

AMERICAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

AMERICAN MILITARY UNIVERSITY

**THE END OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM?
A FORECAST FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN**

ANALYTICS I

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Introduction

Since the turbulent and revolutionary dawn of its independence almost 235 years ago, arguably no nation in the course of human events has been able to capture the global spotlight more than the United States. No other country in world history has been so revered, so hated, and so influential on an international scale. Throughout its storied history, US foreign policy has undergone an extraordinary shift from its isolationist posture between the American Revolution and World War I to its growth as a world superpower and foreign relations juggernaut during World War II through today. Its official goal to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community has perhaps never more appropriate than its application to the US's current engagement with the geographically strategic countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

From the US's humble beginnings through the early twentieth century, its relationship with both Afghanistan and Pakistan could be characterized as virtually non-existent, absent of any official ties or diplomatic relations until 1921 and 1947, respectively. Even during the latter half of the twentieth century, political, economic, and military interaction with these distant nations could be considered moderate at best. This would all change, however, following the tragic events of September 11, 2001 when 19 foreign terrorists hijacked and crashed four commercial airliners into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and a remote field just north of Shanksville, Pennsylvania (allegedly intending to strike the

Capitol building or White House). These highly coordinated suicide attacks killed nearly 3,000 people that day.¹

Only a few hours after the attacks, the National Security Agency with the help of German intelligence agencies, intercepted communications implicating members of Al Qaeda as the solitary perpetrators of these heinous acts of terrorism.² The US intelligence community was quick to identify Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (now imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) and the terrorist group's leader, Osama Bin Laden, as the principle masterminds behind the attacks.

Ruling large parts of Afghanistan during the late 1990's and early 2000s, an Islamist militia group, known as the Taliban—believed to be harboring Bin Laden and his followers—refused to disband Al Qaeda, turn over its leaders, or close the group's terrorist training camps demanded by President George Bush during a speech to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001.

"These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate. Our war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."³

¹ "New York Reduces 9/11 Death Toll by 40." CNN. October 29, 2003. <http://articles.cnn.com/2003-10-29/us/wtc.deaths_1_death-toll-world-trade-center-names?_s=PM:US>.

² Tagliabue, John and Raymond Bonner. "A Nation Challenged: German Intelligence; German Data Led U.S. to Search For More Suicide Hijacker Teams." The New York Times. September 29, 2001. <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A0DE5DA173DF93AA1575AC0A9679C8B63>>.

³ Bush, George W. Presidential Address to Joint Session of Congress. 20 September 2001. Full transcript located: <http://articles.cnn.com/2001-09-20/us/gen.bush.transcript_1_joint-session-national-anthem-citizens?_s=PM:US>.

With the refusal of Taliban leaders to comply with the ultimatum, the US along with an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) made up of more than forty countries, launched Operation Enduring Freedom to bring those responsible for the 9/11 attacks to justice, destroy Al Qaeda along with its supporters, prevent the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations and liberate Afghanistan from the brutally oppressive Taliban regime.

Compounded by a sustained Coalition bombing campaign and a rapidly advancing army of United Islamic Front rebels (also known as the Northern Alliance), the Taliban swiftly withdrew from Afghanistan's major cities and were forced to disperse along the mountainous eastern border of the country known as the Hindu Kush. Many top level Taliban and Al Qaeda militants fled into neighboring Pakistan where they immersed themselves amongst the local tribal populations of the county's Northwestern provinces.

For the next decade the US along with ISAF forces continued to battle Taliban and Al Qaeda resurgences while attempting to establish a cohesive Afghan national government capable of effectively governing and providing security for its own war ravaged population. As the protracted nature of OEF has so far indicated, this has been an extremely arduous endeavor. Enormous obstacles continue to impede progress pertaining to training and standing up operationally proficient Afghan military and police forces capable of functioning autonomously.

Despite these persistent difficulties, President Barack Obama has pledged to bring an end to Operation Enduring Freedom following the recent troop surge of 2010. In a December 2009

nationally televised speech at West Point Military Academy, the President announced plans to begin withdrawing US forces from Afghanistan in July of 2011, with an overall goal of bringing home a majority of the 97,000 currently deployed troops by the completion of his current term, which ends in January 2013.

“As Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home [...] But taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011.”⁴

As this deadline quickly approaches serious questions arise concerning the feasibility of this strategy. After all, the President himself has stated that in recent years the situation in Afghanistan has moved backwards, that the Taliban have gained momentum, that Al Qaeda retains their safe havens along the border, and that our forces lack the full support they need to effectively train and partner with Afghan security forces to more effectively secure the population. If a premature departure of US combat troops from this fragile and volatile region is carried out, in accordance with the President’s timetable, the consequences could prove disastrous for the US, Afghanistan, and even Pakistan.

⁴ Obama, Barack. Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Eisenhower Hall Theatre, United States Military Academy at West Point, West Point, New York. December 1, 2009. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>.

The Issue and National “Actors” Involved

Based on the assumption that President Obama goes forward with the strategy proposed in his December 2009 speech, how would efforts to wage the Global War on Terrorism be affected by terminating US-led combat operations in Operation Enduring Freedom? More specifically, what short and long term impacts will the reduction of a majority of US and ISAF forces from Afghanistan, by the end of 2012, have on the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan? Which assessed future will most closely foretell each’s reality and what destiny is in store for the people of these great nations?

Methodology

In order to address these burning questions, this study, based on the Lockwood Analytical Method of Prediction (LAMP), will first identify the primary ‘actors’ most affected by the proposed troop withdrawal and then provide a background assessment on how each—most likely—perceives the circumstances surrounding the issue in question. Next, the report will consider all reasonable courses of action each country could take based upon their background information followed by the identification of the major scenarios in which alternate futures will be compared. A total number of permutations of possible alternate futures for each scenario will then be calculated followed by a pair wise comparison of all alternate futures within each scenario in order to determine their relative probability.

