia, and holds the distinction of having "superpowers" of their day, including the Alexander the Great, the Mongols, the British Empire, Soviet Union and the United States and NATO Forces invade their borders, but never conquer and control the entire country. Mr. Tanner also focuses on the Afghan people, with the constant state of war the Afghan have learned to adapt to changes in locations, and security. Mr. Tanner also validates the importance of the

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Afghan tribal system. Unlike much of the world, Afghanistan's society and government are still heavily affected by their tribal traditions and customs.

The final author is Marvin Weinbaum, whose United States Institute of Peace Special Report focused on "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors: An Ever Dangerous Neighborhood" (2006). This article focuses on countries that surround Afghanistan and their political and economic stability and their interest in Afghanistan's stability. Mr. Weinbaum points out that external interference has much to do with Afghanistan's inability to become a thriving industrial country, but he also points out that the internal wars between tribes and warlords has also affected their ability to industrialize the nation. While Afghanistan has attempted to remain isolated, their lives are heavily influenced by both Pakistan and Iran. Both are connected through various religious and social ties. Pakistan heavily influences Afghanistan through the Pashtu tribe, as well as through the large refugee camps on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border. Iran, similarly supports the small Shiite population inside of Afghanistan, and continues to work to maintain safety for their people.

The five authors above encompass a diverse amount of information on Afghanistan as it currently stands, and what it could potentially become in the future. Some of these authors differ on what Afghanistan will become once the United States and the NATO forces retreat, they all agree that there is a need to train the Afghan security forces so they can take over for themselves. In addition, the need to eliminate corruption as a governance strategy, and get aid to the remote tribal areas of Afghanistan is critical to prevent the Taliban and Al Qaeda from sweeping back into the vacuum left by the departing Coalition Forces.

Actors & Perceptions

Following the attacks on September 11, 2001, Afghanistan once again gained international attention. There are few states that were not affected, in some way by the attacks on September 11. Nine years later, the international community of leaders, and the general public have seen little progress in capturing Osama bin Laden or Mullah Omar. The mounting deaths of state soldiers in Afghanistan have caused the public to rethink their involvement in direct combat in the war on terror. While Afghanistan's neighboring states are interested in the outcome of the war on terror, there are three actors that play the largest roles in the outcome of Afghanistan; the United States, the Taliban, and the Afghan people. Each of these actors has their own interests in the outcome of the current war in Afghanistan, and has their own viewpoints on the key issues. To facilitate this predictive study on Afghanistan it is imperative that an analysis is performed on each of the critical actors.

Afghanistan

The Afghans are at the center of this predictive analysis. The Afghan population as a whole plays a key role in the predictive outcome of Afghanistan's political stability as a state. When evaluating the Afghan perspectives on this Afghanistan's future state, a number of issues impact the decision making process, including: public perceptions, culture, history, economics, politics, and national security concerns. In order to perform this predictive study it is critical that every factor is carefully evaluated.

Culture

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Afghanistan is a country deeply steeped in tradition. The Pashtun people are the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan, and the world's largest remaining tribal-based society (Tanner 2009, 26). The Pashtun community follows the philosophy of pashtunwali. Robin Ashby, The Director General of the UK Defence Forum, defined pashtunwali, as the Pashtun code of honor which has nine key principles: melmastia (hospitality), nang (solidarity among the clan), isteqamat (persistence), turah (bravery), ghayrat (honor), sabat (steadfastness), namuz (defense of one's honor and women), nanawatai (right of a fugitive to seek refuge), imandari (righteousness), and badal (right of blood feuds). It is thought that through an appeal to the principles of melmastia, sabat, nanawatai and turah, Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden were able to gain and maintain asylum within Afghanistan.

The other key ethnic groups are the Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmens and Nuristanis. The Afghans' ethnic identity is a critical piece of who they are. While the Taliban made an effort to transplant Pashtuns throughout Afghanistan to further their agenda, in reviewing figure 1, it is clear that the Taliban understood the need to infiltrate the diverse ethnic territories to be able to maintain control over them. The Afghan people are deeply connected not only to their customs, but also to their religious beliefs. Islam was introduced to the Afghan population in the 10th century (Ewan 2002, 22). Like much of the rest of the world, Sunni Muslims make up about 80% of the Afghan population, while Shiites make up about 19% and the remaining 1% consists of Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Parsis (CIA Factbook 2010).

Afghanis remain weary (or wary) of outsider involvement in their country. The strong ties to religion and traditional customs hinder the progress that Afghanistan has made in creating a stable country.

History

Afghanistan has a rich and violent history. Over the past two centuries, Afghanistan has been a crossroad for central and southern Asia. It is because of its geographic location that Afghanistan has been invaded by varying armies including: Persians, Greeks, Mongols, British, Russians, and most recently American and NATO forces (Tanner 2002, 22). While Afghanistan has never been conquered by an outside force; this does not mean that invading forces did not leave marks on Afghanistan.

By the end of the 18th century, the British Empire had begun to show an interest in Afghanistan. The first Anglo-Afghan War proved to the superior British Empire that the Afghan warriors, or ghazis, were not willing to be a conquered people. The internal opposition to the British forces caused them to be withdrawn on January 6, 1842, with 16,000 people; including women, children, soldiers and camp followers, once inside the Khyber Pass, the majority of the 16,000 people were slaughtered by the ghazis (Tanner 2002, 140). The British Empire was not willing to allow this slaughter to go unpunished. They attacked with the “army of Retribution” destroying the Kabul bazaar, and sending smaller satellite forces to cities like Istalif, that were not involved in the slaughter, and killed the males, raped and murdered the women and destroyed the city (Ewan 2002, 78). Following the first Anglo-Afghan War, the British Empire determined Afghanistan would be able to serve as a buffer state between the British and Russian Empires. By the end of the third Anglo-Afghan War, modern Afghanistan was formed. The Durand

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Line gave Afghanistan its current borders, and forever divided the Pashtun tribe between Afghanistan and then India.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was an attempt to keep the communist government in Kabul. The Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion was organized in the name of Islam; this was a shift from the tribal affiliations. The Afghan fighters received support from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States in their efforts against the Soviet Union. This was the first instance where jihadist fighters from around the world travelled to Afghanistan to fight along side the Afghans against the oppressive Soviet army. The Soviets claimed defeat on February 15, 1989, following the last Soviet tank crossing the Friendship Bridge, the Afghan fighters returned to tribal skirmishes in an attempt to gain control over the country. With these skirmishes came power grabs by the lead Afghan fighters who transitioned into warlords. After years of corruption and unrest, the Taliban emerged from the Kandahar province, and was viewed by the Afghans as a religious movement that would reinstate peace through Shari'a law.

Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, gave Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda asylum in 1996. His refusal to turn Osama bin Laden over to Saudi Arabia or the United States enabled Osama bin Laden to plan and carry out numerous international attacks, including the attacks on September 11, 2001. Following the attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States along with NATO Forces invaded Afghanistan with help from the Northern Alliance. The Taliban and Al Qaeda forces quickly fell beneath the technologically advanced armies of the West.

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Despite the initial success, the United States and NATO Forces have had difficulty capturing the leader of Al Qaeda or the Taliban. The continued civilian casualties have led to an increase in insurgency fighters. In August 2009, Major-General Zahir Azimi, the Afghan Army spokesman stated “where international forces are fighting, people think it is incumbent on them to resist the occupiers and infidels. This feeling is strong in the South and East and it may spread to other places” (Anonymous 2009, 22). The ethnic divisions and inability for a central democratic government to gain control of all of Afghanistan has led many Afghans to return to their local leaders for their judicial, economic and security needs.

Economics

The economic stability of Afghanistan is almost non-existent. After decades of conflict, Afghanistan’s economy has begun to recover. This is largely due to the influx of international aid. Despite this international aid, widespread corruption has prevented the Afghan people from being given the basic necessities; security, food and shelter.

Afghanistan has also begun to see small amounts of recovery in their service and agricultural sectors. Afghanistan remains an agricultural country, representing 78.6% of the labor force (CIA Factbook 2010). Opium remains the key crop of Afghanistan, and Afghanistan produces the largest quantities of opium in the world. Despite initiatives from the United States, NATO Forces and the Afghan Government, the transition from opium to wheat is still in its infancy.

In 2010, the US Geological Services and USAID announced that Afghanistan has trillions of dollars worth of untapped mineral deposits. This money source continues to

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go untapped due to the lack of infrastructure, including roads, railroads, electricity and water.

Afghanistan's lack of established infrastructure prevents its economy from becoming self-sufficient. This also prevents the Afghans from transitioning from a rural cultural setting to the cities where they would be able to benefit from regular medical care and potentially profit from a more stable environment.

Politics

Afghanistan's current political situation is unstable. The current government has been accused of corruption, and is now rated as the second most corrupt country in the world. In 2006, the German Bertelsmann Foundation stated "the government is imbued by patronage and corruption" (Reynolds 2009). The patronage within the tribes has prevented a unified government from making progress within the rural areas of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's corruption is spread throughout the political system, from public offices for sale, bribes to gain access to government services, to the police and judiciary systems. This corruptive network that is woven throughout the Afghan government and its security apparatus hinders the Afghan people's capability to stand alone on its own once the foreign forces have left the country. The Taliban came to power as a result of the Afghan people looking for a force that would remove the corruptive government and warlords. The Afghan people's key focus is on their security and livelihoods. They are concerned about stability and safety for themselves, their children, their tribes and villages. The goings-on in the large cities and even the capital are of no value if they cannot promote protection of the citizenry.

National Security Concerns

The Afghan population has suffered from decades of war and poverty. The Afghan population has shown that they are looking for an environment free of war that will allow them to rebuild their country. The ethnic divisions and inability for a central government to control the rural areas of Afghanistan has led many Afghans to deal with their judicial, security, and economic needs on local levels through their local tribal elders, or through warlords. This reemergence of the warlord offers Afghans protection on a local level. With the resurgence of the Taliban, the withdrawal of the United States and NATO forces could allow the Taliban to regain control over Afghanistan. This could potentially lead to a backlash by the Taliban for the Afghan support of the United States and NATO forces. The Afghan people want the removal of the foreign fighters, but there is an understanding that they need to have the capability to maintain their country's security. Currently they are not in a position to do this.

The United States

The United States and NATO Forces first entered Afghanistan to begin the War on Terror, following the attacks on September 11, 2001. Nine years later, the United States and NATO Forces are concerned about the future of Afghanistan after the withdrawal foreign troops. The concerns stem from the Afghan government being able to maintain power, and offer national security to the Afghan people. The unresolved issues and fighting with the Taliban and Al Qaeda is another concern. The United States has openly stated that it will begin to withdraw troops from Afghanistan by July 2014. According to the BBC News, Prime Minister Cameron, of the United Kingdom has stated that its armed force's combat role in Afghanistan will end in 2015.

Economics

The primary economic concern for the United States regarding Afghanistan's future state is in relation to the \$29 billion worth of international aid that has been disbursed on projects within Afghanistan. Despite the current recession, the United States and NATO countries have continued to give financial aid to Afghanistan in the hopes of building an infrastructure that will prevent Al Qaeda and the Taliban from regaining control after Afghanistan is left to itself.

Politics

The United States and the NATO Forces are the leading forces behind the current war on terror in Afghanistan. Following the attacks on September 11, 2001, the eradication of terrorism has been at the top of the United States' agenda. The United States and NATO Forces continue to help foster and grow the democratic government in Afghanistan. One of the most systemic issues the Afghan government is facing is corruption, the United States and NATO leaders have made their views on this clear and President Karzai has promised to work to eliminate corruption within the government. Another concern is the ability to expand the Afghan government's reach throughout Afghanistan's rural area. The United States and NATO Forces have allied themselves with Pakistan in an effort to eradicate the Taliban presence in the North West Frontier Province.

National Security Concerns

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The United States and NATO nations' prime concern is the potential reemergence of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The purpose for the current war and financial aid is preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorism again. As a result of the war, Al Qaeda has not been able to carry out another large scale attack like that of September 11, 2001. The United States and NATO Forces need only look back 20 years to the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan. Despite the puppet government the Soviet Union continued to fund, it had collapsed by 1992. At this time the Afghan fighters had gained control of Kabul, and internal fights commenced between the different ethnicities. This is one reason why the United States and the NATO Forces understand the need for a strong, trusted Afghan government, as well as a stable, well trained security apparatus that is a respected part of the government.

