

MODERN WAR IN AN ANCIENT LAND

THE UNITED STATES ARMY IN AFGHANISTAN, 2001–2014

VOLUME I

EDMUND J. "E. J." DEGEN
MARK J. REARDON
FOREWORD BY DR. ROBERT M. GATES,
FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Modern War in an Ancient Land


AFGHANISTAN
PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES
0
200 Miles
0
200 Kilometers
UZBEKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
PAKISTAN
INDIA
JOWZJĀN
BALKH
KUNDUZ
TAKHĀR
BADAKHSHĀN
FĀRYĀB
SAMANGĀN
BAGHLĀN
PANJSHIR
PARWĀN
SAR-E PUL
NŪRISTĀN
BĀDGHĪS
KUNAR
KĀPĪSĀ
BĀMYĀN
WARDAK
LAGHMĀN
NANGARHĀR
HERĀT
GHŌR
LŌGAR
KĀBUL
DĀYKUNDĪ
GHAZNĪ
PAKTIYĀ
KHŌST
FARĀH
URUZGĀN
PAKTĪKĀ
ZĀBUL
HELMAND
NĪMRŌZ
KANDAHĀR
0
500 Miles
0
500 Kilometers

Modern War in an Ancient Land

The United States Army in Afghanistan 2001–2014

Volume I

by

Edmund J. "E. J." Degen

Mark J. Reardon



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
UNITED STATES ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 2021

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Degen, E. J., 1961- editor. | Reardon, Mark J., 1957 October 22- editor. | Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group, author. | United States. Department of the Army. Office of the Chief of Staff, issuing body.

Title: Modern war in an ancient land : the United States Army in Afghanistan, 2001-2014 / prepared by the Chief of Staff of the Army Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Study Group ; Edmund J. "EJ" Degen, study director and editor ; Mark J. Reardon, senior historian and editor.

Other titles: United States Army in Afghanistan, 2001-2014 | CMH pub ; 59-1-1.

Description: Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2020. | Series: CMH pub ; 59-1-1 | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "Modern War in an Ancient Land: The United States Army in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, 2001-2014 examines the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001 and the thirteen-plus years of conflict that followed. Whether sent to Afghanistan to counter terrorists, defeat an insurgency, develop institutions, or support a democracy, Army commanders operated under the assumption that by securing Afghans and their fledgling national government, the U.S. military was protecting America and the Western way of life. For more than a decade, Army formations deployed to Afghanistan to forge a country that would remain unified, at peace with its neighbors, and inhospitable to terrorists who expressed their hatred of the American homeland though violence. Modern War in an Ancient Land is the result of historical thinking by the Army's senior leadership"--Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019013967

Subjects: LCSH: Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001- | Effects-based operations (Military science)--United States--History--21st century. | United States. Army--Stability operations--History--21st century. | Afghanistan--History--2001-

Classification: LCC DS371.412 .M63 2020 | DDC 958.10474--dc23 | SUDOC D 101.2:AF 3/4

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019013967

CMH Pub 59–1
First Printing

Prepared by the Chief of Staff of the Army
Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group

Col. (USA Ret.) Edmund J. "E. J." Degen
Study Director and Editor

Lt. Col. (USA Ret.) Mark J. Reardon
Senior Historian and Editor

Study Group Research and Writing Team
Col. Adrian A. Donahoe
Col. Bryan R. Gibby
Dr. Brian F. Neumann
Col. Francis J. H. Park
Dr. Gregory G. Roberts
Lt. Col. (USA Ret.) Matthew B. Smith
Lt. Col. (USA Ret.) John R. Stark
Maj. Miranda M. Summers-Lowe
Col. Victor H. Sundquist
Dr. Colin J. Williams

Foreword by
Former Secretary of Defense Dr. Robert M. Gates

... to Those Who Served

Contents



Chapter *Page*

Foreword xiii
Preface xvii

Prologue 1
The Taliban 2
The Birth of al-Qaeda 8
U.S. Army Operations from the Post–Cold War Era to 11 September 2001 12
The Institutional Army before 11 September 2001 18
Factors Influencing U.S. Strategic Views in 2001 24
Arrayal of Forces in September 2001 28

SECTION 1: LIBERATION

Introduction 33

1. The American Response to 11 September 2001 35
The Global War on Terrorism 36
The Bush Doctrine 41
Coalition Building 47
Planning for OEF-Afghanistan 50
The September 11th Attacks and the U.S. Army 64
Preparing for Battle 66
Fleshing Out the Theater Framework 68
Initial Deployment of Conventional Forces 70
Opening Moves 71

2. Initial Combat Operations 79
The First Shots 79
Into the Heart of Taliban Country 81
Bringing the United Front into the Fight 84
The United Front 87
More Americans Join the Fight 93
Catastrophic Success 95
Second Foray into the Taliban's Heartland 99
Adapting to a Dynamic Operational Environment 102
The Conflict Goes International 112
All Roads Lead to Kandahar 117
Expanding the Hunt for al-Qaeda 119

Chapter *Page*

3. Path to Victory 127
The U.S. Army Enters in Force 130
Success Creates Growing Complexity 134
Playing the "Long Game" 136
New Boots on the Ground for Evolving Missions 141
Planning for the Shahi Kot 143
Into the Shahi Kot 151
Day Two and Beyond 157
Pushing South 162
Winding Up ANACONDA 165
Securing the High Ground 168
Operation POLAR HARPOON 169

4. A Campaign in Transition 171
Creating the Afghan National Army 173
CFLCC Prepared to Hand Over 176
The Last Enclave: MOUNTAIN LION 180

Conclusion 185

SECTION 2: SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION

Introduction 191
Political Setting as of May 2002 194
The Operating Environment 198
Enemy Situation as of May 2002 201
The Emergence of Drone Strikes in Pakistan 204

5. Counterterrorism as an Operational Approach 207
Planning Collides with Reality 208
Counterterrorism 212
From Civil Affairs Task Forces to Reconstruction Teams 222
Replacing Warlords with Government Security Forces 228
The Army Adapts to the Campaigns 233
Denying Sanctuary in Eastern Afghanistan 243
General Vines in Command 248
Apparent Success 253

6. Counterinsurgency as an Operational Approach 257
Political Setting as of September 2003 259
Enemy Situation as of September 2003 263
A New Operational Approach 266
General Barno's First Three Months 273
Accelerating Success 276
Election Preparations 287
Measuring Success 302

Chapter *Page*

The U.S. Army Meeting Unanticipated Strategic Needs 305

7. Afghan and ISAF Expansion as an Operational Approach 319
Political Setting as of May 2005 321
Enemy Situation as of May 2005 324
Posturing for a Long War 326
Developing Afghan Government Security Forces 330
The End of the Bonn Process 339

Conclusion 345
Forward Deployed in Afghanistan 345
Back in the United States 347

Bibliographical Note 351
Documents and Publications 351
Oral History Interviews and Manuscript Sources 352
Secondary Sources 353

Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group Biographies 357

Appendix: U.S. Military Terminology and Definitions 361

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Key Terms 381

Map Symbols and Note Terms 383

Index 387

Number *Page*

MAPS

Afghanistan, Provincial Boundaries . . . . . *Frontispiece*
1.1. Operation Enduring Freedom Service Arrivals, September 2001–February 2002 72
2.1. Northern Theater, 19 October–10 November 2001 90
2.2. Qala-i-Jangi, 25 November–1 December 2001 109
2.3. Fall of Kandahar, 14 November–9 December 2001 112
2.4. Tora Bora, 30 November–19 December 2001 121
2.5. Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, 2002 124
3.1. Operation Anaconda: The Plan, February 2002 149
3.2. Operation Anaconda, 27 February–20 March 2002 166
5.1. Area of Operations, April 2002–January 2003 215
5.2. Area of Operations, September 2002–August 2003 244
5.3. Area of Operations, August 2003–May 2004 252
6.1. Area of Operations, May 2004–March 2005 293
6.2. Area of Operations, March 2005–March 2006 299

Number *Page*

FIGURES

6.1. Barno's Campaign Model 269
6.2. Army Force Generation Model 313
7.1. Note on U.S. Military Tactical Terminology 327

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Damaged Pentagon on 11 September 2001 36
Firefighters at the World Trade Center Ruins on 14 September 2001 39
Afghan Mountain Range near the Pakistan Border, South of Tora Bora 59
Paktiya Province, near the Pakistan Border 62
Afghanistan's Agricultural Valleys 68
B–52 Stratofortress Providing Close Air Support to Ground Forces 73
U.S. Air Force C–17 Globemaster 74
ODA 595 "Horse Soldiers" with General Abdul Rashid Dostum's Forces 85
ODA 595 Calling in Close Air Support of United Front Forces near Kunduz 87
Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and General Tommy R. Franks 103
Qala-i-Jangi Fortress 108
Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Hamid Karzai 115
Cave Complex in the Tora Bora Area 123
Detention Operations at Kandahar 133
Senior U.S. Military Leaders Overseeing Operation Anaconda 147
Soldiers Scanning a Nearby Ridgeline for Enemy Movement during Operation Anaconda 158
The A–10 Thunderbolt II (Warthog) 160
Soldiers Dig into Fighting Positions during Operation Anaconda 162
A Soldier Scans the Countryside for Enemy Targets during Operation Anaconda 165
A Soldier Manning a .50-Caliber Machine Gun during Operation Anaconda 167
U.S. Navy SEALs Conducting Operations in Afghanistan's Dzadzi Mountains 172
U.S. Navy SEALs Interacting with Local Villagers in the Dzadzi Mountains 177
Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill with Governor Hakim Taniwal 179
Soldiers on a Search-and-Attack Mission during Operation Mountain Lion 213

Page

Soldiers Securing an Ordnance Cache Found during Operation Mountain Lion 218
Soldiers Destroying a Weapons Cache during Operation Alamo Sweep 220
An Army Civil Affairs Unit in Uruzgan Province 223
Lt. Col. Najibullah Sadiqi, ANA, Presents Kandaks to President Hamid Karzai 231
Soldiers Searching for Arms Caches during Operation Alamo Sweep 241
Air and Ground Force Coordination during Operation Alamo Sweep 247
Troops Preparing to Enter a Residential Compound during Operation Alamo Sweep 251
Lt. Gen. David W. Barno 259
Brig. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin and General John P. Abizaid 270
The Kajaki Hydroelectric Plant 279
Providing Medical Care during a Combined Medical Assistance Mission 283
Soldiers Preparing to Destroy Cases of Ammunition and Various Weapons. 284
An Afghan Voter in Khost Province. 296
Local Afghan Guards Securing Road Construction in Paktiya Province 299
Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld Addressing Troops at Bagram 317
Maj. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad 321
ANA Trainees at the Kabul Military Training Center 332
A CH–47 Chinook on an Airstrip near Khost. 340
An AH–64, Guarded by ANA Soldiers, Collecting Afghan Presidential Election Ballots. 342

ARTWORK
Overwatch xvi
Army Horse Soldiers. 31
"I'm OK, Guys" 190
Close Air Support 350

Note on the Images

The majority of the photographs contained in these volumes were taken by U.S. Department of Defense service members and selected specifically to portray Afghanistan from the perspective of those who served. The authors appreciate the U.S. Agency for International Development for the photographs on pages 59, 62, 296, and 299

M. Sgt. Juan C. Munoz, the 2015–2019 Army Artist in Residence, painted the artwork in these volumes based on photographs taken in Afghanistan by military personnel. The U.S. Army thanks Sergeant Munoz for his evocative work and its valuable contribution to the long history of soldiers expressing themselves through their art.

Foreword



Operation Enduring Freedom, the American intervention in Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, was the opening campaign of an era in which extremist groups vied with nation-states to gain territory and followers throughout the world. Initiated during a period when post–Cold War viewpoints still influenced U.S. strategic deliberations, Enduring Freedom achieved its initial goals of removing both the safe haven for the terrorist organization al-Qaeda and the Taliban government protecting them. At the same time, however, it exposed shortfalls in the U.S. military's ability to provide security and its accepted but unwarranted assumptions about ends, ways, and means as the conflict progressed. The U.S. military's experiences in Afghanistan reinforced hard-earned lessons about the complexity of coalition warfare and also revealed the fault lines—and resource disparities—between the U.S. government agencies that export influence and those that compel submission. Moreover, Enduring Freedom raised important questions about how to intervene militarily against stateless organizations while shedding new light on the relationships between global terrorists and their nation-state sponsors.

Taking place between 7 October 2001 and 31 December 2014, Operation Enduring Freedom was the longest named military operation in American history. It spanned eighty-five months of President George W. Bush's two terms in office and seventy-one months of President Barack H. Obama's tenure, as well as the entirety of my four-and-a-half years as secretary of defense. Almost 100,000 Afghan, American, and coalition lives were lost during the campaign, and a significantly greater number were wounded. Those stark figures include more than 2,300 killed and 20,000 wounded American service members, with most deaths occurring after 2007 mainly because of the increase in Taliban insurgent activity and the larger number of U.S. forces on the ground. The violence migrated with the deposed Taliban regime into neighboring Pakistan, where another 21,500 civilians, 6,000 government security personnel, and 29,000 militants died in fighting between 2001 and 2014, as transplanted extremist groups sought to gain power and influence there. In addition to the thousands of Americans killed or wounded in Afghanistan, the United States expended a staggering $718 billion in direct costs. That total includes $104 billion spent on Afghan reconstruction and almost $20 billion in aid to Pakistan. Our North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies also spent tens of billions in aid for the Afghan people and International Security Assistance Force efforts. The conclusion of Enduring Freedom in December 2014 signified transformation rather than termination, as the conflict in that region continues unabated. The ongoing fighting, and the grim statistics associated

with the conflict, justify the efforts of this account to shed additional light on the U.S. Army's role in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The conflict in Afghanistan had far-reaching external and internal ramifications, affecting not merely Afghanistan itself but also its relations with neighboring countries. Extremists operated from sanctuaries in adjacent Pakistan, generating forces in training camps and sending supplies into Afghanistan with virtual impunity. American efforts to deny safe havens to these extremists, through actions that included drone strikes, training for Pakistani security forces, and economic and military aid to Islamabad, had uneven and inconsistent success. More than a decade of continuous conflict also produced numerous changes within Afghan society, many of which proved so profound that they influenced events in remote areas previously considered inaccessible. In fact, some observers argue that Afghanistan now only faintly resembles the country that the United States and its allies liberated from the Taliban in 2001.

The conflict also affected the U.S. Army in a similarly thorough fashion. Mindful of the tremendous logistical difficulties of operating in Afghanistan, as well as the experiences of the Soviet forces defeated by irregular Afghan forces during the 1980s, the United States did not send Cold War–era armored and mechanized divisions to fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Instead, the Army's participation in the opening phase of the Afghan conflict consisted of a Special Forces Group, elements of two downsized brigades of the 10th Mountain Division plus a portion of the divisional headquarters, two Marine Expeditionary Units, and a downsized brigade from the 101st Airborne Division.

From 2002 onward, as planning for the proposed invasion of Iraq gained momentum, U.S. commanders in Afghanistan found themselves competing for supporting assets, including space-based surveillance; fixed- and rotary-wing aviation; and fire, logistics, engineer, and transportation units. Responding to administration priorities, the Army leadership devoted the bulk of available resources to the Iraq conflict from 2003 through 2009, while Afghanistan managed with whatever remained. That operational dilemma dominated the Army's overall approach to Afghanistan for several years; from 2003 onward, mechanized and armored units were sent exclusively to Iraq, while light infantry and Special Forces participated in both conflicts.

On the domestic political front, the Bush administration twice sought to minimize its military commitment to Afghanistan to provide more resources for the Iraq conflict. Taking advantage of the success of the Iraqi "surge" authorized by his predecessor, President Obama authorized the deployment of tens of thousands of reinforcements to Afghanistan, with a firm withdrawal timeline announced in advance to assuage domestic concerns about prolonging a stalemate. Although the Afghan "surge" achieved a great deal, it did not end the fighting. Our enemies simply retired to their sanctuaries to recoup their losses and reconstitute—and wait us out. The final years of Enduring Freedom thus witnessed American forces providing more assistance to their Afghan counterparts as we prepared to hand over responsibilities to them. At the same time, we began shipping troops and materiel out of theater in anticipation of the campaign's projected December 2014 end date.

By consulting primary evidence and interviewing key participants, the Chief of Staff of the Army's Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group has produced the most authoritative account of the conflict yet written. The team's unprecedented access to such vital sources enabled it to make informed observations about counterinsurgency, insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan, the in-theater coordination of conventional and Special Forces, advisory and operational partnerships with Afghans, and the debate between protecting forces and sending them into harm's way. It is my sincere desire that the insight gained by readers of these volumes will help our military and civilian leadership to understand, fight, and prevail in future conflicts.

DR. ROBERT M. GATES
22d United States Secretary of Defense, 2006–2011


J.C. MUÑOZ
2019

Preface



President George W. Bush and his National Security Council viewed the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 as far more than retaliation for the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Even as they were still defining the threat they faced, Bush and his advisers felt that the American way of life was under assault. To confront this threat, they launched Operation Enduring Freedom to oust the Taliban regime that had sheltered Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan and replace it with a representative government permanently hostile to international terrorism. By sending military forces to take down the operating base of the extremists responsible for the deadliest terrorist attack in American history, the Bush administration initiated Operation Enduring Freedom expressly to prevent another such occurrence.

However, the opening phase of Operation Enduring Freedom drew heavily from misconceptions of recent history. Senior administration officials, overly mindful of the negative public perceptions of failed U.S. military operations—exemplified by recent nonfiction and film accounts of the "Black Hawk Down" incident in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993—sought to avoid similar problems in their forthcoming campaign. The Department of Defense and other government agencies also had relatively little in-depth knowledge of the dynamics affecting the region. As a result, the United States initially considered the Taliban as militarily capable as the *mujahideen* fighters who defeated Soviet troops in the 1980s.[1] Based on that erroneous comparison, the campaign plan envisioned a much harder and lengthier fight than actually occurred. Consequently, the U.S. military was not prepared to exploit the dramatic success it achieved early on. Furthermore, because the Pakistani government had aided American efforts to supply Afghan insurgents during the Soviet-Afghan War, the Bush administration continued to view Pakistan as a stalwart ally when in reality its strategic interests clashed with those of the United States. Unfortunately for the trajectory of the campaign, this pervasive lack of comprehensive knowledge persisted as America turned its sights on other strategic goals.

Overview

Modern War in an Ancient Land: The United States Army in Afghanistan, 2001–2014 examines the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001 and

1. *Mujahideen* is the plural form of the Arabic term *mujahid*, meaning one who is struggling or striving for a praiseworthy aim. In English, it is used primarily to describe the Afghan guerrillas who fought against Soviet troops throughout the Soviet-Afghan War (December 1979–February 1989).

the thirteen-plus years of conflict that followed. Whether sent to Afghanistan to counter terrorists, defeat an insurgency, develop institutions, or support a democracy, Army commanders operated under the assumption that by securing Afghans and their fledgling national government, the U.S. military was protecting America and the Western way of life. For more than a decade, Army formations deployed to Afghanistan to forge a country that would remain unified, at peace with its neighbors, and inhospitable to terrorists who expressed their hatred of the American homeland through violence.

Modern War in an Ancient Land is the result of historical thinking by the Army's senior leadership. In the summer of 2014, General Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the United States Army, formed the Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group to research and write an operational history of the U.S. Army's involvement in Afghanistan from October 2001 to December 2014. The book was carried to completion by his successors, Generals Mark A. Milley and James C. McConville, officers with multiple combat tours in Afghanistan. All three understood that history must be both accurate and timely if it is to inform government officials and military officers facing the problems of the present. By giving a diverse team of historians the latitude to pursue primary documents and interview key leaders, Generals Odierno, Milley, and McConville promoted the spirit of independent inquiry needed to uncover the reasons why events happened as they did. By placing the team under the leadership of an accomplished war planner and operator, Col. E. J. Degen, the Chiefs of Staff ensured that any present-day utility offered by this history would not be lost to the passage of time.

Befitting its sponsors, *Modern War in an Ancient Land* is a history of the United States Army. Although Special Forces, joint headquarters, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troop-contributing nations, unaligned third parties, and the United States Marine Corps are all integral to the story, its interpretative scope focuses on what the U.S. Army did in theater, how and why those actions occurred, and what effect those actions had on both Operation Enduring Freedom and the U.S. Army as an institution. These two volumes are a narrative of how the U.S. Army formed, trained, deployed, and employed combat power overseas to prevent a repetition of the terrible events of 11 September 2001. The narrative is focused at the operational level of war and will discuss policy and strategy only as needed to illuminate the operational story. At the same time, it will delve into the tactical realm only when such insights amplify the implications of operational decisions or occurrences.

Although *Modern War in an Ancient Land* is Army-centric, it gives full credence to the multiple causal factors that determined events throughout the campaign. As the theater of operations, Afghanistan's dynamic environment and unique characteristics inherently shaped the nature of the conflict. Its topography, political leadership, security forces, lack of historic unity, economic dependence on opium poppy production, endemic poverty, and persistent corruption all exerted immense influence on what the U.S. Army could and could not do in Operation Enduring Freedom. At the same time, Afghanistan's neighbors, particularly Pakistan, weighted the conflict with transnational aspects that often fell beyond the purview of operational

commanders. Finally, a number of tenacious enemies—not merely the Taliban, but also the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) militant group, the guerrilla insurgent forces of the Haqqani Network, and various criminal networks—impeded the U.S. Army's efforts to protect Afghanistan and its indigenous population during the conflict. All of these factors required the U.S. Army's strategy to evolve and adapt to the constantly changing conditions on the ground.

These factors influenced the organization of *Modern War in an Ancient Land*. After a prologue highlighting the ongoing missions of the United States Army at the time of the September 11th attacks, the history proceeds with five chronological sections divided across two volumes. Section 1, Liberation, covers the Bush administration's decision to invade Afghanistan, its plan for the campaign, and the ways in which initial combat operations supported campaign objectives. Its four chapters examine how the Army built up forces during this phase of the conflict, deploying first Special Forces to partner with the anti-Taliban United Front and topple Afghanistan's ruling government, and then conventional forces from the 10th Mountain Division and the 101st Airborne Division to reduce Taliban concentrations in the country during Operations Anaconda and Mountain Lion.

Section 2, Searching for a Solution, starts with the Department of Defense decision to deploy a three-star joint task force to impose control over combat operations and ends with the conclusion of an international process to install a new Afghan government. The three chapters in this section evaluate the factors that hindered multiple attempts to achieve end-state objectives during this period. A few examples of these problems include nongovernmental organizations unwilling to operate outside the Afghan capital, the near impossibility of discriminating the opposition from the citizenry, the emergence of enemy sanctuaries in western Pakistan, and vacillating interest from a presidential administration intent on overthrowing Saddam Hussein's dictatorial rule of Iraq. This volume closes with some observations and conclusions from the first few years of the war in Afghanistan.

Volume II opens with Section 1, An Economy of Force, and covers the nadir of American military efforts in Afghanistan, one of the most consequential three-year periods in Army history. It begins with an attempt to refocus combat power on the country's eastern provinces, which had been shortchanged in 2006 and 2007 by the need to aid NATO forces ensnared in deadly combat in the southern provinces. The first three chapters of the section explain how the Taliban, HIG, and the Haqqani Network challenged NATO's assumption of operational responsibility for the theater, while its final chapter specifies how intervening forces tried to blunt the opposition's rise by developing Afghanistan's security forces. The section also describes how America's war in Iraq from 2003 onward further complicated matters by severely degrading the U.S. Army's ability to provide trained, combat-ready forces at this stage of the conflict, leading to changes in mission, force structure, and readiness.

The final two sections of *Modern War in an Ancient Land* relate America's attempt to reassert political, strategic, and operational initiative in Afghanistan following the 2009 inauguration of President Barack H. Obama. Under President Obama's leadership, the scope and intensity of Operation

Enduring Freedom would increase temporarily. This growth would limit enemy aggressiveness, creating the necessary time and space to reduce troops to a level deemed acceptable to the American public. Section 2, The Surge in Afghanistan, begins with a strategic reassessment of Operation Enduring Freedom meant to align the new administration's policies with theater objectives. Recommendations from the military focused on personnel end strength. To solve the problems highlighted in the review, President Obama directed a temporary surge in U.S. forces. Commanders used the increased forces available to them to conduct counterinsurgency operations on the northeastern and southwestern peripheries of NATO-controlled Afghanistan. Although occasional tactical setbacks reversed operational gains, they did not alter the Obama administration's intent to reduce force strength starting in late 2011. Section 3, End of Campaigns, describes how the U.S. Army began removing its active components from an environment hostile to foreign forces while forming and conducting aggressive security force assistance operations. The retrograde focused on developing indigenous security forces, accelerating Western efforts to improve Afghan governance, and setting up an ambitious program to ship more than a decade's worth of stockpiled war materiel out of the country. The final section of these volumes presents the overarching lessons learned at the operational level across more than thirteen years of campaigning in Afghanistan. These lessons include the critical balance of ends, ways, and means; the value of force innovation and agility; and the benefits and challenges of force structure transformation in a time of conflict. They also highlight the importance of unity of command and effort, the vital role of information operations on the modern battlefield, and the need for security as a precursor to stability. As always, war is a marathon, not a sprint.

Modern War in an Ancient Land is not the final word on the U.S. Army during Operation Enduring Freedom. Even when viewed through the lenses of the U.S. Army and the operational level of war, Operation Enduring Freedom was an incredibly complex conflict. More work needs to be done to evaluate its broader legacy in American military history. To that end, the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) is now assembling historians to write a series of "Tan Books" covering all facets of the Global War on Terrorism. Not to engage in this comprehensive effort would be to slight the importance of campaigns not mentioned and units not detailed in *Modern War in an Ancient Land*.