The probabilities of these alternate futures will then be ranked from highest to lowest to determine which are most and least likely to occur. Next, the top two most probable futures from

each scenario will be analyzed in terms of their consequences resulting from the removal of US combat forces from Afghanistan. Once this has been accomplished, the study will identify the significant occurrences (also known as focal events) which could bring about a given alternate future. Indicators for these focal events will then be listed indicating that such an event either has occurred or is about to occur. Finally, this report will briefly discuss the possibility for the three most likely futures to transpose into a different alternate future.

Perceptions of the National Actors

To help gain an objective perspective for formulating the most probable scenarios, the following sections will discuss several primary factors directly affecting each national actor's outlook towards a cessation of the US combat force presence in the region. For Afghanistan, these factors include a brief historical background, the influence of Islam, as well as the myriad of national problems currently affecting the nation's economy, politics, and security forces. Key issues influencing Pakistan's perspective involves a historical look at their precarious relationship with Afghanistan, the ongoing war in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and the nation's ability to maintain a stable government in order to preserve national security.

Afghanistan

Throughout its tumultuous and storied history the nation of Afghanistan has been wrought with conflict and violence. From its earliest nomadic inhabitants to its present day urban populations, the people of this war-torn nation have been witness to an endless series of foreign occupations, power struggles, and tribal in-fighting. From Alexander the Great and Genghis

Khan in ancient times to the Soviet Union and United States in the modern era, Afghanistan has arguably experienced more military invasions than any other contemporary country in the world.

The intervening periods between foreign occupations have been characterized by continuous internal strife amongst the nation's numerous ethno-linguistic tribal groups, who (prior to 2001) have routinely waged war against one another, competing for legitimate control over Afghanistan's government. Following two wars in the mid and late 1800s, in which Afghan Pashtuns defeated the British Empire (who were attempting to keep the Russians at arm's length from colonial India), Abdurrahman Khan, an ethnic Pashtun, became the first indigenous ruler to control almost the entirety of current day Afghanistan. In addition to establishing the modern day boundaries of the country, Abdurrahman instituted the foundation for an Afghan monarchy that was committed to serious modernization attempts through its interest in Western technology.

The line of royal succession was broken in 1929 when tribal revolts—instigated by outrage from Muslim religious leaders over the ruling family's liberal reforms—led to back-to-back takeovers of the Afghan government by rival Tajik and Pashtun forces. 40 years following the coups, “a series of cautious and moderate governments under the Afghan monarchy brought political stability to the country, and allowed it to make substantial strides toward modernization and national unity.”⁵ Ruling as king from 1933-1973, Zahir Shah was overthrown by his brother-in-law, Daoud Khan, who launched a bloodless coup and became the first President of Afghanistan, ending monarchial rule in the country.

⁵ The Cultural Orientation Project. “Afghans—Their History and Culture” (History Section). Center for Applied Linguistics. Last Updated June, 30, 2002. <<http://www.cal.org/co/afghan/ahist.html>>.

The government was overthrown yet again in 1978 when the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)—fearing dismantlement by Daoud—assassinated him and his family during the Saur Revolution. Hostilities between the party's two factions quickly developed when major rebellions against the Marxist reform programs threw the country into chaos. Fearing the removal of the pro-Communist party, the Soviet Union, with more than 100,000 troops, invaded Afghanistan in 1979 in order to thwart US attempts to subvert the government and gain an upper hand in fighting the Cold War.

It was during this occupation that Osama Bin Laden along with thousands of other conservative Muslims traveled to Afghanistan to engage the Soviets in what they considered a holy war (or jihad). As an integral part of the United States' containment policy, supplies and weapons were funneled to the Afghan rebels through Pakistan to impede the spread of Communism into south Asia. In early 1989, following ten years of protracted and ineffectual fighting, the Soviet Union pulled out of Afghanistan, leaving behind an ongoing civil war between the Marxist government and guerrilla soldiers. Although rebel forces were able to capture Kabul, overthrow the government, and establish a provisional Islamic republic in April 1992, rival militant groups continued to fight amongst themselves prolonging the civil war.

From 1992-1996, an interim government was established through a power-sharing agreement (Peshawar Accords) formed between several major Afghan political parties. A constant barrage of attacks from opposing factions hindered the interim government from

developing a national military, police force, or justice system, which saturated the country with anarchy and lawlessness.

In 1994, the Taliban (a movement originating from religious-run schools for Afghan refugees in Pakistan) emerged in Afghanistan as a politico-religious force comprised primarily of young and poorly educated Pashtuns. In their efforts to attain political prominence in the country, the Taliban—mobilizing out of the southern provinces—successfully seized Kandahar and, two years later, captured Kabul, taking full control of Afghanistan’s government. “Their success was largely due to their popular support, gained as a result of their ability to restore civil order after the chaos of the preceding years.”⁶

Soon after seizing power, the Taliban extended safe haven to Osama Bin Laden, who had been expelled from Saudi Arabia (and later Sudan) following his return from Afghanistan in 1990 to work in the family construction business. It was from this refuge that Bin Laden and his secretly formed radical militant Islamist group (Al Qaeda) was permitted to recruit and train operatives, plan and conduct terrorist attacks, and safely wage a jihadist war against the United States.

From a cultural perspective, Islam continues to dominate—as it has for the last 1300 years—most aspects of Afghan life. With one of the world’s most homogenously Muslim populations, a vast majority of Afghans adhere to the mainstream Sunni branch of Islam. The influence of Islam on individuals and families is subject to the level of devotion to traditional rituals. “Some strictly adhere to tradition, praying five times a day, maintaining *halal* food

⁶ Ibid

practices, and dressing to cover head, arms and legs. Other are more relaxed, praying to themselves when the spirit moves them rather than at specific times, and dress less conservatively.”⁷ The preponderance of tribal and religious leaders throughout Afghanistan surprisingly lack comprehensive instruction in Islam and with a national literacy rate of 28%—among the lowest in the world—most Afghans only possess a fundamental understanding of the Koran’s teachings.