Taliban

The Taliban and their ally Al Qaeda continue to collaborate and work towards common goals; the removal of the infidel from their country, and regaining control of Afghanistan. To some observers, the war in Afghanistan is this century's Vietnam, and Al Qaeda and the Taliban see it as their right to bleed the foreign troops. The inability of the current Afghan government to gain control over all of Afghanistan politically, and create a security force that will be able to stand on its own, bodes well for the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Economics

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The majority of the Taliban's economic solubility came from the opium trade. The Kandahar district was the birth place of the Taliban and is also one of the provinces that produce the most opium. This has not changed since the War in Afghanistan began. It is estimated that through drug trade, protecting processing labs, and collecting payoffs the Taliban generates anywhere from \$70million (USD) to \$500million (USD) a year (Collins and Ali 2010). The reemergence of the Taliban in the Pakistan North Western Frontier Province included the take over of the SWAT emerald mines. The Taliban now collects one-third of each miners' yield, to fund their guerilla attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The introduction of Al Qaeda in 1996, brought with it large amounts of monetary funds. Al Qaeda's funds have decreased since the attacks on September 11, 2001, and they no longer fund the Taliban. Despite the disruption to Al Qaeda's operations, they still maintain financial solubility through financial facilitators in the Middle East, benefiting through the transfer of funds via an untraceable means known as hawala.

Politics

The Taliban began to take control of Afghanistan in 1994, under the leadership of Mullah Omar and were originally seen as saviors. The story that circulated about their emergence had to do with a corrupt warlord that the Taliban killed. The Taliban enforce their ideology on all of Afghanistan. This ideology was a strict and anti-modern, it is comprised of Pashutunwali (Pashtun tribal codes), Wahhabism (conservative Sunni Islam from Saudi Arabia) and was influenced by Osama bin Laden's jihadist movement. The Talibani forces throughout the country to enforce the Shari'a law, anti-modernity restrictions (no televisions, music, kites) and restrictions on women (no school, no

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employment, wearing of burqas). The Taliban is also known to have connections with the Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence Agency as well as the Pakistani military. The Al Qaeda organization still maintains its goals of bringing down the United States, but the organization has changed as a result of War on Terror. Osama bin Laden still views Afghanistan as the potential starting point for the pious Caliphate (Scheuer 2006, 171). It is the hope of the Taliban and Al Qaeda that following the withdrawal of the foreign forces, Afghanistan will once again fall off the radar for many international nations, enabling the Taliban and Al Qaeda to regain political control.

National Security Concerns

The Taliban and Al Qaeda's prime concern is their ability to regain control of Afghanistan after the United States and NATO forces have withdrawn. In conjunction with this vision, they must be careful not to draw attention to their actions. For the Taliban, the withdrawal of the foreign forces will be a sign of victory by the Afghan Taliban. Al Qaeda will also claim this as a victory, just as Osama bin Laden claimed full success of the Soviet Union withdrawing from Afghanistan in 1989. In order to follow the ideologies of both non-state actors, it is imperative that they be successful in returning Islamic rule to Afghanistan.

Research Design

For this predictive study, the author has chosen to use the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction (LAMP). LAMP was created by Dr. Jonathan Lockwood. It incorporates methodologies from other analytical and planning methods to create the LAMP methodology. LAMP's focus on international political predictions makes it the

ideal methodology for this study. Unlike the Delphi Technique, or the Analytic Hierarchy

Process, LAMP takes free will on potential events into consideration; this is a key

discriminator (<http://www.lamp-method.com>). The concept of free will enables the three actors

in this predictive study to make decisions that will affect the perception and outcome of

all the actors. This methodology takes into account the actors as well as their

perceptions and intentions of each event. It also allows for a series of future scenarios.

Through the concept of free will, the analyst is forced to consider all perceptions

involving all the actors for the scenarios. LAMP includes twelve steps:

1. Determine the issue for which you are trying to predict the most likely future.

It is important to keep the issue focused. An issue that is too broad will cause the analyst to have to review too many actors.

2. Specify the national “actors” involved.

The analyst determines the number of actors that can directly affect the issue.

3. Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question.

The analyst is required to carry out historical research on each of the actors.

4. Specify all possible courses of action for each actor.

The possible courses of action should be obvious based on the previous research.

5. Determine the major scenarios within which you will compare the alternate futures.

These are based on the likelihood of future actions.

6. Calculate the total number of permutations of possible “alternate futures” for each scenario.

For this step, the general formula is $X^Y=X$.

7. Perform a “pairwise comparison” of all alternate futures to determine their relative probability.

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A pairwise comparison is between two alternative futures at a time, with the mindset that they are the only two in existence.

8. Rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received.

Ranking from the most likely scenario to least likely scenario.

9. Assuming that each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms of its consequences for the issue in question.

What are the consequences of the particular future?

10. Determine the “focal events” that must occur in our present in order to bring about a given alternate future.

Examine the potential future and its potential transposition.

11. Develop indicators for the focal events

Indications and Warnings

12. State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future.

The analyst must consider the consequences of an alternate future, and its potential for transposition into another alternate future.

For this predictive study, the three actors are; Afghanistan (people), the United States and the Taliban. The issue is the future stability of Afghanistan as a result of the involvement of Western Armies. Through the LAMP process, the analyst will be able to take into consideration Afghanistan, the United States and the Taliban’s perceptions and potential behaviors. Like any predictive study, the future scenarios are based on the perceptions, which is only as good as the analysts understanding of the actors perceptions. Despite the LAMP concept of free will, it is impossible to cover every actor’s perception. With most of the literature having a Western perspective, the analyst

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may infuse some of those thought processes in the analysis unconsciously. It is the responsibility of the analyst to verify their analysis and eliminate any biases.

Potential Courses of Action for Interested Actors

In this predictive study, there are three actors that have an impact on the future stability of Afghanistan; Afghanistan, the United States and the Taliban. Based on the issue of the future of Afghanistan, there are three actions:

- 1. Political Influence used to reach agreement.** The actor in question uses political influence and clout in an effort to achieve agreements.
- 2. Continue to Fight.** The actor in question will continue to push forward with their agenda. Continue to fight against opponents until their goal is achieved, there is no opportunity for negotiations.
- 3. Withdraw Forces.** The actor in question will draw their fighters.

Major Scenarios

LAMP analysis enables the analyst to review multiple future scenarios to determine the most likely future.

- 1. Democratic Government.** Afghanistan continues to exist with the current government; with Western backing continues to work on removing corruption and expanding their influence throughout Afghanistan.
- 2. Tribal Warlords.** Afghanistan's current government fails to extend its control beyond Kabul. The Afghan people opt to follow their tribal elders and warlords that offer security and means for a living.

3. **Islamic Caliphate.** The Taliban and along with their ally Al Qaeda regain control through religion and the promise of a security.

According to the LAMP methodology, it is imperative that the analyst analyze all potential actions by the three actors.

Permutations of Behavior

Step 6 in the LAMP process is calculating the total number of alternate futures from the actors in this predictive study (United States, the Taliban and Afghanistan) is $X^Y = Z$. For this equation X is equivalent to the number of actions offered to each actor, the Y equals the number of actors involved and Z is equivalent to the total number of alternate futures to be compared.¹ For this analysis there are two available courses of action for each of the three actors. The equation for this predictive study is as follows: $3^3 = 27$. This means that there are 27 possible alternate futures to compare for each of the actors in each of the three scenarios.

The abbreviations below are used to identify the courses of action:

Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)

Continue to Fight (CF)

Withdraw Forces (WF)

The three scenarios will likewise be identified by abbreviations:

Scenario 1 = Democratic Government (DG)

Scenario 2 = Tribal Warlords (TW)

Scenario 3 = Islamic Caliphate (IC)

¹ <http://www.lamp-method.org/2.html>

Table I – Alternate Future Permutations

Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan
1	PA	PA	PA
2	PA	PA	CF
3	PA	CF	PA
4	CF	PA	PA
5	PA	CF	CF
6	CF	PA	CF
7	CF	CF	PA
8	CF	CF	CF
9	PA	PA	WF
10	PA	WF	PA
11	WF	PA	PA
12	PA	WF	WF
13	WF	PA	WF
14	WF	WF	PA
15	WF	WF	WF
16	CF	CF	WF
17	CF	WF	CF
18	WF	CF	CF
19	WF	WF	CF
20	CF	WF	WF
21	WF	CF	WF
22	PA	WF	CF
23	PA	CF	WF
24	CF	WF	PA
25	CF	PA	WF
26	WF	CF	PA
27	WF	PA	CF

Pairwise Comparisons for Each Scenario

Step 7 in the LAMP process utilizes Table 1 – the Alternate Futures Table from the previous section. Step 7 is a “pairwise comparison” analyzing the alternative futures two at a time for each scenario. A pairwise comparison is a simplified way of comparing

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each possible alternate future against another alternate future and determining which is most likely to occur based on the analyst's knowledge of the actors' perceptions. The analyst begins with future #1 and compares it to future #2 and then compares future #1 to future #3 and selects the future most likely to occur in relation to the scenario. Step 7 also comes with an equation for determining the numbers of pairwise comparisons are required.

$$X = \frac{n(n-1)}{2}$$

The n is equivalent to the total number futures to be analyzed, while the x equals the total number of pairwise comparisons. For this predictive study, the n equals 27 and X equals 351 pairwise comparisons for each scenario.

$$351 = \frac{27(27-1)}{2}$$

Tables 2 through 4 below represent the Alternate futures table and a votes column which is a tally of the pairwise comparison votes.

Table 2

Alternate Futures Table				
Scenario 1 – Democratic Government (DG)				
Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan	Votes
1	PA	PA	PA	0
2	PA	PA	CF	1
3	PA	CF	PA	12
4	CF	PA	PA	9
5	PA	CF	CF	22
6	CF	PA	CF	9
7	CF	CF	PA	13
8	CF	CF	CF	6
9	PA	PA	WF	8
10	PA	WF	PA	15
11	WF	PA	PA	18
12	PA	WF	WF	22
13	WF	PA	WF	10
14	WF	WF	PA	17
15	WF	WF	WF	19
16	CF	CF	WF	22
17	CF	WF	CF	22
18	WF	CF	CF	21
19	WF	WF	CF	6
20	CF	WF	WF	16
21	WF	CF	WF	15
22	PA	WF	CF	8
23	PA	CF	WF	18
24	CF	WF	PA	18
25	CF	PA	WF	10
26	WF	CF	PA	13
27	WF	PA	CF	1

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Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)

Continue to Fight (CF)

Withdraw Forces (WF)

Table 3

Alternate Futures Table				
Scenario 2 – Tribal Warlord (TW)				
Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan	Votes
1	PA	PA	PA	0
2	PA	PA	CF	14
3	PA	CF	PA	11
4	CF	PA	PA	14
5	PA	CF	CF	15
6	CF	PA	CF	17
7	CF	CF	PA	16
8	CF	CF	CF	20
9	PA	PA	WF	12
10	PA	WF	PA	15
11	WF	PA	PA	22
12	PA	WF	WF	13
13	WF	PA	WF	9
14	WF	WF	PA	21
15	WF	WF	WF	2
16	CF	CF	WF	9
17	CF	WF	CF	18
18	WF	CF	CF	26
19	WF	WF	CF	25
20	CF	WF	WF	5
21	WF	CF	WF	10
22	PA	WF	CF	19
23	PA	CF	WF	6
24	CF	WF	PA	5
25	CF	PA	WF	5
26	WF	CF	PA	3
27	WF	PA	CF	19

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Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)

Continue to Fight (CF)

Withdraw Forces (WF)

Table 4

Alternate Futures Table				
Scenario 3 –Islamic Caliphate (IC)				
Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan	Votes
1	PA	PA	PA	0
2	PA	PA	CF	11
3	PA	CF	PA	16
4	CF	PA	PA	13
5	PA	CF	CF	20
6	CF	PA	CF	18
7	CF	CF	PA	20
8	CF	CF	CF	24
9	PA	PA	WF	14
10	PA	WF	PA	10
11	WF	PA	PA	21
12	PA	WF	WF	7
13	WF	PA	WF	10
14	WF	WF	PA	6
15	WF	WF	WF	4
16	CF	CF	WF	9
17	CF	WF	CF	11
18	WF	CF	CF	20
19	WF	WF	CF	15
20	CF	WF	WF	3
21	WF	CF	WF	22
22	PA	WF	CF	13
23	PA	CF	WF	15
24	CF	WF	PA	2
25	CF	PA	WF	1
26	WF	CF	PA	22
27	WF	PA	CF	24

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Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)
 Continue to Fight (CF)
 Withdraw Forces (WF)

Using the results from Step 7 (Pairwise comparisons) from the tables above (Table 2 through Table 4), the analyst now moves to step 8. Step 8 ranks the scenarios,

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based off the voting scores, in order of probability (highest to lowest). This will give the analyst the most likely actions to occur specific to each scenario.