Acknowledgments

In writing this book, the authors have benefited from numerous experts. Although it would be impractical to list them all, any attempt must begin with our review board: Dr. David E. Johnson of the RAND Corporation; General (Ret.) Charles H. Jacoby Jr. of the U.S. Army; Dr. Jack D. Kem of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; Dr. Brian M. Linn of Texas A&M University; Dr. Brian Glyn Williams of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth; Dr. Robert M. Citino from The National World War II Museum; Paul W. Westermeyer from the Marine Corps History Division of the Marine Corps University; and Dr. William Shane Story from

CMH. The insight and knowledge of these distinguished gentlemen saved the Study Group from errors both large and small. Any errors remaining are the fault of the authors alone. In addition, Dr. Donald P. Wright at Army University Press (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) and Genoa Stanford at the Maneuver Center of Excellence's Donovan Research Library (Fort Benning, Georgia) contributed documents that greatly expanded the study group's research archives.

The authors also owe considerable gratitude to the staffs of both U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command. From hosting and assisting the research team to fast-tracking the declassification of critical documents, their timely and friendly support was second to none and a clear reflection of the commands. The team also owes much to Generals John F. Campbell and John W. "Mick" Nicholson Jr. at NATO's International Security Assistance Force headquarters, who ensured that their staff provided anything and everything we requested from them. And finally, we offer a special thanks to then Maj. Gen. John M. Murray and the staff of the 3d Infantry Division, who allowed the writing team to access the servers of the National Support Element Command–Afghanistan in Bagram, Afghanistan, from which they siphoned multiple terabytes of critical historical data.

Closer to home, Directors of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, Lt. Gen. Joseph M. Martin, and Lt. Gen. Walter E. Piatt and Vice Director Mr. Steven J. Redmann deserve special thanks for the constant "top cover" they provided the team. They eagerly gave support when and where it was needed. General Raymond T. Odierno, General Mark A. Milley, and General James C. McConville empowered and guided the team and critiqued its work as necessary. Their sage guidance and consummate support were invaluable. The former Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army Mr. Gerald B. O'Keefe, and CMH's Executive Director Mr. Charles R. Bowery Jr. and Chief Historian Mr. Jon T. Hoffman, provided the Study Group with administrative support as well as a wonderfully collegial place in which to conduct the serious work of history. As always, Chief of Historical Services Mr. Frank R. Shirer, and all the historians who deposited and maintained data in the CMH library, proved invaluable. The CMH Historical Products Division, under the intrepid leadership of Ms. Cheryl L. Bratten, the rigorous editorial direction of Ms. Shannon L. Granville, and the dedicated editorial review of Ms. C. Sarah Castle, Ms. Margaret J. McGarry, and Ms. Karla Moon, excelled at preparing *Modern War in an Ancient Land* for publication. Mr. Matthew T. Boan and Mr. Ramon L. Perez, the branch's cartographers, prepared all of the maps in this book. CMH visual information specialists Mr. Timothy J. Mazurek and Mr. Michael R. Gill provided the critical design and production work to see both volumes into print. Their collective skill and expertise are all integral to the value of the finished product.

Finally, this history has benefited from leaders who entertained our questions. From President George W. Bush to platoon leaders, they all met willingly with members of the writing team and answered questions to the best of their recollections. A special thanks is due to former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, who graciously consented to provide an in-depth interview and to write the foreword for Volume 1.

Prologue



In late December 1979, Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev dispatched troops to Afghanistan to prop up a failing communist government in Kabul. Yet instead of strengthening a faltering ally, the Soviet intervention only further destabilized the country, sparking a nationwide Islamist insurgency that led to a decade-long war for the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. After initially deploying massed tanks, artillery, and airpower against the Afghan guerrilla movement known as the mujahideen, the Soviet military began relying on Special Operations Forces (SOF), heliborne infantry, and Afghan proxy fighters. The adoption of more sophisticated tactics, however, did not deliver victory. The insurgency grew in scope and ferocity. Years of inconclusive combat, coupled with a growing need for domestic political and economic reforms, prompted the Soviet Union—now led by Mikhail Gorbachev—to announce a plan to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in October 1985. That process required four years to complete, as Moscow reduced its troop commitment while transferring responsibility for the ongoing conflict to its communist Afghan allies.

As the Soviets withdrew, Western nations that had been funneling weapons to the Afghan resistance through Pakistan also pulled out of the conflict. The flow of American aid to Pakistan, its main ally in the region, had come under scrutiny in August 1985 after Congress passed the Pressler Amendment to the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The amendment stipulated that no military or technology equipment would be sold or transferred to Pakistan unless the American president certified that Pakistan did not possess an assembled nuclear bomb or all of the components necessary to make a bomb.[1] Although President Ronald W. Reagan's administration obtained evidence that Pakistani scientists were violating the amendment, it deferred enforcement of it until the Afghan-Soviet conflict ended.[2] Once the United

1. The 1985 amendment was a compromise measure worked out in Congress after Democratic senators John H. Glenn Jr. and Alan M. Cranston proposed a more stringent change to the act in March 1984. Some evidence suggests that Pakistan was informed about the Pressler Amendment in advance. See Rabia Akhtar, "The Correct Narrative on Pressler," *Dawn*, 29 May 2017, https://www.dawn.com/news/1335979, Historians Files, Chief of Staff of the Army Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group (hereinafter Hist Files, OEF Study Grp).

2. Available evidence suggests that Pakistani scientists were doing so without official backing or approval. These sanctions were not permanent, as the U.S. government lifted and reimposed them several times before 11 September 2001. Even though the United States eased the sanctions after the September 11th attacks, U.S.-Pakistan relations remained problematic. See "A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network," *History Commons*, 2009, https://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=aq_khan_nuclear_network_tmln&aq_khan_nuclear_network_tmln_us_

States began enforcing the Pressler Amendment in October 1990, relations with Pakistan deteriorated. The end of U.S. aid hurt Pakistan both financially and militarily, but it freed Islamabad to pursue its own aims in Afghanistan without Washington's interference.

Even after the Soviets departed in 1989, the Afghan conflict continued as mujahideen fighters battled the communist regime and each other. Afghanistan's weak proxy government, mountains of surplus weaponry, and panoply of insurgent bands formed along various ideological and ethnic lines combined to sustain chaos on a national scale. This constant instability motivated a group of religious students to form an armed movement to end the fighting. These students, known as the Taliban (students of Islam), shared a strong ideological bond with a number of volunteers from Arab countries who had traveled to Afghanistan to join the mujahideen and fight the Soviets. In an effort to increase its influence within Afghanistan and thus gain strategic depth against India, the Pakistani government began providing weapons and advisers to the Taliban. In addition, Saudi Arabia provided cash, weapons, and thousands of vehicles to the Taliban as part of its plan to surround Shia-dominated Iran with Sunni-dominated governments.[3] This influx of outside aid helped convince many Afghan warlords to ally with the Taliban.

Imbued with a single-minded dedication that many of its opponents lacked, the Taliban eliminated virtually all opposition before it. After securing control of most of Afghanistan by late 1995, it offered sanctuary to extremist groups such as al-Qaeda (the foundation or the base) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in return for assistance in defeating local political leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, whose collection of Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek militias had been resisting Taliban rule in the Darya-ye Panjshayr Valley of northern Afghanistan. To prevent the Taliban from taking control of the entire country, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funneled some aid to Massoud in the late 1990s. That aid, however, did nothing to prevent terrorist organizations from establishing camps in Afghanistan. Nations targeted by these groups had limited retaliatory options unless they wanted to risk war with the Taliban.

The Taliban

Even though the Soviets ended their troop presence in Afghanistan in February 1989, they continued to provide substantial military and economic assistance to the Afghan communist regime in Kabul. The government forces of President Mohammed Najibullah sorely needed that aid, because the Afghan mujahideen turned against them as soon as the Soviet troops departed. Najibullah's regime clung to power for almost three more years, largely with the help of Soviet weaponry and funds. In addition to

---

intelligence_on_pakistani_nukes=aq_khan_nuclear_network_tmln_us_sanctions, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

3. Celia W. Dugger, "Indian Town's Seed Grew into the Taliban's Code," *New York Times*, 23 Feb 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/23/world/indian-town-s-seed-grew-into-the-taliban-s-code.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

furnishing Najibullah's troops with firepower, Soviet aid allowed the Afghan communists to buy the allegiance of local mujahideen militias.[4] Although their outside funding sources made the Pakistan-based mujahideen bands less susceptible to bribery, they were unable to muster enough strength to overcome Najibullah because they were as politically or violently opposed to each other as they were to the communists.

The most effective foes of the Najibullah regime during this period included Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) and Massoud's Tajik militia.[5] Hekmatyar mobilized support among fellow ethnic Pashtuns, while Massoud attracted non-Pashtun ethnic groups including Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras.[6] When Najibullah's regime began disintegrating as the Soviets withdrew their aid, the communist-armed forces dispersed into the various militias depending on which one made them the best offer. In many ways, this situation benefited Massoud most, as it allowed him to occupy Kabul days ahead of Hekmatyar's troops in April 1992. The fall of the communist regime, however, did not bring peace to war-torn Afghanistan. After efforts to form a unity government failed, various armed factions attempted to take by force what they could not cajole by *shura* (a local consultative council or assembly).[7]

The post-1992 conflict differed from the Afghan-Soviet conflict in that other regional powers were willing to invest significant resources to influence the metamorphosing Afghan civil war. Russia, Iran, and Turkey all had proxies and interests in northern and western Afghanistan. The Central Asian republics, now freed from Soviet control, also had their preferred strongmen: Abdul Rashid Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek, and Massoud, an ethnic Tajik, looked to the newly independent Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, respectively, for support and sanction. At the same time, Pakistan focused its energies on promoting Hekmatyar's HIG forces.[8] The Saudis aided Islamabad's efforts by funding recruitment and training infrastructure in Pakistan and Afghanistan and by purchasing Pakistani factories to manufacture small arms and ammunition, explosives, and other weapons.[9] The end product was an overall stalemate and general misery. Afghanistan would not achieve peace or stability until something, or someone, broke the deadlock.

As the Afghan civil war stagnated into factional violence, Islamabad started looking for other options to bring down the Tajik-dominated seat of government in Kabul. Elements within Pakistan's government quietly began

---

4. Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 241–49.

5. Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), pp. 303–20.

6. Husain Haqqani, "Insecurity along the Durand Line," in *Afghanistan: Transition under Threat*, eds. Geoffrey Hayes and Mark Sedra (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), pp. 228–29.

7. Barfield, *Afghanistan*, pp. 249–50.

8. Tomsen, *Wars of Afghanistan*, pp. 454–55; Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 21.

9. Tomsen, *Wars of Afghanistan*, p. 464.

shifting support from Hekmatyar to the increasingly influential Taliban.[10] Hailing from the fertile triangle between the two branches of the Arghandab River in the Panjwa'i District west of the provincial capital city of Kandahar, the Taliban represented a large group of familial and tribal interests firmly committed to the principles of Islam. Because most Taliban members were Pashtuns from southern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, they had an immediate constituency in those regions, even though much of the local population did not embrace the movement's strict interpretations of *sharia* (Islamic religious law) and Islamic theology.[11]

Led by Mullah Mohammed Omar, a reclusive one-eyed preacher from the rural district of Maywand in Kandahar Province, the Taliban emerged onto the world stage in late autumn of 1994 when a few dozen former *talibs*—as individual members of the Taliban were known, from the Arabic word for "student"—gathered to attack highway brigands that had been preying on innocent travelers.[12] Taliban mythology claims that Omar personally led a group of no more than thirty talibs, half with rifles, to rescue two teenage girls who had been abducted by a local warlord. Omar's prestige grew following this successful raid and other actions that his followers took to confront warlords and petty criminals in the province. The Taliban's growing reputation for timely Islamic justice, charitable work, and the empowerment of Pashtuns also improved its local standing. All these threads combined to enhance Omar's appeal to ethnic groups on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border who were looking to end Afghanistan's internal turmoil and divisions.[13]

An important dimension of Omar's world view was his adherence to an Islamic school known as Deobandism, a late-nineteenth-century revivalist and anti-imperialist movement. Even today, it remains one of the more influential schools of sharia legal interpretation prevalent in south and central Asia.

---

10. The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad was aware of fissures in Pakistan's policy of supporting the "Peshawar Seven"—the alliance of seven mujahideen parties that had come together in the 1980s to fight the Soviets. Afghan sources revealed anxiety over any overt Pakistani influence in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Pakistani sources indicated that support for the Taliban was problematic and just as likely to harm Pakistan as to benefit it. The confused reporting likely contributed to a fundamental misreading of the situation as the Taliban emerged from an unknown group to the region's most potent military movement. Fax, U.S. Embassy Islamabad [Redacted] to Ron McMullen, 5 Dec 1994, sub: Developments in Afghanistan, The National Security Archive, George Washington University (hereafter NSA GWU), https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB227/1.pdf, Hist files, OEF Study Grp; Fax, Islamabad 11584, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 6 Dec 1994, sub: [Redacted] Believe Pakistan Is Backing Taliban, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal5.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; see also Fax, Islamabad 003466, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to RUEHC/Sec State, 22 Apr 1996, sub: A/S Raphel Discusses Afghanistan, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal15.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11. Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 25, 33.

12. Fax, Islamabad 01792, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 20 Feb 1995, sub: Finally, a Talkative Talib: Origins and Membership of the Religious Students' Movement, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal8.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 25; Fax, U.S. Embassy to Sec State, 20 Feb 1995, sub: Finally, a Talkative Talib; Tomsen, *Wars of Afghanistan*, p. 536.

Highly structured and legalistic, Deobandism also promoted a sense of Muslim national identity in conflict with the West. The Taliban fused this vision of Islamic purity with Salafist orthodoxy and Pashtun nationalism to glorify armed resistance to foreign influences. It was a short step for this philosophy to evolve into a movement that promoted *jihad* (struggle, in the sense of a holy war waged on behalf of Islam) against infidels, apostates, and modernity.[14]

A charismatic and trusted leader, Omar decided to spread the Taliban's sharia-based mandate throughout Afghanistan.[15] Flush with growing popular support, he reportedly went as far as to take the cloak of the Prophet Muhammad from a Kandahar shrine, wrap himself in it, and extract the *bayat* (an oath of personal allegiance) from his followers. He also accepted the title of *Amir al-Mahmunen* (Commander of the Faithful).[16] It was a masterful political stroke that brought him supporters from Uzbek, Tajik, and other ethnic groups who were willing to subscribe to his military and political objectives.[17] Reports of the Taliban's deeds also breathed credibility and impetus into the new movement, and motivated an increasing number of veteran mujahideen to side with Omar.

Finally, in the fall of 1994, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency blatantly threw its weight behind the new movement. On 4 October—though some sources suggest that the attack took place in late September—200 Taliban militants, Islamic *madrassa* (religious educational institution) students, and Arab fighters attacked Spin Boldak, a port of entry on the Afghan side of the border with Pakistan. In addition to its role as a major transportation hub (and therefore revenue producer), the Spin Boldak border crossing was controlled by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's followers. American diplomatic sources believed that Pakistan's military supported the attack with "artillery shelling . . . from Pakistani Frontier Corps positions."[18] Hekmatyar's men fled after a brief firefight, abandoning a large weapons store that added thousands of small arms, dozens of artillery pieces, and large quantities of ammunition, explosives, and vehicles to the Taliban's inventory. The victory at Spin Boldak convinced many lesser warlords and militias to join the Taliban as repeated military successes allowed the new movement to consolidate Afghan political and social authority under Omar's banner.

---

14. Hassan Abbas, *The Taliban Revival: Violence and Extremism on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 13–17; Abdul Salam Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 22–26; Mark Silinsky, *The Taliban: Afghanistan's Most Lethal Insurgents* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2014), pp. 13, 17. For Deobandi ideas and proliferation, see Ira A. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 465.

15. Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2015), p. 250.

16. Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 42, 86–93. The Kandahar shrine that held the Prophet Muhammad's cloak had been built by Ahmed Shah Durrani, Afghanistan's first Pashtun king (r. 1747–1772).

17. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 250– 51.

18. Fax, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 6 Dec 1994, sub: [Redacted] Believe Pakistan Is Backing Taliban.

A few weeks after seizing Spin Boldak, a Taliban unit marched on Kandahar, capturing it with little effort on 5 November. Thousands of Afghan refugees returned from Pakistan to join the Taliban colors. They were young and lacked combat experience, but they knew how to handle guns and were completely detached from Afghanistan's traditional tribal network and traditions, which made them loyal to the Taliban alone. Veteran journalist Ahmed Rashid believes that as many as 20,000 Afghan refugees and "hundreds" of Pakistani Pashtuns crossed into Afghanistan following the fall of Kandahar.[19] With this influx of fresh manpower, Mohammed Omar's lieutenants surged into neighboring Helmand Province, overrunning it by February 1995. Twin drives then reached the cities of Herat in the west and Kabul in the east.[20]

Herat's provincial governor, Ismail Khan, fled the provincial capital in early September, allowing the Taliban to seize the city on 4 September 1995 and cement its hold on the western side of the country. In Kabul, Massoud's forces fought with more skill and firepower, giving the Taliban its first rebuff. Taliban forces, now augmented with tanks, artillery, and rockets, besieged the city, using their indirect fire assets to bombard Kabul in much the same way as Hekmatyar's men had a few years earlier. Massoud's limited resources were fully committed to retaining control of the embattled capital as the Taliban sent men and munitions from the Pashtun south into the fight in a bid to overwhelm its Tajik defenders.[21] In the summer of 1996, Pakistan broke the impasse by allowing Taliban forces in South Waziristan to launch an assault on the eastern city of Jalalabad, which fell on 10 September. Additional Taliban columns swept north, scooping up Kunar, Nangarhar, and Nuristan Provinces, thus sealing Kabul's fate. Massoud withdrew on 26 September. The Taliban flag now flew over Afghanistan's hollowed-out capital city.[22]

The 40,000 to 50,000 combatants serving with the Taliban were nominally under a corps headquarters in Kabul commanded by Mullah Mohammed Fazl. Air defense assets included about a dozen MiG jet interceptors, as well as three batteries of Soviet-made SA–3 radar-guided surface-to-air missiles, 300 to 550 antiaircraft guns of varying calibers, and several hundred SA–7 man-portable surface-to-air missiles. In addition to jet fighters, the Taliban possessed transport planes and helicopters. The Taliban inventory also contained about 200 operational artillery pieces, as well as multiple truck-mounted rocket launchers, all of which were distributed piecemeal in accordance with battlefield needs. Additionally, it had an armored brigade equipped with 250 tanks and other armored vehicles. Like the rocket launchers, most armored fighting vehicles were distributed in platoons or smaller formations to assist infantry units that required additional fire support to gain a local advantage.

---

19. Tomsen, *Wars of Afghanistan*, p. 536.

20. Ibid.; Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 29–32.

21. Fax, Islamabad 08185, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 6 Sep 1995, sub: Afghanistan: Heavy Fighting Rages West of Kabul; Herat Calm after Taliban Takeover, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal11.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 35–40.

22. Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 48–49.

As Omar formed a new national government, it became clear that Pashtuns—who represented less than half of the country's twenty-seven million citizens—would be dominant in Afghan affairs. The lesser ethnic groups, all of whom practiced less-stringent versions of Islam, deeply resented being dominated by predominantly Sunni Pashtuns. The combined Tajik and predominantly Shia Hazara populations, which matched the Pashtuns in numbers, were excluded from the new government. As a result, Hazari, Tajik, and Uzbek communities and former mujahideen commanders continued to resist Taliban expansion. Despite fierce fighting, by 1998 the Taliban had captured the cities of Bamyan and Mazar-e Sharif, along with the Hazarjat region in central Afghanistan. The fighting grew more vicious as Omar's followers pushed north and northwest from Kabul, with Hazaras and Taliban each committing atrocities against their opponents.[23] Each new success further energized Taliban efforts to persecute their enemies.[24]

In addition to condoning the torture and execution of captured fighters, the Taliban imposed a harsh brand of justice—one which drew heavily from the Pashtuns' pre-Islamic tribal code and Wahhabi interpretations of sharia—on the general population. Policies designed to suppress un-Islamic behavior, such as banning music and television, jailing men whose beards were considered to be too short, and forcing women to wear the head-to-toe covering known as the *burqa*, appalled Western observers.[25] In 1998, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed two resolutions admonishing the Taliban for its abusive and restrictive treatment of women and issued formal sanctions on the regime.[26] These sanctions diplomatically isolated the Taliban with only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates recognizing the regime's legitimacy.

By 1999, Massoud, living in exile in Tajikistan, had assembled the remaining opposition elements into a shaky coalition called the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan—known in the West as the United Front.[27] The United Front proved so adept at keeping its opponents at bay that Omar continued to feed troops into the fight until the bulk of the Taliban's field forces were committed in the north. The resultant stalemate led Pakistan to send in advisers who could provide technical advice and support planning. Although a highly trained and motivated unit of Uzbek, Chechen, and Arab

---

23. Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 38.

24. Donald P. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), October 2001–September 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), p. 12.

25. Ibid., pp. 23–24.

26. Zachary Laub, "The Taliban in Afghanistan," Council on Foreign Relations, 4 Jul 2014, https://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. Pakistan chose to use the term "Northern Alliance" in order to portray the anti-Taliban coalition as a narrow, Tajik-dominated resistance without broad national appeal. Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), p. 127.

extremists—known as Brigade 055—aided the Taliban, decisive battlefield success in the north remained elusive.

The Taliban regime presented the international community with a dilemma. It had delivered stability and Islamic justice to a war-weary nation. Although the regime was not universally accepted, particularly by non-Pashtuns, it did have enough Afghan support to give it legitimacy. However, it appeared to show little respect for international norms. Its human rights policies were abysmal, and its crude enforcement of sharia law made it appear to encourage gratuitous violence and domestic oppression.[28] Moreover, the Taliban's international stature suffered greatly from the regime's willingness to offer protection to some of the world's most wanted terrorists. Although the United States made several diplomatic efforts during the latter half of the 1990s to close the gap between Taliban words and actions regarding international terrorism, those overtures produced little progress and few tangible results.[29]

The Birth of al-Qaeda

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan attracted thousands of young Arab men who pledged to defend Islamic lands from the invading infidels. Many of these individuals were also angry at the corrupt and secular nature of many Arab governments in the Middle East. For them, joining the anti-Soviet jihad was one way to express pan-Islamism, and Afghanistan became the epicenter of a growing idealistic vision that would redeem the heritage of the Prophet Muhammad.[30] One of these religious zealots was Osama bin Laden, the son of a Saudi billionaire who headed a construction conglomerate. Under the mentorship of a Palestinian cleric, Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden initially supported and advised Arab and other Islamic fighters through his association with an Islamic charity, the Services Office (Maktab al-Khidamat).[31] Dissatisfied with remaining on the sidelines as others fought, bin Laden sought more active participation as well as a leadership role in the field. The young Saudi expatriate's path to martyrdom began when he provided funds and equipment to strengthen logistical sites, including Tora Bora and Zhawar Kili, in remote eastern Afghanistan. After upgrading the mujahideen fortifications, bin Laden took to the field in 1987, where he personally participated in a defensive battle against a strong Soviet attack near Dzadzi (Jaji) in Paktiya Province in 1987.

In the wake of this and other intense battles against communist forces, bin Laden's view of jihad broadened from a defense of Islamic lands to encompass

---

28. Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban*, pp. 77–78, 84.

29. Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 80; John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The U.S. at War in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2012), pp. 24–26; U.S. Department of State Cable 203322, Sec State to U.S. Embassy Islamabad, 28 Sep 1996, sub: Dealing with the Taliban in Kabul, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal17.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 21–23.

31. Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al-Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 24.

direct confrontation and overthrow of Muslim governments that failed to follow traditional Islamic ways. This approach was a significant break from accepted thought, which defined jihad as the liberation of former Muslim lands from non-Muslims. As a result, bin Laden broke with Abdullah Azzam and began to form al-Qaeda, a multinational group of Sunni Islamist fighters in Pakistan dedicated to continuing the war and overthrowing the Afghan communist regime.[32] Al-Qaeda differed from other Afghan mujahideen groups in its intensity. Its training camps were known as tough, austere, disciplined, and effective at transforming civilians into guerrilla fighters.

Like-minded individuals, such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad's Ayman al-Zawahiri, found their way to western Pakistan to meet with bin Laden. In 1988, they organized a loosely structured military elite to give Islamic direction, tactical training, financial resources, and networked leadership to potential mujahideen. According to one of its founding members, al-Qaeda's goals were simple: to be "an organized Islamic faction . . . to live the word of God, [and] to make his religion victorious."[33] In addition to a military function, bin Laden promoted his organization as the vanguard "to spread the soul and the idea of jihad among Muslims . . . their idea of jihad, which means fighting infidels and to establish a truly Islamic government all over the world." Foreign recruits came from many countries, not merely from Middle Eastern nations such as Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, but also from Western nations such as Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. The newcomers were divided into two groups: one would support the Afghan mujahideen for the duration of the war, while a second would join the international crusade against apostates, heretics, and infidels.[34]

Afghanistan proved an ideal battlefield for al-Qaeda to establish its roots and to nurture its internationalist vision. Bin Laden benefited directly from Pakistan's sanctuary and from Saudi and Gulf States' largess. Despite the influx of men and money, al-Qaeda suffered some humiliating defeats that caused severe internal fractures and decreased bin Laden's prestige among those who valued military proficiency over martyrdom. The Soviet-backed Afghan government's victory at the Battle of Jalalabad, fought between March and June 1989, was a disaster for al-Qaeda, and bin Laden shouldered most of the blame for his reckless, self-promoting rush into battle. His subordinates subsequently worked to change their approach to training, specifically by deemphasizing direct combat. The transition heightened bin Laden's appeal as an international visionary of means who could lead a worldwide jihad, and downplayed the problems he had faced as a battlefield commander.[35]

The end of Soviet operations and the eventual collapse of Najibullah's regime made bin Laden and other foreign Islamists a liability for Pakistan.

---

32. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 76–79; Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 27, 51–55, 74.