Taking full advantage of this educational deficiency, the Taliban—while in power—imposed their fanatical, antiquated, and extreme interpretations of Islamic law throughout the country. Having no choice and fearing harsh retribution (to include torture and death) for resisting, most Afghan citizens reluctantly accepted and abided by these rigid directives, even though the Taliban have been widely criticized by Islamic scholars for their evident lack of knowledge concerning Sharia law and history. Despite the Taliban’s fervent animosities (along with those of the Islamic militant groups sympathetic to the regime) toward ‘Westerners’ and their associated liberal values, the average Afghani never adopted these extremist viewpoints.

Ranking as one of the world’s least developed and most impoverished nations, Afghanistan’s economy has been decimated by over 30 years of almost continuous conflict. As the backbone of the country’s economy, agriculture production employs the services of more than 75% of the population with opium revenues accounting for a third of Afghanistan’s GDP. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, however, international assistance and investments, mostly

⁷ The Cultural Orientation Project. “Afghans—Their History and Culture.” (Religion Section). Center for Applied Linguistics. Last Updated June, 30, 2002. <<http://www.cal.org/co/afghan/arelig.html>>.

from the US, totaling multiple billions of dollars has stimulated unprecedented growth in nation's economy, surging approximately 12% per year over the past six years.⁸

The infusion of external revenue has also dramatically improved health care and education levels amongst Afghanistan's 30 million people. Prior to the US-led invasion, reportedly one out of every six Afghan children died before the age of five. Substandard medical treatment and facilities were sparsely available only in major urban areas, contributing to widespread deaths from preventable diseases such as polio and tuberculosis. International aid has since reduced the infant mortality rate by 33% and approximately 64% of the total population now has access to some form of health care.⁹ Under oppressive Taliban rule, only 900,000 male students attended school while females were banned from attending altogether. Today nearly nine million children—a third of which are female—are enrolled in Afghanistan's education system.

As leader of the Afghan government for the past ten years, President Hamid Karzai has struggled to maintain the confidence of the Afghan people as well as his Coalition allies. From chronic high unemployment levels to continued opium cultivation, he has been widely blamed for many of the failures that have beleaguered reconstruction efforts. He has also been criticized for his inability to curtail widespread corruption not only amongst government officials—who have reportedly forced citizens to pay up to a third of their income in bribes—but also within the

⁸ "USAID/Afghanistan Strategy." USAID. Last Updated January 27, 2011. <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/about/country_strategy>.

⁹ Ibid.

ranks of the nation's security forces, who are, thus far, incapable of conducting counterinsurgency operations without the assistance of foreign troops.

Arguably the most prominent factor affecting the continued presence of US and ISAF forces in the country today is the proficiency and effectiveness of Afghanistan's military and police forces to defend its territory and people from Taliban and Al Qaeda resurgences. For nearly a decade Afghan security forces—comprised primarily of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP)—have received considerable training and support from US and NATO troops. “According to the current strategy, the Afghan National Army will grow from 90,000 to 134,000 by the end of 2011, instead of 2014. The Afghan police force will grow from 82,000 to 87,000 in the same time period.”¹⁰ Even with this anticipated growth, both the Obama and Karzai administrations agree that the projected number of security forces will not be sufficient to maintain public order in the face of repeated insurgent and terrorist attacks.

Pakistan

As an integral player of Operation Enduring Freedom, the future of Pakistan will undoubtedly be heavily impacted by the departure of US combat forces from Afghanistan. Over the past 60 years, the relationship between the two south Asian neighbors can be best characterized as tumultuous as it is inseparable. In addition to their dynamic trade and economic relations, Pakistan and Afghanistan share many similar historical, religious, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic ties. Sharing an ambiguous and porous border, known as the Durand Line, Pakistan

¹⁰ Kagan, Kimberly. “Afghan Army and Police Forces Must Grow Much Larger.” The Washington Examiner. August 17, 2009. <<http://washingtonexaminer.com/world/2009/08/afghan-army-and-police-forces-must-grow-much-larger>>.

has historically retained friendly relations with each of Afghanistan's continually changing governments. During the Soviet occupation of 1979-1989, Pakistan played an essential role, not only by assisting refugees fleeing across the border, but also by financing and equipping Afghan Mujahedeen fighters to repel the Red Army. Even after the Soviet Union's withdraw from Afghanistan, the Pakistan government continued to provide extensive support for more than three million displaced Afghans.

When the Taliban seized control in 1996, their extreme interpretation and enforcement of Islamic law over the Afghan population alienated most of the world. Only Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. As the former Pakistani President—as well as Army Chief of Staff—Pervez Musharraf deployed thousands of his own troops to fight alongside the Taliban and Bin Laden in order to repress the forces of the Northern Alliance, who relentlessly opposed the brutal regime from the country's northern provinces. As the leader of the resistance, Ahmad Shah Massoud was keenly aware of the Taliban's dependence on Pakistani support for survival.

"The Taliban are not a force to be considered invincible. They are distanced from the people now. They are weaker than in the past. There is only the assistance given by Pakistan, Osama bin Laden and other extremist groups that keep the Taliban on their feet. With a halt to that assistance, it is extremely difficult to survive."¹¹

Only two days prior to the September 11 attacks, Massoud was assassinated in Takhar Province by Al Qaeda suicide bombers who were posing as journalists.

¹¹ Martin, Susan. "The Man Who Would Have Led Afghanistan." St. Petersburg Times. September 2002. <http://www.sptimes.com/2002/09/09/911/The_man_who_would_hav.shtml>.

The mutually supportive nature of Afghan-Pakistan relations deteriorated following the defeat and expulsion of the Taliban in November 2001. The newly formed Hamid Karzai administration was quick to criticize the Pakistani government for their lackluster efforts in confronting and capturing fugitive members of the Taliban and Al Qaeda who found safe haven amongst the nomadic tribes of the rugged Northwest Frontier provinces. The Afghan government also accused factions within the Musharraf administration of supporting Taliban fugitives due to the continued religious, cultural, and ethnic ties historically shared between the two groups. According to US government officials, the Taliban's ability to continue their attack campaign has been sustained in part by the direct support and coordination of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. Even the Pakistan government has admitted that it is unable to control all elements of its intelligence agency.