Ranking the Alternate Futures

The Tables (2-4) from Step 7 show the total number of permutations of alternate future for each scenario, as well as the correlating number of votes received during the pairwise comparison. Step 8, in the LAMP process is to rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest to lowest, thus showing the most likely to least likely to occur. The alternate future tables 5 through 7 represent each scenario and are arranged according the rank.

Table 5

Alternate Futures Table				
Scenario 1 – Democratic Government (DG)				
Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan	Votes
5	PA	CF	CF	22
12	PA	WF	WF	22
16	CF	CF	WF	22
17	CF	WF	CF	22
18	WF	CF	CF	21
15	WF	WF	WF	19
11	WF	PA	PA	18
23	PA	CF	WF	18
24	CF	WF	PA	18
14	WF	WF	PA	17
20	CF	WF	WF	16
10	PA	WF	PA	15
21	WF	CF	WF	15
7	CF	CF	PA	13
26	WF	CF	PA	13
3	PA	CF	PA	12
13	WF	PA	WF	10
25	CF	PA	WF	10
4	CF	PA	PA	9
6	CF	PA	CF	9
9	PA	PA	WF	8
22	PA	WF	CF	8
8	CF	CF	CF	6
19	WF	WF	CF	6
2	PA	PA	CF	1
27	WF	PA	CF	1
1	PA	PA	PA	0

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Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)

Continue to Fight (CF)

Withdraw Forces (WF)

Table 6

Alternate Futures Table				
Scenario 2 – Tribal Warlord (TW)				
Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan	Votes
18	WF	CF	CF	26
19	WF	WF	CF	25
11	WF	PA	PA	22
14	WF	WF	PA	21
8	CF	CF	CF	20
22	PA	WF	CF	19
27	WF	PA	CF	19
17	CF	WF	CF	18
6	CF	PA	CF	17
7	CF	CF	PA	16
5	PA	CF	CF	15
10	PA	WF	PA	15
2	PA	PA	CF	14
4	CF	PA	PA	14
12	PA	WF	WF	13
9	PA	PA	WF	12
3	PA	CF	PA	11
21	WF	CF	WF	10
13	WF	PA	WF	9
16	CF	CF	WF	9
23	PA	CF	WF	6
20	CF	WF	WF	5
24	CF	WF	PA	5
25	CF	PA	WF	5
26	WF	CF	PA	3
15	WF	WF	WF	2
1	PA	PA	PA	0

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Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)

Continue to Fight (CF)

Withdraw Forces (WF)

Table 7

Alternate Futures Table				
Scenario 3 –Islamic Caliphate (IC)				
Possible Future #	United States	Taliban	Afghanistan	Votes
8	CF	CF	CF	24
27	WF	PA	CF	24
21	WF	CF	WF	22
26	WF	CF	PA	22
11	WF	PA	PA	21
5	PA	CF	CF	20
7	CF	CF	PA	20
18	WF	CF	CF	20
6	CF	PA	CF	18
3	PA	CF	PA	16
19	WF	WF	CF	15
23	PA	CF	WF	15
9	PA	PA	WF	14
4	CF	PA	PA	13
22	PA	WF	CF	13
2	PA	PA	CF	11
17	CF	WF	CF	11
10	PA	WF	PA	10
13	WF	PA	WF	10
16	CF	CF	WF	9
12	PA	WF	WF	7
14	WF	WF	PA	6
15	WF	WF	WF	4
20	CF	WF	WF	3
24	CF	WF	PA	2
25	CF	PA	WF	1
1	PA	PA	PA	0

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Political Influence used to reach agreement (PA)

Continue to Fight (CF)

Withdraw Forces (WF)

Analysis of Alternate Futures

Scenario 1 – Democratic Government

In Scenario 1, Afghanistan would continue to exist with a Democratic government. Afghanistan will continue to receive financial aid and backing from Western governments. The Democratic government will continue to make headway in removing corruption from the government as well as the security and justice systems. As the Afghan government continues to mature, it will expand its influence throughout Afghanistan.

Through the use of the pairwise comparison, these five alternate futures were compared to and received the highest votes out of the 27 alternate futures. The five alternate futures received a vote of at least 21. These five alternate futures are considered to be the most likely to occur. This section includes both the analysis of the alternate future as well as potential consequences for this particular alternate future.

Alternate Future #5: *The United States pursues an agreement through political influence with the Taliban while the Taliban and Afghanistan continue to fight.*

Alternate Future #5 received 22 votes during the pairwise comparison. Four of the five alternate futures discussed in this section received 22 votes.

For this alternate future, the Taliban and Afghanistan continue to fight against each other, while the United States attempts to use its political influence to reach an agreement. It is likely that part of the continued fights will be between ethnic groups within Afghanistan. This could happen as a result of an ethnic group, most likely the

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Uzbeks or the Tajiks feeling that the Afghan government is not doing all that was possible to protect the Afghan people. The Afghan government has to be able to prove to the Afghan people, as well as their international peers that they have the power behind them to continue to fight the Taliban insurgency. If they have any hope of gaining country wide support and confidence, the government has to prove they can keep the Afghanis safe. National security will remain an issue for Afghanistan's near future. This also proves to the international community that the Afghan government is working to eliminate radicalism from its society.

The Taliban will most likely continue to fight because of the weakness and corruption within the government. To date the Afghan government is still lacking in the national security capabilities as well as in their fight against corruption. These are two key areas that need to be worked with in order to maintain and grow on the power and control they currently have. The United States' attempt to use political influence to reach an agreement with the Taliban would also be seen by the Taliban as a weakness. This would guarantee that the Taliban would not withdraw its forces from the Afghan battlefield.

One consequence the United States could face from this initiative is the perception that they are willing to negotiate with terrorists/insurgents. Up till this point the United States has maintained a strict policy of no negotiations. There is also the potential for pockets of fighting between the Afghan government and the Taliban. This would cause unrest among the affected provinces and could potentially lead to the men in those provinces rearming themselves in order to protect their families and ways of life.

Alternate Future #12: *The United States pursues an agreement through political influence with Taliban while the Taliban and Afghanistan withdraws their forces.*

Alternate Future # 12 also received 22 votes. This alternate future is very similar to Alternate Future #5, except in this instance the Taliban and Afghanistan withdraw their troops rather than continuing to fight. The justification for the Taliban withdrawing could be as simple as needing to resupply its fighters with food and weapons, to having the fighters return to the Pakistani border to recruit new fighters. The Taliban could also withdraw in order to plan their next attack, most likely against Kabul, while they wait to see what progresses from the United States negotiations.

Afghanistan's withdrawal could share the same theories with the Taliban; resupplying its troops, or seeing how the negotiations turn out. In addition, the Afghan government could also withdraw in order to refortify key areas like the Kabul and the Bagram Air base. It is imperative that the Afghan government maintain an image of being both competent and able to defend Afghanistan from enemies, both foreign and domestic.

The attempt by the United States to carry out politically influenced agreements shows the dedication of the United States in attempting to end the war in Afghanistan. It would also prove to the Taliban, Afghan government and many critics from around the world that the United States is not trying to create their won empire in Central Asia.

As previously stated in Alternate Future #5, the United States runs the risk of opening themselves up to loss of face for negotiating with a known terrorist/insurgence group. This would set a new precedence for the American negotiation system. This withdrawal of both the Taliban and Afghan government forces could potentially lead the

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Afghans to feel as though the security forces are focused on centralized cities instead of dispersed among the people of Afghanistan. As a result the Afghan government might lose support from the Afghans who are not located in a city.

Alternate Future #16: *The Taliban and the United States continue to fight both in Afghanistan and along the Pakistani/Afghan border, while Afghanistan withdraws their forces.*

Alternate Future # 16 showcases an interesting dynamic. In this alternate future; the Taliban and the United States use their political influence to reach an agreement between each other while Afghanistan withdraws their forces. The negotiations to reach an agreement between the United States and the Taliban would be a long process. It is unlikely that the public would ever receive full disclosure on the terms and conditions of the agreement. This agreement would set precedence for future dealings with insurgency/terrorist organizations.

While these two actors are negotiating their agreement, the Afghans and their government would need to focus on building the security forces, infrastructure and dealing with their internal corruption. When and if the negotiations between the United States and the Taliban were ratified, the Afghans would still have a radical organization to deal with. The Afghan government has an uphill battle ahead of it for creating an environment where the Afghan people feel secure and can see an improvement in their lives. This does not mean that Afghanistan should become isolated, and try to ignore the potential problems that the Taliban and Al Qaeda represent.

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The United States faces similar complications to those which the Soviet Army encountered in the 1980s. The Taliban has an amorphous capability to melt into their surroundings, and then emerge and to carry out another guerilla attack against the United States and NATO Forces. While the United States has begun to deploy new technologies that assist in tracking these guerilla attacks, they still have not perfected a method to prevent I.E.D.s. The United States and NATO death tolls will continue to rise against the Taliban. Continued fighting between the Taliban and the United States could also end in the United States pushing the Taliban back into Pakistan, thus causing the Taliban to focus its attacks on Pakistan instead of Afghanistan. Pakistan's nuclear capabilities multiply the risks associated with this possibility.

Alternate Future #17: *The United States and Afghanistan continue to fight against Taliban insurgency, while the Taliban withdrawing its fighters.*

Alternate Future #17 has two of the three actors continuing to fight the War on Terror in Afghanistan. While the Afghan government and the United States embroil themselves in warfare, the Taliban withdraws its forces back to the Afghan/Pakistani border. The terrain along the Afghan/Pakistani border is difficult to traverse; the Taliban and Afghans have the benefit of traveling through and living in the mountainous region.

The Taliban's withdrawal of its forces could be for gathering new supplies or recruits, or for planning the next large scale attack against Afghanistan, the United States and NATO Forces. This withdrawal should not be regarded as a quiet exit from the attempt to regain control of Afghanistan.

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It is the responsibility of the United States, its NATO Forces allies, and the Afghan government to be prepared for these potential attacks. The need to ensure that Afghanistan has a strong security force is essential to deterring attacks by the Taliban. The strengthening of the Afghan security forces will also increase the Afghan opinion of both the Afghan government and the stability and security of their country. After decades of war, the Afghans need to see their Afghan government as a valid system of power.

The main consequence of this alternate future would be the failure of the United States and Afghanistan to utilize the withdrawal of the Taliban fighters to eliminate the single cells that have remained behind. This is also an opportunity for the Afghan government to attempt to begin to rebuild some of the destroyed infrastructure. If the Afghan government fails to make the most out of this opportunity, where they are the hunter, not being hunted, then they run the risk of the Afghans looking to warlords and local tribal elders for security and support.

Alternate Future #18: *The United States begins its withdrawal process, and the Taliban turn their focus to Kabul, and the current government. Afghanistan in turn, begins to fight against the Taliban.*

After reviewing the first four alternate futures, Alternate Future #18 might seem out of place, but it is not. Throughout history, Afghans have fought against a common enemy or invader (the Soviet Union during the Soviet-Afghan War). Immediately after the enemy's withdrawal, the Afghan tribes and fighters return to internal skirmishes. In this instance, the Taliban has been primarily focused on eliminating the risk the United

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States and the NATO Forces present. When the United States and the NATO Forces withdraw from Afghanistan, an opportunity will present itself to the Taliban to turn its forces against the Afghan government.