33. Seth G. Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of Al Qa'ida Since 9/11* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), p. 38.

34. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 80–81, 99. Jamal Ismail, a Palestinian who knew bin Laden, is the source of the quotation. Idem, p. 82.

35. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 158–60.

In 1990, bin Laden's attention turned away from Afghanistan when Saddam Hussein's Iraq overran neighboring Kuwait and posed a direct threat to Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden approached the Saudi royal family soon after the invasion of Kuwait with an offer to lead thousands of mujahideen fighters against the Iraqis in defense of his native land. Yet the Saudi government spurned his offer, and instead invited non-Muslim military forces into the kingdom to eject the Iraqis from Kuwait. Bin Laden interpreted these developments as an insult to his faith and began agitating against the Saudi royal family. In 1991, officials in Riyadh forced bin Laden to leave Saudi Arabia permanently. He briefly returned to Pakistan to reconstitute and reestablish his leadership over a much-reduced al-Qaeda organization before relocating to Sudan the following year. From the safety of Khartoum, bin Laden nurtured contacts, established training camps, and supported regional jihad, mostly against President Hosni Mubarak's Egypt.[36]

Osama bin Laden's plans for toppling Muslim governments that failed to follow Islamist ways included attacking the interests of the Western nations that supported them. Al-Qaeda began spreading influence from its base in Sudan, initially by supporting Muslim militants engaged in conflicts in Bosnia, North Africa, Chechnya, and Yemen.[37] The failure of the U.S.-led UN effort to subdue Somali warlords in late 1993 convinced bin Laden that "Americans were soft and that the United States was a paper tiger that could be defeated more easily than the Soviets had been in Afghanistan."[38] Driving America from the Middle East now seemed an attractive prospect because it would deprive Israel of its main Western backer and separate "the head of the snake" from "its many tails"—namely, the region's authoritarian Arab governments. However, before bin Laden translated those thoughts into action, in 1996 an assassination attempt by a rival group forced him to relocate to Afghanistan, where the Taliban now ruled in place of the defunct mujahideen regime.[39]

Years of Western neglect and festering internal conflicts had allowed the Taliban to turn Afghanistan into a sanctuary state for Islamic extremists. Bin Laden and his followers brought with them money, credibility, and religious influence that blinded Mullah Mohammed Omar's organization to the dangers that al-Qaeda posed to regional stability.[40] On 23 February 1998, bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and three other prominent jihadists published a *fatwa* (a deliberate call to arms for believers). The legal opinion of the fatwa, which quoted the Quran, commanded "every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their

---

36. Ibid., pp. 177–79; Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 112–13.

37. Osama bin Laden's influence in Somalia may have been aimed more at sparking jihad in Yemen than at confronting the American and United Nations (UN) efforts there. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 184–94, and the chart "Activities of bin Laden in Sudan, 1992–5," p. 195.

38. George Tenet with Bill Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), p. 103.

39. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 116, 132–36; Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 204–05.

40. Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. viii, xi.

money wherever and whenever they find it."[41] In doing so, it placed al-Qaeda and its Taliban hosts on a collision course with the United States and its allies.

The CIA first took note of bin Laden in 1993 when a financial analysis cell identified the Saudi expatriate, then living in Sudan, as an active backer of terrorist networks.[42] The al-Qaeda bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on 7 August 1998, which killed 224 people (including 12 Americans), brought bin Laden to the attention of the American public. Thirteen days later, President William J. "Bill" Clinton announced Operation Infinite Reach, a series of cruise missile strikes against al-Qaeda targets in Sudan and Afghanistan.[43] Because the United States lacked detailed targeting information, the retaliatory attacks did little more than damage some terrorist training facilities. Nevertheless, the CIA's covert fight against al-Qaeda gained momentum in the wake of the much-publicized missile strikes. Although most U.S. government departments were under budgetary pressures at the time, funding for counterterrorism efforts rose more than 50 percent over the next four years.[44] The CIA utilized some of the additional funding to develop human assets within Taliban-controlled southern and central Afghanistan while strengthening its ties with opposition groups in the northern part of the country. This increased funding convinced some Afghans to work for the Americans, but none of the new informants were highly placed within the Taliban, and so their contributions were less helpful than their handlers desired.

As a consequence of the al-Qaeda attack on the U.S. embassies and the less-than-effective American response, bin Laden's prestige soared within the Muslim world, particularly among those Islamists who already subscribed to the ideology of global jihad. Around this time, bin Laden also seemed to deepen his relationship with Mohammed Omar and the Taliban.[45] A source close to bin Laden later revealed that Operation Infinite Reach actually helped steel the Taliban leadership's resolve to provide refuge to al-Qaeda, which had been in doubt because of bin Laden's refusal to keep his actions discreet. Some reports suggest that al-Qaeda's bellicose rhetoric and fatwas against the United States had discomfited the Taliban. The U.S. missile strikes dispelled this tension, and bin Laden began to enjoy greater freedom of movement and influence in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.[46] As Sami ul-Haq, headmaster of a prominent Islamic madrassa near Peshawar, told American journalist

41. Osama bin Laden, "Al-Qaeda's Second Fatwa," *PBS NewsHour*, 23 Feb 1998, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military-jan-june98-fatwa_1998/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Tenet with Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm*, p. 100.

43. William J. Clinton, "Address to the Nation by the President" (National Address, The White House, 20 Aug 1998), https://clinton6.nara.gov/1998/08/1998-08-20-president-address-to-the-national.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Tenet with Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm*, p. 21.

45. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, pp. 243–45.

46. U.S. Department of State Cable 177309, Sec State, 25 Sep 1998, sub: Afghanistan: Taliban Convene Ulema, Iran and Bin Laden on the Agenda, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal26.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 224–27.

Peter Bergen in September 1998, "Osama bin Laden has become a symbol for the whole Islamic world. All those outside powers who are trying to crush Muslims interfering with them; he is the courageous one . . . he is a hero to us, but it is America itself who first made him a hero."[47] It was an object lesson that Omar and his Taliban followers would remember.

Throughout the late 1990s and into the first year of President George W. Bush's administration, the United States attempted to communicate with the Taliban through intermediaries on more than thirty occasions. U.S. officials urged the Taliban, among other things, to shut down all terrorist networks, control illicit narcotics trafficking, and expel bin Laden from Afghanistan. The Taliban responded by assuring the Americans that Afghanistan would dismantle infrastructure that supported terrorism and energize drug eradication efforts, but Omar manifestly refused to abandon bin Laden, even as Taliban emissaries reported that the al-Qaeda leader's activities had been "restricted."[48] To some extent, bin Laden may have hijacked the Taliban ideologically by successfully expanding his worldview to Central Asia, Palestine, and the United States.[49] His real genius, though, was channeling ethnic and religious discontent into violence against the West. He was a sponsor for extremists—not necessarily a terrorist himself, but a facilitator and a lodestone for like-minded individuals. For al-Qaeda and the Taliban, it was an unholy alliance of mutual assistance. The symbiotic relationship between the two organizations would become starkly clear in the fall of 2001.[50]

U.S. Army Operations from the Post–Cold War Era to 11 September 2001

The U.S. Army underwent significant changes following the end of the Cold War. In 1988, as the Soviet economy continued to falter, the Pentagon Joint Staff commissioned a study examining U.S. strategy in the absence of a Soviet Army. The report concluded that communism had failed, that the Cold War had ended in May 1988, and that the world would soon witness a second Russian revolution.[51] Although the United States and its fellow members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) rejoiced as they watched the Warsaw Pact (Eastern Europe's Soviet-led military confederation) disintegrate, celebrations soon gave way to calculations as U.S. defense

47. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 227–28.

48. Rpt, U.S. Department of State, [ca. 16 Jul 2001], sub: U.S. Engagement with the Taliban on Usama bin Laden, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal40.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 235–36.

50. Fax, Islamabad 04450, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 12 Jun 1998, sub: Afghanistan: Taliban Said to Loosen Grip on Bin Laden as They Increasingly Turn to Him for Financial Support and Advice, NSA GWU, https:// www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB389/docs/1998-06-12%20-%20Haqqani%20as%20 UBL%20Advocate.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

51. Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Development of the Base Force, 1989–1992* (Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, 1993), p. 8.

budget projections were reexamined to discern a potential post–Cold War peace dividend. Fewer troops and less equipment would be needed to confront regional threats than those required to deter Soviet ambitions.

As the leader of the NATO alliance, the United States contributed large numbers of modern tanks, aircraft, and ships. Keenly aware that defense cuts would invariably bite deeply into the U.S. armed forces, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin L. Powell (1989–1993) sought to prevent immediate large-scale drawdowns, preferring a 20 to 25 percent reduction spread over four to five years. President George H. W. Bush approved Powell's plan, which called for 442,000 personnel to be culled from the 2.1 million men and women then on active duty.[52] The U.S. Army shouldered the bulk of the personnel cuts as it shrank from 760,000 personnel in eighteen divisions to 525,000 personnel in four corps and ten divisions.[53] In addition, many of the units remaining on the rolls would also move from overseas locations back to the continental United States.

On 2 August 1990, President Bush announced his decision to reduce military expenditures by 25 percent over the next five years. That same day, however, Iraq's dictatorial President Saddam Hussein ordered his army into Kuwait, an act that temporarily postponed the planned drawdown. In a response dubbed Operation Desert Shield, the United States assembled a sizable military coalition in neighboring Saudi Arabia. Following thirty-eight days of preparatory airstrikes, the American-led effort to liberate Kuwait began in February 1991 with a massive ground assault involving seventeen division-sized formations, known as Operation Desert Storm. In just over four days, the coalition defeated the Iraqis, while suffering only minimal losses. Although many of the coalition forces returned to their own countries after the conflict ended, a residual U.S. presence remained in Kuwait and northeastern Saudi Arabia to deter future Iraqi aggression.

The first post–Cold War Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon R. Sullivan (1991–1995), assumed his duties just before the start of Operation Desert Shield. Sullivan viewed the end of Desert Storm as an opportunity to make more far-reaching changes than merely reducing the Army's manpower and materiel reserves. The most pressing issue from the conflict with Iraq involved the high number of incidents in which coalition aircraft or ground troops fired on friendly units. As a result, the Army began relying on space-based technology to mitigate human errors in target identification with digital devices such as the Enhanced Position Location Reporting System. The system employed satellite positioning technology similar to the Global Positioning

52. Associated Press, "25% Cut Will Save $8.6 Billion, Cheney States," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Jun 1990, https://articles.latimes.com/1990-06-20/news/mn-238_1_cheney-states, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

53. Eric V. Larson et al., *Defense Planning in a Decade of Change: Lessons from the Base Force, Bottom-Up Review, and Quadrennial Defense Review* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2001), p. 25.

System used by American troops in the Kuwaiti and Iraqi deserts to broadcast the location of friendly vehicles to other U.S. units.[54]

The Army's decision to leverage satellite information drew inspiration from a theoretical military hypothesis about the future of warfare known as the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). RMA proponents believed that during certain periods of history, innovations in military doctrines, strategies, tactics, and technologies irrevocably change the conduct of warfare. Citing the enormous damage inflicted by precision airstrikes, backers of the RMA theory claimed that Desert Storm showed how decisive information operations, guided weapons, and space-based surveillance technology had become. Following that line of reasoning, militaries that exploited those technologies better than their opposition would prevail on any future battlefield. All of the services embraced the RMA concept to varying degrees, but it exerted considerable influence on the post–Cold War Department of Defense (DoD), which sought new ways to meet strategic responsibilities in a constrained fiscal environment.[55]

Although a post–Desert Storm Air Force survey provided instances of an adaptive enemy instituting countermeasures to limit the impact of coalition bombing, RMA adherents dismissed these findings by claiming that technologically superior nations could always dictate the ultimate trajectory of a conflict.[56] Enthusiasm for adopting the means to wage decisive war from air and space grew stronger after the United States became involved in a series of controversial international peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions. The first of these took place in December 1992, just before President Clinton entered office, when U.S. Army troops landed near the Somali capital of Mogadishu to support humanitarian aid efforts in Operation Restore Hope. When the dire situation in Somalia began to improve the following spring, President Clinton allowed UN peacekeepers to assume most of the American responsibilities, ordering all but a 3,000-strong logistical, aviation, and quick-reaction force home.[57]

---

54. John S. Brown, *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989–2005* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011), p. 120.

55. Following the publication of the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)-inspired operational concept, *Joint Vision 2010*, the Army unveiled *Army Vision 2010* in November 1996. To quote *Army Vision 2010*, "In the theater of operations, information-age technologies will facilitate *shaping the battlespace* to set the conditions for *decisive operations*, resulting in the successful accomplishment of all missions." [Emphasis in the original.]. Yet the enemy is never mentioned, except in passing, and all of the accompanying illustrations show U.S. troops in a sterile desert environment. Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), *Army Vision 2010*, p. 18, https://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/virtual_disk_library/index.cgi/4240529/FID378/pdfdocs/2010/varmy.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. A 2007 assessment of Donald H. Rumsfeld's tenure as secretary of defense lauds his qualifications while asserting that his embrace of RMA blinded him to the influences exerted by the enemy, allies, and politics during a conflict. Bradley Peniston, "Why Did Donald Rumsfeld Fail?," *Armed Forces Journal* (1 Jan 2007), https://armedforcesjournal.com/why-did-donald-rumsfeld-fail/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. Richard W. Stewart, *The U.S. Army in Somalia, 1992–1994* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1994), pp. 8–15.

Somalia's improved domestic conditions, coupled with a decreasing number of foreign military forces, convinced warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed to seize the opportunity to gain ascendency over his rivals. In a bid to burnish his image as the most powerful figure in Mogadishu, Aideed ordered his followers to ambush a convoy of Pakistani peacekeepers on 5 June 1993. The following day, the UN adopted a resolution authorizing offensive operations against the rogue warlord. Subsequent efforts to bring Aideed to justice led to a battle in Mogadishu between his fighters and U.S. Special Forces personnel on 3 and 4 October 1993. Hundreds of Somalis and eighteen U.S. soldiers were killed in the clash. Photographs of Somalis dragging a downed U.S. helicopter crewmember's corpse through the streets of Mogadishu turned U.S. public opinion against further involvement in the region. On 7 October, Congress demanded that the Clinton administration develop an exit strategy for American troops in Somalia. Paradoxically, the chosen strategy involved temporarily sending 1,700 additional Army troops, including mechanized forces, and 3,600 marines to Somalia to safeguard the withdrawal.[58] On 20 October, President Clinton ordered the withdrawal of the Army Rangers and Special Operations personnel who had been sent to bring Aideed to justice.[59] Over the next five months, U.S. forces disengaged in a deliberate, systematic fashion, with the last marine security element departing Mogadishu on 25 March 1994.[60]

The negative experience in Somalia did not quench White House interest in peacekeeping. Presidential Decision Directive 25, published by the White House on 3 May 1994, stated that multilateral peace operations were a legitimate means of advancing American national interests. To the Clinton administration, these interests included maintaining regional stability and relieving suffering. Although the directive noted that U.S. forces could be employed under the operational control of a competent UN commander, it envisioned the United States taking a leading role in planning, executing, and supporting peacekeeping operations.[61]

---

58. "The Somalia Mission; Clinton's Words on Somalia: 'The Responsibilities of American Leadership,'" *New York Times*, 8 Oct 1993, https://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/08/world/somalia-mission-clinton-s-words-somalia-responsibilities-american-leadership.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

59. Art Pine, "Clinton Orders Army Rangers Home from Somalia," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Oct 1993, https://articles.latimes.com/1993-10-20/news/mn-47764_1_clinton-orders, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

60. Approximately 100,000 U.S. service members were deployed to Somalia between December 1992 and March 1994. American casualties totaled 30 killed and 175 wounded. Donatella Lorch, "Last of the U.S. Troops Leave Somalia; What Began as a Mission of Mercy Closes With Little Ceremony," *New York Times*, 26 Mar 1994, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/26/world/last-us-troops-leave-somalia-what-began-mission-mercy-closes-with-little.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

61. Presidential Decision Dir, NSC-25, William J. Clinton, 3 May 1994, sub: U.S. Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations, pp. 1–3, https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12749, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The White House released an updated National Security Strategy two months after Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 25. The new guidance asserted that the United States possessed unparalleled military capabilities as the only nation on the globe capable of conducting large-scale operations far beyond its borders. This belief was the basis for embracing a new approach that emphasized American participation in military coalitions designed to preserve regional security. The National Security Strategy noted that the U.S. military also needed to be prepared to deal unilaterally with threats such as global terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.[62]

Less than a year after its release, President Clinton's national security vision would be tested in a region far from America's borders. Since April 1992, ethnic strife between Orthodox Christian Serbs and Muslim Bosnians had dominated Bosnia and Herzegovina, a province of the former Yugoslavia. The killings and forced expulsions continued for two more years, chiefly because the United States and its European allies, particularly Great Britain and France, hesitated to do more than send token peacekeeping contingents or launch small-scale airstrikes in retaliation for Serb atrocities. The May 1995 massacre of 8,000 Bosnian men and boys in Srebrenica, which took place despite the presence of Dutch peacekeepers, finally spurred NATO into pursuing a more aggressive stance toward this internal conflict.

In mid-August 1995, U.S. diplomat Richard C. Holbrooke was designated as a special envoy and opened negotiations among concerned parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the goal of brokering a permanent peace. Talks stalled until NATO airstrikes against Serb artillery surrounding the besieged city of Sarajevo broke the impasse. Following the December 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace, NATO dispatched a substantial military presence, which included more than 24,000 Germany-based U.S. troops headed by the 1st Armored Division of the V Corps, to Bosnia and Herzegovina over a three-month period.[63] RMA proponents viewed developments in the Balkans with favor, noting that precision munitions were effective in environments other than featureless desert. The Serbs, like the Iraqis in 1991, responded by developing countermeasures to lessen the impact of future NATO air attacks on their ground forces.

The prospect of maintaining a sizable contingent of ground troops in Bosnia for a decade or longer prompted Army leadership to examine the use of reserve component units for that mission. To implement such an approach, however, the existing mobilization process would need to be changed significantly. Congress proved receptive to amending those laws, in large part because Reserve and National Guard leaders supported the initiative. Although the Balkans commitment pushed the Army to rely on its reserves for a growing number of peacetime missions, it also furthered a closer bond

62. William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, Jul 1994), pp. 8–9.

63. R. Cody Phillips, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The U.S. Army's Role in Peace Enforcement Operations, 1995–2004* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2005), pp. 11–13, 16–20.

among all components and helped prepare reserve units for short-notice and nontraditional overseas deployments.[64]

Tensions in the Balkans rose again in 1998 as Serbian troops led by Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milošević initiated a program to expel almost 1.8 million ethnic Albanians from the province of Kosovo. Hundreds of homes were destroyed and thousands more were looted in an orgy of violence, during which 12,000 Albanian Kosovars met their deaths at the hands of Serb security forces. Ethnic Albanians responded in turn, perpetuating a cycle of violence as each killing led to further reprisals. NATO extended its original deadline for both parties to reach a diplomatic resolution three times, but to no avail. On 24 March 1999, a series of NATO airstrikes hit Serbian military, communications, and industrial sites throughout Kosovo and Serbia. Yet Serb air defense systems and passive countermeasures, such as dispersing military units to prevent them from being detected and attacked by high-flying fixed-wing jet aircraft, minimized the effect of the NATO bombing.[65] The Serbs, emboldened by President Clinton's assurances that ground troops would not be employed in Kosovo, refused to concede as they had earlier in Bosnia.

Faced with Serb intransigence, NATO jets began striking targets south of the 44th parallel in Serbia proper instead of focusing on Milošević's military forces in Kosovo. Inclement weather and coordination problems within the multinational air forces conducting the attacks prevented this second effort from producing the desired results. Those unwelcome developments forced the NATO forces to modify their plans yet again. By the end of the campaign's third week, coalition aircraft had switched to hitting strategic targets, including industrial and national infrastructure, though this change in tactics did not mitigate the existing coordination issues.[66] In addition to intensifying the air campaign, NATO put into motion a contingency plan that added American attack helicopters, rocket artillery, and mechanized units to the fight. The movement of U.S. ground troops from Germany to Albania took place under grueling conditions that produced unexpected delays and considerable negative press coverage. Despite its embarrassing debut, Task Force (TF) Hawk's AH–64 Apache helicopters, M270 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, M1A1 Abrams tanks, and M2A3 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles sent to Albania were set to initiate operations in neighboring Kosovo by the first week of May. Although the precise reasons remain unclear, Milošević announced his decision to pull Serb troops from Kosovo on 9 June 1999.[67] Shortly afterward, American

64. Brown, *Kevlar Legions*, p. 161.

65. Capt Gregory Ball, "1999 – Operation Allied Force," Air Force Historical Support Division, 23 Aug 2012, https://www.afhistory.af.mil/FAQs/Fact-Sheets/Article/458957/operation-allied-force/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

66. One particularly embarrassing and controversial failure for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coalition forces was the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on 7 May 1999. "DCI Statement on the Bombing of the Chinese Embassy," Central Intelligence Agency, 22 Jul 1999, https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/1999/dci_speech_072299.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

67. Although the NATO commander, U.S. General Wesley K. Clark, noted in his memoirs that "[p]lanning and preparations for ground intervention were well under way by the end of

ground forces entered Kosovo as part of a multinational contingent to take part in what promised to be yet another lengthy peacekeeping mission.[68]

Events during this period heartened RMA proponents within the DoD. The department allocated $1.2 billion in emergency supplemental funds to upgrade 624 land attack versions of Tomahawk Cruise Missiles, convert 321 Tomahawks from nuclear to conventional delivery platforms, and procure 11,000 Joint Direct Attack Munitions kits that used Global Positioning System technology to convert unguided bombs into precision weapons.[69] However, the DoD overlooked the possibility that potential U.S. opponents would use the Kosovo experience as a model for their own ambitions. Taking to heart the bitter lessons of Bosnia, the Serbs demonstrated in 1999 that poor weather, harsh terrain, dispersal, camouflage, limited use of electronic emitters, and positioning high-value military assets in civilian areas could degrade or render ineffective even the most advanced military technology.[70]

The Institutional Army before 11 September 2001

The first major challenge to the Army's post-Vietnam organizational approach, known as the Abrams Doctrine or Total Force Policy, occurred two decades after the concept was first created.[71] The origins of the challenge

---

the campaign, and I am convinced that this, in particular, pushed Milosevic to concede," he also informed NATO Secretary General Javier Solana that 175,000 to 200,000 ground troops were needed to secure Kosovo. Task Force (TF) Hawk, however, had only 6,200 personnel, a fact that appears to undercut Clark's assertion. However, senior U.S. Air Force leaders believed that Milošević quit because of rising domestic political opposition following bombing attacks on Serb infrastructure. See David E. Johnson, *Learning Large Lessons: The Evolving Role of Ground Power and Air Power in the Post–Cold War Era* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2007), pp. 68–81.

68. R. Cody Phillips, *Operation Joint Guardian: The U.S. Army in Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2007), p. 19.

69. The report also requested $178 million to address intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance shortfalls that emerged during the NATO efforts. Rpt, Department of Defense (DoD) to Congress, Jan 2000, sub: Message from Secretary William S. Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry H. Shelton, Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After Action Report, p. 3, https://archive.org/stream/ReporttoCongressKosovoOperationAlliedForceAfterActionReport/Report%20to%20Congress-Kosovo%20Operation%20Allied%20Force%20After-Action%20Report_djvu.txt, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

70. Lt Gen H. R. McMaster, "Continuity and Change: The Army Operating Concept and Clear Thinking About Future War," *Military Review* 95, no. 2 (Mar–Apr 2015): 8.

71. The end of the draft, coupled with a major post-Vietnam drawdown, led Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger to reissue the Total Force Policy in 1973. Schlesinger's directive led Army Chief of Staff General Creighton W. Abrams to realign the active and reserve component force structure to ensure the former could field the sixteen divisions it needed to meet current global strategic requirements, despite a presumed ceiling of 785,000 troops. However, some have since suggested that Abrams consciously transferred the majority of theater- and corps-level combat support and combat service support force structure to the reserve component to curb the executive branch's ability to commit major military forces for sustained periods without congressional consent. In reality, the force structure transfer began in 1969, three years before Abrams became chief of staff, and the first mention of the Abrams Doctrine did not occur until

stemmed from a 1973 decision to replace the third maneuver brigade in active component divisions based in the continental United States with a "roundout" National Guard or Army Reserve brigade or armored cavalry regiment. The displaced active brigades became three additional active component divisions. Although the decision made sense from a fiscal and administrative perspective, some Army leaders felt it overlooked the need to synchronize force structure with doctrine. The dissenters believed that active component divisions might find themselves deploying to a combat situation without their "roundout" brigades, which meant that they would be forced to fight in accordance with doctrine based on three brigades, not two, until the reserve component units arrived.[72]

Reserve Component Readiness Issues

Concerns about the time required for reserve units to mobilize and improve combat readiness before overseas deployment proved to be highly relevant in 1990–1991 during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Two active component divisions—the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Stewart, Georgia, and the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Riley, Kansas—had to be filled with active component separate brigades from Germany and Fort Benning, Georgia, before deploying to Saudi Arabia because their designated roundout National Guard brigades were not ready. A third active component unit, the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, had to deploy to Kuwait without its roundout brigade, which relegated the division to the VII Corps reserve for most of the conflict. The National Guard roundout units—the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Louisiana, the 155th Armored Brigade from Mississippi, and the 48th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Georgia—were mobilized in late November and early December 1990. Although each received three to five months of predeployment training, only the 48th Infantry Brigade met the readiness ratings necessary for overseas service. The brigade, however, achieved this status only on the last day of the conflict, which meant that none of the brigades left the continental United States.[73]

1986, more than a decade after his death. As historians Conrad C. Crane and Gian Gentile contend, if Abrams actually sought to curb executive power, a review of U.S. military activity since the adoption of the Total Force approach would reveal that he failed to achieve that alleged goal. Conrad Crane and Gian Gentile, "Understanding the Abrams Doctrine: Myth Versus Reality," War on the Rocks, 9 Dec 2015, https://warontherocks.com/2015/12/understanding-the-abrams-doctrine-myth-versus-reality/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

72. Col Roland R. Rollison, *Are Roundout Brigades a Viable Concept for the Future?* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1990), p. 1.