Despite these assertions of subversion, the Pakistan government has adamantly defended its role as a loyal US ally in fighting the War on Terrorism. Following the September 11 attacks, former President Musharraf reversed Pakistan's allegiance with the Taliban and provided the US several military airbases to launch attacks against Afghanistan, in addition to providing other logistical support. Backed by huge inflows of US funds, the Pakistan military launched its own campaign against fugitive Taliban and Al Qaeda militants immersed in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where the nation's government held little control. In 2004, tensions—fueled by the Pakistan Army's intense search efforts—escalated among local Arab and Central Asian militia groups who joined forces with the exiled Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. Since then, the Pakistan military has been engaged in a mostly ineffectual succession of violent

clashes and retaliations, intermingled by a series of broken peace agreements, with various tribal groups of the northwest provinces.

Over the course of this—still ongoing—conflict, Pakistani security agencies claimed to have killed or captured more than 17,000 terrorist and militant suspects, including the notorious Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was arrested and turned over to the US for his role as the September 11 mastermind and his involvement in the October, 2000 USS Cole bombing.¹² During an October 2009 trip to Islamabad, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, praised the military's offensive against the Taliban and pledged continued US assistance. “So this is our struggle as well, and we commend the Pakistani military for their courageous fight, and we commit to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistani people in your fight for peace and security.”¹³

Although senior US officials have publically commended Pakistan's efforts to root out anti-Western forces from their territory, many have privately expressed their concerns that not enough effort is being made to defeat the enemy. Many analysts argue that former President Musharraf's reluctance to fully engage religious extremist groups—entrenched within Pakistan's borders—stemmed directly from his fear that supporting a Western government would alienate the pro-Islamic population base. US willingness to support the military dictatorship of

¹² Ummid. “Global War on Terror Claims 30,000 Pakistani Casualties.” February 18, 2010.
<http://www.ummid.com/news/2010/February/18.02.2010/cost_of_war_aganist_terror.htm>.

¹³ Real Clear Politics. “Secretary Clinton's Remarks w/Pakistan's FM.” October 28, 2009.
<http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/10/28/secretary_clintons_remarks_wpakistans_fm_98916.html>.

Musharraf, to the detriment of democracy in his country, was a key indicator of how imperative Pakistan's cooperation was in winning the War on Terrorism and eradicating the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

In late 2007, turmoil erupted within the Pakistani government over the impending national elections, in which President Musharraf—despite his rising unpopularity—attempted to secure another term in office. This political unrest began to raise fear among US, ISAF, and Afghan leaders that Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts would degrade or even collapse, generating yet another sanctuary and home base for Taliban and Al Qaeda to continue their war efforts. Prompted by numerous controversies surrounding his re-election eligibility and the questionable dismissal of Pakistan's Chief Justice, Musharraf declared a state of emergency, postponing indefinitely the elections for the National Assembly that were initially scheduled to occur on January 8, 2008.

Prior to the state of emergency, a broad-based pro-democracy movement—led by Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N)—had been sweeping the country. After national elections were finally held on February 18, 2008—in which the PPP and PML (N) won a majority of seats in the National Assembly—a movement began to impeach President Musharraf. After months of political wrangling, Musharraf was forced to resign, eventually elevating Benazir Bhutto's husband—Asif Ali Zardari—as Pakistan's President, who had become leader of the PPP following Bhutto's assassination in December 2008.

Despite the inauguration of a pro-democratic government and immense financial provisions from the US, arguably the single biggest obstacle in eradicating Taliban and Al Qaeda safe havens inside Pakistan remains the government's refusal to allow US troops inside the country. Other than the 60 to 100 special operations forces currently training Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps in counterinsurgency techniques—including intelligence gathering and development assistance—no US or ISAF combat units have been permitted to pursue Taliban and Al Qaeda fugitives across the Durand Line. Even the special forces training has intentionally been kept low-key so as not to infringe onto Pakistani sensitivities about sovereignty and well as to avoid inflaming already high anti-American sentiment.

To compensate for this operational barrier, in 2004, the US military and Central Intelligence Agency began an aerial bombing campaign, using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to target enemy forces located in the lawless Federally Administered Tribal Areas of northwest Pakistan. MQ-1 Predators and more recently MQ-9 Reapers, loaded with AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, have been striking targets with increasing intensity, killing an estimated 2,000 militants over the past seven years. Although the Zardari government has publicly condemned these attacks, Pakistan's ISI has allegedly shared significant amounts of intelligence with US operatives, possibly even secretly allowing the CIA to operate its drones out of Pakistan's Shamsi Airbase.¹⁴ Public outcry over collateral damage and accidental killings of innocent civilians has recently ignited fierce animosity against the air strikes. President Obama's decision to send an additional 30,000 US troops to Afghanistan in 2009, was paralleled by a substantial

¹⁴ Hodge, Amanda. "Pakistan Allowing CIA to Use Airbase for Drone Strikes." *The Australian*. February 19, 2009. < <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/pakistan-permits-cia-base-for-strikes/story-e6frg6t6-1111118893683>>.

increase in the number of UAVs deployed to the region, doubling the amount of attacks in northwest Pakistan. Despite this surge of precision bombing, elusive elements of the Taliban and Al Qaeda continue to pose serious threats the security of Pakistan, as well as Afghanistan.

Possible Courses of Action for Each Actor

Assuming that all US combat forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan by 2013, the two national actors will be left with generally four courses of action (COAs).

COA 1: The country's security forces (comprised primarily of national police and military units) continue conducting combat operations on their own against Taliban and Al Qaeda militants, making little to no progress in defeating them. Enemy resurgences continue to threaten national security for the foreseeable future.

COA 2: After intense and carefully calculated negotiation efforts, the government decides to make concessions with Taliban and Al Qaeda forces and both sides agree to an unsteady ceasefire. Although tensions remain high between the two groups, all fighting discontinues.