If this alternate future were to occur it would be almost identical to the fall of the Afghan government supported by an outside country, and ensuing tribal warfare would determine who has the power to maintain control of Kabul and Afghanistan. If the United States and the NATO Forces can succeed in creating a stable and robust security council to maintain control, the fledgling Afghan government would have a better chance of maintaining control.

This alternate future would have serious consequences for Afghanistan. The nations that were withdrawing from the country would potentially be leaving Afghanistan open again for terrorist activities. The potential infighting would prevent the Afghan government from improving its national security. The Afghan people would have a sense of status quo, constant warfare with no opportunity to better their lives.

Reviewing the five alternate futures above, the analyst can deduce that the United States change in mindset to enable political influence to achieve an agreement has its consequences. While half of Afghanistan may be in agreement with this option, the Northern half of Afghanistan is violently opposed to the Taliban reentering Afghanistan under any agreement. In each of these alternate futures, Afghanistan needs to see a united front on the part of the government. Potential corruption, lack of security or negotiations with the Taliban could potentially doom the Democratic government. The Afghans and their government are currently navigating a fine path between a Democratic government, which is supported by the international community,

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and traditional tribal elders, warlords, and rural societies. The lack of infrastructure increases difficulties faced by the Afghan Democracy.

Scenario 2 – Tribal Warlords

Scenario 2 of this predictive study draws from Afghanistan's tribal population. The isolated natures of the country and various geographical features have prevented the different ethnic populations from having to associate and assimilate with each other, except for in large cities. Throughout Afghanistan's history, there are few central governments that have succeeded in extending their control across Afghanistan. The current Afghan government is no exception. The strong tribal and ethnic connections and lack of national security have enabled the Afghans to opt to follow their tribal elders and warlords who are able to offer both security and a means for living.

If this scenario were to occur, Afghanistan's economy would come to a standstill, with opium being their key export. Their national security would devolve from a nationwide focus to rural territories. Afghan tribal warlords would reappear. While these warlords would offer the Afghans security they desire, they would hurt the overall progress of the country. Afghanistan would begin to lose the advances it has made.

Alternate Future #18: *The United States begins its withdrawal process, and the Taliban turn their focus to Kabul, and the current government. The Afghanistan in turn, begins to fight against the Taliban.*

Alternate Future #18 received 26 votes, the highest score from the pairwise comparison. For Scenario 2's analysis, this is the most likely alternate future to occur.

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As previously mentioned under Scenario 1, Afghan history is filled with different instances where Afghan tribal enemies would form a limited confederacy to eliminate a common external enemy. The Afghan government does not view the United States and the NATO Forces as the enemy. The Afghan government's perspective views the role of United States and NATO Forces as assistance in increasing the overall security of Afghanistan, while working to eliminate a terrorist group and an Islamic fundamentalist group.

Once the United States has withdrawn, the Afghan government will receive financial assistance from its allies, but will essentially be left to defend itself. This is the primary reason for the push towards increasing Afghanistan's security capabilities. The Taliban is currently aligned with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Mujihadeen fighter from the Soviet Afghan War. Hekmatyar has lived and fought through this alternate future before, following the end of the Soviet Afghan War.

If this alternate future were to occur, there are two key consequences. Firstly, the attempts to create a secure and stable Afghanistan will be gone. The return of turf wars drawn upon tribal-based lines, in hopes of gaining territory and funds would spread across Afghanistan, causing migration issues for the already stressed surrounding nations. Secondly, there is the potential for the reintroduction of Al Qaeda and terrorist training camps into Afghanistan. With internal disputes taking place, it would not be difficult for Al Qaeda to cross over the Afghan border and establish a new training facility.

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Alternate Future #19: *The United States and the Taliban withdraw from Afghanistan, and Afghanistan continues to fight with remaining Taliban insurgents and between ethnic groups.*

Alternate Future #19 would begin with the withdrawal of the United States and NATO Forces from Afghanistan. The Taliban would then withdraw its forces. The Taliban's withdrawal may be an attempt to regroup its forces, replenish their supplies and add additional recruits to the ranks. Without the constant warfare between the United States, NATO Forces and the Taliban or insurgencies, the lack of infrastructure could lead ethnic groups to return to in-fighting to gain control over prosperous territories. Afghanistan currently does not have the infrastructure, national security or economic prosperity to ensure the long-term survival of the Afghans without economic aid from external nations.

The consequences for alternate future #19 could be as bleak as the elimination of the Afghan government that was founded and nurtured over the last 6 years. If Afghanistan were to continue to fight against enemy forces, either new or old, mujahideen fighters with experience, including major figures like Ismail Khan, Hekmatyar and Dostum, would again gain control over large sections of Afghanistan.

Alternate Future #11: *Afghanistan and the Taliban work through their political influences to reach an agreement and the United States withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.*

This alternative future seems to cover the ultimate objectives of the three actors. While Alternate Future #11 would seem to allow peace through negotiation, it would in

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fact lead Afghanistan back into a civil war. In this alternate future, the Afghan government and the Taliban would work together to reintegrate the Taliban insurgents back into Afghan society. It is anticipated that this reintegration could work much like the denazification policy in Germany following World War II, with major leaders being put on trial, and lesser participants being given amnesty. The Afghans in the northern half of the country have already stated that if this occurs, they will rearm. The two main ethnic groups in northern Afghanistan are the Tajiks and Uzbeks, under Taliban rule; both ethnicities were punished and treated like second class citizens. They will not allow this to occur again. Some may fear that the reintegration of the Taliban into Afghan society and government will lead to the minority ethnic groups being removed from their positions of power.

Through this alternate future the Afghan government would be taking steps towards reintegrating the Taliban into society and reaching an agreement with the Taliban to eliminate the insurgency, thus increasing the national and regional security. The Taliban insurgents would benefit by returning to their home provinces within Afghanistan, and could potentially be used as a security detail. The northern half of Afghanistan would rearm, and rebel against the negotiations and any resulting agreement that is reached between the two parties. The withdrawal of the United States and the NATO Forces would reduce the security within Afghanistan. If Afghanistan's government security forces haven't improved, this would enable the Northern Afghans further justification for rearming.

Potential consequences of this would be the Taliban regaining a majority of the government and reenacting Shari'a Law. Another potential concern would be aimed at

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the treatment of women and girls, both in their education as well as in human rights.

The roles of women is one area the Taliban feels very strongly about, and could potential cause tension. This could also cause another civil war in Afghanistan; this would be very similar to the aftermath of the Soviet Afghan War. This could also potentially cause mass migration of the Afghan people to neighboring countries due to the fear of potential Civil War. If a Civil War were to break out it is reasonable to assume that Warlords would once again emerge. Dostum, an Uzbek warlord, would undoubtedly be the prime leader for the Uzbek tribe. It is also reasonable, based on historical data, to assume that the Uzbeks and Tajiks would ally themselves against the Pashtu fighters.

Alternate Future #14: *The United States and the Taliban withdraw their forces while Afghanistan uses political influence to try to achieve an agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government.*

Alternate Future #14 focuses on two of the actors removing themselves from the equation. If the United States and the Taliban were both to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan, despite the support that the Afghan government would still receive from international countries, they would be without forces to prove to the Afghan people that they are capable of providing security. The Afghan government's attempt to use political influence to reach an agreement with the Taliban would be seen by many in southern Afghanistan as a move to ensure peace and increase the overall security of the southern provinces. The ethnic groups in northern Afghanistan would not feel that their security had been increased, if anything, they would feel more vulnerable as a result of the agreement.

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This alternate future could very quickly turn into the next civil war. If this were to occur, it is unlikely the democratic government would be able to sustain control over any of the country. If civil war broke out in Afghanistan, Kabul would most likely be one of the first places to be attacked. A civil war would cause mass migration as well as destruction of any of the infrastructure created over the last nine years. Civil war would ultimately turn into a battle for power, and this could potentially allow the Taliban to return to reclaim the southern provinces before attempting to retake the northern provinces.

Alternate Future #8: *The United States, Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to fight.*

Alternate Future #8 appears as the fifth possible future for Scenario 2. This alternate future would consist of continuous warfare between the Taliban and the United States and Afghanistan. This would cause a lack of stability within Afghanistan and lead to lower approval ratings not only for the Afghan government, but for the United States government as well. Alternate Future #8, would force the Afghanis to align themselves with a strong local force that could offer protection against insurgents. The United States would most likely be forced to eventually withdraw much like the Soviets did during the Soviet Afghan War.

This alternate future would lead to a quagmire in Afghanistan. The resulting long-term devastation would cause massive migration as refugees flee to the surrounding nations, much like during the Soviet Afghan War. The opium trade would remain one of the key sources of funds within Afghanistan, and production would most likely increase to fund the insurgent fighters as well as local warlords.

Reviewing Scenario 2's five alternate futures above, a trend appears for Afghanistan. In order for Scenario 2 (Tribal Warlords) to potentially occur, the Afghanistan has two options; continue to fight or attempt to publicly negotiate with the Taliban. The continued fighting can come in two ways; either Afghanistan the country remains embroiled in warfare with the Taliban and the United States, or internal skirmishes break out within Afghanistan's tribes as a result of the lack of infrastructure, economy, and stability. While many view the potential negotiations as the solutions to the current situation in Afghanistan, it is important that the United States and the Afghan government take into account the entire Afghan population, not just southern Afghanistan. It is unlikely that the northern Afghans will be willing to agree to any negotiations that include the Taliban reentering the government or gaining power in southern Afghanistan.

Scenario 3 –Islamic Caliphate

Scenario 3 would cause international instability, as well as damage the successes Afghanistan has made to date. Scenario 3 entails the Taliban and their ally Al Qaeda regaining control of Afghanistan through religious propaganda and promise of security. By reinstating Shari'a Law, all of the progress made towards women will be reversed. Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar proclaiming Afghanistan as the birthplace of the next Caliphate will give credence to both the Taliban and Al Qaeda's causes and could potentially lead to additional large and small scale terrorist attacks around the world.

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Scenario 2 & Scenario 3 share two alternate futures. In order for this scenario to come to fruition the Taliban and its ally Al Qaeda need the United States and the NATO Forces to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Alternate Future #8: *The United States, Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to fight.*

Unlike Scenario 2, Alternate Future #8 ties for first place with 24 votes in Scenario 3. This is the most likely to alternate future to occur for scenario 3.

Alternate Future #8 tied for first place primarily due to Afghanistan history. As previously stated in Scenario 2, if all three actors continued to fight, it would eventually turn into a deadlock. Afghanistan's economy, democracy, infrastructure and morale would suffer. With critics already comparing the War in Afghanistan to the Vietnam War, if the United States were to continue down that path, with no way to withdraw while securing victory, the American public would most likely demand the evacuation of Afghanistan. If this were to occur, the Afghan government would not be able to survive without external financial and security support. This could potentially allow the Taliban and Al Qaeda to offer the Afghan people security, while allowing them to practice their religious beliefs without restriction.

If this future alternate were to occur, Afghanistan could once again become a haven for terrorism. This would not only affect the three actors discussed in this predictive study, but also the majority of the Western Hemisphere. The ability to offer protection and economic security to the Afghanis is important to ensuring their support.

Alternate Future #27: *The United States withdraws from Afghanistan, while the Taliban uses political influence to reach an agreement with the Afghan government. Meanwhile the Afghanis continue to fight.*

Alternate Future #27 focuses on the tendency for the Afghan population to fight among themselves once the external enemy is gone. For this analysis, the United States will withdraw from Afghanistan, and the Taliban will use its political influence (Saudi Arabia and Pakistan) to negotiate an agreement with the Afghan government. While this is occurring, the Afghan population will resort back to skirmishes to gain food, water, money and weapons.

Afghanistan's current government is incapable of impacting all of Afghanistan. The vast majority of settlements in Afghanistan are rural and lack of infrastructure adds to this inability to have governmental influence across all of the geographic area of Afghanistan. As a result, the current Afghan government is incapable of providing even the bare necessities to the Afghan people.