73. Col Clifford G. Willis, *Forward Deployed, Separate Brigades as Roundout Units for Partial Divisions* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1992), pp. 1–3. This report details how the brigades in question were unable to deploy owing to a combination of legislative limits on mobilized reserve personnel, late mobilization call-up, overstated readiness reporting, and insufficient home station training facilities.

These negative experiences with roundout brigades during Desert Storm meant that partnering relationships among full-time soldiers, guardsmen, and reservists attracted significantly more oversight and funding. On 1 November 1991, the National Guard instituted Project Standard Bearer, designed to keep high-priority units designated as the Contingency Force Pool at the highest level of personnel readiness through increased retention and recruiting programs as well as the implementation of an overstrength policy.[74] The number of personnel affected by the project expanded as the Contingency Force Pool grew to 389 units, 97 percent of which were deployable for domestic and international missions by 1993.[75]

In response to the Army National Guard's inability to contribute maneuver units to Operation Desert Storm, Congress passed the Army National Guard Combat Readiness Reform Act in 1992. Known as Title XI because of its location in the 1993 National Defense Authorization Act, the act paired National Guard units deemed necessary for the execution of the National Military Strategy with an equivalent active component unit.[76] In addition to pairing similarly organized units, the Army National Guard Combat Readiness Reform Act authorized active component divisional headquarters training oversight for three designated high-priority reserve units, termed Enhanced Separate Brigades.[77] These brigades were designated as Force Package 3 units, the highest rating obtainable in peacetime for the reserve component.[78] These changes produced National Guard units that could operate alongside active component units in the near term. However, the initiative also had negative long-term consequences: the high-priority units received better training and support than the traditional reserve units, creating an unequal two-tier structure, and the plan did not have the resources to maintain that capability through multiple deployments over a sustained period.[79]

In addition to the actions mandated by Congress, internal efforts to reshape reserve components produced an "Offsite Agreement" by Army senior leaders that realigned the mix of units within both the Army Reserve and National Guard. At the macro level, the Army National Guard retained a balanced mix of combat and combat support units while the Army Reserve focused exclusively on fielding combat service support units, with special emphasis on

---

74. Steven E. Everett and L. Martin Kaplan, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 1993* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2002), pp. 77–78.

75. Michael Doubler, *I am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636–2000*, Pamphlet 130-1 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), p. 341.

76. *Army National Guard Combat Readiness Reform Act of 1992*, 10 U.S.C. § 10542(b) (1992), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

77. Ellen M. Pint et al., *Active Component Responsibility in Reserve Component Pre- and Postmobilization Training* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2015).

78. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff for Opns and Plans, *The United States Army Modernization Plan* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 13 Apr 1998), p. A–13.

79. Dennis P. Chapman, *Planning for Employment of the Reserve Components: Army Practice, Past and Present*, Land Warfare Papers No. 69 (Arlington, Va: The Institute of Land Warfare, Sep 2008), pp. 2–6.

those organizations normally found at echelons above division and corps.[80] In practical terms, the agreement resulted in the Army Reserve transferring its Special Forces Groups and nearly all of its aviation forces to the National Guard, thereby divesting itself of its combat arms force structure.[81] The new structure postulated that early-deploying active component units would be self-sufficient for thirty days, at which point responsibility for theater sustainment shifted to mobilized reserve component units. This force structure shift made the Army more dependent on the Total Force (meaning active, guard, and reserve components). Army forces would flow into theater led by active component units, followed by Army Reserve support units whose main role would be to relieve early deploying units of theater logistical responsibilities. More troops, including additional National Guard and active component combat units, would follow as needed.

Partnership initiatives and improved readiness among reserve units, coupled with the growing number of peacekeeping responsibilities assumed by the United States, fundamentally shifted the employment of National Guard and Army Reserve personnel during the Clinton administration. The change stemmed from the Army's decision to use reserve component units for overseas peacekeeping tasks. The earliest example occurred in 1993 when General Sullivan authorized the deployment of ad hoc units of reserve component volunteers to participate in the Multinational Force and Observers mission in Sinai.[82] Because the Army had fewer troops available to support the growing number of peacekeeping missions, it sought to commit progressively larger reserve organizations to those missions. By November 1997, more than 15,000 personnel from the Army Reserve and the National Guard had participated in the Bosnia peacekeeping mission.[83] Reserve component involvement, both as entire units and as individual augmentees assigned to active organizations, had expanded to such a degree that guardsmen and reserve soldiers were deployed in more than a hundred countries by 2001.[84] That process culminated with a decision by General Eric K. Shinseki, the 34th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army (1999–2003), to use National Guard division headquarters to command and control the Balkans peacekeeping rotations. He intended not only to relieve growing pressures placed on active component units, but also to provide reserve units with an opportunity to gain valuable experience in a relatively benign operational environment.

---

80. Andrew Feickert and Lawrence Kapp, *Army Active Component (AC)/Reserve Component (RC) Force Mix: Considerations and Options for Congress*, R43808 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 5 Dec 2014), p. 6.

81. Doubler, *I am the Guard*, p. 346.

82. Ruth H. Phelps and Beatrice J. Farreds, eds., *Reserve Component Soldiers as Peacekeepers* (Alexandria, Va.: Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1996), p. xv.

83. United States Gen Accounting Ofc, *Reserve Forces: Cost, Funding, and Use of Army Reserve Components in Peacekeeping Operations*, GAO/NSAID-98-190R (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Gen Accounting Ofc, 15 May 1998), p. 3.

84. Bfg, Army G-3 Staff to Sec Def, Apr 2002, sub: War on Terrorism: A War of Wills, slide 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Active Component Readiness Issues

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent reorganization of American military spending throughout the 1990s, the U.S. Army received far fewer dollars than it needed to sustain high levels of combat readiness. To avoid an overall reduction in readiness throughout the entire force, the Army adopted a policy of tiered resourcing by dividing units into four categories, also known as Force Packages, based on existing contingency plans and strategic deployment timelines. It determined Force Package readiness levels by the priority placed on fielding new equipment or maintaining existing equipment, as well as staffing level percentages.[85] Force Package 1 units were the highest priority and Force Package 4 units, the lowest. Most active combat units were in Force Packages 1, 2, or 3—reflecting the fact that they would be required in theater sooner rather than later—and the majority of reserve component combat units were in Force Packages 3 and 4. Regardless of component, combat support and combat service support units were placed in the Force Package that corresponded with wartime mission requirements, which meant that many reserve support units were maintained at higher readiness levels than reserve combat units.

The Army's Major Contingency Response Force, consisting of the 82d Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), and 3d Armored Cavalry, formed Force Package 1. These forces were responsible for preparing and planning for a major regional conflict in either Southwest Asia (XVIII Airborne Corps) or Northeast Asia (III Corps). Force Package 2 units making up the Regional Rapid Response Force included the forward deployed 2d Infantry Division in Korea as well as stateside-based combat units with wartime responsibilities in the Pacific region. Force Package 3 included active units forward deployed in Europe, active units within the continental United States designated as reinforcements for overseas contingencies, and Army National Guard enhanced brigades. Force Package 4 consisted of National Guard divisions, active combat units making up the strategic reserve, and any remaining National Guard combat units.[86]

To varying degrees, tiered resourcing produced a culture of haves and have-nots within the Army as a whole. Fully staffed and equipped Force Package 1 units had their full allocation of operations and maintenance funding, whereas lower priority units received personnel, equipment, and funding only after all higher priority needs were met. Force Package 2 through 4 units were uniformly resourced through a process known as cascading, whereby higher priority units received new equipment and passed down their older equipment to lower priority units. The reserve component

---

85. Force Development Directorate, Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff for Opns and Plans, *The United States Army 1995 Modernization Plan* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1995), p. 13.

86. The National Guard and Army Reserve also fell under the categories of Force Support Packages 1 through 3, which established the readiness levels of early deploying and reinforcing combat support and service support units. Col (Ret.) John R. Brinkerhoff, "The Army National Guard and Conservation of Combat Power," *Parameters* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 1996): 4–16.

in particular felt the negative effects of cascading, as it resulted in major commands and sometimes even the same unit having multiple generations of equipment.

In addition to complicating routine logistical and training responsibilities, tiered resourcing made it more difficult to deploy guard and reserve units during peacetime. The practice of passing down displaced older equipment to lower priority units created growing interoperability issues as more reserve units took part in peacekeeping rotations in the Balkans. Outgoing active component units often found themselves being replaced by reserve component forces that did not have the same equipment. As a result, the Army had to maintain overseas stockpiles of repair parts and replacement equipment to support differently equipped units.

Given the resource-constrained environment of the 1990s, it is not surprising that by 2001, some Army units were fully prepared and equipped for twenty-first-century warfare while others were significantly less capable.[87] The interoperability of light and heavy forces was a particular concern. Although the force structure included both heavy and light units, the Army did not actively create opportunities for both types to work together. In fact, it had separate training centers for heavy and light units at Fort Irwin, California, and Fort Polk, Louisiana, respectively. More problematically, although heavy units had been experimenting with new aspects of digital command and control, the technology had not been miniaturized to the point at which light units could readily use it in combat conditions. Thus, light units could not benefit from the technological experiences and lessons learned by heavy units. Even when the Army took its first belated steps to introduce digitization into the light force, it did not fully appreciate the potential of man-portable information technology. The initial light force digitization trials involved a two-day Joint Contingency Force Advanced Warfighter Experiment exercise at Fort Polk in September 2000. Troops from the 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, along with a company from the 2d Marine Division, battled the defending Joint Readiness Training Center opposing force in an urban combat setting.[88] In spite of exercises such as this, the Army's digitization interests remained overwhelmingly centered on the heavy force.[89]

When General Shinseki became chief of staff, he sought to redress the balance problems and gaps within the active component. Soon after taking office in 1999, he informed other Army senior leaders that "we will begin to erase the distinctions between heavy and light forces."[90] The first tangible

---

87. Brown, *Kevlar Legions*, pp. 99–100.

88. Pvt James Strine, "Final JCF-AWE Attack Shows Equipment Works," *Army News Service*, 20 Sep 2000, https://fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/land/docs/man-la-land_warrior-000920.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

89. Jean L. Dyer, Richard L. Wampler, and Paul N. Blankenbeckler, *After Action Reviews with the Ground Soldier* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Sep 2005), pp. v–vii.

90. Ofc of the Ch of Staff, *The Army Vision: Soldiers on Point for the Nation; Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1999), p. 6.

bridges between operational cultures were the Interim Brigade Combat Teams established at Fort Lewis, Washington. Those units, equipped with the Stryker wheeled personnel carrier, came from the armored and light infantry brigade located there. Shinseki wanted the Interim Brigade Combat Teams to validate the organizational and operational model for medium-weight units. His ultimate goal was to field a strategically mobile future force equipped with lighter, highly lethal, and survivable weapon systems linked by digital networks that would be fully compatible with those used by other services.[91]

Factors Influencing U.S. Strategic Views in 2001

As the United States sought to respond to the September 11th terrorist attacks, senior administration officials and military leaders relied on past experience and shared beliefs to devise appropriate strategic goals and operational plans. For example, the George W. Bush administration's views on postconflict involvement in Afghanistan drew heavily on the fact that thousands of American troops were still on peacekeeping duty in the Balkans. In addition, perceptions of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan influenced U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) decision to open its campaign using Afghan proxies and SOF. Similar concerns motivated transformation proponents touting aerially delivered precision-guided munitions and space-based surveillance assets as the weapons of choice.

As the Clinton administration reached the end of its second term, military readiness was a key issue during the presidential campaign between Democratic candidate Vice President Albert A. Gore and Republican challenger George W. Bush, then governor of Texas.[92] As president, Bush's campaign rhetoric claimed, he would restore the rightful function of the U.S. military, in contrast to the Clinton administration's years of systematic neglect and misuse of defense resources. In a September 1999 campaign speech at the Citadel, Bush criticized Clinton for sending American troops on "vague, aimless, and endless deployments" and promised that "we will not be permanent peacekeepers, dividing warring parties."[93] Condoleezza Rice, who was heading Bush's foreign policy team, told reporters during the campaign that long-term peacekeeping operations were not an appropriate use of the United States military power: "Carrying out civil administration and police functions is simply going to degrade the American capability to do the things America has to do. We don't need to have the 82d Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten."[94]

---

91. Thomas K. Adams, *The Army After Next: The First Postindustrial Army* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), pp. 82–84.

92. Victoria K. Holt and Michael G. MacKinnon, "The Origins and Evolution of U.S. Policy Towards Peace Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 1 (Feb 2008): 18–34.

93. George W. Bush, "A Period of Consequences" (Speech, The Citadel, 23 Sep 1999), https://www3.citadel.edu/pao/addresses/pres_bush.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

94. Michael R. Gordon, "Bush Would Stop U.S. Peacekeeping in Balkan Fights," *New York Times*, 21 Oct 2000, https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/21/us/the-2000-campaign-the-military-bush-would-stop-us-peacekeeping-in-balkan-fights.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The political rhetoric drew a response from the DoD shortly before Americans went to the polls. On 3 September 2000, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General H. Hugh Shelton publicly rebutted Bush's declaration that Clinton-era defense polices had left two out of ten active army divisions unready for combat. Shelton explained that the combat readiness of the units that Bush had cited—10th Mountain and 1st Infantry—had been downgraded because large segments of both were deployed to Bosnia and Kosovo for peacekeeping duties rather than training for combat.[95] The exchange took place as decreasing numbers of U.S. troops were involved in peacekeeping. Although NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Kosovo each originally numbered nearly 50,000 personnel in June 1999, at the time of the 2000 U.S. presidential election, the security situation had improved enough to dramatically reduce the size of the participating contingents.[96] By January 2001, more than 9,000 active component U.S. soldiers were stationed in the Balkans, along with another 1,000 soldiers with the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai. However, those figures reflected units actually conducting peacekeeping and not others preparing for peacekeeping deployments or training to regain warfighting skills after redeploying to their home stations. The constant rotation of active units to the Balkans had such an impact on readiness that Army leaders spent the latter half of the 1990s obtaining congressional approval for National Guard units to assume those responsibilities.[97]

On 11 October 2000, in his second debate with Gore, Bush stated unequivocally: "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building. I think our troops ought to be used to fight and win war. I think our troops ought to be used to help overthrow the dictator when it's in our best interests."[98] One day later, the United States received a stark reminder of the significant global threat posed by extremism, when two suicide bombers rammed a motorboat full of explosives into the destroyer USS *Cole* as it refueled in Aden, Yemen. The blast ripped a gaping hole in the vessel's hull, killing seventeen crewmembers and wounding thirty-nine others. Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network took credit for the attack.[99] It occurred only three weeks before Americans cast their votes for the next president.

---

95. Gen (Ret.) Hugh Shelton with Ronald Levinson and Malcolm McConnell, *Without Hesitation: The Odyssey of an American Warrior* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010), pp. 415–16.

96. Steven Lee Myers and Craig R. Whitney, "Crisis in the Balkans: Peacekeeping Force of 50,000 Allied Troops to Enter Kosovo as Yugoslav Forces Withdraw," *New York Times*, 4 Jun 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/04/world/crisis-balkans-nato-peacekeeping-force-50000-allied-troops-enter-kosovo-yugoslav.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

97. Steven Lee Myers, "Army Will Give National Guard the Entire U.S. Role in Bosnia," *New York Times*, 5 Dec 2000, https://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/05/world/army-will-give-national-guard-the-entire-us-role-in-bosnia.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

98. George W. Bush, "The Second Gore-Bush Presidential Debate" (Debate, Winston-Salem, N. C., 11 Oct 2001), Commission on Presidential Debates, https://www.debates.org/?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

99."USS Cole Bombing," 9/11 Memorial, https://www.911memorial.org/uss-cole-bombing (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

As a result of the November 2000 election, George W. Bush became president-elect of the United States by the narrowest Electoral College margin in more than a century. Bush entered office pledging to give the men and women in uniform "clear missions with attainable goals."[100] Within a short time, however, campaign rhetoric succumbed to political realities. Governor Bush had spoken of drawing down the U.S. commitment in Bosnia, but as president he heeded pressure from NATO allies and made only a slight cutback.[101] In July 2001, the Bush administration authorized U.S. military support for NATO's Operation Essential Harvest, intended to disarm ethnic Albanian rebels in Macedonia, though the U.S. contingent drew only on resources already stationed in Kosovo.[102]

Bush's efforts to wean the U.S. military from its outdated "industrial age" outlook on warfighting encountered resistance from both familiar and unexpected quarters. Soon after taking office, Bush signed Presidential National Security Directive 3 tasking his new secretary of defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, with transforming and modernizing the armed forces.[103] Rumsfeld sought to leverage the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review to shift the military toward a new mindset in which force structure requirements would be defined by joint capabilities rather than regional needs. Several key military leaders, including General Shelton, opposed Rumsfeld's initial efforts, warning him of the dangers of compromising readiness for modernization. Shelton and other Army generals also believed that any approach founded on deploying air and naval assets from the continental United States would be a less effective regional deterrent than an enduring U.S. ground presence overseas.[104]

Anticipating considerable resistance within the Pentagon, the new secretary placed transformation-oriented thinkers in critical DoD, Joint Staff, and service billets. Longtime associates, including Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz and special assistant Dr. Stephen A. Cambone,

---

100. "Text: Bush Names Rumsfeld Defense Secretary," *Washington Post*, 28 Dec 2000, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/elections/bushtext122800.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

101. Steven Erlanger, "Europeans Say Bush's Pledge to Pull Out of Balkans Could Split NATO," *New York Times*, 25 Oct 2000, https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/25/world/europeans-say-bush-s-pledge-to-pull-out-of-balkans-could-split-nato.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Steven Erlanger and Michael R. Gordon, "Allies, Questioning Bush Stand, Say U.S. Kosovo Role Is Crucial," *New York Times*, 16 Jan 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/16/world/allies-questioning-bush-stand-say-us-kosovo-role-is-crucial.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Keith B. Richburg, "Rumsfeld Worries Europeans on Bosnia; Allies Warn US Against Withdrawal," *Washington Post*, 23 May 2001, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Michael R. Gordon, "NATO Plans Only Modest Bosnia Cutback," *New York Times*, 27 May 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/27/world/nato-plans-only-modest-bosnia-cutback.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

102. John Diamond, "U.S. Offers Limited Help to NATO in Macedonia," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 Jul 2001, https://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-07-06/news/0107060191_1_nato-force-nato-mission-european-troops, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

103. Bradley Graham, *By His Own Rules: The Ambitions, Successes, and Ultimate Failures of Donald Rumsfeld* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009), p. 208.

104. "14th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Hugh Shelton," Joint Chiefs of Staff, https://www.jcs.mil/About/The-Joint-Staff/Chairman/General-Henry-Hugh-Shelton, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

figured prominently in Rumsfeld's inner circle.[105] The new administration selected Army, Navy, and Air Force secretaries who had corporate experience with reputations for revitalizing underproducing business enterprises.[106] The secretary of defense also selected replacements for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, vice chairman, and Joint Staff chief operations officer (J-3).[107]

The baseline premise for Rumsfeld's transformational vision drew heavily from earlier work on network-centric warfare; Effects-Based Operations; and, most significantly, the notions of "dominant maneuver" and "dominant battlespace awareness." All of these concepts had been unveiled in *Joint Vision 2010*, the Department of Defense's 1990s-era concept for future warfare.[108] Rumsfeld oversaw his transformation efforts out of the Office of Force Transformation under Vice Admiral (Retired) Arthur K. Cebrowski, which was formed in October 2001. Transformation combined the notions of dominant maneuver and dominant battlespace awareness to arrive at a new concept known as Rapid Decisive Operations. Developed by the U.S. Joint Forces Command, Rapid Decisive Operations envisioned a force that could deploy and engage quickly in combat operations in the pursuit of American national interests. It suggested the possibility of a comparatively bloodless campaign (at least for the United States) and quick victory achieved through the use of technical intelligence, information technologies, and stand-off precision strike systems to meter force discriminately and end conflicts at times and places of American choosing. Because such operations would not need as many ground forces, the United States would not need to establish a large theater logistics infrastructure to support them.

Although this infusion of new blood undoubtedly would support the Pentagon's transformation and modernization efforts, departing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shelton pointed out the danger of pursuing a single-minded agenda: "Units undergoing transformation, and those involved in experimentation, may not be available or ready to respond to crises within required operational timelines."[109] Indeed, Rumsfeld's pursuit of reform proved so focused that many questioned whether the secretary of defense's

---

105. Both Wolfowitz and Cambone served on the bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission formed by the Republican-controlled Congress in 1998 to examine the growing threat of nuclear proliferation by rogue states. As of the end of 2019, Cambone still served on the board of the Rumsfeld Foundation. Bradley Peniston, "Who Is Steve Cambone? A Look at Rumsfeld's Right Hand Man," *Armed Forces Journal* (1 Apr 2006), https://armedforcesjournal.com/who-is-steve-cambone/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

106. Jeffrey M. Borns, "How Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld Sought to Assert Civilian Control over the Military," Course Material, The Interagency Process Seminar C, Course 5603, National War College, National Defense University, 2002, p. 7, https://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a442491.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

107. Shelton et al., *Without Hesitation*, pp. 425–27.

108. Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), pp. 229–30.

109. Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, DoD, 30 Sep 2001, pp. 68–70, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

preference for technological solutions obscured other types of answers to strategic challenges.

Arrayal of Forces in September 2001

On 30 September 2001, the U.S. Army numbered 1,038,258 soldiers, which included 480,801 on active duty or attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; 351,829 National Guardsmen, and 205,628 reservists.[110] On any given day, 125,000 soldiers were stationed outside the continental United States in Europe, the Pacific, Kuwait, Qatar, Alaska, and Hawaii. An additional 26,000 soldiers, including some normally assigned to bases in the continental United States, participated daily in military exercises in dozens of countries around the world. Europe boasted the largest overseas Army presence, which included an active component armored division and a mechanized infantry division, an airborne infantry brigade, and theater support elements capable of sustaining a large number of reinforcing units. Most European-based personnel were stationed in southern Germany, with smaller contingents assigned to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium and the Southern European Task Force in Italy. In the Pacific, forces available to the U.S. Army Pacific and the Eighth Army in Korea included an infantry division, a light infantry division, two separate infantry brigades, an air cavalry brigade, and a robust theater-level support infrastructure. Army troops in the Pacific region were based primarily in South Korea and Hawaii, with some based in Alaska and Japan. In the Middle East, a small number of Army headquarters and logistics personnel were based in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, all of which reported to CENTCOM.

Active component units in the continental United States under U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) at Fort McPherson, Georgia, included an armored division, two mechanized infantry divisions, a light infantry division, an air assault division, an airborne division, and two armored cavalry regiments. These forces were assigned various training and planning responsibilities in the event of a war, such as responding to unforeseen contingency missions, reinforcing forward deployed troops in Europe and the Pacific, and defending Kuwait against Iraqi aggression. Most Army Special Operations units—four active and two National Guard Special Forces groups, a Ranger regiment, a Special Operations aviation regiment, four Army Reserve civil affairs commands, and their associated support units—were stationed in the continental United States, although two of the active Special Forces groups had battalion-sized forward presences in Germany and Japan.

Some Army National Guard units had been temporarily deployed overseas, but normally they were stationed in the continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Alaska. These forces consisted of seven infantry divisions, one armored division, twelve separate infantry brigades, one infantry group, three separate armored brigades, one armored cavalry regiment, seventeen field artillery brigades, three air defense artillery

110. Christopher N. Koontz, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2001* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011), p. 13.

brigades, six aviation brigades or groups, and six engineer brigades, among other elements. The Army Reserve, based similarly to the National Guard, consisted of mobilization-oriented training organizations and combat service support units totaling eleven regional support commands, three regional support groups, four training support divisions, seven institutional training divisions, one theater army area command, three theater support commands, and two theater signal commands.[111]

Army Chief of Staff Shinseki thus found himself balancing Army transformation efforts—which included fielding a division-sized "digitized" force furnished with networked information systems and several highly deployable but untested medium-weight brigades equipped with wheeled-armored vehicles—with operational challenges worldwide. Digitization efforts focusing on improving the capabilities of light forces, however, were still in the formative stage. Although enabling transformation and maintaining readiness were high on Shinseki's list of priorities, daily reminders of post–Cold War regional instability also occupied his thoughts, as evidenced by remarks he made during the summer of 2001 when visiting U.S. troops in Kuwait: "There will most certainly be another war in our future. If history is any indicator, it will happen sometime in the early decades of this century."[112]

111. Unit deployment data and strength figures derived from *The 2001–02 Army Green Book* 51, no. 10 (Arlington, Va.: Association of the United States Army, 2001): pp. 208–34.

112. In his end-of-tour interview with the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), General Shinseki detailed the circumstances behind these remarks. They are also quoted in the Association of the United States Army's annual *Green Book* issue published after 11 September 2001. See Gen Erik K. Shinseki, "The Army Vision: A Status Report," ibid., p. 33.

SECTION I

LIBERATION


J.C. MUÑOZ
2019

Section I

Introduction



The September 11th attacks orchestrated by Osama bin Laden were the deadliest hostile act on U.S. soil since the Japanese strike against the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941. An often overlooked but nonetheless equally applicable comparison is that neither al-Qaeda nor the Japanese felt that the American people possessed the will necessary to prevail in the coming struggle. Yet the memory of Pearl Harbor did not resonate within President George W. Bush's cabinet as it mapped out the U.S. response to the attacks. An examination of subsequent policy decisions reveals that events of the past twenty years—including the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, the UN intervention in Somalia, and the NATO operations in the Balkans—dominated thinking within the White House. The decision to assemble an international coalition to wage war on global terrorism, for example, owed more to the Balkans experience than to dimly remembered World War II policies.