COA 3: Without the advanced weaponry, tactics, and manpower of the US military, the country's security forces are unable to suppress enemy resurgences and the enemy eventually overthrows the government and takes control of the country.

COA 4: The country's government intensifies its military campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, eradicating a majority of their fighters and suppressing their ability to continue combat operations. Enemy forces that are not killed or detained, flee the country and peace is restored.

The Major Scenarios

As previously mentioned in the introduction, this analysis is being conducted under the assumption that—as President Obama asserted in his December 2009 speech—the US will begin withdrawing its combat forces out of Afghanistan in July 2011 with a complete departure of troops by January 2013. Operating under this assumption, two primary scenarios have been identified.

Scenario 1: The US pulls out of Afghanistan completely. Not only are combat forces withdrawn from Afghanistan, but all other US government personnel operating in a supporting capacity (advisors, trainers, intelligence analysts, civil engineers, logisticians, etc...) are removed as well, leaving the Afghan and Pakistan governments to rely on their own self-sufficient measures to defend their territory.

Scenario 2: The US keeps support personnel in place (much like it has in Iraq). Although all US combat units are pulled out of Afghanistan, a support contingent of civilian and military advisors, trainers, intelligence analysts, civil engineers, logisticians, etc... is left behind to assist the Afghan and Pakistan government in their campaign against Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters.

Total Number of Possible Alternate Futures

In order to calculate the total number of permutations of possible "alternate futures" for each scenario, the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction delineates the formula as $X^Y=Z$. 'X' represents the number of courses of action available to each actor. 'Y' represents the number of actors involved. 'Z' represents the number of alternative futures that will be compared in the assessment. Since there are two actors and four courses of action available to each actor, there are a total of 16 combinations of courses of action (or alternate futures) available in each of the two scenarios.

'Pairwise' Comparison of Alternate Futures and Relative Probability

To determine which alternate futures have the highest probability of occurring, a 'pairwise' comparison will be made between each—two at a time. Based on previously researched information, the alternate future assessed as most likely to happen in each 'pairwise' comparison will be awarded one vote. Once every single future has been compared to every other future, the process will be repeated for the second scenario. The higher total number of votes an alternate future receives, the more probable it is that that future will occur. As outlined by LAMP, the formula for calculating the total number of votes is $X= n(n-1)/2$. In this case, 'X' represents the total number of 'pairwise' comparisons (or votes) and n represents the total number of alternate futures to be analyzed. Due to the fact that there are 16 alternate futures for each scenario, the formula for acquiring total number of votes is $X=16(15)/2$. When solving for X, a total of 120 votes is ascertained and illustrated below.

Legend	
COA 1: Fighting Continues	COA 3: Government defeated by enemy
COA 2: Negotiation of Ceasefire	COA 4: Enemy defeated by government

Scenario 1: The US pulls out of Afghanistan completely.

Alternate Future	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Votes
1	COA 1	COA 1	12
2	COA 1	COA 2	12
3	COA 1	COA 3	8
4	COA 1	COA 4	8
5	COA 2	COA 1	11
6	COA 2	COA 2	10
7	COA 2	COA 3	5
8	COA 2	COA 4	4
9	COA 3	COA 1	15
10	COA 3	COA 2	14
11	COA 3	COA 3	7
12	COA 3	COA 4	7
13	COA 4	COA 1	3
14	COA 4	COA 2	3
15	COA 4	COA 3	1
16	COA 4	COA 4	0

Scenario 2: The US keeps support personnel behind.

Alternate Future	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Votes
1	COA 1	COA 1	15
2	COA 1	COA 2	14
3	COA 1	COA 3	8
4	COA 1	COA 4	8
5	COA 2	COA 1	11
6	COA 2	COA 2	10
7	COA 2	COA 3	4
8	COA 2	COA 4	6
9	COA 3	COA 1	4
10	COA 3	COA 2	3
11	COA 3	COA 3	0
12	COA 3	COA 4	1
13	COA 4	COA 1	11

14	COA 4	COA 2	11
15	COA 4	COA 3	6
16	COA 4	COA 4	8

Probability Ranking of Alternate Futures (Descending Order)

After tabulating the votes, the most probable alternate futures will be determined simply by ranking each one in terms of number of votes received—from most to least. As the first table below indicates, alternate futures nine, ten, and one are the most likely futures pertaining to scenario 1. Alternate futures one, two, and five have been determined as most probable for scenario 2.

Scenario 1: The US pulls out of Afghanistan completely.

Alternate Future	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Votes
9	COA 3	COA 1	15
10	COA 3	COA 2	14
1	COA 1	COA 1	12
2	COA 1	COA 2	12
5	COA 2	COA 1	11
6	COA 2	COA 2	10
3	COA 1	COA 3	8
4	COA 1	COA 4	8
11	COA 3	COA 3	7
12	COA 3	COA 4	7
7	COA 2	COA 3	5
8	COA 2	COA 4	4
13	COA 4	COA 1	3
14	COA 4	COA 2	3
15	COA 4	COA 3	1
16	COA 4	COA 4	0

Scenario 2: The US keeps support personnel behind.

Alternate Future	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Votes
1	COA 1	COA 1	15
2	COA 1	COA 2	14
5	COA 2	COA 1	11
13	COA 4	COA 1	11
14	COA 4	COA 2	11
6	COA 2	COA 2	10
3	COA 1	COA 3	8
4	COA 1	COA 4	8
16	COA 4	COA 4	8
8	COA 2	COA 4	6
15	COA 4	COA 3	6
7	COA 2	COA 3	4
9	COA 3	COA 1	4
10	COA 3	COA 2	3
12	COA 3	COA 4	1
11	COA 3	COA 3	0

Analysis of four Most Probable Alternate Futures

The following section will assess the consequences of the two most probable alternate futures for each of the two scenarios, first analyzing the future determined to have the highest probability of occurring and then addressing the scenario’s second most likely future. It is important to remember that Scenario 1 involves the complete withdrawal of all US combat and support personnel from Afghanistan by January 2013 and Scenario 2 entails only the removal of combat units.