Through pointed and deliberate negotiations, the Taliban could gain control over potentially important areas within the government. The ethnic connection, of the Pashtun tribe could potentially assist the Taliban in gaining control of important territories and funds. The internal skirmishes would enable the Taliban once again to take over territory and remove corrupt warlords and government officials.

As is the case for the five alternate futures in this scenario, if an Islamic Caliphate were to begin in Afghanistan, the level of Islamic extremists would increase as they would now have a haven in which to operate. Concerns would also be raised over the current state of securities regarding Pakistan's nuclear weapons and the stability of their

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government and security apparatus to ensure the nuclear weapons aren't mishandled or easily accessible.

Alternate Future #21: *The United States and Afghan fighters withdraw from the War on Terror, while the Taliban continues to fight.*

In this alternate future, the withdrawal of both the United States and Afghan fighters provides the Taliban with an opportunity to move into strategic, unoccupied territory. This also opens the possibility for the Taliban, and its ally Al Qaeda to surround Kabul in an attempt to gain control of the current government.

The Taliban does not have the same economic clout that it had in the early 1990s. However, they have been able to maintain and expand their recruitment base from both Afghanistan and Pakistan. If the United States were to withdraw from Afghanistan, without first preparing the Afghan government with a security force that could protect it, and without eliminating a percentage of the corruption within the government, it is unlikely that the current Afghan government would be able to survive for an extended period of time without intervention or defense from abroad.

By both the United States and the Afghan fighters withdrawing, it leaves the Afghan people vulnerable to the Taliban forces. If the Taliban decides to continue to fight, there is the potential for greater infiltration of Pakistan and its various government apparatuses. This not only puts another nation at risk, but a nation with nuclear capabilities.

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Alternate Future #26: *While the United States withdraws from Afghanistan, the Afghan government attempts to use political influence to reach an agreement with the Taliban. At the same time the Taliban continues to fight against the current Afghan government.*

Alternate Future #26, consists of the United States withdrawing from Afghanistan, while the Taliban continues to fight against the Afghan government, and the Afghan government uses political influence to reach an agreement with the Taliban. Alternate Future #21 and Alternate Future #26 are similar in the consequences and analysis, with one main exception. Alternate Future #21 has the Afghan government withdrawing its forces, while in alternate future #26, the Afghan government is using its political influence to achieve an agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

Again, the Taliban is on the attack, while the Afghan government appears to be on the defensive. The attempt to work with and accommodate the Taliban forces does nothing to divert the Taliban from their ultimate goal of retaking Afghanistan, it only delays the takeover.

Alternate Future #11: *The United States withdraws from Afghanistan while the Taliban and Afghan government both use their political influence to reach an agreement.*

Alternate Future #11 appears in both Scenario 2 and Scenario 3. This alternate future offers the Taliban the opportunity to negotiate directly with the Afghan government for a position of power without interference from the United States.

While the Afghan government would not be willing to transform the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan into an Islamic Caliphate, the Taliban would most likely be able

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to gain seats of power within the government. This would be true for two reasons, one the Taliban members come primarily from the Pashtun tribe, and secondly, the common occurrence of corruption within the government would make it relatively easy for the Taliban representatives to bribe their way into possession of either information or supplies.

If these agreements are conducted in secrecy, the Afghan government runs the risk of upsetting the international aid organizations and nations providing economic aid and relief to the Afghan people. In addition to international repercussions, the Afghan government also runs the risk of the ethnic groups from the Northern province, primarily the Uzbek and Tajiks, rearming in preparation of a Civil War. Negotiations between the current Afghan government, which is run by Karzai, a Pashtun, and the Taliban, which is a predominantly Pashtun organization, could be seen by the northern provinces as a security risk to their way of life. After suffering from Taliban rule, most Afghans are unwilling to entertain the idea of the Taliban in the government.

The most likely consequence of this would be a civil war in Afghanistan. This does provide the Taliban with the opportunity to emerge the victor against the northern provinces, as they did in the civil war in the 1992.

In reviewing Scenario 3, in order for the Islamic Caliphate to stand a chance at developing and taking root, the United States needs to be removed from the equation. The only alternate future that has the United States involved in was the first alternate future where all three actors continue to fight, thus resulting in a draw in Afghanistan.

Focal Events and Indicators

Steps 9 & 10 are determining the focal events and developing the indicators for the focal events. This analysis is different from the consequence analysis in the previous section. A focal event is an event that affects the alternate future enough that it changes the relative probability. The indicators are associated with each of the alternate futures and focal events. The analyst should produce a list of possible indicators that work as a check-list for whether an event is about to occur or has already occurred. This checklist allows the analyst to periodically review and revote on the alternate futures as new information becomes available. In addition, it allows the analyst to refine indicators that are associated with certain focal events and identify new focal events for more extreme alternate futures.²

This predictive study focuses on Afghanistan, the United States and the Taliban in relation to the Afghanistan's government. During this analysis it is important to determine the options Afghanistan has, and understand both what is currently going on, and what could potentially occur in the future, and how Afghanistan would likely respond. It is important, as the analyst; to keep in mind that not all the focal events need occur at the same time to change the current future to an alternate future; however, at least one focal point must occur to change the alternate futures.

The current status of Afghanistan is **Alternate Future #8**; the United States, Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to fight. The United States has approved a surge of US soldiers in an effort to disrupt and destroy the Taliban insurgency in southern

² <http://www.lamp-method.org/>

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Afghanistan. The United States and NATO Forces have stated earlier this year that they do not plan to begin to withdraw from Afghanistan until 2011.

Alternate Future #5: *The United States pursues an agreement through political influence with the Taliban while the Taliban and Afghanistan continue to fight.*

Until the press release on July 19, 2010, the United States had been opposed to participating in negotiations with the Taliban. While these issues are not completely resolved, the United States and the Taliban have moved one step closer to having an open dialog concerning a peace agreement.³

Focal Events:

United States: The United States population's opposition to the War in Afghanistan continues to grow. President Obama changes the United States Strategy on talking with and negotiating with the Taliban. The United States reduces the Department of Defense budget.

- Policy change. The United States makes an official statement on their stance on negotiating with the Taliban.
- The United States opens up diplomatic discussions with Russia, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan concerning Afghanistan and Taliban.
- WikiLeaks releases 92,000 classified military documents on the War in Afghanistan.

³ MacAskill, Ewen and Simon Tisdall. "White House shifts Afghanistan strategy towards talks with Taliban." *The Guardian*. July 19, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/19/obama-afghanistan-strategy-taliban-negotiate> (accessed July 24, 2010).

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- Statistics on military suicide rates and military personnel suffering from combat stress disorders released to the public.

International: NATO countries that are participating in the War in Afghanistan hold elections, and new leaders are elected into office.

- David Cameron was elected as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on May 11, 2010. His view regarding the War in Afghanistan “is not a war of choice, it is a war of necessity.”⁴

Central Asia: The Taliban openly discusses with the media the possibility of negotiating with the United States.⁵ The Afghans in northern Afghanistan begin to rearm and strategically position themselves for military actions if necessary.

- President Karzai has a press release to the Afghan people that they are having negotiations with the Taliban.

Alternate Future #11: *Afghanistan and the Taliban work through their political influences to reach an agreement and the United States withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.*

The United States and the NATO Forces have made it clear that they have no intention of leaving Afghanistan before it is capable of maintaining its own security and governance.

⁴ Watt, Nicholas. “This is a war of necessity, David Cameron tells troops in Afghanistan.” *The Guardian*. June 11, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/jun/11/david-cameron-troops-afghanistan> (accessed July 28, 2010).

⁵ Boone, Jon. “Taliban talks: the obstacles to a peace deal in Afghanistan.” July 19, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/19/taliban-talks-obstacles-peace-deal-afghanistan> (accessed July 24, 2010).

Focal Events:

United States: President Obama changes the United States Strategy on talking with and negotiating with the Taliban.

- Policy change. The United States “o.k.’s” Karzai taking the lead in Taliban discussions.
- The United States opens up diplomatic discussions with Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan concerning Afghanistan and Taliban negotiations.

International: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agree to facilitate the negotiations between the Taliban and Afghanistan.

- The United States changes their strategy on dealing with the Taliban.
- Pakistan and the United Kingdom have openly commented on their willingness to support discussions with the Taliban.

Central Asia: The Taliban openly discusses with the media the possibility of negotiating with the United States. The Afghans in northern Afghanistan begin to rearm and strategically position themselves for military actions if necessary. The 9th International Conference on Afghanistan held in Kabul. At the conference, President Karzai stated that Afghanistan should have full control of its own security by 2014.

- Media discussions on open negotiations escalate. President Karzai gives a press release to the Afghan people that they are close to a settlement with the Taliban.
- Statistics involving the Afghan Army and their completed training.
- Transition plan for Afghan provinces to be handed over to Afghan security forces.

Alternate Future #12: *The United States pursues an agreement through political influence with Taliban while the Taliban and Afghanistan withdraws their forces.*

There have been news articles recently of President Obama and the government considering changing the strategy of Afghanistan in relation to negotiating with the Taliban. Up until this point, the United States has been against negotiations, despite the support of the idea from the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and President Karzai. The United States has not released an official statement to change their strategy, until that time some of the future analyses, including this one can not occur.

Focal Events:

United States: President Obama changes the United States Strategy on talking with and negotiating with the Taliban. The United States' deploys the soldier surge.

- There is a significant reduction in insurgency attacks, and an increase in detainments.
- The United States announces its willingness to consider talks with the Taliban through a third party (Saudi Arabia or Pakistan).

International: The 9th Annual Afghanistan Conference highlighting Afghanistan's current state, and the strategies in place to gain their independence from foreign security by 2014.

- 50% of the financial aid that goes to Afghanistan is funded through the Afghan government.

Central Asia: Afghanistan focuses on the initiative to remove opium production from southern Afghanistan, the bad weather conditions assisted in the loss of opium fields.

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northern Afghans begin to rearm themselves after word of potential peace talks

between the Taliban and the Afghan government circulate.

- Northern Afghans (Uzbeks and the Tajiks) begin to rearm and stockpile weapons and supplies.
- Ceasefire between Afghanistan and the Taliban.
- Karzai's government along with help from aid organizations begin to distribute hexaploid wheat seed to farmers affected by the loss of their opium plants along with financial aid as an incentive to transition their crops.

Alternate Future #16: *The Taliban and the United States continue to fight both in Afghanistan and along the Pakistani/Afghan border, while Afghanistan withdraws their forces.*

The withdrawal of the Afghan forces would coincide with the training regiments currently being run by the United States military. President Karzai has laid out very aggressive security targets, this will require intense training. This would not be a permanent withdrawal.

Focal Events:

United States: The United States and Pakistan begin a joint operation to close in on the Taliban from both sides. Pakistan gives the United States permission to enter the Northwest Frontier Province. A portion of the United States soldier surge is to increase the Afghan security training. The United States and its allies gain valid intelligence on the location of Mullah Omar.

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- The United States releases the date for the transition from combat to supporting the Afghan forces.
- The United States increases the number of contracts for civilian security agents for training in Afghanistan.
- Defection of key Taliban members to Afghanistan.

International: NATO Forces state for Afghan President Karzai, that until the Afghan government has a capable security force, NATO Forces will not be leaving.

- NATO nations increase aid to Afghanistan.
- NATO nations increase their training regiments with the Afghan security recruits.

Central Asia: Afghanistan vows to have control of their country's security by 2014.

This is done through increasing their recruiting numbers and allowing insurgents to reintegrate into Afghan society. Unrest emerges in northern Afghanistan.

- Troops drawn back to increase their training.
- President Karzai makes press release vowing to allow insurgents and dissidents back into the Afghan society, and allow them to participate in the future security of Afghanistan.
- Influx of insurgents returning to Afghanistan and joining the security recruits.
- Uzbeks and Tajiks begin to rearm due to fear of an influx of insurgents reintegrating into Afghan society and the security sector.

Alternate Future #17: *The United States and Afghanistan continue to fight against Taliban insurgency, while the Taliban withdrawing its fighters.*

The Taliban withdrawal from direct confrontation from the United States and Afghanistan is not a permanent move. Based on the Taliban's strategies it is most likely a move to preserve their forces, while attacking in another area. There is also the possibility that they are resupplying the forces in the field.