Comparisons between Pearl Harbor and September 11th also fail to account for the different situations facing the U.S. military before and after each attack. In the decades before the attack on Pearl Harbor, war planning, doctrinal development, training, and weapons procurement anticipated the real possibility of armed conflict between the United States and Japan. The impending German conquest of France in the summer of 1940 convinced President Franklin D. Roosevelt that American involvement in the ongoing European conflict would be inevitable. To that end, Roosevelt summoned William Knudsen, president of General Motors, to the White House on 30 May 1940 to oversee the reorganization of the American economy to produce war materiel. This transformation progressed significantly over the next eighteen months, allowing American industry to switch rapidly from manufacturing consumer goods to airplanes, tanks, and ships soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.[1]

In sharp contrast, with the exception of a few experts in the Special Operations community, military planners paid scant attention to al-Qaeda prior to 11 September 2001. At the time, it was U.S. policy to consider terrorists as a criminal threat and not a danger to national security. As a result, the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation shared responsibility for protecting American interests from terrorism abroad and at home. The unexpected attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon caught the U.S. military

1. Charles K. Hyde, *Arsenal of Democracy: The American Automobile Industry in World War II* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), pp. 7–15.

ill-prepared to mount a global war on terrorism. Although certain U.S. military units could perform counterterrorism operations, memories of U.S. involvement in the UN response to the Somali Civil War—specifically, the disastrous Battle of Mogadishu in 1993, captured in both journalism and film as the "Black Hawk Down" episode—hindered the willingness of senior military leaders to employ ground troops against terrorist strongholds prior to 11 September. Moreover, a substantial percentage of available conventional forces, which were required to defeat state sponsors of terrorism, were already committed to preserving regional security around the globe, with large commitments in Europe and East Asia. Transitioning these committed units to wartime readiness following a decade of budget cuts would prove to be a major task.

In spite of these challenges, the U. S. military succeeded in gathering the intelligence needed to develop plans, obtain basing and overflight rights, form alliances of indigenous allies, and deploy forces into theater. CENTCOM commander General Tommy R. Franks initiated the U.S. retaliatory campaign using airpower, Special Forces, CIA paramilitary officers, and indigenous militia fighters. CENTCOM's innovative methods had unanticipated success as Afghan opposition forces captured key cities, including the capital of Kabul, soon after combat operations began. With the Taliban government defeated, American battlefield priorities shifted to killing or capturing al-Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan, which led to engagements at Tora Bora and Shahi Kot during December 2001 and March 2002, respectively. The latter battle, also known as Operation Anaconda, was the first battle in the Global War on Terrorism to involve American and coalition conventional units.

Although an unbroken string of Afghan and American tactical successes forced the al-Qaeda leadership to flee Afghanistan in 2002, the failure to kill or capture bin Laden, coupled with Pakistan's willingness to grant sanctuary to the defeated Taliban, guaranteed a lengthier commitment to the region than originally envisioned. Faced with the need to remain in Afghanistan longer than anticipated, the United States committed itself to a multiyear effort focusing on rebuilding infrastructure, supporting the formation of a democratic central government, and maintaining internal security in a war-torn country. The Taliban's ability to cloak its activities from Western intelligence agencies as it regenerated strength in Pakistan thus set the stage for a protracted conflict that bore little resemblance to the initial campaign planned and waged by CENTCOM.

Chapter One

The American Response to 11 September 2001



On 11 September 2001, nineteen al-Qaeda members took control of four airliners that had departed Washington, D.C.'s Dulles Airport and Boston's Logan Airport, and rammed the planes into the North and South Towers of New York City's World Trade Center complex and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The fourth hijacked airliner crashed in a field in rural western Pennsylvania, rather than striking its intended target (thought to be the White House), as a result of the passengers' heroic but fatal bid to retake control of the plane. All told, the attacks killed 2,977 people and caused almost $10 billion in property damage.[1]

Intelligence sources laid the blame for the September 11th terrorist attacks on Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, then based in the "failed state" of Afghanistan.[2] President George W. Bush interpreted the attacks as an act of war.[3] Bush, along with key members of his administration, felt that any retaliatory response needed to act against more than the actual perpetrators, targeting a broad range of groups and individuals who supported terrorism. In the administration's view, the September 11th attacks revealed that global terrorism now threatened "the American way of life."[4] Any future attacks had the potential to cripple the American economy and destroy the openness that defined American society. Thus, in his Oval Office address on the evening of 11 September 2001, President Bush told the nation that "our way of life, our

1. 9/11 Memorial, Frequently Asked Questions, https://www.911memorial.org/faq-about-911, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), https://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf (hereafter *9/11 Report*), p. 326.

3. According to President George W. Bush, he decided that the attacks were a "declaration of war" when he learned that a third plane had struck the Pentagon. George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), p. 128. On 11 September, President Bush opened the first National Security Council meeting after the attacks with the statement, "We're at war."; *9/11 Report*, p. 326. Pentagon officials independently arrived at the same conclusion with the same speed as the president, agreeing that the attacks "were more than just a law enforcement matter." Douglas J. Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), pp. 4–5.

4. On the significance of this phrase to the U.S. policy response, see Feith, *War and Decision*, pp. 68–71.



Tech. Sgt. Jim Varhegy, U.S. Air Force (USAF)

Smoke rises over the damaged Pentagon after the building was struck by a hijacked airliner on 11 September 2001.

very freedom" had come under attack that day. He declared that the United States now stood with its allies "to win the war against terrorism."[5]

The Global War on Terrorism

The Bush administration defined the enemy not as any one group, but as a global network. Groups like al-Qaeda could not operate internationally without support from state and nonstate entities, whether that support was a safe haven, direct state sponsorship, or "charitable" contributions from wealthy sympathizers. In September 2001, the relationships among international terrorist groups and their sponsors were far from clear, but the Bush administration assumed the existence of a global terrorist network and set out to dismantle it.[6] By mid-September, President Bush felt comfortable enough with that policy to publicly state: "Our enemy is a radical network

5. George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on the September 11 Attacks"(National Address, The White House, 11 Sep 2001). https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. Concerns (or speculations) regarding the existence of global terrorist networks surfaced long before the September 11th attacks. For example, in 1903 anonymous parties in tsarist Russia fabricated the anti-Semitic *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to stoke widespread fear of global Jewish domination. For a Cold War–era interpretation, see Claire Sterling's *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism* (New York: Holt & Company, 1981), which argued that the Soviet Union employed terrorist groups as proxies against the United States.

of terrorists, and every government that supports them."[7] To eliminate the terrorist threat, America would not only have to eliminate sanctuaries, but also convince or compel all entities that sponsored, harbored, or otherwise tolerated terrorists to terminate their support.[8] The Bush administration especially feared that "rogue" states such as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea might lend support to terrorist groups in the form of weapons of mass destruction.[9]

By 13 September, President Bush identified four objectives for what he characterized as the Global War on Terrorism: (1) eliminate al-Qaeda, (2) hold the perpetrators of 11 September 2001 accountable, (3) pursue "other lethal anti-US terrorist groups," and (4) eliminate safe havens and support for terrorists.[10] These goals suggested that the war was both about punishment and prevention, and that it would target both states and the nonstate actors who had attacked the United States. On 14 September, the U.S. Congress gave President Bush the authority to pursue such a war, through an Authorization for Use of Military Force that empowered the president to:

> use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, and persons he determines planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.[11]

---

7. George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of the 107th Congress"(National Address, U.S. Capitol, 20 Sep 2001). https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz made the scope of the mission public at a Pentagon press conference on 13 September: "It's not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism." DoD News Bfg, Deputy Sec Def Wolfowitz, 13 Sep 2001, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1622, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. For weapons of mass destruction fears, see Memo, Sec Def Donald H. Rumsfeld for President George W. Bush, 6 Oct 2001, sub: My Visits to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt, Uzbekistan, and Turkey, 6 Oct 2001, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/secret-october-6-2001-memo.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.; Interv, Tom Shanker, *New York Times*, with Sec Rumsfeld, 12 Oct 2001, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2097, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America's Pursuit of Its Enemies Since 9/11* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 65.

10. Talking Points for Principals Committee, U.S. Department of State, 13 Sep 2001, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc04.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Talking Points for Principals Committee, U.S. Department of State, 14 Sep 2001, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc07.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Authorization for Use of Military Force*, S. Joint Res. 23, 107th Congress (Cong.). (14 Sep 2001), https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/23, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

From the outset, the Bush administration planned to target threats outside of Afghanistan, including Iraq. Indeed, in the wake of the attacks, the president and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld assumed that Saddam Hussein's regime had been involved in the plot.[12] When Bush met with his war cabinet at Camp David on 15 September, he had them consider three target options: al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Iraq.[13] Some within the Office of the Secretary of Defense believed that al-Qaeda and Iraq, not the Taliban, posed the greater strategic threats to the United States. However, the president decided that Iraq was not an immediate priority and directed an attack against al-Qaeda's safe haven in Afghanistan first.[14] However, the decision not to strike Iraq first was only a question of timing; in late November—roughly six weeks after the Afghanistan campaign began—Secretary Rumsfeld would order CENTCOM, at the president's request, to update its Iraq war plans.[15]

As planning for Afghanistan got underway, Rumsfeld continued to push the Pentagon to align its planning horizons with the president's global visions. The defense secretary was reportedly disappointed in General Tommy R. Franks' draft campaign plan, briefed on 20 September, because of its limited "focus on al-Qaida [*sic*] in Afghanistan."[16] In a 30 September memo to the president, Rumsfeld laid out several political objectives for the war on terrorism, including: "new regimes in Afghanistan and another key State (or two) that supports terrorism," "Syria out of Lebanon," the "dismantlement or destruction of WMD [weapons of mass destruction] capabilities" in two classified locations, and the "end of many other countries' support or

---

12. On the afternoon of 11 September, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told General Richard B. Myers that his instinct was to strike Saddam Hussein at the same time as al-Qaeda; *9/11 Report*, pp. 334–35. Also that afternoon, he directed General Counsel William J. Haynes II to speak with Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz about finding additional support for an Iraq–al-Qaeda connection; Note, Principal Deputy Under Sec Def for Policy Stephen A. Cambone, 11 Sep 2001, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB326/doc07.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. On 12 September, President Bush ordered Richard A. Clarke, the National Security Council's national counterterrorism coordinator, to look for Iraqi links to 9/11; *9/11 Report*, p. 334.

13. The "war cabinet" included Vice President Richard B. "Dick" Cheney, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General H. Hugh Shelton, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers, Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet, Attorney General John D. Ashcroft, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Robert S. Mueller III, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card, and, frequently, Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Joshua B. Bolten; see *9/11 Report*, p. 330.

14. Ibid., p. 335.

15. Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), pp. 1–4; Tommy R. Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier: General Tommy Franks, Commander in Chief, United States Central Command* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), p. 329.

16. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 63. Feith takes this quote directly from his draft memo for Secretary Rumsfeld, 20 Sep 2001, sub: Briefing President on Operational Plan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



PM2 Jim Watson, U.S. Navy (USN)

Firefighters search for victims in the World Trade Center ruins on 14 September 2001.

tolerance of terrorism."[17] He appreciated the audacity of this global vision: "If the war does not significantly change the world's political map, the United States will not achieve its aim. There is value in being clear on the order of magnitude of the necessary change."[18] Rumsfeld's radical views on altering the world's political map in order to achieve American aims did not mirror CENTCOM's understanding of the purpose of the upcoming campaign, and made it more difficult for the military to identify the specific standards that it would have to meet to secure a successful outcome.

Rumsfeld continued to espouse his version of national policy by sending a 3 October memo to the combatant commanders and service chiefs. His "strategic guidance for the campaign against terrorism" identified four war "aims," which military planners might call political end states. These end states amounted to the creation of "an international political environment hostile to terrorism," a world in which terrorists could no longer operate.[19]

---

17. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for President Bush, 30 Sep 2001, sub: Strategic Thoughts, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc13.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Feith drafted the memo and Wolfowitz, General John P. Abizaid, and Myers revised it before Rumsfeld made final edits and signed it; Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 81.

18. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for President Bush, 30 Sep 2001, sub: Strategic Thoughts, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Donald H. Rumsfeld, "A New Kind of War," *New York Times*, 27 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/27/opinion/27RUMS.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also DoD News Briefing, Sec Def Rumsfeld, 18 Sep 2001, https://archive.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=1893. The Office of the Secretary of Defense's strategic guidance called for the "campaign on terrorism" to include "multiple agencies" and "multiple instruments [of national power.]" Even though this responsibility typically belonged to the National Security Council, the

To achieve this ambitious goal, he provided an equally ambitious "strategic concept": "multiple agencies, multiple fronts, multiple instruments, multiple methods and extended duration."[20] In keeping with this concept, he directed his subordinates to "marshal, coordinate and synchronize all instruments of U.S. national power—diplomatic, financial, intelligence, military and other—in the planning, execution and exploitation of a global campaign against terrorism sustainable for the foreseeable future."[21] The 3 October memorandum therefore set highly aggressive goals while promising few additional resources for the military forces charged with obtaining those objectives.

Rumsfeld's global vision also seriously constrained the ability of the Joint Force to plan and execute a successful intervention in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan was never meant to be a war in its own right, but the opening campaign of a protracted, global conflict. CENTCOM had to plan not merely to eliminate al-Qaeda's sanctuary in Afghanistan, but also to eliminate terrorist capabilities across its entire area of operations, which at the time included Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. In addition, the imperative to fight a global war "sustainable for the foreseeable future" created an unprecedented challenge for the all-volunteer force. Although President Bush told the American public to expect "a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen," he did not express interest in generating additional warfighting resources and personnel.[22] The war on terrorism's multiple campaigns would therefore be fought by existing military and paramilitary units, and its overall success would depend on rapid victories and equally rapid withdrawals.

Most importantly, the Global War on Terrorism's broad strategic goals made it difficult for military planners to develop clear and feasible termination criteria. In Afghanistan (as in other projected theaters of operation), the core goal was not simply to remove al-Qaeda's sanctuary but to prevent its reemergence.[23] The latter was a fundamentally political goal that necessitated state-building. By definition, terrorist safe havens exist in ungoverned spaces,

---

Department of Defense (DoD) outlined the nonmilitary components of the war's strategy in this document. Memo, Sec Def Rumsfeld, for Deputy Sec Def, Secs Mil Departments, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Under Secs Def, Combatant Cdrs, Asst Sec Def for Command, Control, and Communications, and General Counsel, 3 Oct 2001, sub: Strategic Guidance for the Campaign Against Terrorism, p. 6, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc15.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Memo, Rumsfeld, for Deputy Sec Def, Sec Mil Departments, CJCS, Under Secs Def, Combatant Cdrs, Asst Sec Def for Command, Control, and Communications, and General Counsel, 3 Oct 2001, sub: Strategic Guidance for the Campaign Against Terrorism, p. 9.

21. Ibid., p. 7.

22. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress" (20 Sep 2001).

23. In November 2001, Secretary of State Powell told the UN Security Council that the war would "be fought with increased support for democracy programs, judicial reform, conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, economic reform and health and education programs. All of these together deny the reason for terrorists to exist or to find safe havens within those borders." Colin L. Powell, "Remarks to United Nations Security Council" (Remarks, New York, 12 Nov 2001), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

either in a remote location or failed state.[24] It follows, then, that to prevent safe havens, a legitimate government would have to be present and capable of providing order and justice. A sober assessment of existing resources at the time reveals that the American government was ill-equipped to undertake such a task. As a result, American military leaders faced the uncomfortable fact that they would need outside assistance to accomplish many of their goals.

The Bush Doctrine

The Bush administration faced two significant diplomatic challenges for its Global War on Terrorism. The first consisted of building the international coalition needed to ensure success in achieving ambitious strategic goals, and the second involved convincing unfriendly nation-states to stop supporting terrorism. On the evening of 11 September, President Bush took what he hoped would be the first step in resolving the latter challenge. In his address from the Oval Office, he declared a new foreign policy: from now on, the United States would "make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."[25] The president restated the new policy more bluntly in his 20 September address to Congress: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."[26] The Bush Doctrine, as it became known, gave countries the world over a stark choice: in the coming war, they would be either friends or enemies of the United States; there was "no neutral ground."[27]

The Bush administration soon put this new policy to the test with the country that had the closest relationship to the Taliban: Pakistan. The administration believed Pakistan's cooperation would be essential to the success of a military campaign in Afghanistan and the broader war on terrorism for three reasons. First, Islamabad offered a diplomatic channel to the Taliban, through which it might be able to convince Mullah Mohammed

---

24. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 would define a terrorist safe haven as an ungoverned and lawless location in a remote region or failing state; see *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*, PL 108–458, 108th Cong., 1st sess. (17 Dec 2004) sec. 7102(a). Military doctrine did not define terrorist safe haven in 2001; Lt Col Marc Jamison, *Sanctuaries: A Strategic Reality, an Operational Challenge*, U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 Mar 2008, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. Bush, "Address to the Nation on the September 11 Attacks" (11 Sep 2001). President Bush proclaimed this new policy without consulting his vice president, secretary of state, or secretary of defense. Peter Baker, *Days of Fire: Bush and Cheney in the White House* (New York: Doubleday, 2013), p. 131; Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), p. 30.

26. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress" (20 Sep 2001)

27. "In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves." George W. Bush, "Presidential Address to the Nation" (National Archives, The White House, 7 Oct 2001), https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bush, *Decision Points*, pp. 396–97.

Omar's regime to cease harboring al-Qaeda. Pakistan historically had supported the Taliban and even fostered them into power, and was one of three countries to officially recognize the regime. Conversely, if the Taliban refused to cooperate and pressure from Washington forced Islamabad to cut ties, then the Taliban's leadership would be diplomatically isolated.[28] Second, Pakistan's intelligence agencies, especially the Directorate General for Inter-Services Intelligence, knew Afghanistan and their own Pashtun tribal areas better than anyone. The U.S. government had lost much of its Afghan expertise since disengaging from the region in the early 1990s, and it needed help understanding the enemy. Finally, Pakistan's location made it the best option to gain access to landlocked Afghanistan. The geographical alternatives were worse for various reasons: Iran would never cooperate with American military operations; India had a longstanding policy of nonalignment, and even if this changed, it could not serve as a base for operations in Afghanistan without risking war with Pakistan; and the Central Asian republics were just as landlocked—and therefore just as expensive to transport through for military equipment and humanitarian aid—as Afghanistan.

Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage delivered the president's ultimatum to Lt. Gen. Mahmud Ahmed, the director of the Inter-Services Intelligence, at a meeting in Washington on 12 September. "Pakistan faces a stark choice," he said. "Either it is with us or it is not."[29] Ambassador Wendy J. Chamberlin delivered the same message to President Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad the next day. While Musharraf tried to distance Islamabad from the Taliban regime, he also noted that Pakistan questioned "how to deal with the Taliban," hinting that it would prefer a nonmilitary solution.[30] After some additional discussion, Musharraf assured Chamberlin of his country's support. Musharraf later framed his decision as a question of whether the Taliban were worth committing suicide over; the answer was "a resounding no."[31]

---

28. The other two were the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The former would end relations with the Taliban on 22 September. Saudi Arabia had frozen relations in 1998 over Osama bin Laden's guest status in Afghanistan and would cut ties completely on 25 September 2001. Warren Hoge, "United Arab Emirates Cuts Ties with Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 22 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/22/international/middleeast/united-arab-emirates-cuts-ties-with-afghanistan-2001092293313264342.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; John F. Burns with Christopher Wren, "Saudi Arabia Cuts Ties with Taliban," *New York Times*, 26 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20010926wednesday.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. U.S. Dept of State Cable, Sec State to Ambassador Chamberlin, 12 Sep 2001, sub: Deputy Secretary Armitage's Meeting with Pakistan Intel Chief Mahmud: You're Either With Us or You're Not, NSA GWU, version 1: https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc03-1.pdf, version 2: https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc03-2.pdf; Cable, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 13 Sep 2001, sub: Musharraf: "We Are With You in Your Action Plan in Afghanistan," NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc02.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Ibid.

31. Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 202.

The diplomatic exchange shifted from obtaining a broad understanding to engaging specific issues on the following day when Deputy Secretary Armitage presented seven demands for General Ahmed to pass to Islamabad.[32] The list itemized what Pakistan had to do to show it was "with" the United States:

1. Stop al-Qaida [*sic*] operatives at your border, intercept arms shipments through Pakistan and end all logistical support for bin Laden.
2. Provide the United States with blanket overflight and landing rights to conduct all necessary military and intelligence operations.
3. Provide as needed territorial access to United States and allied military intelligence, and other personnel to conduct all necessary operations against the perpetrators of terrorism or those that harbor them, including use of Pakistan's naval ports, airbases, and strategic locations on borders.
4. Provide the United States immediately with intelligence, [excised] information, to help prevent and respond to terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States, its friends and allies.
5. Continue to publicly condemn the terrorist acts of September 11 and any other terrorist acts against the United States or its friends and allies, [excised].
6. Cut off all shipments of fuel to the Taliban and any secret other items and recruits, including volunteers enroute [*sic*] to Afghanistan that can be used in a military offensive capacity or to abet the terrorist threat.
7. Should the evidence strongly implicate Usama bin-Laden [*sic*] and the Al Qaida [*sic*] network in Afghanistan and should Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to harbor him and this network, Pakistan will break diplomatic relations with the Taliban government, end support for the Taliban and assist us in the aforementioned ways to destroy Usama bin-Laden [*sic*] and his Al Qaida [*sic*] network.[33]

On 14 September, Musharraf met with his corps commanders and top generals, and laid out the case that Pakistan would be branded a terrorist state and stigmatized internationally if it refused to join America's war on terrorism. Several of his generals, including Ahmed, nevertheless opposed cooperation. Ultimately, they agreed to accept the demands only because

32. Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage and Powell had developed this list on their own despite its obvious military implications, a move that later irked Rumsfeld, but in fact merely reflected his own willingness to address diplomatic issues. Interv, PBS *Frontline*, with Richard L. Armitage, Deputy Sec State, 20 Jul 2006, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/interviews/armitage.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Feith, *War and Decision*, pp. 14–15.

33. U.S. Department of State Cable, Sec State to Ambassador Chamberlin, 13 Sep 2001, sub: Deputy Secretary Armitage's Meeting with General Mahmud: Actions and Support Expected of Pakistan in Fight Against Terrorism, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc05.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

they feared that delay on their part would push the United States closer to India.[34] At the same time, cooperation with Washington risked provoking a domestic backlash from Pakistanis who held Islamist and anti-American views.[35]

When Musharraf met with Ambassador Chamberlin later that same day, he said that "he accepted the points without conditions and that his military leadership concurred."[36] At the same time, he raised a number of still-classified concerns over their implementation.[37] As these details were worked out in the coming weeks, the United States did not hold Pakistan to its demand for unlimited basing and overflight rights. Rather, it accepted a limited flight corridor and basing rights at Shamsi and Jacobabad, as well as Pakistan's stipulation that no attacks could be launched from its soil.[38]

The Bush administration's demands did not alter Pakistan's strategic calculus, which continued to revolve around India. Pakistan would support the American war on terrorism only insofar as it furthered this core interest. Musharraf made this clear to his constituency in a televised, Urdu-language speech on 19 September. According to Musharraf, this was the only way he could preserve the country's "main cause" in Kashmir: India was trying to woo America to its side, have Pakistan declared a terrorist state, "and thus damage our Kashmir cause."[39] He implied that Pakistan's alignment with America was a temporary, lesser evil, speaking by analogy of how the Prophet Muhammad once had to ally with the Jews of Medina to fight his enemies in Mecca before being able to defeat those same Jews in battle six years later. He also noted his continued efforts to spare Afghanistan and the Taliban from an American attack.[40]

---

34. Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America's War on Terror* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), p. 220; Rory McCarthy, "Dangerous Game of State-Sponsored Terror that Threatens Nuclear Conflict," *Guardian*, 24 May 2002, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/25/pakistan.india, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

35. Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 541.

36. Cable, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 14 Sep 2001, sub: Musharraf Accepts The Seven Points, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc08.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. Ibid.

38. Howard B. Schaffer and Teresita C. Schaffer, *How Pakistan Negotiates with the United States: Riding the Roller Coaster* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2011), pp. 138–39; Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, p. 206.

39. The geographical area of Kashmir between India and Pakistan has been the main area of conflict between the two nations since the establishment of Pakistan as an autonomous nation in 1947. Pervez Musharraf, "Text: Pakistan President Musharraf" [televised speech to the people of Pakistan], *Washington Post*, 19 Sep 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/pakistantext_091901.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. Ibid.; Selig S. Harrison, "Bush Needs to Attach Strings to Pakistan Aid," *USA Today*, 23 Jun 2003, https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2003-06-23-oplede_x.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Thus, the Bush administration erred in believing that Islamabad would serve as their most important ally in the coming war in Afghanistan, even though the two countries had divergent interests there. That misplaced faith, sustained for several years by pro-Pakistani voices within the CIA, DoD, and State Department, ultimately placed a large swath of the Taliban's traditional base of support—the Pashtun tribal belt that straddled both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border—off limits to American attack. For the foreseeable future, U.S. ground forces would not be able to pursue their opponents into the sovereign territory of its new friend and ally without risking the logistical and intelligence cooperation on which the military campaign depended.