Scenario 1 — Most Likely Alternate Future (#9): Enemy forces recapture Afghanistan while fighting continues indefinitely in Pakistan.

After the US contingent departs from Afghanistan a series of institutional breakdowns slowly erodes away any progress that the country’s government, economy, and security forces have made over the past ten years. Without the expertise and close support of US political

advisors, confidence in the Karzai administration amongst the Afghan population as well as rival political parties weakens substantially. Lacking the stringent political accountability measures implemented and overseen by US officials, government corruption surges above its presently high levels.

Karzai's plummeting approval ratings and unwillingness to crack down on government dishonesty reverberates throughout all sectors of Afghanistan's workforce. Foreign investment declines and the nation's financial system suffers despite continued efforts by the US to infuse revenue into its economy. Rising financial instability drives inflation upward while the value of Afghanistan's currency sinks downward. This triggers an escalation of food and fuel prices in addition to significant declines in wages and jobs. As unemployment grows, animosities amongst the Afghan population boil over, prompting protests and riots. The government struggles to maintain order.

The US's departure and Afghanistan's sinking economy has even more dire consequences for the nation's police and military. Without the leadership, advanced training, and manpower that US support personnel are currently providing, Afghan security forces' ability to effectively drive back Taliban and Al Qaeda advances. Many jobless Afghans are recruited by Islamic extremists groups in order to make a living. The revitalized enemy strengthens in numbers, retakes lost territory, increases attacks against the destabilizing Karzai government, and eventually capture most of its major cities. Taliban and Al Qaeda forces eventually overthrow the government and take control of the country, re-establishing Sharia law.

The withdrawal of US forces from Operation Enduring Freedom not only degrades Afghanistan's capacity to successfully engage Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters, but also decreases

Pakistan's ability to conduct offensive military campaigns and counterinsurgency operations in their country. Although the US is assessed to have less than 100 troops inside Pakistan—primarily to train their military's elite special operation forces—pulling out these highly experienced instructors reduces the combat proficiency of Frontier Corps soldiers, who often represent the first offensive wave against enemy forces.

The pull out of US troops also coincides with the departure of Predator and Reaper units stationed in Afghanistan (as possibly Pakistan if confirmed). Without the pressure of incessant aerial strikes, enemy forces are able to move freely throughout northwest Pakistan and coordinate terrorist attacks against the government and civilian population. The Zardari administration continues to lack the military resources and capability to defeat the Taliban and its Al Qaeda allies. Suicide attacks and other terrorist strikes continue wreak havoc within Pakistan with no resolution in sight.

Scenario 1 — Second Most Likely Alternate Future (#10): Enemy forces recapture Afghanistan while Pakistan brokers a peace agreement.

In this second most likely alternate future for Scenario 1, the courses of action and consequences for Afghanistan remain the same as those described above in the most likely alternate future (#9). For Pakistan, however, instead of fighting a seemingly endless war with Taliban and Al Qaeda militants, the government opts for a more peaceful resolution. Although unsuccessful, previous attempts by the government to achieve ceasefire agreements and sign peace accords, with enemy forces, substantiate Pakistan's intentions and willingness to negotiate. The first of these three attempts occurred in April 2004, only a few months after fighting began in Northwest Pakistan. This peace agreement—signed with militia commander Nek Muhammad

Wazir in South Waziristan—was quickly abrogated after Nek was killed by US airstrikes in June 2004.

The second and third peace deals—negotiated with Nek's successor Baitullah Mehsud--were ratified in February 2005 and September 2006 respectively, which brought relative calm to the entire Waziristan region. These peace accords were shattered, however, in August 2007 following a major offensive led by the Pakistani Army known as the Siege of Lal Masjid.

Perceiving no cessation of bloodshed in this prolonged conflict, Pakistan leaders once again attempt to strike a peace agreement. With US combat forces out of the region and no longer posing a direct threat to their wellbeing, many lower level, less radicalized militia members—only fighting to expel the US—return to their pre-OEF occupations. A majority of tribal leaders in the Northwest Frontier Provinces, weary of continual fighting, agree to concessions made by the government and a lasting peace deal is finally established. Top and mid level Taliban and Al Qaeda extremists become isolated and unable to conduct large scale attacks.

Scenario 2 —Most Likely Alternate Future (#1): Fighting continues indefinitely in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Although the US has withdrawn its contingent of combat-capable forces from the country, all other supporting elements, including civilian and military advisors, trainers/ teachers, intelligence analysts, air field ops/ maintenance personnel, civil engineers, and health care workers, are kept firmly in place. A similar plan to the post-Operation Iraqi Freedom strategy (known as Operation New Dawn) is implemented and US personnel continue to work side-by-side with their Afghan counterparts to carry on nation building and reconstruction efforts.

Despite reoccurring incidences of corruption, the Karzai government succeeds in maintaining an unsteady confidence amongst the Afghan people. With continued financial assistance from the US, Afghanistan's economy steadily improves along with the population's standard of living. Significant strides are made in upgrading and expanding the nation's health care and education systems. Many easily treatable diseases are eradicated and infant mortality rates gradually decline. Record numbers of children begin attending school and female enrollment rates begin to rival that of males.

The most significant long-term impact, differentiating this scenario from Scenario 1, is the ability of Afghan security forces to successfully repel repeated Taliban and Al Qaeda attacks. Due to the continued presence of highly skilled military advisors/ trainers, in a few years the ANA and ANP are able to meet or exceed their recruitment goals by adding approximately 50,000 to their ranks. As the ANA takes a lead role in providing security for its own country, their proficiency in conducting counterinsurgency operations and thwarting terrorist attacks strengthens. Without expertly trained US forces by their side, however, Afghan security forces remain incapable of eliminating scattered pockets of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. Although fewer in number and intensity, sporadic enemy attacks continue to terrorize the population and fighting continues for the indefinite future.