Focal Events:

United States: Drone attack in the Northwest Frontier Province kills key Taliban leader. The United States and Pakistan agree to joint military operation to squeeze the Taliban hideout in the Northwest Frontier Province.

- Surge of troops are moved along the Afghan/Pakistan border.
- Intelligence on meeting of Taliban leaders is leaked.

International: NATO Forces participate in military operation to eradicate the Taliban. Agricultural initiative to transition from opium to wheat is rejuvenated as a result of poor weather conditions.

- Redistribution of troops along the Afghan/Pakistan border.
- Importation of wheat seeds. Increase of economic aid to the agricultural communities for changing crops.

Central Asia: Taliban receives lowest profits in its history from Opium productions. Afghan government distributes 50% of the economic aid coming into the country, resulting in noticeable changes within Afghanistan, and a larger support base for the Afghan government.

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- Bad weather and reemergence of the initiative to transition from opium to wheat.
- Guarantee from the International community to purchase the wheat produced in Afghanistan.
- At the 9th Annual Afghanistan conference the International Community promised to allow 50% of the aid to flow through the Afghan government.

Alternate Future #18: *The United States begins its withdrawal process, and the Taliban turn their focus to Kabul, and the current government. The Afghan government in turn, begins to fight against the Taliban.*

The United States and NATO Forces completed their promises to train the Afghan forces. The United States and NATO Forces are reduced to supporting roles.

Focal Events:

United States: The United States population's opposition to the War in Afghanistan continues to grow. The United States reduces the Department of Defense budget.

- Increase in death toll of United States soldiers.
- Study completed and released on the amount of aid given to Afghanistan and the impact/infrastructure it has created.
- Change in leadership, which promises change in the War in Afghanistan.
- WikiLeaks releases 92,000 classified military documents on the War in Afghanistan.

International: NATO nations population's opposition to the War in Afghanistan grows.

- NATO soldiers death tolls rise.

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- Opposition movements from within the NATO nations to withdraw from the War in Afghanistan.

Central Asia: Afghan government state that they are in control of the country's security operations. Insurgents attack from within Afghanistan's security forces. The Taliban attempts to undermine the Afghan government and regain control of Southern Afghanistan.

- The United States and NATO Forces increase the security training of new Afghan recruits.
- The United States and NATO Forces transition from full scale forces to smaller support forces.
- Taliban insurgents reintegrate into the Afghan society and join the security forces.
- Reemergence of Taliban forces in Southern Afghanistan.

Alternate Future #19: *The United States and the Taliban withdraw from Afghanistan, and Afghanistan continues to fight with remaining Taliban insurgents and between ethnic groups.*

The United States and NATO Forces completed their training and security obligations to Afghanistan. Afghanistan has resumed control of their country's security forces.

Focal Events:

United States: The United States population's opposition to the War in Afghanistan continues to grow. President Obama changes the United States Strategy on talking with and negotiating with the Taliban.

- Policy change. The United States makes an official statement on their stance on negotiating with the Taliban.
- The United States opens up diplomatic discussions with Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan concerning Afghanistan and Taliban.
- WikiLeaks releases 92,000 classified military documents on the War in Afghanistan.
- Statistics on military suicide rates and military personnel suffering from combat stress disorders released to the public.

International: NATO countries have transitioned to a support role.

- NATO Forces increase their training of Afghan troops for security details.
- Opposition for continued involvement in Afghanistan begins in NATO countries.

Central Asia: The Taliban openly discusses with the media the possibility of negotiating with the United States. The Afghans in Northern Afghanistan begin to rearm and strategically position themselves for military actions if necessary.

- President Karzai hints to the Afghan people that he would be willing to negotiate with the Taliban.
- The Uzbeks and Tajiks in Northern Afghanistan begin to align themselves under warlords for protection.
- Taliban reintegration increases.

Alternate Future #21: *The United States and Afghan fighters withdraw from the War on Terror while the Taliban continues to fight.*

This alternate future would be a complete the complete opposite of the current conditions in Afghanistan. It would give the Taliban an advantage, and allow them to reclaim lost territory.

Focal Events:

United States: The United States transitions from combat to support. The United States reduces its total troop force.

- The United States begins to withdraw troops.
- The United States government promises the population a reduced role in the war.
- The United States trains the Afghan security forces.

International: The UN declares Afghanistan ready to have control over its security.

- NATO Forces and the United States increase training regiments for Afghan security forces.
- UN inspections for Afghan security forces.
- UN reviews the Afghan government's overall security.

Central Asia: The Taliban carries out a surge; increasing attacks on remote locations in South Afghanistan. The Taliban carries out attacks from within the newly installed security forces. Afghan security forces withdraw from remote locations.

- Increase in Pakistani Taliban recruits.

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- Taliban insurgents reintegrate and join the security branches of the Afghan government.
- Taliban carry out a surge of attacks along the fringe of the Afghan government's control. Gain control of several outposts.

Alternate Future #26: *While the United States withdraws from Afghanistan, the Afghan government attempts to use political influence to reach an agreement with the Taliban. At the same time the Taliban continues to fight against the current Afghan government.*

The attempt by the Afghan government to negotiate with the Taliban and end the fighting is a realistic goal for President Karzai.

Focal Events:

United States: The United States transitions from combat to support. The United States reduces its total troop force.

- The United States begins to withdraw troops.
- The United States government promises the population a reduced role in the war.
- The United States trains the Afghan security forces.

International: The UN declares Afghanistan ready to have control over its security.

- NATO Forces and the United States increase training regiments for Afghan security forces.
- UN inspections for Afghan security forces.
- UN reviews the Afghan government's overall security.

Central Asia: The Afghan government begins peace talks with the Taliban. The Taliban infiltrates the Afghan security forces. The Taliban regains territory in South Afghanistan and surrounds Kabul. Northern Afghan tribes rearm.

- President Karzai receives support from International governments including the United States to begin discussions with the Taliban.
- Northern Afghans rearm themselves and begin skirmishes with local insurgencies.
- The Taliban plans strategic attacks from within Afghan's security forces.
- Taliban insurgents join the Afghan security forces.
- The Taliban take control of territories that are sympathetic to the Taliban.
- The Taliban create a strategy to procure positions around Kabul. Showcase their strength.

Alternate Future #27: *The United States withdraws from Afghanistan, while the Taliban uses political influence to reach an agreement with the Afghan government. Meanwhile the Afghans continue to fight.*

Based on the current conditions and open discussions, if the United States were to agree to allow negotiations with the Taliban, this would be the most likely future.

Focal Events:

United States: President Obama changes the United States Strategy on talking with and negotiating with the Taliban. The United States transitions force role from combat to support. The United States reduces its total troop force.

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- The United States announces its willingness to consider talks with the Taliban through a third party (Saudi Arabia or Pakistan).
- The United States trains the Afghan security forces.
- The United States begins to withdraw troops.

International: The UN declares Afghanistan ready to have control over its security.

NATO Forces transition to a role of support instead of combat and begins to withdraw troops.

- NATO Forces and the United States increase training regiments for Afghan security forces.
- UN inspections for Afghan security forces.
- UN reviews the Afghan government's overall security.
- NATO Forces are drastically reduced as the result of Afghan security taking control.

Central Asia: The Afghan government begins peace talks with the Taliban. Northern Afghan tribes rearm. Civil war breaks out between northern Afghanistan and southern Afghanistan. The Afghan government loses control of the Afghan population.

- President Karzai receives support from international governments including the United States to begin discussions with the Taliban.
- Discussions begin between the Taliban and the Afghan government with a third party mediator.
- Northern Afghans rearm themselves and begin skirmishes with local insurgencies and security forces.
- Northern Afghans ally themselves with strong warlords.

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- Old warlords like Dostum (an Uzbek) begin to gain popularity and worldwide attention.

Transposition of Alternate Futures

Step 12 in the LAMP process is concerned with the transposition of alternate futures. In this step the analyst reviews each scenario and the corresponding top future alternates from the pairwise comparison and determines the possibility of transposition between them. Potential transposition between alternate futures occurs when one actor's actions change the perception of another actor. When this occurs, the actor whose perception has been altered has the opportunity to transpose another alternate future. It is important to keep in mind the actors historical backgrounds and perceptions when reviewing the potential for transposition of alternate futures. The analysis below will focus on the top five alternate futures for each scenario as determined by the pairwise comparison.

Scenario 1 – Democratic Government

The first four alternate futures (5,12,16, and 17) ranked 22 votes and would be considered the most likely to occur in order for Afghanistan to be able to obtain its democratic government. For this analysis, the focus is on alternate futures # 5 and 12 share the concept of the United States changing its policy and opening negotiations with the Taliban; this provides an opportunity for transposition between the two alternate futures.

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Afghanistan holds the key to whether transposition may occur. Based on current commentary on negotiating with the Taliban, the Northern Afghans have vocally opposed the idea, and commented on their decision to rearm if such discussions take place. This would lead to a transposition from #12 to #5. The United States' change in policy and willingness to enter into discussions with the Taliban would first hinder on the ability of the two organizations to come to terms, which would most likely be a ceasefire during negotiations. This ceasefire would originally include the Afghan government, as they would have a significant role during the negotiations. The Northern Afghans, including the Uzbeks and Tajiks have already stated they will not support negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. This is partly due to the historical relationship between the northern Afghans and the Taliban and partly due to the Pashtun majority in the country. The northern Afghans have a perception that the reintegration of the Taliban will lead to a Pashtun government that will once again exclude the minority ethnic groups.

Alternate Future # 12 could also transpose into # 16 if the attempted negotiations fall through. The United States would again go on the offensive against the Taliban. The withdrawal of Afghanistan would be a necessary step to rebuild the broken connections with Northern Afghanistan. The Afghan government would need to dedicate a significant amount of energy to regain the trust of Northern Afghanistan. Alternate # 16 does not appear to have a link between the other top future alternates. As a result, it has not been included in the analysis above. The two possible transpositions above have the highest probability of affecting the alternate futures, based on the perceptions of Afghanistan and its people.

Scenario 2 – Tribal Warlords

Scenario 2 offers the clearest transposition between the top three alternate futures (11, 19 and 18). The fifth alternate future (#8) in this scenario is the closest to the current situation in Afghanistan. The three alternate futures listed above would be possible of occurring in Afghanistan due to the preconceived perceptions that the Afghan population has formed over the last three decades of war.

In alternate future 11 the Taliban and Afghanistan use political influence to work towards an agreement while the United States begins to withdraw. While these negotiations are taking place, a ceasefire would likely be in place. The actions of the Afghan government to enter into discussions with the Taliban would immediately cause the Northern Afghans (Uzbeks and Tajiks) to rearm and begin to align themselves with powerful leaders (warlords), like Dostum the Uzbek. This would lead to the transposition between Alternate Future 11 and Alternate Future 19.

In Alternate Future 19, the United States would not change its withdrawal strategies, in addition to the United States, the Taliban would also withdraw, to regroup and strategize. The Afghan government's battle to subdue and regain the trust of northern Afghanistan's population would enable the Taliban to develop a revised military strategy against Afghanistan. In addition, the Afghan government's attention would be focus on northern Afghanistan, and skeleton forces would be left to protect south Afghanistan. The Afghan government's perception of regaining power in the North by focusing its attention there would enable Alternate Future 18 to occur.

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Alternate Future 18, continues the United States strategy of continuing to withdraw from Afghanistan. The Afghan government's focus on reabsorbing and quelling the skirmishes in the north would leave southern Afghanistan, and potentially Kabul, open for Taliban attacks. If the Taliban uses its knowledge of the terrain, and its support networks through southern Afghanistan and Pakistan they would be able to catch the Afghan government by surprise in Kabul and force the Afghan government to fight on two fronts.

Under this scenario, many Afghans would revert back to the protection of tribal warlord leaders. The Afghans perception would be that the centralized government has failed, by not providing the necessary protection that the Afghans have received from their ethnically affiliated tribal warlords.