The diplomatic reset with Islamabad also opened a communications channel that the Bush administration leveraged to deliver its ultimatum to the Taliban. By 14 September, the State Department had developed a list of demands for Omar's regime, which included: (1) turn over Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants; (2) "tell us everything they know" about bin Laden and his associates, "including their whereabouts, resources, plans for future terrorist attacks, and access to WMD [weapons of mass destruction] materials"; and (3) "close immediately all terrorist training camps and expel all terrorists."[41] The State Department entertained the possibility that the Taliban regime would cooperate, either by using their own forces to expel al-Qaeda or allowing U.S. forces to operate freely. If Taliban leaders did not "take decisive action" in twenty-four to forty-eight hours, then—in keeping with the Bush Doctrine—the United States would "take all necessary means to see that terrorist infrastructure is destroyed despite them" and begin to work "to remove the Taliban leadership from power."[42]

General Ahmed delivered a version of the U.S. demands to Omar personally on a 17 September visit to Afghanistan. He reported back to Armitage that he had "framed the decision to Omar and the other Afghans as essentially choosing between one man and his safe haven versus the well-being of 25 million citizens of Afghanistan," and that the Taliban's response was "not negative."[43] According to later reports, Ahmed either did not bring up bin Laden at all, did not push Omar to extradite him, or actively encouraged Omar to resist the United States, even advising him on military strategy.[44] Whatever the case, the Taliban leadership did not agree

---

41. Memo, U.S. Department of State, 14 Sep 2001, sub: Gameplan for Polmil Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, p. 1, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc06.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Ibid.

43. U.S. Department of State Cable, Sec State to U.S. Embassy Islamabad, 18 Sep 2001, sub: U.S. Department of State: Deputy Secretary Armitage–Mamoud Phone Call Sept. 18, 2001, p. 2, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc09.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Michael Zielenziger and Juan O. Tamayo, "U.S. Finds Itself Relying on Information from Former Taliban Allies," Knight Ridder/Tribune News Service, 3 Nov 2001, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Kathy Gannon, *I is for Infidel: From Holy War to Holy Terror: 18 Years Inside Afghanistan* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), pp. 93–94; Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, pp. 542–43.

to the U.S. demand for action against bin Laden, announcing instead that a grand council of Islamic clerics would decide bin Laden's fate.[45] For Omar, the sticking point seems to have been his responsibility to his Arab Muslim guests under *pashtunwali*, the ancient Pashtun code of conduct that included a strong tradition of hospitality, or specifically *melmastiia*. Under the code of melmastiia, Omar felt he must offer protection to his guest and did not believe he could give up bin Laden—especially to non-Muslims—without losing all honor and legitimacy as a Muslim and Afghan leader.[46]

Although the decision effectively sealed the Taliban leadership's fate, diplomatic efforts continued for another two weeks. In a 24 September meeting with Ambassador Chamberlin, General Ahmed warned that removing the Taliban would leave Afghanistan at the mercy of warlords once again, and that a strike would "produce thousands of frustrated young Muslim men" and "be an incubator of anger that will explode two or three years from now."[47] Four days later, Ahmed traveled to Kandahar—after the first CIA team had already infiltrated Afghanistan—in a last-ditch effort to change Omar's mind. This time Ahmed brought with him eight Pakistani clerics who had instructed several Taliban officials as students, but even they failed to persuade Omar to give up bin Laden.[48] Although it did not oppose Ahmed's mission, the United States now believed that the time for negotiation had passed.[49] The Taliban's failure to surrender bin Laden and his lieutenants would make them the target of a U.S. military campaign in less than two weeks' time.

Once again, the policies adopted by the Bush administration threatened to create as many strategic challenges as it solved. The post–September 11th American approach to global terrorism effectively fused an international terrorist group (al-Qaeda) and a national insurgency (the Taliban) together and made them "the enemy" in Afghanistan. That viewpoint did not take into account that, as CENTCOM planners recognized, the two groups

---

Another version has a Pakistani cleric, Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai, encouraging Mullah Mohammed Omar to start a jihad against the United States if it attacked Afghanistan; see Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, p. 221.

45. "Taliban to Decide Fate of Bin Laden," 18 Sep 2001, CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/central/09/18/afghan.taliban.0430/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Luke Harding, Ewen MacAskill, and Richard Norton-Taylor, "Defiant Taliban Ready for War," *Guardian*, 18 Sep 2001, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/18/politics.september11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. In a September 2001 interview with Voice of America, Mullah Omar cited "Islam's prestige" and "Afghanistan's tradition" as the reasons why he could not give up bin Laden. Transcript, "Mullah Omar – In His Own Words," *Guardian*, 26 Sep 2001, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/26/afghanistan.features11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, p. 542.

47. Cable, U.S. Embassy Islamabad to Sec State, 24 Sep 2001, sub: Mahmud Plans 2nd Mission to Afghanistan, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc11.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

had distinct strategic and operational interests.[50] Nor did it account for the DoD's position that the Taliban did not pose a strategic threat to the United States, or allow for the possibility that the Taliban's "control" over al-Qaeda may have been less than complete.[51] It also was not clear that, within the framework of international law, the Taliban bore legal responsibility for the 11 September 2001 attack.[52] Finally, removing the Taliban from power did not necessarily eliminate al-Qaeda's sanctuary. Rather, by creating a power vacuum, it gave rise to separate strategic challenges that could not be solved militarily. Ironically, the administration's preferred course of action risked trading one ungoverned space (the Taliban's failed state) for another (a power vacuum), and constrained the ability of American military commanders to pursue the enemy into the ungoverned spaces of neighboring Pakistan.

Coalition Building

The remaining major diplomatic challenge for the Bush administration was to secure the international coalition necessary to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism. By 13 September, President Bush had spoken with Russian president Vladimir Putin, British prime minister Tony C. Blair, French president Jacques R. Chirac, German chancellor Gerhard F. Schröder, and Canadian prime minister Joseph Jacques "Jean" Chrétien; Secretary of State Colin L. Powell had spoken with UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan, European Union leaders, and his counterparts in many countries.[53] They continued to work the phones in that pivotal first week, and in his 20 September speech before Congress, President Bush asked "every nation to join us" in what he called "civilization's fight."[54]

---

50. Theater Campaign Plan, Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), 26 Nov 2001, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

51. Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban–Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Compare with the State Department's assessment shortly after the attacks: "Tuesday's attacks clearly demonstrate that UBL [Osama bin Laden] is capable of conducting terrorism while under Taliban control—something the Taliban had repeatedly assured us was not the case." Memo, U.S. Department of State, 14 Sep 2001, sub: Gameplan for Polmil Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, p. 1. U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) planners similarly emphasized "the Taliban's close association with UBL and Al Qaida [*sic*]" and identified bin Laden as the primary financial backer of the Taliban. Theater Campaign Plan, Operation Enduring Freedom, CENTCOM, 26 Nov 2001, pp. 10–11

52. Helen Duffy, *The 'War on Terror' and the Framework of International Law*, 2d ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 83–89.

53. Ibid.; Jane Perlez, "After the Attacks: The Diplomacy; Powell Says It Clearly: No Middle Ground on Terrorism," *New York Times*, 13 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/13/us/after-attacks-diplomacy-powell-says-it-clearly-no-middle-ground-terrorism.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress" (20 Sep 2001).

These efforts resulted in an immense outpouring of international support for the United States.[55] On 12 September, NATO agreed to invoke Article 5 of its charter—which required all member states to consider an attack on one member an attack on all—for the first time in its history, provided that the United States could prove that the attacks originated from outside its borders.[56] On 21 September, the European Union condemned the attacks and announced an action plan to fight terrorism.[57] A strong majority of the public in countries such as France and Britain supported their own participation in the anticipated U.S. military actions.[58] This support continued and even increased after the start of operations.[59]

Insofar as they backed a military response by the Americans, however, most allies supported it only in Afghanistan. The Bush Doctrine soon raised concerns that the United States was planning to attack Iraq, which France and Germany (among others) adamantly opposed. The Bush administration's pre–September 11th reputation for "unilateralism"—based largely on its rejection or undermining of major international agreements—exacerbated these fears.[60] These tensions between the Bush administration and NATO would come to a head when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, and they would strain the coalition effort in Afghanistan.

American efforts at coalition-building also suffered from philosophical differences between the Department of State and DoD. The former wanted to build as broad a coalition as possible to bolster the legitimacy of military action against terrorists and their sponsors. Secretary Powell's talking points

---

55. Warren Hoge, "After the Attacks: West; Outpouring of Grief and Sympathy for Americans Is Seen Throughout Europe and Elsewhere," *New York Times*, 14 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/14/us/after-attacks-west-outpouring-grief-sympathy-for-americans-seen-throughout.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Tom Lansford, *All for One: Terrorism, NATO, and the United States* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 73–74; Suzanne Daley, "After the Attacks: The Alliance; For First Time, NATO Invokes Joint Defense Pact with U.S.," *New York Times*, 13 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/13/us/after-attacks-alliance-for-first-time-nato-invokes-joint-defense-pact-with-us.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. Council of the European Union, Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140.en.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. Gallup poll, "L'opinion publique internationale et la riposte américaine aux attentats du 11 septembre" [International public opinion and the U.S. response to the September 11 attacks], 14–15 Sep 2001, Association Française de Science Politique [page discontinued], http://www.afsp.info/omasp/agregation/archives/ri/opinionpubliqueinternationale.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

59. Philip H. Gordon, "NATO After 11 September," *Survival* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 3, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396330112331343145, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

60. These included the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention verification protocol, the International Criminal Court, and a UN small arms trade agreement; Ibid., p. 2. Also see William Drozdiak, "EU Leaders Back Attacks on Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 20 Oct 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/10/20/eu-leaders-back-attacks-on-afghanistan/fb12b220-966b-4829-ad55-52e0c1fdad2f/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

from 13 and 14 September show diplomatic efforts to have included not only traditional partners like the UN, NATO, Israel, and Japan, but also Iran, Sudan, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, plus Central, South, and Southeast Asian countries. The State Department identified Saudi Arabia and Egypt as "key priorities for closer cooperation in all possible tracks," and described "moderate Arabs" as "key to the coalition."[61] The State Department opposed striking Iraq in the first phase of the war on terror in part because they feared such action would alienate coalition partners.[62]

By contrast, senior civilian officials in the Pentagon did not want the political sensibilities of other nations to restrict U.S. military options. In fact, Rumsfeld believed that the American position should be the bellwether for the world: "The legitimacy of our actions does not depend on how many countries support us. More nearly the opposite is true: the legitimacy of other countries' opinions should be judged by their attitude toward this systematic, uncivilized assault on a free way of life."[63] He envisioned a coalition of coalitions, recognizing "that coalition members may support aspects of our war effort and not support (or even oppose) other aspects."[64] He encapsulated his philosophy on alliances with the maxim: "The mission must determine the coalition; the coalition must not determine the mission."[65] As Under Secretary Douglas J. Feith observed: "Whereas [Secretary] Powell stressed the importance of respecting the views of allies and friends abroad, we encouraged the President to act, with due respect, to *shape* those views."[66]

The DoD's uncompromising stance guided the Bush administration's response to NATO's Article 5 invocation. Although the U.S. delegation sought the invocation of Article 5, and the North Atlantic Council confirmed it in

---

61. First quotation: Talking Points for Principals Committee, U.S. Department of State, 13 Sep 2001; second and third quotations: Talking Points for Principals Committee, U.S. Department of State, 14 Sep 2001.

62. *9/11 Report*, p. 335.

63. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 56. Feith takes this quote directly from a memo, no subject, dated 19 September 2001, from Secretary Rumsfeld to Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, Chief of Staff to the Vice President I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and Counselor to the President Karen P. Hughes.

64. Memo, Rumsfeld for Deputy Sec Def, Sec Mil Departments, CJCS, Under Secs Def, Combatant Cdrs, Asst Sec Def for Command, Control, and Communications, and General Counsel, 3 Oct 2001, sub: Strategic Guidance for the Campaign Against Terrorism, p. 11.

65. The maxim appears in different variations in multiple memos: Rumsfeld for Bush, sub: Coalitions, 22 Sep 2001; Rumsfeld for Powell, sub: Coalitions, 18 Oct 2001; Rumsfeld for Bush, sub: Decisions, 19 Jan 2002, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Rumsfeld's strategic guidance for the war on terrorism also directed the DoD to "partner, as appropriate, with the people or institutions of other states on particular elements of this campaign, recognizing that our missions should determine the composition of multinational efforts and operations." Memo, Rumsfeld, for Deputy Sec Def, Sec Mil Departments, CJCS, Under Secs Defense, Combatant Cdrs, Asst Sec Def for Command, Control, and Communications, and General Counsel, 3 Oct 2001, sub: Strategic Guidance for the Campaign Against Terrorism, p. 7.

66. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 59.

early October, they also made clear that the United States neither required collective action from the alliance nor wanted it to form a counterterrorism Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF). Rather, the Bush administration wished to maintain maximum flexibility and lean on NATO as the cornerstone of its coalition of coalitions.[67] Rumsfeld in particular was skeptical of NATO involvement for two reasons. First, he shared the view of some senior defense officials and generals that NATO structures had compromised operational security and interfered with the U.S. military's ability to conduct an efficient campaign in Kosovo.[68] Second, Rumsfeld held a dim view of allied military capabilities. With the exception of Great Britain, NATO allies could not move their assets to the Afghan theater without American assistance.[69]

The secretary of defense's diplomatic efforts ensured NATO played a supporting role in the early stages of the Afghan intervention with only British Special Forces participating in combat operations. NATO's clear support meant that after the cessation of hostilities the United States could lean on member nations to contribute to the peacekeeping and reconstruction missions. This allowed the Bush administration to retain flexibility in the use of its own military to strike terrorists and their sponsors in other theaters.[70] Ultimately, the invocation of Article 5 laid the groundwork for NATO's formal entry into the conflict years later.

Planning for OEF-Afghanistan

Planning for a military intervention in Afghanistan began even before the Bush administration decided that the Taliban regime would be the first target in its war on terrorism. The CIA initially took the lead in planning the intervention, in part because CENTCOM had no contingency plans for Afghanistan, and in part because the CIA had already developed a covert plan to overthrow the Taliban.[71] Indeed, just one day before 11 September, the National Security Council Deputies Committee approved a plan to

---

67. Lansford, *All for One*, pp. 91–93.

68. Dana Priest, "France Played Skeptic on Kosovo Attacks," *Washington Post*, 20 Sep 1999, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/daily/sept99/airwar20.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Lt Gen Michael C. Short, Cdr, 16th Air Force and Allied Air Forces Southern Europe Air Component, 22 Feb 2000, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/short.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Gordon, "NATO After 11 September," p. 4; James F. Dobbins, *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2008), p. 44.

69. Rebecca Johnson and Micah Zenko, "All Dressed Up and No Place to Go: Why NATO Should Be on the Front Lines in the War on Terror," *Parameters* (Winter 2002-2003): 51–52.

70. The Office of the Secretary of Defense remained wary of involving U.S. forces in international command and control structures that might limit their ability to carry out the counterterrorism mission: "Engaging U.N. diplomacy beyond intent and general outline could interfere with U.S. military operations and inhibit coalition freedom of action." Draft memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 16 Oct 2001, sub: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc18.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

71. Franks with McConnell, *American Soldier*, p. 266.

increase pressure on the Taliban regime to move against al-Qaeda, and, if those measures failed, to provide covert assistance to topple the regime from within.[72] The plan involved providing assistance to the United Front, a loose alliance of five Taliban opposition groups consisting of the "Panjshir Front," a Tajik group under the command of Mohammed Qasim Fahim after its long-time leader, Ahmad Shah Massoud, died at the hands of al-Qaeda assassins on 9 September 2001; the "Uzbekistan Front" led by Abdul Rashid Dostum; the "Herat Front" in the west, commanded by Ismail Khan, a Tajik with connections to Iran; the "Bamian Front" in the central highlands, led by Shia Hazara chieftain Karim Khalili; and a fifth front in Ghor Province consisting of 2,000 Shia fighters under various commanders.[73]

At a National Security Council meeting on the day after 11 September, Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General H. Hugh Shelton raised the possibility of adopting this unconventional warfare approach, using CIA paramilitary teams and SOF to partner with the local opposition.[74] At a Security Council meeting on 13 September, Director of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center J. Cofer Black briefed the concept, garnering the support of President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld.[75] At the Camp David meetings of 15–16 September, Tenet further developed the plan to combine American and United Front forces against the Taliban.[76]

---

72. *9/11 Report*, pp. 205–06.

73. Lester W. Grau and Dodge Billingsly, *Operation Anaconda: America's First Major Battle in Afghanistan* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2008), pp. 33, 44–45. The full title of the organization was the United National and Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan. The pro-Taliban Pakistani government sought to portray the United Front as an isolated organization representing a discontented minority by referring to it as the "Northern Alliance." There is some truth to that perception, given that its members were organized along ethnic lines that effectively prevented them from collectively agreeing on anything in all but the most extreme circumstances. The motivation levels within the United Front varied widely, with Uzbeks and Hazaras viewing their Pashtun opponents as blood enemies, while Sunni Tajiks disliked Shia Hazaras almost as much as Pashtuns. The United Front's military tactics and capabilities also differed greatly because its leadership had a broad spectrum of professional credentials, ranging from Abdul Rashid Dostum serving with the Soviet and Afghan communist armies to Massoud emerging as the most successful of the irregular mujahideen commanders during the Afghan-Soviet conflict.

74. Unconventional warfare is defined as: "Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area." Jeffrey Hasler, "Defining War 2011," *Special Warfare* (Jan-Feb 2011), http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/archive/SW2401/SW2401DefiningWar.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. On the National Security Council meeting, see Shelton with Levinson and McConnell, *Without Hesitation*, p. 441.

75. Tenet with Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm*, p. 175; Shelton with Levinson and McConnell, *Without Hesitation*, p. 443; Feith, *War and Decision*, pp. 16–17.

76. Shelton with Levinson and McConnell, *Without Hesitation*, p. 444; Gen (Ret.) Richard B. Myers with Malcolm McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon: Serving on the Front Lines of National Security* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2009), p. 167.

The Bush administration saw several advantages to embracing an unconventional warfare approach during the opening phases of a military campaign in Afghanistan. First, utilizing indigenous opposition fighters to gather information would lessen American reliance on Cold War–era intelligence collection systems optimized for use against Soviet-style mechanized forces. Afghanistan possessed very few identifiable "high-value" targets, such as military airfields, air defense sites, oil refineries, dams, and electrical power stations, necessary to support the daily operations of a nation-state.[77] SOF, partnering with the Afghan opposition, stood to improve the effectiveness of preparatory air strikes by identifying and pinpointing discreet assets essential to the Taliban regime's survival.[78]

Harkening back to the Gulf War and Balkans experiences, Rumsfeld had concerns that air strikes carried the risk of inflicting "collateral damage that would be used against us from a religious standpoint," as it might create "images of Americans killing Moslems."[79] In contrast, "equip-and-train activities with local opposition forces coupled with humanitarian aid and intense information operations" would "set the political stage that the people we are going after are the enemies of Moslems themselves."[80] In fact, an unconventional warfare approach had the potential to create a successful model of regime change for the broader war on terrorism. Rumsfeld argued that:

> the U.S. strategic theme should be aiding local peoples to rid themselves of terrorists and to free themselves of regimes that support terrorism. U.S. Special Operations Forces and intelligence personnel should make allies of Afghanis [*sic*], Iraqis, Lebanese, Sudanese and others who would use U.S. equipment, training, financial, military and humanitarian support to root out and attack the common enemies.[81]

Perhaps the most important requirement that the proposed unconventional approach met was President Bush's demand for swift action. Military logisticians estimated it required several months or more to position sufficient conventional ground forces for an invasion of Afghanistan, but this projected timeline did not satisfy Bush's desire to respond decisively sooner rather than later.[82] In part, this attitude stemmed from the president's outrage at the 11 September 2001 attacks. In his role as a national leader he felt compelled to deliver swift justice to the perpetrators.[83] Yet the administration also desired

---

77. Ibid., p. 65.

78. Memo, Deputy Sec Wolfowitz for Sec Rumsfeld, 23 Sep 2001, sub: Using Special Forces on "Our Side" of the Line, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/267/2001-09-23%20from%20Wolfowitz%20re%20Using%20Special%20Forces%20on%20Our%20Side%20of%20the%20Line.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

79. Feith, *War and Decision*, pp. 55–56.

80. Ibid., pp. 81–83.

81. Ibid., p. 83.

82. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 43–44, 72.

83. Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 128.

immediate military action for strategic reasons. As a later paper from the Office of the Secretary of Defense noted, an early victory could deter other nation-states from supporting terrorist attacks by "making an example of the Taliban."[84] Such a success could "build U.S. public confidence for action in other theaters" and "maintain the support of key coalition members."[85] Thus, when General Franks asked for two months to devise a draft campaign plan, Rumsfeld told him he had only a few days.[86]

Adopting an unconventional warfare approach offered many advantages and would utilize a wide variety of military capabilities to deliver a decisive victory in the shortest time possible. Conventional ground forces likely would be needed in light of intelligence estimates stating the United Front lacked the capability to defeat the Taliban, even with American SOF and air support.[87] Further discussion resulted in a concept combining both conventional and unconventional methods, which General Shelton introduced at the 15 September Camp David meeting.[88] Planners anticipated that, in just a few months' time, the Afghan winter would bring military operations to a near halt.[89] Between the weather and the amount of time it would take to deploy large ground units, CENTCOM did not envision deploying conventional forces in adequate numbers until the spring of 2002.

The amount of ground forces necessary to defeat Taliban and al-Qaeda forces remained an open question, but the Bush administration sought to commit as few U.S. conventional units as possible. The reasons for this "light footprint" approach were complex. Because of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, members of the administration believed that a large ground force could not succeed there. Afghans were, in Rumsfeld's words, "anti-foreigner," which meant that a military occupation on the model of Japan or Germany was out of the question.[90] Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz believed that putting SOF in the lead would send the important message that the United States was not "heading for a long-term occupation of Afghanistan with all of the potentially catastrophic consequences, which

---

84. Draft memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 16 Oct 2001, sub: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan.

85. Ibid.

86. Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), p. 370.

87. Information (Info) Paper, Defense Intelligence Agency, 15 Oct 2001, sub: Prospects for Northern Alliance Forces to Seize Kabul, NSA GWU, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc17.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

88. Shelton with Levinson and McConnell, *Without Hesitation*, pp. 444–445; Col. Nathan S. Lowery, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2002: From the Sea, U.S. Marines in the Global War on Terror* (Washington, D.C.: United States Marine Corps [USMC] History Division, 2011), p. 25.

89. Draft memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 16 Oct 2001, sub: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan.

90. Memo, Rumsfeld for Bush, 19 Jan 2002, sub: Decisions, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/743/2002-01-19%20To%20President%20George%20W%20Bush%20re%20Decisions-%20Memo%20Attachment.Bush%20re%20Decisions-%20Memo%20Attachment%2001-19-2002, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 194.

that entails."[91] The logistical challenge of moving large numbers of ground troops into landlocked Afghanistan also presented a powerful argument for going light.[92]

As discussed, the Global War on Terrorism reflected many of these assumptions, and its call for simultaneous operations in multiple theaters precluded U.S. forces from undertaking protracted stability operations in any one place. But perhaps more than any other reason, the Bush administration wanted to minimize the U.S. footprint in Afghanistan because it was opposed to using American troops for nation building. Although nation building is a notoriously ill-defined concept, in the 1990s it became attached—with significant political baggage—to the contingency operations ordered by President Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo.[93] When then-Governor Bush campaigned against nation building in 2000, he was expressing his opposition to using the American military to conduct humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. The president and his advisers believed that such interventions degraded American military capabilities, tied up forces indefinitely, and created economic dependency in the host nation.[94] Compounding this opposition to nation building was the administration's general pessimism about Afghanistan's future prospects. According to Richard N. Haass, who participated in National Security Council meetings in the fall of 2001 as the administration's coordinator for the future of Afghanistan, "the consensus was that little could be accomplished in Afghanistan given its history, culture, and composition, and that there would be little payoff beyond Afghanistan even if things there went better than expected."[95] Thus, President Bush stuck to his position in the wake of

---

91. Memo, Wolfowitz for Rumsfeld, 23 Sep 2001, sub: Using Special Forces on "Our Side" of the Line.

92. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, Combat Studies Institute (CSI), with Gen Victor G. Renuart Jr., former (frmr) CENTCOM Director of Opns, 31 May 2007, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

93. The term has been used variously to refer to state-building, peace-building, stabilization, reconstruction, democratization, and modernization efforts in postconflict environments. Two RAND studies openly embrace this multiplicity of meaning: see James F. Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2003), p. 1; James F. Dobbins et al., *After the War: Nation-Building from FDR to George W. Bush* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2008), p. 2. For a different take, see Francis Fukuyama, "Nation-Building and the Failure of Institutional Memory," in Francis Fukuyama, ed., *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 4–8.

94. Michael R. Gordon, "The 2000 Campaign: The Military; Bush Would Stop U.S. Peacekeeping in Balkan Fights," *New York Times*, 21 Oct 2000, https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/21/us/the-2000-campaign-the-military-bush-would-stop-us-peacekeeping-in-balkan-fights.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Condoleezza Rice, "Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, (Jan-Feb 2000), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2000-01-01/campaign-2000-promoting-national-interest, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Beyond Nation Building," (Speech, Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, New York City, 14 Feb 2003), http://archive.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=337, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

95. Richard N. Haass, "Time to Draw Down in Afghanistan," *Newsweek*, 18 Jul 2010, https://www.newsweek.com/haass-time-draw-down-afghanistan-74467, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11 September, declaring on 25 September: "We're not into nation-building; we're focused on justice."[96]

Under these policy constraints and with only basic strategic guidance from Washington, CENTCOM's staff worked furiously to prepare a draft campaign plan for General Franks in the eight days following 11 September. Because it effectively was being asked to plan operations for immediate execution, CENTCOM brought members of its planning and operations staffs together under the leadership of the chief operations officer (J-3), Air Force Maj. Gen. Victor G. Renuart Jr.[97] Renuart also relied upon subordinate components, including Third U.S. Army/U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), Fifth Fleet/U.S. Navy Central Command, Ninth Air Force/U.S. Central Command Air Forces, and Special Operations Command Central for additional expertise. While the Marines lacked permanent representation, U.S. Marine Forces Pacific soon transformed itself into U.S. Marine Forces Central Command.[98] In addition to providing insight into unique capabilities resident within their parent service, the subordinate air and naval commands planned and executed strategic sealift and airlift, while ARCENT oversaw theater-wide civil engineering, detainee operations, communications, bulk petroleum management, and Special Forces logistical support.[99]

Although the State Department had succeeded in gaining concessions from Pakistan, other regional diplomatic hurdles constrained military options. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, all of which had recently gained independence from the Russian Federation, needed Moscow's tacit approval before they could host U.S. troops. In addition, the United States had to convince regional leaders to lend their full support. In some cases, the challenge of persuading smaller nations to accept the presence of U.S. troops proved more difficult than obtaining the backing of America's former Cold War adversary. For example, while Uzbekistan's President Islam A. Karimov agreed to allow CIA and U.S. military personnel to transit his country and survey facilities for possible use, he denied requests to launch air and ground attacks from his nation.[100] Karimov's unwillingness stemmed in part from Uzbek security service reports of U.S. Special Forces personnel talking to known opponents of his regime during a joint training exercise in 2000.[101]

---

96. George W. Bush and Junichiro Koizumi, "International Campaign Against Terror Grows," (Remarks, The White House, 25 Sep 2001), https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010925-1.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

97. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Renuart, 31 May 2007, p. 3.