The assessment for Pakistan's outlook in this alternate future is almost identical to the one described in the most likely alternate future (#9) from Scenario 1. With US support personnel remaining behind however, airstrikes from unmanned Predator and Reaper drones continue to assist Pakistan's military in subduing enemy forces. US elite special operations instructors also continue training Pakistani paramilitary Frontier Corps units, elevating their

capability to develop counterinsurgency techniques, conduct intelligence gathering operations, and carry out development assistance campaigns. Regardless of the sustained presence of US assistance personnel, Pakistan's military forces are unable to make any significant progress in purging the country of Islamic militant groups or resolving disputes with indigenous tribal factions.

Scenario 2 — Second Most Likely Alternate Future (#2): Fighting continues indefinitely in Afghanistan while Pakistan brokers a peace agreement.

In this second most likely alternate future for Scenario 2, the courses of action and consequences for Afghanistan remain the same as those described above in the most likely alternate future (#1). Similarly, the assessment for Pakistan's outlook in this alternate future is almost identical to the one described in the second most likely alternate future (#10) from Scenario 1. Perceiving no cessation of bloodshed in this prolonged conflict, Pakistan leaders attempt to negotiate and secure a peace agreement with tribal elders. Although US support personnel continue to actively assist Pakistani counterterrorism efforts, many lower level, less radicalized militia members—only fighting to expel US combat forces from the region—return to their pre-OEF occupations. A majority of tribal leaders in the Northwest Frontier Provinces, also weary of continual fighting, agree to concessions made by the government and a lasting peace deal is finally established. Top and mid level Taliban and Al Qaeda extremists become isolated and unable to conduct large scale attacks.

‘Focal Events’ and their Indicators

The following section will identify the ‘focal events’ for the previously-described most likely alternate futures. These ‘focal events’ are specific incidences, which carry such a high magnitude of relevance that their occurrence is almost certain to cause the alternate future in question to come to fruition. In other words, ‘focal events’ are occurrences that could happen in order for a hypothetical future become the actual future. They are the intersections on an imaginary line drawn from the present into the future, with each path branching off into a different future. Associated with each one of these focal events are one or more key indicators. These indicators help signify that such a focal event either has occurred or is about to occur. The focal events and corresponding indicators below are denoted by the following legend:

- ❖ Focal Event
 - Indicator

Scenario 1 — Most Likely Alternate Future (#9): Enemy forces recapture Afghanistan while fighting continues indefinitely in Pakistan.

- ❖ Karzai government destabilizes
 - Afghanistan’s economy stops growing (and begins to sink)
 - Corruption levels rise amongst government officials and security forces
 - Karzai’s approval rating plunges triggering mass protests and riots
 - Poppy cultivation and drug production/ trade proliferates
 - Recruitment and retention among Afghan security forces drop
 - Quality of health care, education, public services, and infrastructure decline (standard of living falls)
 - Government subversion attempts escalate
 - Afghan government makes increased requests for foreign assistance
- ❖ Enemy forces in Afghanistan strengthen in number
 - Frequency of enemy propaganda and threat statements (audio and video messages) rises
 - Sympathy for Taliban and Al Qaeda increases amongst population
 - High unemployment prompts jobless civilians to seek positions within enemy ranks
- ❖ Attacks from enemy forces in Afghanistan increase in number and intensity
 - Increase in revenue for Taliban and Al Qaeda campaigns

- Number and quality of weapons/ munitions possessed by the enemy rises
- Number and quality of transportation and other support equipment possessed by the enemy grows
- ❖ Enemy forces retake lost territory in Afghanistan
 - Afghan security forces are forced out of previously occupied areas
 - Previously peaceful locations and areas with low levels of violence throughout the country experience a surge of enemy attacks
 - Taliban and Al Qaeda militants capture/ occupy increasing number of villages/ towns/ cities
- ❖ Taliban, Al Qaeda, and anti-government tribal groups retain their strongholds in northwest Pakistan
 - No discernable military advancements or increases in captured/ occupied areas made by Pakistani security forces or enemy forces
 - No significant variations in enemy movements, attacks, or government subversion efforts
 - No noticeable change in government urgency/ motivation/ desire to root out enemy forces
 - No major differences in level of funding for Pakistani security forces or enemy forces
 - No discernable changes in number and quality of weapons/ munitions possessed by the enemy
 - No significant variations in level of combat proficiency exhibited by the Pakistan military
 - Democratic government remains in power for the foreseeable future

Scenario 1 — Second Most Likely Alternate Future (#10): Enemy forces recapture Afghanistan while Pakistan brokers a peace agreement.

- ❖ Focal events and indicators for Afghanistan in this alternate future remain the same as those listed above in the most likely alternate future (#9) from scenario 1.
- ❖ Zardari administration and anti-government tribal groups begin to cooperate
 - Communication between government and tribal leaders increases
 - Insurgent offensives against Pakistan military discontinues
 - Suicide and other terrorist attacks on Pakistan population decline
 - Prisoners of war on both sides are released/ swapped
 - Frequency of enemy propaganda and threat statements (audio and video messages) decreases
 - Requests for international mediation between the two sides materialize
 - Government subversion attempts by the enemy decrease
- ❖ Major changes in political activity/ policy are observed in the Pakistani government
 - Tribal groups of northwest Pakistan increase participation in the government
 - A more hard-line, pro-Islamic political party is elected or takes power in the country
- ❖ Pakistan military disengages from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)
 - Counterinsurgency and offensive campaigns to capture/ kill enemy forces cease

- Pakistan Army withdraws troops from northwest provinces
- ❖ Economic conditions in northwest Pakistan improve
 - Trade/ commerce escalates in the region (vehicle and foot traffic increases on major routes)
 - Quality of health care, education, public services, and infrastructure in Pakistan's northwestern provinces grows (standard of living rises)
 - Decrease in flow of refugees out of FATA. Expatriates begin to return to the region
 - Tourism increases in northwestern provinces

Scenario 2 — Most Likely Alternate Future (#1): Fighting continues indefinitely in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- ❖ Taliban, Al Qaeda, and anti-government tribal groups retain their ability to threaten Afghan national security
 - No discernable military advancements or increases in captured/ occupied areas made by Afghani security forces or enemy forces
 - No significant variations in enemy movements, number or intensity of attacks, or government subversion efforts
 - No major differences in level of funding/ resources for enemy forces
 - No discernable changes in number and quality of weapons/ munitions possessed by the enemy
 - No decline noted in frequency of enemy propaganda and threat statements (audio and video messages)
 - No significant drop in Afghanistan's economic conditions
 - Democratic government remains in power for the foreseeable future
- ❖ Condition of Afghan security forces remains status quo
 - No major differences in level of funding for the ANA or ANP
 - Afghan government fails to meet its recruitment goals (number of forces remains static)
 - No observed improvements to securing the Afghan-Pakistan border
 - No significant variations in level of combat or counterinsurgency proficiency exhibited by Afghan security forces
- ❖ Focal events and indicators for Pakistan in this alternate future remain the same as those listed above in the most likely alternate future (#9) from scenario 1.