Scenario 3 – Islamic Caliphate

Scenario 3, similar to scenario 2 has alternate future #8, which is most similar to the current state in Afghanistan. The top three alternate futures that could lead to transposition are 11, 27 and 26. Much like Scenario 2, Alternate Future 11, the Taliban and Afghanistan would use political influence to work towards an agreement while the United States would begin to withdraw its troops. The withdrawal of the United States troops would also include the withdrawal of NATO troops. Both parties have agreed that a smaller portion of troops would remain to support the Afghan security forces. By this point, the Afghans would have been given control over all of Afghanistan. With this on going negotiation would be an agreement of a ceasefire between the Taliban and Afghanistan. The Afghan government's disregard for the statements made by the tribal

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leaders in northern Afghanistan concerning entering into negotiations with the Taliban would lead the northern Afghans to rearm due to their perception of being ignored, and potentially shut-out from the democratic government system. The ethnic tribes who rearmed, would most likely break the ceasefire, which they would not feel they were included in. This would transpose the Alternate Future from 11 to 27.

Alternate Future 27 would have the Taliban continue to participate in the peace negotiations, while the Afghan government attempts to subdue the northern Afghanistan insurgency (Uzbeks and Tajiks). This effort would require personnel and funds. It would draw the attention away from southern Afghanistan and embroil northern Afghanistan and the Afghan government in a civil war. The Taliban's perception of a weakening Afghan government would transpose the Alternate Future from 27 to 26.

Future 26 would see the United States still withdrawing, while Afghanistan is dealing with the civil war between northern Afghanistan and the central government. The Afghan government would push to continue the peace negotiations with the Taliban. This is due to their desire to eventually bring peace to Afghanistan and prevent the government from having to fight on two fronts. The Taliban perceive this as a weakness within the Afghan government, and would exploit this weakness by reentering the fight against Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, and through the LAMP process, it is clear that Afghanistan has a long road ahead of it before it can truly exist peacefully and create

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the national security its people crave. While Afghanistan is currently a democratic nation, this is largely due to the large presence of NATO and United States soldiers patrolling and keeping the Taliban at bay. The Afghan government continues to deal with corruption issues throughout both the government and security branches. In addition, it has been unable to garner either the support or the endorsement of the rural Afghan communities. The continued focus on tribal connection and ethnic prioritization hinders the Afghan government from presenting a truly unified front against the Taliban, and its ally Al Qaeda, as well as to the United Nations. The people of Afghanistan have dealt with many years of war, and have suffered from the destruction of their economy and basic infrastructure. To the majority of Afghans, the international aid that has flowed into Afghanistan over the past nine years has made little to no impact on their daily lives.

The United States continues to deal with opposition at home, as well as in Afghanistan, to their presence. The recent release of classified military documents highlighting civilian deaths and operations only reinforces the Afghan belief that the United States soldiers are not bringing peace, but instead more death. In the United States, the recent new release on the rise of military suicides only drives home the need to bring the United States soldiers back from Afghanistan. Both the United States and the international community, including its NATO allies, are focused on training Afghan security to ensure there is an indigenous protection of the Afghans and to create a security force independent of the United States and NATO. Despite the aggressive strategies that are currently in place, this is will take years and a significant amount of effort from both the international community as well as the Afghans themselves.

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The Taliban continue to cause tension inside of Afghanistan, because of their ethnic connections to the majority of Afghans, as well as their alliance and protection of Al Qaeda. This connection has prevented peace negotiations from taking place. As the war is close to entering its ninth year, rumors have begun to circulate about a potential change in strategy for the United States. This change in strategy would enable such discussions. The Taliban still has reservations on the terms of such a negotiation with the United States, but they have not taken it off the negotiating table outright. The Taliban's ability to draw in the Northwest Frontier Province, and expand its ideology and recruiting throughout Pakistan, reintroduces the concept of "Pashtunistan" a nation-state that was abandoned following the third Anglo-Afghan War. It is unlikely the Taliban will be willing to allow the current Afghan government to stay in control indefinitely. Even if the Taliban was reintegrated back into Afghan society, they would still achieve their goal of upsetting the current Afghan dynamic. As a result of this reintegration it is logical to estimate that the northern Afghan tribes will rebel and rearm. This will send Afghanistan back into a state of civil war.

This civil war would destroy the current democratic society, and for a time plunge the nation back into tribal warlords. After studying Afghanistan's history this is the timeline has repeated itself after almost every international invasion of the country. This civil war provides the Taliban the opportunity to reinstate their control over Afghanistan, if they can find the necessary funds to procure the weapons. This could potentially lead to the rebirth of the Islamic Caliphate. The other alternative would be the Afghan tribes once again breaking into ethnic sectors, and each tribe having a council of elders to dispense justice while warlords offer protection to the tribe.

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Afghanistan's cultural structure and social structure are not like those of most modern countries. These distinct differences have different weights that need to be taken into consideration when viewing potential scenarios for Afghanistan future.

Appendix A – Afghanistan Background Wartorn Past

Afghanistan has a rich and violent history. Over the past two centuries, Afghanistan has been a crossroad for central and southern Asia. It is because of its geographic location that Afghanistan has been invaded by the Persian, Greek, Mongol, British, and Russian armies (Tanner 2002, 22). Afghanistan is made up of numerous ethnic groups; with Pashtuns being in the majority followed by Tajiks, Hazari, Uzbeks, Turkmen and

Nuristani. Figure 1 shows the diversity within Afghanistan, the ethnic groups are not segregated into separate areas, but in some cases meshed together with another ethnic group. The multiple ethnicities shed light on the differing interpretations of Islam



and the blending of local customs. Afghanistan's unique terrain along with its tribal customs and social structure has prevented the Afghans from unifying into a stable government.

Afghanistan is based on a tribal society; it has never been completely conquered by any outside force. This is not to say that the conquering armies did not leave their mark on Afghanistan. Alexander the Great's imperialist desire did not seem to have been deterred by tribal warfare. He crossed Afghanistan and founded Alexandria-Eschate (Alexandria-at-the-end-of-the-world) on the Sri Darya before moving on to India (Ewan 2002, 18). The ruler Mahmud, of the Ghaznavids dynasty, advocated the

conversion to Islam (Ewan 2002, 22). The Mongol invasion of Afghanistan began in 1221. Many of the towns and farms in the Mongol's warpath have still not recovered. The nomadic and many of the non-nomadic Afghan tribes transitioned into the hills to escape the Mongol's destruction (Tanner 2002, 81). These conquering people and the technologies they brought with them, like gunpowder, created the modern day Afghan man. Stephen Tanner states "into this mix of former steppe warriors turned kings and sedentary peoples simply trying to get along, emerged the Afghans, who combined the tribal instincts of nomads with the technology of civilization" (Tanner 2002, 110).

In the 16th century, the Safavid and Moghul dynasties once again brought Afghanistan into the land power game. The continuous struggle for control between the Safavid and Moghul dynasties continued until the 18th century. During this time, Islam continued to spread throughout Afghanistan. As previously stated, the converts brought local customs into their Islamic faith, which allowed for divisions to continue within Afghanistan's ethnic tribes. From an external view, Afghanistan was unified under one religious faith, Islam; however, from an internal view, Islam had different practices depending on the tribe you were in (Goodson 2001, 12). It is also important to note that the Hazaras constitute the majority of the Shiite Muslims in Afghanistan.

It was during the end of the 18th century, that Britain began to show an interest in the Afghanistan territory. As a result of the fall of the Safavid and Moghul Empires, the Afghans returned to isolationism. The terrain of Afghanistan as well as the diverse ethnicity of the Afghans created a sense of separateness for the smaller tribes; the lack of resources returned the Afghan attention to internal disputes (Goodson 2001, 26). The

British Empire made its first official contact with Afghanistan in 1809 on a treaty-making mission (Ewan 2002, 41). This was the beginning of the Great Game.

The Great Game was the term given to the Imperialistic power gain competition between the Russian and British Empire. The Russian Empire's continuous expansion had led the British Empire to fear that the Cossacks would continue on to conquer India, the crown jewel of the British Empire (Hopkirk 1990, 5). The Russian Empire had two imperialistic goals; to weaken the British Empire, both in India as well as the rest of the world, and to conquer the Central Asian khanates, while the British Empire's focus was on annexing and pacifying the princely states of India (Goodson 2001, 33). The British Empire's Russophobia resulted in Afghanistan becoming a buffer zone between the two empires.

During this time Afghanistan gained its national boundaries, Afghan ethnic consciousness continued to flourish and internally Afghanistan began to see an increase in skirmishes brought on by tribal leaders looking to extend their territory and exert their strength through firearms (Goodson 2001, 27). Despite the anarchy in Afghanistan as a result of Zaman Shah's death, Dost Mohammed Khan claimed the title of Amire ul-Mominin (Commander of the Faithful) and presented the fighting as a jihad against the Sikhs (Tanner 2002, 127). In 1838, tensions were running high in the British Empire over Russia's continued attempts to expand their borders. As a result, the British Empire sent Alexander Burnes to Dost Mohammed's court giving Afghanistan the ultimatum: "desist from all correspondence with Persia and Russia... never receive agents from them..." (Ewan 2002, 57). This level of distrust led to the first of three Anglo-Afghan Wars.

The first Anglo-Afghan War was an attempt by the British to remove Dost Mohammed from power and reinstate Shah Shuja. In a Manifesto published prior to the war beginning, the British promised "...when once he shall be secured in power, and the independence and integrity of Afghanistan established, the British army will be withdrawn", similar words were used one hundred and forty years later when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan (Ewan 2002, 61-62). The invasion and occupation of Afghanistan did not settle well with Mohammed Akbar Khan, the son of imprisoned Dost Mohammed Khan. Internal opposition forced the British to decide to retreat. Mohammed Akbar Khan promised the British safe passage out of Afghanistan, but this was not to be. On January 6, 1842, the British garrison left Shah Shuja to defend himself against the Afghan people, 16,000 British fighters in all left for the Khyber Pass and the safety of India (Hopkirk 1990, 259-261). Mohammed Akbar Khan joined with ghazis, religious warriors, who temporarily put aside tribal disputes to remove the infidel from Afghan soil (Tanner 2002, 140). The majority of the 16,000 people, which included women, children, camp followers, servants, sepoy and soldiers were slaughtered by the ghazis.

The British Empire responded to this devastating loses with the "Army of Retribution" which destroyed the Kabul bazaar and sent smaller forces to Istalif, a city that had not been involved in the massacre of the British, and the males were killed, the women were raped and murdered and the city was destroyed (Ewan 2002, 78). These actions of retribution on the part of the British have permanently altered the Afghan population's outlook. The Afghan population became xenophobic, and they still view foreigners as aggressors, infidels, and immoral.

Afghanistan returned to a period of isolationism, between each of the Anglo-Afghan Wars. Under the leadership of Yakub Khan, Afghanistan signed over foreign policy rights to the British, and allowed the British to have a permanent mission in Kabul in 1879. In response, the Ghazni tribe's elderly mullah, Mushk-i-Alam proclaimed a jihad against the infidel and thousands flocked to the call (Tanner 2002, 209). Amir Abdur Rahman returned to tradition by being selected as Amir by a tribal jirga. He also came to power with the backing of the British Empire. The Amir, Abdur Rahman took control of the waqf (religious trusts), the judicial processes which included a unified system for Sharia courts, and reserved the right of declaring jihad for himself. Amir Abdur Rahman was given the title Zia al-Millat-I wa al-Din (Light of the Nation and Religion) (Ewans 2002, 101-102).

The third Anglo-Afghan War was a result of the Great War (World War I) occurring in Europe. Habibullah initially declared neutrality, this changed when the Caliph called for jihad. Many tribal and religious leaders believed that Afghanistan betrayed its Islamic faith by not gaining its independence following the Bolshevik revolution. Following Habibullah's assassination, Afghanistan, under the leadership of Amanullah declared itself independent (Ewans 2002, 115-117). Amanullah was forced to agree to the Durand Line and to release any claim he had to the tribal territories in British India. The Durand Line, which was established to create an official buffer between Afghanistan and British India, current day Pakistan, thus dividing the Pashtun ethnic tribal territory between two countries (Curtis and Phillips 2007).