98. Lowery, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan*, p. 27.

99. Department of the Army (DA) Field Manual (FM) 1, *The Army*, 14 Jun 2001; DoD Dir 5100.1, 1987, sub: *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components*.

100. David J. Gerleman et al., *Operation Enduring Freedom: Foreign Pledges of Military & Intelligence Support*, Rpt for Cong. 31152 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service 17 Oct 2001), p. 9.

101. The fact that the U.S. soldiers were Special Forces personnel resonated with Islam A. Karimov because those types of units often led forcible regime changes of Soviet-era satellite states. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, OEF Study Grp, with Col (Ret.) Gilberto Villahermosa, frmr Central Asian Br Ch, CENTCOM CJ–5, 13 Mar 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

CENTCOM planners did not have the luxury of concentrating solely on Afghan issues. General Franks decided that U.S. forces would participate—as planned before 11 September 2001—in Bright Star, a multinational exercise taking place in Egypt from 8 October to 2 November. Although his staff recommended opting out, Franks viewed Bright Star as an opportunity rather than a distraction. First, he sought to leverage the momentum created by personnel and equipment flowing into the region for the past several weeks. After Bright Star concluded, key personnel and units could remain in theater to provide security and build or improve port facilities, billeting, airfields, and command and communications nodes rather than return to their home stations. Second, Franks saw Bright Star as a means of deceiving al-Qaeda about the timing of impending military operations. Finally, American participation demonstrated to regional allies that the United States would not abandon them during a crisis.[102]

Working under these constraints, Renuart's staff quickly produced a draft plan for General Franks to brief Secretary Rumsfeld and the Joint Chiefs on 20 September. The brief did not satisfy the senior military leaders who received it. As Air Force General Richard B. Myers, who would succeed General Shelton as chairman of the Joint Chiefs on 1 October, recalled: "The operation was too light, too dependent on SOF; heavier forces were needed—but such units were difficult to sustain. Others recommended more air power."[103] By the end of the presentation, Franks believed his audience was focusing too narrowly on promoting their own service's parochial interests.[104] Although he did not voice his misgivings, Rumsfeld was also concerned by the early reliance on air strikes and the lack of actionable intelligence. Nonetheless, he recognized that the "requirement to initiate military strikes within a very short time" had been a key limitation to CENTCOM's planning, and he allowed the draft plan to go forward to the White House.[105]

General Franks briefed his plan to the president and vice president at the White House the next day, accompanied by Secretary Rumsfeld, Generals Shelton and Myers, and a senior Special Operations commander, Army Maj. Gen. Dell L. Dailey. Rumsfeld opened by informing Bush and Vice President Richard B. "Dick" Cheney that the plan was a work-in-progress.[106] Franks began by providing an overview of the operational challenges he faced before progressing to a step-by-step explanation of how he envisioned the campaign unfolding, making "it clear the mission in Afghanistan would not be easy."[107] Franks also informed Bush that the Uzbek defense minister, Kodir Ghulomov,

---

102. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 60.

103. Myers with McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon*, pp. 175–76.

104. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, Col E. J. Degen, and Maj Matthew Smith, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Tommy R. Franks, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 4 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

105. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 63. Feith takes this quote directly from a memo he drafted for Secretary Rumsfeld, sub: Briefing President on Operational Plan, 20 Sep 2001.

106. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, p. 371.

107. Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 194.

was willing to let the United States use the former Soviet Karshi Khanabad Air Base in southern Uzbekistan. This offer did not come free. The Uzbeks wanted not only compensation in the form of military equipment and money, but also assurances that the Americans would target Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan fighters working with the Taliban.[108] President Bush ended the meeting by asking General Franks when the plan could be executed. Franks replied that, "in about two weeks we'll have the required support from the nations in the region."[109] Despite the unfinished state of the plan, Bush ordered the military to launch an air campaign and insert SOF simultaneously in two weeks' time.[110]

The Pentagon originally named the planned campaign Infinite Justice, following the precedent of previous efforts in Afghanistan. The 1998 cruise missile strike on al-Qaeda training camps—in retaliation for the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania—had been dubbed Infinite Reach; a proposed follow-on strike was named Infinite Resolve.[111] The name did not last, as the Pentagon soon learned it might offend allies whose Muslim populations believed that only God is capable of dispensing infinite justice.[112] On 24 September, General Franks proposed Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), which pleased Secretary Rumsfeld and earned White House approval.[113] OEF would refer to both the imminent actions in Afghanistan and to operations in the Global War on Terrorism as a whole. Operations in specific theaters were to be named OEF-Afghanistan, OEF-Philippines, OEF-Horn of Africa, and so forth. Only after Operation Iraqi Freedom began in 2003 did OEF become synonymous with the war in Afghanistan.

Even as the president approved CENTCOM's initial course of action, the CIA continued to plan for its role in unconventional warfare operations. On 21 September, the same day the White House hosted General Franks, Director Tenet hosted a brainstorming session at Langley to provide updated guidance to CIA teams preparing to depart for Afghanistan. The attendees shared Secretary Rumsfeld's concerns that the United States had to avoid the appearance of waging a war against Islam or being an occupying force like the Soviets. They also feared that the collateral effect of U.S. strikes against the Taliban could cause tens of thousands of Afghans to flee eastward into Pakistan, where their presence would potentially destabilize the Musharraf regime.[114] CIA officials further agreed that it was important to unite opposition groups that historically had competed against each other, and to leverage the

---

108. Myers with McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon*, pp. 176–77.

109. Franks with McConnell, *American Soldier*, pp. 280–81.

110. Baker, *Days of Fire*, pp. 158–59. For progression, see Myers with McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon*, pp. 180–81; Shelton with Levinson and McConnell, *Without Hesitation*, pp. 447–48.

111. *9/11 Report*, p. 336 and endnote p. 85.

112. Elizabeth Becker, "A Nation Challenged; Renaming an Operation to Fit the Mood," *New York Times*, 26 Sep 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/26/us/a-nation-challenged-renaming-an-operation-to-fit-the-mood.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

113. Myers with McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon*, p. 181.

114. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 114–15.

traditional Afghan distrust of outsiders against the Arabs who constituted al-Qaeda's ranks. Finally, they hoped to capitalize on Afghan resentment toward the Taliban, especially among ethnic and religious minorities such as the Shia Hazara, whom the Taliban actively persecuted.[115]

However, the meeting also exposed differences of opinion within the agency. On the one hand, officers familiar with the United Front noted that near-term results could only be achieved by supporting organized Uzbek and Tajik opposition groups in the north. On the other hand, the Islamabad station chief, Robert L. Grenier, argued that the CIA should invest time and effort in establishing dissident Pashtun groups in the south. A keen student of the centuries-old ethnic tensions dominating the region, Grenier believed that civil war would result if the Tajiks and Uzbeks seized control of Kabul. Rather than aid the United Front, Grenier felt that a lengthy bombing campaign aimed at weakening the Taliban, while CIA and Special Forces teams organized Pashtun dissident groups, was the only logical course of action.[116]

The discussions held at Langley prompted Director Tenet to propose an alternative course of action at a 23 September Security Council meeting. Tenet raised the possibility that U.S. actions should focus on splitting the Taliban from al-Qaeda. By holding off against the Taliban during the opening air attacks and focusing on al-Qaeda's highly trained Brigade 055 instead, the United States might be able to pit moderate Taliban leaders against Omar. This approach elaborated on an earlier State Department proposal to find "subtle ways to encourage splits within the leadership" of the Taliban, and received Secretary Powell's support in the meeting.[117] However, Tenet's proposal raised the possibility of disconnects between the Security Council's goals and the plan taking shape at CENTCOM. As a result, General Shelton asked Franks to synchronize the military's plans with the new approach suggested by the CIA.[118]

On 24 September, Station Chief Grenier participated in a three-way teleconference with General Franks and Director Tenet. After stating his concerns about how Pashtuns would react to the United Front overthrowing the Taliban with American support, Grenier asked Franks to revise the proposed targeting list to ensure that the opening attacks devastated the morale of the Taliban leadership. General Franks agreed to hit Taliban political centers of gravity—the enemy's source of strength—during the initial air attacks, with the caveat that the target set would be expanded if the strikes did not quickly generate visible fissures in the Taliban leadership. General Franks also seemed amenable to holding off

115. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 12.

116. Grau and Billingsly, *Operation Anaconda*, p. 51.

117. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 123–25; Memo, U.S. Department of State, 14 Sep 2001, sub: Gameplan for Polmil Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

118. Robert Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar: A CIA Diary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), p. 93.



U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

The mountainous terrain known as the Hindu Kush, which runs directly through the center of Afghanistan, increased the complexity of operations in the area. The Afghan mountain range shown here is near the Pakistan border, just south of Tora Bora.

on sending U.S. conventional troops inside Afghanistan until the CIA signaled that their presence was needed.[119]

This last point led to discussions between Secretary Rumsfeld and Director Tenet to determine how operational command and control would migrate from the CIA to the military as the campaign progressed in Afghanistan. Although the agency depended on U.S. military air power from the onset, the paramilitary teams deployed to Afghanistan and Pakistan would initially have the lead in coordinating with Afghan opposition forces. That responsibility would shift to Franks and his CENTCOM headquarters once growing numbers of Special Forces personnel and conventional military units arrived.[120] Secretary Rumsfeld remained engaged on this issue by continually promoting close cooperation between CENTCOM and the CIA.[121]

CENTCOM continued to refine its campaign plan after the president's initial approval and even after the first CIA team arrived in Afghanistan on 26 September. On 30 September, Special Operations Command Central

119. Ibid., pp. 95–96.

120. Although the former secretary of defense does not pinpoint the exact date, he discusses it just before talking about a chance meeting with California's Rep. Dana Rohrabacher on 26 September. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, pp. 374–75.

121. Interv, Mark J. Reardon and Maj Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Richard B. Myers, frmr CJCS, 14 Mar 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Myers noted that Secretary Rumsfeld expended significant effort to ensure that U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) efforts were aligned with plans being developed by General Tommy R. Franks.

briefed a more aggressive unconventional warfare approach to Franks aimed at removing the Taliban from power. They acknowledged the CIA's conflicting views on opposition groups by presenting a range of options that included (1) placing the main unconventional warfare effort in the south, (2) weighting the main unconventional warfare effort in the north, (3) placing equal emphasis in the north and south, and (4) limiting U.S. involvement to indirectly aiding indigenous opposition groups from bases outside Afghanistan. Franks approved the northern option because the main opposition groups were located in that region and the Special Forces units tentatively slated to deploy there were very familiar with implementing unconventional warfare.[122] The Special Forces teams, however, would not enter Afghanistan until CIA officers laid the groundwork for their arrival.[123]

A week later, on 7 October 2001, American and British warplanes began combat operations before CENTCOM had a full, four-phase campaign plan in place. Nevertheless, strategy development continued in Washington and at the CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa even as operations unfolded. This later became known as adaptive planning.[124] On 16 October, the National Security Council approved a strategy for Afghanistan that had been drafted by Rumsfeld's staff within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Although the strategy called for integrating military, diplomatic, covert, humanitarian, and financial efforts, the strategy clearly emphasized using military force to "eliminate Al-Qaida [*sic*] leadership and forces" and "terminate the rule of the Taliban and their leadership."[125] The Security Council especially emphasized the antipersonnel focus of the campaign: "Al-Qaida's [*sic*] and the Taliban's main assets are people. They must be destroyed."[126] To this end, the strategy prescribed using "incentives and disincentives—money, food, military equipment, supplies; air strikes, etc." to get "any and all Afghan tribes and factions" to eliminate enemy personnel and military capabilities.[127] At the strategic level, the Bush administration hoped that military success in Afghanistan would produce intelligence "for the worldwide campaign against terrorism" and show that "harboring terrorism will be punished severely."[128]

Operationally, the strategy sketched a northern-focused approach like that previously approved by General Franks. It called for ground liaison teams to encourage their northern Afghan partners to establish a land bridge to Uzbekistan, clear enemy forces, surround Kabul, and sever Taliban lines of command north of the capital, in that order. The paper also outlined a diplomatic message for the United Front: respect human rights in the conduct of the campaign, and allow the future of Kabul—and by implication, the post-

122. Eric Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For: How Eleven Green Berets Forged a New Afghanistan* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 40.

123. Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, p. 375.

124. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Renuart, 31 May 2007, p. 3.

125. Draft memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 16 Oct 2001, sub: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid.

128. Ibid.

Taliban government—to be decided by a political process that represented the interests of all Afghans, not merely the Pashtun majority. In the Pashtun south, where the United States did not yet have adequate intelligence or partners, it was "critical that CIA and Defense Department accelerate the process of establishing on-the-ground contacts." The National Security Council paper identified Pakistan and the exiled Afghan king Zahir Shah as possible channels for influencing Pashtuns. It also proposed the following message for the Pashtun tribes: the United States was prepared to give them the same support it was lending the United Front, the United States was "committed to preserving Kabul as a capital for all Afghans," and they (the tribes) needed to join the U.S. coalition to balance the United Front.[129]

The Security Council paper also laid out the American intentions for post-Taliban Afghanistan. In principle, President Bush understood that stability was necessary to prevent Afghanistan from becoming "yet again a haven for terrorist criminals," and that Afghanistan's recent history showed "that we should not just simply leave after a military objective has been achieved."[130] Yet the paper argued that "[t]he U.S. should not commit to any post-Taliban military involvement, since the U.S. will be heavily engaged in the anti-terrorism effort worldwide."[131] Thus, the administration supported deploying an international peacekeeping force to Kabul, but nowhere else in the country and not with U.S. troop contributions. Similarly, it would provide near-term humanitarian relief and long-term "economic support for reconstruction within an all-Afghan political framework," but not take charge of any state-building mission.[132] Although the administration decided on a broad-based coalition government for Afghanistan as early as 14 September, Washington decision makers felt America lacked the influence to mandate a solution, preferring instead to consider the wishes of its international supporters.[133] Therefore, the administration argued that "U.S. preference for a specific outcome ought not to paralyze U.S. efforts to oust Al-Qaida [*sic*] and the Taliban." As a result, the initial strategic goal for the post-conflict environment remained vague and limited: "Take steps to contribute to a more stable post-Taliban Afghanistan."[134]

---

129. Ibid.

130. President Bush, "Prime Time News Conference" (Remarks, East Room, 11 Oct 2001), https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011011-7.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. On the significance of these comments, see David E. Sanger, "A Nation Challenged: News Analysis; A New, Uneasy Burden," *New York Times*, 12 Oct 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/12/world/a-nation-challenged-news-analysis-a-new-uneasy-burden.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

131. Draft memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 16 Oct 2001, sub: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan.

132. Ibid.

133. The State Department set out this goal as early as 14 September: "bring together non-Taliban Afghans and [the] Northern Alliance to form [a] broad-based coalition government with broad appeal across geographic and ethnic lines." Memo, U.S. Department of State, 14 Sep 2001, sub: Gameplan for Polmil Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

134. Draft memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 16 Oct 2001, sub: U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan.



USAID

In rugged Paktiya Province, near the border with Pakistan, the high peaks rapidly descend to create severe valleys running north and south of the Hindu Kush.

As the first Special Forces teams entered the country on 19 October, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council returned to their efforts to update existing guidance focusing on near-term events. In response, by 1 November CENTCOM refined planning for Phase II, which broadly aimed to "destroy, disrupt, [and] degrade Taliban and Al Qaida [*sic*]."[135] The operational objectives for Phase II now included maintaining the internal stability of regional partners, building a coalition to conduct military operations in Afghanistan, significantly reducing the threat posed by al-Qaeda, compelling the Taliban to cease harboring terrorists, providing humanitarian relief to innocent Afghans, and setting the conditions for Phase III.[136] Given that three of the five objectives were independent of U.S. military forces and required diplomatic coordination beyond General Franks' scope of responsibilities, the plan reflected CENTCOM's optimistic opinion of its likely success.

As air strikes continued to pound a dwindling number of Taliban targets, CENTCOM now envisioned Phase II unfolding in three stages. Stage 1, "Initial Strike Operations," had consisted of air operations designed to "to eliminate air/air defense threats, disrupt Taliban planning and communications, and set conditions for follow-on targeting of Taliban and Al Qaida [*sic*] leadership." It also referred to the insertion of CIA teams when noting "an embedded direct action operation to gain actionable intelligence and display U.S. capabilities and resolve." Stage 2, referred to as "Continued Operations," marked the

135. Combined Forces Command (CFC) Operation Order (OPORD) 02–02, Phase II-Stage 2 Continued Operations, CENTCOM, 1 Nov 2001, sec. 1.B, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

136. Ibid., sec. 3.A.

introduction of SOF tasked with conducting unconventional warfare and "direct action against the Taliban and Al Qaida [*sic*] centers of gravity in Afghanistan," as well as aerially delivered humanitarian assistance. Although CENTCOM deferred detailed examination of Stage 3 until developments warranted such an effort, Franks' planners began looking more closely at setting conditions for Decisive Operations in Phase III and "expanding counter terrorist operations AOR [Area of Responsibility] wide."[137] Likewise, fruitful Phase IV planning would have to wait for the convening of an internationally recognized conference chartered to determine Afghanistan's post-Taliban political future.

The eight primary operational tasks set out for the Afghanistan campaign at this stage reflected a mix of conventional and unconventional approaches to warfighting. The former received top priority with U.S. military, coalition troops, and proxy military forces alike focusing on degrading and destroying al-Qaeda and the senior Taliban leadership. CENTCOM deemed the latter necessary in order to eliminate the Taliban as a battlefield opponent and pave the way for a new form of Afghan government. Five of the remaining seven tasks were directly or indirectly related to the United Front. These included CENTCOM plans to employ the United Front to secure a land corridor from Mazar-e Sharif to Uzbekistan, the northern cities of Taluqan and Kunduz, Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul, and the eastern city of Jalalabad. CENTCOM also sought to create "operationally viable" opposition groups in southern Afghanistan. The final pair of tasks focused on the civil-military realm, which included delivering sufficient humanitarian assistance to meet the immediate needs of the Afghan people and initiating efforts to promote post-conflict stability and the establishment of a friendly Afghan government.[138]

Thus, as U.S. SOF entered Afghanistan, CENTCOM expected to wage a rapid campaign in comparison to what transpired after Soviet troops invaded in 1979. Instead of being tied up fighting al-Qaeda for years on end, General Franks anticipated a campaign that opened in late fall 2001, followed by an operational pause lasting several months due to severe winter conditions, before resuming full bore in spring 2002. Although U.S. military leaders did not prefer to slow operations during the winter months, they felt it would take some time to provide the United Front with additional training and develop anti-Taliban partners in the Pashtun. By implication, they also believed the winter months provided more time to "cultivate attitudes" among local partners who favored U.S. and international interests. As it happened, events began unfolding in dizzying succession beginning in mid-November, CENTCOM soon found itself scrambling to adjust its campaign plan to reflect battlefield realities.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid., sec. 3.B.2.

The September 11th Attacks and the U.S. Army

The sudden and unexpected nature of the September 11th terrorist attacks severely tested the Army's existing readiness and force management framework. As news of the terrorist strike spread, Army personnel from all three components flocked to both the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to provide security and assist civilian first responders. In stricken New York City, 1,500 Army National Guard soldiers made their way directly to the site of the shattered World Trade Center—soon to be known as Ground Zero—before nightfall.[139] The active duty and reserve forces partnership and affiliation programs leading up to 11 September 2001 were built around a framework of overseas, active-duty-led operations, not the need to react to a major domestic attack. As a result, Joint Forces Command at Norfolk, Virginia—the joint force headquarters responsible for resourcing military units for operations—did not formally respond to the World Trade Center attack until 13 September 2001.[140] On that same day, eighty-five Army Reserve soldiers from 1st Lt. Hector S. Martinez's 311th Quartermaster Company (Mortuary Affairs) deployed to Fort Myer, Virginia, from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, to aid the 54th Quartermaster Company of Fort Lee, Virginia, with recovering and processing human remains at the Pentagon.[141]

Developments in the aftermath of 11 September inexorably propelled the entire Army toward war. In New York City, 8,000 National Guardsmen were activated before nightfall on 11 September.[142] By the following morning, thousands more National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers, knowing that phone lines were inoperable and transportation was difficult, began to muster at their armories. National Guard soldiers stationed at key airports provided many Americans with the first visible indication of heightened security. The term "Force Protection" also took on real meaning at Army installations as commanders took steps to safeguard soldiers, their families, equipment, and supplies from a follow-on terrorist strike.

On 14 September, President Bush declared a National State of Emergency, "by Reason of Certain Terrorist Attacks." In doing so, he signed Executive Order 13223 invoking Section 12302 of Title 10 of the United States Code which enabled the federal government's right to call into service any reserve unit, and any individual member of the Ready Reserve not assigned to a unit, for a period not to exceed twenty-four months.[143] The Joint Chiefs estimated

---

139. John S. Brown, *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989–2005* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011), p. 212.

140. Joint Forces Command , Execution Order , 131800RSEP01, sub: EXORD for DoD Support to FEMA for Consequence Management in Response to Terrorist Attacks in NYC, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

141. Kathryn Roe Coker et al., *The Role of the Army Reserve in the 11 September Attacks: The Pentagon* (Ft. McPherson, Ga.: Office of Army Reserve History, 2003), pp. 124–32.

142. Brown, *Kevlar Legions*, p. 212.

143. "Executive Order 13223 as of 14 September 2001," *Federal Register* 66, no. 181 (18 Sep 2001), https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2001-09-18/pdf/01-23359.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the need to activate 50,000 reservists for the purpose of providing "port operations, medical support, engineer support, general civil support, and homeland defense."[144]

The mobilization requirements were based on the personnel needed for improved homeland defense. The declared State of Emergency did not set limits on the mobilization or employment of troops other than those outlined under existing U.S. Code, which authorized up to one million reservists for up to twenty-four months. Although the National State of Emergency expired annually, the president could renew it as many times as the strategic situation dictated, which gave him sustained access to the reserve forces and the supplemental war funding it enabled. This declaration of emergency, written with homeland defense in mind, would become the baseline document that authorized the mobilization of more than 900,000 reservists over the next fifteen years for combat.[145]

The sight of growing numbers of guardsmen and reservists patrolling airports, harbors, and other high-value sites provided a visible reassurance to the American public as CENTCOM initiated planning for a retaliatory strike against al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan. The call up of reservists and guardsmen, initially conducted under the auspices of the Global War on Terrorism, were consolidated on 25 September as Operation Noble Eagle. The majority of domestic operations were sourced from the National Guard, since Title 32 of the U.S. Code allowed for the National Guard to respond to potential civil disorder without violating the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878.[146] Indeed, nearly 28,000 reserve component soldiers—about the size of two divisions—were mobilized and deployed by November 2001.[147] Although many mobilized reservists and guardsmen were released after intelligence analysts later indicated a reduction of immediate post-attack threat levels, missions such as the New York National Guard's Empire Shield, designed to

---

144. At a 14 September 2001 press briefing, the military services identified requirements for 35,500 reservists: 13,000 Air Force, 10,000 Army, 3,000 Navy, 7,500 Marine Corps, and 2,000 Coast Guard. DoD, "Partial Mobilization of National Guard, Reserve Authorized," Press Opns News Release 426-01, 14 Sep 2001, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Military to Call up 50,000 Reservists," CBS News, 26 Sep 2001, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/military-to-call-up-50000-reservists/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

145. DoD Mobilization Rpt, 31 March 2015, http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Mobilization-Weekly-Report-150331.pdf [page discontinued], Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., "Active vs. Guard: An Avoidable Pentagon War," Breaking Defense, 28 Jun 2013, https://breakingdefense.com/2013/06/active-vs-guard-an-avoidable-pentagon-war/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

146. *Posse Comitatus Act of 1878*, 18 U.S.C. § 1385(1878), original at 20 Stat. 152(1878). The act prevents the federal government from using the Title 10 active military in a domestic law enforcement role within the territorial borders of the United States.

147. News Call, "The Army Responds to Terrorist Attacks," *Army Magazine* (Nov 2001): 59; Interv, Lt Col Victor Sundquist, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Col Kelly A. Lelito, 9 Jul 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Lt Col Victor Sundquist, OEF Study Grp, with Col (Ret) Stewart Brown, 10 Jul 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Lt Col Victor Sundquist, OEF Study Grp, with Maj (Ret.) James Larry Kendrick Jr., 6 Apr 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

prevent terrorist attacks in New York City, remained in force indefinitely.[148] These sustained commitments, however, created competition between domestic requirements, rotational peacekeeping commitments, and combat rotations for the Global War on Terrorism within a force pool of finite size.