Scenario 2 — Second Most Likely Alternate Future (#2): Fighting continues indefinitely in Afghanistan while Pakistan brokers a peace agreement.

- ❖ Focal events and indicators for Afghanistan in this alternate future remain the same as those listed above in the most likely alternate future (#1) from scenario 2.

- ❖ Focal events and indicators for Pakistan in this alternate future remain the same as those listed above in the second most likely alternate future (#10) from scenario 1.

Potential of a Given Alternate Future to ‘Transpose’ into Another

The final step of the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction denotes the likelihood of one alternate future ‘transposing’ into another, thus affecting the relative probability of that future. The section below will identify which of the most likely alternate futures (detailed in the report’s findings) have the highest chance of morphing into other alternate futures and briefly describe how these transpositions might take place.

Of the most likely alternate futures, identified in this report, the one with highest probability of transposing into another is alternate future #1. The factor most prone to morphing this alternate future into another is a change in type of government administration over the country. The form of government currently ruling both Afghanistan and Pakistan is a democratically-elected, Islamic republic. This assertion, compounded by the fact that both countries (for all intents and purposes) are tepid allies of the US, reduces the possibility that their leaders will choose seek truce or peace agreements with Taliban or Al Qaeda terrorist groups. In the event that either country elects—or is taken over by—a more radical-Islamic and less Western-leaning administration, the chance of making amends or concessions with enemy forces and achieving a ceasefire with them increase significantly. If this hypothetical scenario were to happen in Afghanistan, alternate future #1 would transpose into alternate future #5. Likewise, if this potential situation occurred in Pakistan, alternate future #1 would transpose into alternate future #2. If both countries happen to fall victim to this hypothetical circumstance, alternate future #1 would transpose into alternate future #6.

The next alternate futures most likely to transpose into another (which only affects Afghanistan) are alternate futures #9 and #10. In the event that the Afghan government (after the US has long since withdrawn from the country) is close to being overthrown by a resurgent Taliban and Al Qaeda force, the nation's leaders would more than likely call for international assistance in preventing its downfall. After spending more than ten years attempting to eradicate Islamic terrorism from Afghanistan, the US—regardless of ruling party—would certainly answer the call of a strategic Middle Eastern ally. If this hypothetical scenario were to come to fruition, alternate futures #9 and #10 would transpose into alternate futures #1 and #2 respectively.

Finally, the Pakistan components of alternate futures #1 and #9—although highly unlikely—have the potential to transpose into yet another possible future. In the event the Pakistani government retracts its position prohibiting US ground forces from entering its territory, the US—as well as other international forces—may choose to pursue and eliminate Taliban and Al Qaeda leadership entrenched inside the country. This situation would only be viable if Zardari feared his government was in imminent danger of collapsing and being overthrown by enemy forces. It is also possible that a newly elected, pro-Western administration could allow a certain number of US troops to enter specific provinces of northwestern Pakistan to finish the mission which began almost ten years ago. If this improbable development were to happen, alternate futures #1 and #9 may transpose into alternate futures #4 and #12 respectively. If the enemy were defeated in Pakistan through this unorthodox set of circumstances, it is certainly not out of the question that the Taliban and Al Qaeda could be defeated in Afghanistan as well. In this extreme case, alternate futures #1 and #9 would transpose into the least likely alternate future of this study—alternate future #16.

Conclusion

As this analysis has revealed, the long, perilous roads that lie ahead for both Afghanistan and Pakistan will undoubtedly continue to be shrouded with uncertainty. The eternally intertwined destinies of these two nations will highly depend upon the critical choices made and foreign policies set forth by their Western allies. US leaders must thoroughly consider the fundamental implications and consequences of each and every decision affecting the national security of its two south Asian allies. While setting timetables for troop withdrawal may appease political party support bases and earn reelection credit, policy makers must not shape their foreign policies to acquiesce with majority opinion no matter how unpopular. Politicians must listen to their military commanders—as well as their Afghan and Pakistani counterparts—and heed their expert advice concerning the way forward. Pulling US combat forces out of Afghanistan before indigenous security elements are fully prepared to operate autonomously will more than likely entrench the Afghan government in a quagmire of ceaseless violence against Taliban and Al Qaeda resurgences. Prematurely removing all US personnel entirely would have even more disastrous consequences potentially enabling enemy forces to recapture Afghanistan and impose their extremist policies once again.

The US mission in Operation Enduring Freedom has not only been of enormous importance to the freedom-loving people of Afghanistan and Pakistan but also has held resounding significance to maintaining national security at home. Afghanistan must never again become a sanctuary for Islamic terrorist groups such as the Taliban, Al Qaeda, or other transnational extremists. They must never again be allowed to establish safe havens, where terrorist training camps thrive and attacks against the US and other Western nations can be planned.

Achieving this objective will require continued assistance in developing Afghanistan's ability to effectively secure and govern itself. It will also necessitate the sustained perseverance of those supporting the current civil-military campaign, carried out in full partnership with Afghan—as well as Pakistani—counterparts, in order to develop a proficient and professional military corps, improve the lives of average citizens, and support the establishment of good governance and economic development in the region for years to come.

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