Throughout the next fifty years, Afghanistan maintained the claim of neutrality. However, they remained economically dependent on the Soviet Union, who bought the

majority of their exports. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on December 25, 1979 and put Babrak Karmal as their puppet Prime Minister. The Afghan population declared jihad against the Soviet infidel shortly after Babrak Karmal was brought to Kabul.

The Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion was organized in the name of Islam; this is a shift from the traditional call to arms via organization through tribal affiliations. The United States collaborated with Pakistan to fund provide arms to the Mujihadeen in Afghanistan. Prior to this arrangement, Pakistan had already selected seven main groups based in Peshawar with Sunni religious ideologies to support. The Islamist organizations included; Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami*, Yuni Khalis' *Hezb-i-Islami*, Rabbini's *Jamiat-i-Islami*, which included Ahmed Shah Massoud, and Addal-Rab al-Rasul Sayyaf's *Ittihad-i-Islami Bara-I Azadi Afghanistan* (Islamic Union for the Freedom of Afghanistan). The Traditionalist organizations included; Maulvi Nabi Mohammedi's *Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami* (Islamic Revolution Movement), Sayyid Ahmad Gailani's *Mahaz-i-Melli-i-Islami* (National Islamic Front), who traced his descent from the Prophet Mohammed and Sebghatullah Mjadidi's *Jabha-i-Nejat-i-Melli* (National Liberation Front) (Ewans 2002, 213-215). These organizations differ in their essential beliefs, Hekmatyar and his followers were more extreme in their beliefs than Rabbani and Massoud; as a result of their differences, they were unable to come together under the banner of jihad to expel the Soviets from Afghanistan.

Each Mujihadeen group took the weapons and money given to them through the Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence and waged their own war against the Soviet Union. In conjunction with the funds and weapons that were distributed, there was an initiative for Muslims from around the world to fly to Afghanistan and help fight the infidel.

Osama bin Laden took up the call and began his lifelong jihad at that time. The Mujaheddin waged unconventional guerilla warfare against the Soviet forces, attacking and then disappearing into society or the mountains, this made the Soviet tactical style of warfare impossible. The last Soviet tank departing Afghanistan crossed the Friendship Bridge on the Amu Darya on February 15, 1989 (Rasanayagam 2005, 125). The Communist party continued to rule over Afghanistan until 1992, during this time, the majority of the financial aid was being used by the Communist government to buy support from the tribal and mujahideen leaders (Ewans 2002, 238).

The Mujahideen forces finally captured Kabul and proclaimed Afghanistan to be an Islamic State (Gohari 1999, 9). This transition brought Afghanistan into a period of civil war among the Mujaheddin factions. The Islamic Jihad Council named Majadid, head of one of the moderate parties as President; Massoud as Defense Minister; Gailani, another moderate as Foreign Minister and Sayyaf as the Minister of Interior, Hekmatyar was given the role of Prime Minister which he refused to hold with Massoud as Defense Minister (Tanner 2002, 276). The idea of minorities holding the majority of seats was unacceptable to Hekmatyar and many other Pashtun mujihadeen. The Afghans reverted back to the policy they have followed throughout their history. The common threat was gone, and so was the short-term alliance that had existed between traditional tribal enemies/rivals, chaos ensued.

The civil war enabled ethnic warlords to emerge and flourish. Mujahideen fighters like Hekmatyar began turf wars to gain control over the most territory surrounding Kabul. The first three years of Mujahideen rule was ineffective because of the immense infighting. The infighting was a result of the leaders' personal ambitions clashing as well

as ethnic, tribal and religious disputes (Ewans 2002, 249). Hekmatyar and the majority of other Pashtuns were strongly opposed to the ethnic minorities like Dostum, an Uzbek, or Rabbani and Massoud, both Tajiks having a say in the future development of Afghanistan. Throughout Afghanistan's history, ethnic leaders have allied themselves to fight against a common enemy, but it could not work in the government of the Mujahideen. Although these tribal leaders had done their country a great service in removing the Soviet Union armed threat, they could not allow a tribal rival to be awarded a role in the newly formed Afghanistan Mujahideen governance.

This anarchy of indecision existed not only in the capital, but in other regions including Kandahar. But the power vacuum would not exist for long. The Taliban originated from the madrassas, meaning religious schools, in the Northwest Frontier Province. These madrassas were attended by mostly Pashtun Afghan refugees from the Soviet Afghan War. The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan as a result of the Pashtun Afghan refugees who had become disillusioned with the fractious political wrangling of the mujaheddin parties and their practices. These young men had no real employment prospects following the completion of their schooling at the madrassas, but they did get their dose of Taliban learning and propaganda. Under the leadership of Mullah Maulvi Mohammad Omar, the Taliban declared jihad against anyone who had betrayed Afghanistan (Ewans 2002, 253). Massoud, Dostum and Ismail Khan made a concerted effort against the Taliban; despite these attempts they were unsuccessful in stopping the Taliban from gaining control.

As the Taliban conquered territory, beginning with Kandahar, they implemented the strictest interpretations of Shari'a law (Rashid 2000, 29). On April 4, 1996, the

Taliban had almost complete control of Afghanistan, Mullah Omar removed the kherqa (piece of cloak claimed to have been worn by the Prophet Mohammed) and wrapped it over his shoulders and proclaimed himself commander of the faithful and leader of all Islam (Weiner 2001). Despite the Taliban having control of the majority of Afghanistan, on June 13, 1997, a new alliance called the United National and Islamic Front for the Salvation of the Homeland was founded between Massoud, Kalili and Malik (Rasanayagam 2005, 155). Under the leadership of the United National and Islamic Front for the Salvation of the Homeland, the new proposed government would include tribal leaders, Islamic leaders and technocrats.

It was within this same year that Mullah Omar gave Osama bin Laden asylum. The Taliban's alliance with Al Qaeda has further circulated the rumors of Mullah Omar as the new Caliph, Osama bin Laden told the Muslim media "the Taliban have established the rule of Allah in Afghanistan... the pious caliphate will start from Afghanistan" (Scheuer 2006, 171). Some Muslims believe that the recreation of the Islamic Caliphate will liberate Muslims and non-Muslims from the oppression of those who are only interested in international imperialism like the United States and European Allies (Gohari 1999, 111).

The Taliban's relationship with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda has given them money and resources from people and countries around the world. In 1998, however the Taliban lost the support of Saudi Arabia, when it refused to turn Osama bin Laden over to the United States to face charges from the terrorist attacks on U.S. Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. The Taliban lost control over Afghanistan on November 13,

2001, with the fall of Kabul to the United States and its allied forces in the war against terrorism.

Prior to the U.S. invasion, the Taliban had begun to lose some of its Pashtun support as a result of corruption within the Taliban. The Taliban controlled Afghanistan through fear tactics, but was ill-prepared to govern administratively the entire nation (Rasanayagam 2005, 197). The Taliban has started out as an Islamic reform movement, but has no real connection to the Islamic ideas in Afghanistan (Rashid 2000, 87). It's refusal to recognize other forms of Islam isolated it from the rest of the Islamic world. Being that Afghanistan is at the crossroads of the Islamic expansion, this isolation does not benefit the country or its people. A longer term view of regional stability was needed.

The Bonn Agreement was signed in December 2001, and placed a transition government in place with Hamid Karzai as the President. The new government was unable to prevent warlords and regional leaders from reemerging. The United States Institute of Peace published a special report in 2003, entitled "Unfinished Business in Afghanistan, Warlordism, Reconstruction, and Ethnic Harmony," the report estimated that warlords controlled seventy-five percent of Afghanistan. This lack of unity hinders the chances of Afghanistan ever becoming a strong enough country to withstand attempts by the Taliban to regain power. The porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has allowed for the Taliban and Al Qaeda to regroup, just as the Mujaheddin did during the Soviet Afghan war.

Afghanistan's neighboring nations have offered limited assistance to Afghanistan as a developing nation. Pakistan has, in the past favored the concept of a pure Islamic

state in Afghanistan, this allows for the continuation of jihadist training to continue the fight in Kashmir as well as neutralize the Pashtun irredentism (Weiner 2001, 6). This may be why Pakistan is slow to close down the border it shares with Afghanistan. Iran, on the other hand, is strongly opposed to the Taliban regaining control of Afghanistan and persecuting the Hazaras. Iran's government is rapidly devolving into a police state, so the best that the Iranians could offer the Afghan government is funding and infrastructure development assistance. The Post-Soviet states to Afghanistan's north follow a similar policy to Russia, trying to contain Islamic radicalism. Many of these countries will not admit additional refugees and are placing requirements on current refugees to learn the local language if they wish to be employed.

Abroad, there has recently been an increase in debate among the citizens of countries current fighting in Afghanistan as to how much longer they will remain. After over eight years of fighting against Al Qaeda, and the Taliban, the allied forces are no closer to capturing Mullah Omar or Osama bin Laden. The lack of new information on their whereabouts, combined with the rising number of casualties and the increasing cost has led to public awareness and opposition to the war. These new voices speaking out against the war are forcing the governments of the allied forces to reexamine their objectives and goals for the near future in Afghanistan. The British government has recently suffered heavy casualties due to their patrolling of the opium fields in Helmand and Kandahar, which were traditionally heavily Taliban. President Obama has faced the same pressure from the United States public.

The Taliban has begun to recover some of its lost strength while remaining in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Despite this reemergence of the

Taliban, they do not have the same following in Afghanistan as they previously held. The current government has been unable to perform to the levels suggested, and is suffering from the same issues as previous governments, including corruption. The majority of the Afghan population is unhappy with the current conditions in Afghanistan, militarily, politically, economically and socially. The current administration has been unable to establish a sense of authority or credibility among the Afghan population. In a recent poll, Afghans across the country feel a sense of resentment to President Karzai's foreign-funded government, as well as the NATO-led forces and the Westerner employees (Anonymous 2009, 21). There may also be a perception by the Afghans that the current Karzai government is only in place through the funding of the infidels and is therefore no better than the foreign endorsed governments who attempted to rule Afghanistan in the past.

The presence of Allied forces has not prevented continued attacks from Afghanistan, however, as a result of the war in Afghanistan many of the Taliban are in the Northwest Frontier in Pakistan. This surplus of Taliban insurgents has placed Pakistan in a situation of dire consequence, there is a strong need to eliminate the risk the Taliban present to the sovereignty of Pakistan before Pakistan, a nuclear armed country, is seen by the Taliban and Al Qaeda as the next potential center for an Islamic Caliphate. The Pakistani government has belatedly begun to fight back against the insurgency, prior to this new initiative, the Taliban moved their militants from the Swat Valley, which was controlled under Shari'a law, to Buner, which is ninety-seven kilometers from the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. This kind of threat to the stability of a

state, especially one that has nuclear capability is not allowable for the safety of the rest of the world.

Throughout Afghanistan's history, there has been a lack of unity among the ethnic groups that has hindered their ability to live peacefully under one government. The current international attention on Afghanistan has removed any chance of it becoming the starting place for the next Caliphate. The Afghan population has suffered heavily throughout history from heavy handed tactics from foreign nations. Adam Khan from Jalalabad stated the Afghan belief best when he states "we want democracy in the country but not at the expense of our culture and religion. I believe they all could be reconciled and that is what should happen" (Army Press 2004, 194). The Afghanistan population has shown that they are looking for an environment free of war that will allow them to rebuild their country. The ethnic divisions and inability for a central democratic government to gain control of a majority of Afghanistan has led many Afghans to deal with their judicial, military, and economic needs on a local level.

Perhaps the Afghans could learn from the oblast style of governance that is currently used in Russia. There are local judicial, military, and economic outposts in each oblast that report in to the centralized oblast (Moscow), however, each of the local leaders in the oblast comes from that community. It is in this way that Russia has largely been able to weather the instability of the post-Soviet collapse and continue to provide education and health care for their people, as well as stability. As an observer, this much is clear, Afghanistan cannot be allowed to descend into a Taliban-run safe haven for terrorism again. It is this author's sincerest desire that diplomacy and Post-WWII Marshall-style state assistance be given their fullest chance to come to fruition and bring

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Afghanistan into the 21st century with all the amenities that Afghanistan's neighbors have and more of the stability that the Afghan people deserve after almost two centuries at war.

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