Preparing for Battle

The United States could not address the possibility of further al-Qaeda attacks effectively by adopting a wholly defensive stance. On 16 September, the Joint Staff issued a warning order to the Department of the Army alerting the XVIII Airborne Corps, consisting of the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), 10th Mountain Division, 82d Airborne Division, and 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), to be prepared to take part in "an imminent combat mission."[149] The Joint Staff selected the XVIII Airborne Corps because all of its subordinate elements maintained specially designated units, from a company to a full brigade, ready to deploy on little or no notice.

In addition to using XVIII Airborne Corps, CENTCOM envisioned a central role for SOF in Afghanistan. General Franks relied on Air Force General Charles R. Holland, commanding the United States Special Operations Command located adjacent to Franks' headquarters in Tampa, Florida, to spearhead the upcoming campaign. In addition to his other responsibilities, Holland oversaw General Dailey's dedicated counterterrorist command, also located at MacDill Air Force Base. Drawing from special operators provided by the Army, Air Force, and Navy, elements from the Army's 160th Aviation Regiment (Special Operations)—commonly referred to as the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, or 160th SOAR—and the 75th Ranger Regiment, along with National Security Agency and CIA elements, Dailey's Florida-based headquarters transformed itself into a joint element designated as Task Force (TF) Sword. The responsibilities of TF Sword included neutralizing weapons of mass destruction and eliminating or capturing high-ranking al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders.[150]

Holland's other assets consisted of U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, Florida; and the Naval Special Warfare

148. "New York National Guard Joint Task Force Empire Shield," New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs, https://dmna.ny.gov/press/NY_JTFES_Fact_Sheet.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

149. Thomas E. Ricks, "Pentagon Issues Order to Elite Units in Infantry," *Washington Post*, 17 Sep 2001, http://jime.ieej.or.jp/htm/extra/2001/09/13/20010917/wp-05.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

150. Ballard, Lamm, and Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, pp. 55–56; Fred J. Pushies, *Night Stalkers: 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)* (St. Paul, Minn.: Zenith Press, 2005), p. 123; Backgrounder, Lt Col Pete Blaber, Cdr, Advanced Force Opns, Opn Anaconda, 1 Mar 2012, p. 2, American Enterprise Institute, https://www.aei.org/press/operation-anaconda/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Command at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California.[151] All of these headquarters interacted with CENTCOM through Special Operations Command Central Command headed by Rear Admiral Albert J. Calland.[152] Lt. Gen. Bryan D. Brown's U.S. Army Special Operations Command provided the bulk of Special Operations Command Central's available resources. In particular, the 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, commanded by Col. John P. Mulholland, would become Brown's primary force provider. In addition to the 5th Special Forces Group and 160th SOAR at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, U.S. Army Special Operations Command began preparing the 75th Ranger Regiment, 4th Psychological Operations Group, 528th Support Battalion (Special Operations), 112th Signal Battalion, and 96th Civil Affairs Battalion for Enduring Freedom.

Some Special Operations units were already in theater as a result of the decision to go forward with Bright Star. Holland supported U.S. Army Special Operations Command participation in Natural Fire, a joint United States—Jordanian Special Operations exercise held during the same timeframe. Forces in this exercise included Lt. Col. David G. Fox's 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group; Company A, 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment from Fort Lewis, Washington; a Navy SEAL (Sea Air and Land) platoon, and elements of the Fort Campbell–based 3d Battalion, 160th SOAR. In addition to personnel in Jordan, elements of Lt. Col. Christopher K. Haas' 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, were in Kuwait as part of a regularly scheduled force rotation.[153]

CENTCOM's Special Operations Command began making major decisions affecting the upcoming campaign before CENTCOM settled on a specific course of action. On 13 September, Mulholland learned that 5th Special Forces Group would deploy as a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) rather than a service-component headquarters.[154] His unit, designated as CJSOTF-North, had responsibility for Afghanistan north of the prominent Hindu Kush. Calland planned to form a second Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) to oversee operations south of the Hindu Kush once the Taliban were forced out of Kabul.[155] His decision to

---

151. John Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007* (MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.: U.S. Special Operations Command History and Research Office, 2007), pp. 18–20. The Marine Corps did not establish a Special Operations Command until 2006.

152. Dana Priest and William M. Arkin, "'Top Secret America:' A Look at the Military's Joint Special Operations Command," *Washington Post*, 2 Sep 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/top-secret-america-a-look-at-the-militarys-joint-special-operations-command/2011/08/30/gIQAvYuAxJ_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

153. Interv, Terry Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Lt Col Donald Bolduc, frmr Ops Ofcr, 2d Bn, 5th Special Forces (SF) Grp, 23 Apr 2007, pp. 19–20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Charles H. Briscoe et al. *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2003), p. 58; Interv, John McCool, CSI, with Maj David King, frmr Intel Ofcr, 3d Bn, 160th Special Opns Avn Rgt, 6 Oct 2005, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

154. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Brig Gen John Mulholland, frmr Cdr, 5th SF Grp, 7 May 2007, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

155. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 54.



102d Military History Detachment (MHD)

The canalized terrain of Afghanistan's lush agricultural valleys had few suitable entry and exit points for ground combat vehicles.

defer the creation of a second JSOTF meant that 5th Special Forces Group would "command all SOF that would fight inside Afghanistan" for an indeterminate period.[156] Colonel Mulholland afterward admitted that the unprecedented responsibility was "worrisome to me because we had never trained to operate at what [was] an operational level of warfare."[157] The Special Operations Command, Joint Forces Command, of Norfolk, Virginia, addressed his concerns by sending a dozen instructors to teach Mulholland's staff how to function as a CJSOTF.[158]

Fleshing out the Theater Framework

Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek's headquarters, based in Fort McPherson, Georgia, acted as both ARCENT and Third United States Army, reflecting the inherent dual-hatted nature of the commands working for General Franks. As the commanding general of ARCENT, Mikolashek served as Franks' primary ground-component headquarters. As the commanding general of Third Army, he reported to his immediate superiors at U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), also located on Fort McPherson. FORSCOM was the conduit for the Army to provide personnel and equipment to all CENTCOM components, including ARCENT.

156. Ibid., p. 53.

157. Interv, John D. Gresham, Defense Media Network, with Lt Gen John F. Mulholland, frmr Cdr 5th SF Grp, 25 May 2010, http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/interview-lt-gen-john-f-mulholland-jr-usa/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

158. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 54–56.

Although Third Army/ARCENT numbered 1,100 personnel during the 1991 Gulf War, it gradually shrank to 246 active component spaces following several downsizing initiatives implemented during the Clinton administration.[159] Within twenty-four hours following the September 11th attacks, Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki authorized an increase in Third Army/ARCENT to 510 officers and enlisted personnel.[160] Translating authorizations to on-hand personnel would take several months due to constraints imposed by the existing assignment system and reserve mobilization process.

General Mikolashek faced the pressing task of creating an infrastructure to sustain the campaign well in advance of his own headquarters deploying into theater. Elements from the 377th Support Command (Theater) and the 335th Signal Command (Theater) initiated that process when they arrived at Camp Doha, Kuwait, in October 2001 to augment ARCENT's forward headquarters and the active component 54th Signal Battalion.[161] The deployment of these reserve units enabled military leaders to shape the network and logistical footprint of the region and to properly set the theater for future operations.

The U.S. military split this logistical and communication framework into two regional approaches—northern and southern—to provide multiple avenues for sustaining the effort in Afghanistan. The two logistical nodes would prove indispensable to the Army's ability to build and sustain combat power in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. They also enabled American and coalition forces to redeploy troops and equipment quickly and efficiently once the wars ended. To establish the southern logistical approach, the 377th Support Command (Theater) formed Combined/Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore sites.[162] By leveraging the formidable capabilities available at Kaiserslautern Army Depot and Ramstein Air Base, Germany, the 21st Support Command (Theater) established a northern logistical route consisting of air and rail corridors designed to funnel both humanitarian relief and combat support to CENTCOM forces in Afghanistan. During the first six months of ENDURING FREEDOM, transport planes hauled 2.2 million humanitarian rations, about 770 metric tons of wheat, nearly 69,000 blankets, and over 2,500 precision-guided container delivery systems to Afghanistan using the northern route.[163]

---

159. Presentation, Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), sub: Command and Control Enhancement Program, slides 4–9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

160. Presentation, Third Army/ARCENT, 121800Z Sep 2001, sub: Personnel Status, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

161. John A. Bonin, U.S. Army Forces Central Command in Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf during Operation Enduring Freedom: 11 September 2001–11 March 2003, Monograph 1–03 (Carlisle, Penn.: Army Heritage Center Foundation, 2003), p. 11.

162. Annual History (Hist) Rpt, 377th Theater Support Command, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

163. Sue Harper and Gregory Jones, "Supporting Afghanistan from Europe: U.S. Army Europe's 21st Theater Support Command," *AUSA Army Magazine* (Aug 2002): 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

While the 377th and 21st Support Commands (Theater) assumed responsibility for the twin logistical footprints, the 335th Signal Command (Theater) took control of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) and ARCENT-centralized network management responsibilities in theater. At the same time, the 335th also assumed responsibility for Third Army's command, control, communications, and computers operations in Afghanistan.[164] The 335th's initial deployment package included fifty augmentees for ARCENT's forward-stationed 54th Signal Battalion, but it would grow to several hundred reserve soldiers by the end of 2002.[165] The 335th would accept ongoing operational responsibility for "managing the telecommunications infrastructures for Southwest Asia and the Horn of Africa—an area of responsibility covering twenty-five countries from Kenya to Kazakhstan, and Egypt to Pakistan."[166]

Initial Deployment of Conventional Forces

Although CENTCOM envisioned using conventional ground forces in the opening phase of the campaign, the Army found itself providing infantry units to secure Special Operations bases in theater long before combat operations commenced. The 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, New York, led by Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck, learned on 21 September that Lt. Col. Paul J. LaCamera's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, would take part in the security force mission.[167] LaCamera's battalion remained behind when the bulk of the 1st Brigade, along with part of Hagenbeck's staff, deployed several weeks earlier to Kosovo under Hagenbeck's deputy, Brig. Gen. Keith M. Huber.[168] In addition, the 1st Brigade detached its 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The division's 2d Brigade, under which LaCamera's unit temporarily served, sent its 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry, to the United Nations' Multinational Force and Observers mission in Sinai.

The 101st Division's commanding general, Maj. Gen. Richard A. Cody, faced a similar situation upon learning his unit would also fill security force requirements. Given that the 101st Airborne Division rotated brigades through installation support, training, and deployment-ready cycles, it possessed only one available brigade combat team. Cody alerted Col. Francis J. Wiercinski's 3d Brigade for the mission. Wiercinski's 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Charles A. Preysler, was already getting ready to assume the Multinational Force and Observers mission in the

164. Annual Hist Rpt, 2003, 335th Theater Signal Cmd, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

165. Bonin, U.S. Army Forces Central Command in Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf During Operation Enduring Freedom, p. 11.

166. Annual Hist Rpt, 2003, 335th Theater Signal Cmd, p. 9; Mobilization and Deployment Database, G-3 Opns and Contingency Planning Div, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

167. Interv, John McCool, CSI, with Maj Roger A. Crombie, frmr Cdr, Co A, 1st Bn, 87th Inf, 10th Mountain (Mtn) Div, 30 Mar 2006, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

168. Presentation, Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) (Forward) Transition Bfg, slides 2–3, 25 Jan 2002, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Sinai.[169] In early October, the Army mobilized the Arkansas Army National Guard's 2d Battalion, 153d Infantry, to assume the Sinai tasking, enabling the 3d Brigade to deploy all three of its infantry battalions to Afghanistan.[170]

In October, as the magnitude of the challenge facing the Army after 11 September became more apparent, General Shinseki assembled key commanders to discuss the difficulties of creating a force prepared to fight an extended campaign in multiple theaters. Following the conference, Shinseki began crafting a set of instructions that would take the Army from its peacetime footing and transform it into a wartime force. All of the Army's plans and programs now had to reflect the fact that the United States was at war. It would take time to reorient both national policy and the Army bureaucracy's mindset, which meant that for the foreseeable future other units would encounter the same hurdles facing the 10th Mountain Division and 101st Airborne Division's 3d Brigade.

Opening Moves

The process by which U.S. forces moved into position to execute CENTCOM's campaign plan began soon after General Renuart's staff started work on that document (*Map 1.1*). On 14 September, the DoD sent two tankers carrying 235,000 barrels of maritime diesel fuel to the British atoll of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, along with the transfer of 28,000 tons of jet fuel from NATO stockpiles in Greece to Morón Air Base in southern Spain, where it would be available to tanker and transport aircraft en route to the Middle East.[171] Several days later, President Bush ordered B–52H Stratofortresses and B–1B Lancers, along with their supporting tanker aircraft, to Diego Garcia.[172]

The incoming aircraft would be controlled by the Coalition Air Operations Center located on Prince Sultan Air Base near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In accordance with a long-standing agreement with the Saudi government, U.S. strike and reconnaissance aircraft were not permitted to operate from

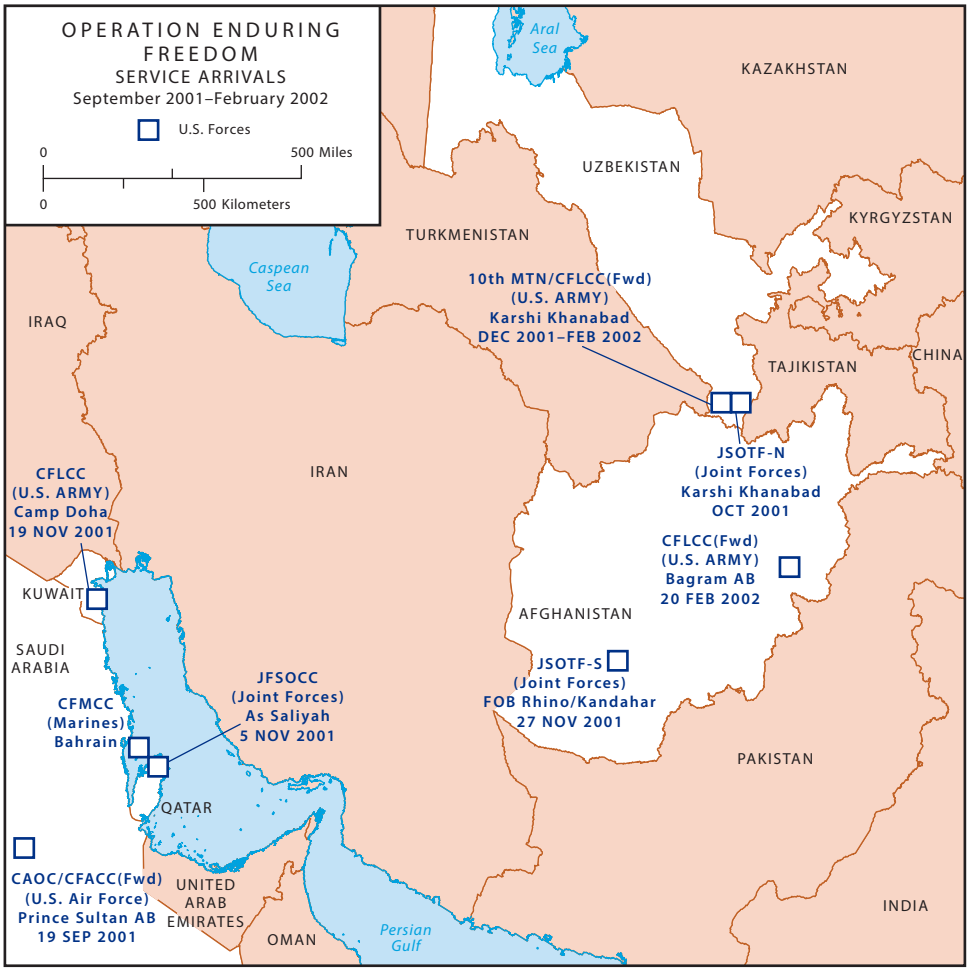
---

169. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Charles A. Preysler, frmr Cdr, 2d Bn, 187th Inf, 8 May 2007, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

170. "Tribute to Task Force 2-153, Arkansas National Guard," *Congressional Record* 148, pt. 4, 11–24 Apr 2002 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2002), p. 4874.

171. Michael Smith, "Attack 'Could Come This Weekend,'" *Telegraph*, 15 Sep 2001, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1340597/Attack-could-come-this-weekend.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

172. The bomber contingent sent to Diego Garcia, designated as the 40th Expeditionary Bombardment Wing, consisted of two squadrons of B–52s from the 2d Bombardment Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, and the 5th Bombardment Wing at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. The B–1B Lancer component was drawn from the 37th Bombardment Squadron at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, and the 34th Bombardment Squadron of Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, to form the 28th Expeditionary Bombardment Squadron. See Bill Yenne, *B–52 Stratofortress: The Complete History of the World's Longest Serving and Best Known Bomber* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2012), pp. 149–50; Thomas Withington, *B–1B Lancer Units in Combat* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2007), p. 50; Ellsworth AFB, MilitaryBases.us, http://www.militarybases.us/air-force/ellsworth-afb/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Map 1.1

Prince Sultan Air Base.[173] Although Pakistan granted basing and overflight rights, and Uzbekistan promised the same in the near future, neither country authorized the Americans to launch strike missions from their soil. Until those restrictions were loosened, the B–1B Lancers and B–52H Stratofortresses at Diego Garcia, as well as B–2 Spirit stealth bombers from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, were the only land-based aerial platforms available for the bombing attacks.[174]

The initial deployment orders for conventional army units were issued in late September when Joint Forces Command received a directive to be prepared to send light infantry, explosive ordnance disposal technicians, and logisticians to establish a forward operating base at a yet to be determined

173. Tim Ripley, *Middle East Airpower in the 21st Century* (Barnsley, U.K.: Pen and Sword, 2010), p. 341.

174. Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror: America's Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2005), p. 250.



M. Sgt. Lance Cheung, USAF

A B–52 Stratofortress provides the unaccustomed role of providing close air support to ground forces in early Enduring Freedom operations.

location in Uzbekistan. Those troops would soon be joined by signal, logistics, and aviation support from U.S. Special Operations Command.[175] The growing collection of military assets being assembled in the Gulf also led to the deployment of additional security personnel, including light infantry slated for Camp Doha in Kuwait and potentially Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia as well.[176]

Two carrier battle groups, formed around the USS *Carl Vinson* and USS *Enterprise*, were already deployed in the CENTCOM area of operations when the September 11th attacks occurred. On 17 September, Pacific Command passed control of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, commanded by Col. Thomas D. Waldhauser, to General Franks.[177] A third carrier group, formed around the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, departed Norfolk Naval Base, Virginia, on 19 September. A second amphibious readiness group led by USS *Bataan*, carrying 2,100 officers and enlisted personnel of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, sailed from Norfolk on the following day to take part in Bright Star.[178] On 30 September, the carrier USS *Kitty Hawk* departed Yokosuka, Japan, for the Middle East to serve as an afloat forward staging

175. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, pp. 60–62.

176. Andrew Exum, *This Man's Army: A Soldier's Story from the Front Lines of the War on Terrorism* (New York: Gotham Books, 2004), pp. 76–86.

177. Lowery, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2002*, pp. 27–31.

178. "Rumsfeld: US Must Drain the Swamp – Roosevelt Carrier Group Headed to Sea," CNN, 19 Sept 2001, http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/18/ret.defense.rumsfeld/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



A1C Keoni Chavarria, USAF

The U.S. Air Force's C–17 Globemaster was a critical support tool for Enduring Freedom operations in Afghanistan's canalized and restricted terrain.

base for TF Sword helicopters.[179] Diplomatic considerations proved far less restrictive for U.S. carriers operating in international waters, which ensured naval and marine aircraft would play a major role in the opening air attacks.

As U.S. naval and air assets converged on the Persian Gulf region, a seven-man CIA paramilitary team led by veteran operative Gary C. Schroen linked up with United Front chieftain Mohammed Qasim Fahim approximately 160 kilometers northeast of Kabul at 1440 on 26 September.[180] In addition to disbursing funds to bolster Fahim's commitment and increase his military strength, Schroen's team assessed United Front capabilities, pinpointed the location of opposition fighters and Taliban units, and compiled intelligence for future air strikes. Schroen's operatives also learned that the opposition groups had no intention of acting together against the Taliban until the United States military entered the fray.

Advance parties surveying Pakistani and Uzbek airfields arrived soon after the CIA personnel made contact with Fahim. The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit established a forward operating base at Shahbaz Air Force Base on the outskirts of Jacobabad, Pakistan, as well as a second airfield at Pasni, located on the Pakistani coast. The Marines also gained approval from the Pakistani military for incoming Special Operations units

179. Memo, Commanding Ofcr, USS Kitty Hawk, to Director of Naval History, Ofc of the Ch of Naval Opns, 8 May 2002, sub: USS Kitty Hawk Command History for Calendar Year 2001, https://www.history.navy.mil/content/dam/nhhc/research/archives/command-operation-reports/ship-command-operation-reports/k/kitty-hawk-cv-63-ii/2001.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

180. Gary C. Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005), p. 77.

to utilize smaller airfields at Shamsi and Dalbandin as forward operating and logistical bases.[181] On 29 September, two C–130s carrying an airlift control element of fifty troops departed Germany bound for Karshi Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan.[182] Its arrival was the first tangible step to converting the Soviet-era Uzbek airbase into a platform capable of supporting intratheater airlift, Combat Search and Rescue, and the covert insertion of CIA and Special Operations personnel.

Acquisition of the Uzbek air base triggered the flow of Army Special Operations units into the northern part of the theater. Elements of 160th SOAR arrived at Karshi Khanabad within forty-eight hours of the Air Force personnel. Over the next several days, aviation mechanics from the U.S. Army reassembled four MH–47E Chinook and two MH–60L Black Hawk helicopters delivered to Karshi Khanabad via C–17 transport aircraft. The aviators were joined by Company A of the 528th Support Battalion (Special Operations) on 4 October. On 7 October, the 3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment flew out of Fort Benning, Georgia, bound for the Middle East.[183] TF Sword elements were temporarily bedded down on Jazirat Masirah off the Omani coast awaiting the arrival of the USS *Kitty Hawk*, which would serve as their launching pad for heliborne assaults into southern Afghanistan.[184]

Although Uzbek President Karimov granted basing and overflight rights to the United States, he did not publicly disclose the presence of U.S. personnel in his country until 5 October. The announcement spurred the near-simultaneous departure of almost every U.S. transport plane impatiently waiting at multiple bases across Europe for Karshi Khanabad. Incoming aircraft immediately clogged the limited ramp and taxi space at Karshi Khanabad, creating a huge traffic jam. Air traffic controllers were overwhelmed as offload teams struggled to keep up using the limited equipment they had. This increased activity meant that coalition military personnel on the Uzbek base grew from 100 to more than 2,000 in a week.[185]

On 5 October, the initial elements of a task force from the 10th Mountain Division's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, deployed to Karshi Khanabad as some of the first conventional units in theater. The 10th Mountain Division contingent consisted of key personnel from the unit operations section; Capt. Roger A. Crombie's Company A, with attached personnel from the 3d Battalion, 6th Field Artillery; 3d Battalion, 62d Air Defense Artillery;

181. Lowery, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan*, pp. 46–49.

182. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, p. 86.

183. Capt Brent W. Clemmer, "Raid on Objective Rhino, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 19–20 October 2001" (Personal experience paper [PEP], Maneuver Capts Career Course, U.S. Army Inf School, n.d.), pp. 6, 19, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

184. Pushies, *Night Stalkers*, p. 55; Memo, Commanding Ofcr, USS *Kitty Hawk*, to Director of Naval History, Ofc of the Ch of Naval Opns, 8 May 2002, sub: USS Kitty Hawk Command History for Calendar Year 2001."

185. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 61.

and the 110th Military Intelligence Battalion.[186] The remainder of Colonel LaCamera's battalion arrived soon afterward, assuming responsibility for a larger share of the base perimeter as well as dedicating one rifle company as a quick reaction force. LaCamera's chief logistical officer, Capt. William T. Rodebaugh III, recorded his initial impressions of Karshi Khanabad: "There were some hardstands, some old hangars that we were able to move into, but there were questions about food and potability of water."[187] M. Sgt. Jorge O. Soriano, a senior noncommissioned officer from the 2d Battalion, 160th SOAR, recalled, "[T]here were no porta-potties or buildings to use [as] latrines. We had to dig our own sanitation holes. . . . sleeping was initially under the stars, then we were able to occupy some old, dirty, dusty Russian bunkers. . . . Tents were not used, because we did not own any."[188]

Two days later, the first detachment of Air Force HH–60 Black Hawk helicopters dedicated to Combat Search and Rescue duties arrived at Karshi Khanabad.[189] On that same day, the advance party from 5th Special Forces Group, now known as Task Force Dagger, arrived. The group included fifteen augmentees from the Special Operations Command of U.S. Joint Forces Command out of Norfolk, Virginia. The first echelon of newly arrived Special Forces personnel took care to maintain a low profile while travelling due to Uzbek government sensitivities. Colonel Mulholland and his staff arrived three days later. The base's inability to accept more than a limited number of inbound aircraft each day, coupled with the lack of housing and life support, constrained the number of Special Operations personnel at Karshi Khanabad until infrastructure improvements could be made. The 5th Special Forces Group ultimately required seventy-two C–17 sorties spread over six weeks to deploy from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Uzbekistan.[190]

Despite some internal shortages, the U.S. military deployed sufficient aviation, Special Operations, and logistical units by the end of the first week of October to support the initiation of Phase II. In fact, CENTCOM accelerated this process by proactively assigning key tasks to early-arriving forces. The 528th Support Battalion (Special Operations), for example, gained responsibility for Army sustainment operations at Karshi Khanabad in spite of the prospect that it would receive little or no outside assistance. This unorthodox arrangement prepared units based at Karshi Khanabad

---

186. 1–87th Battalion History, accessed 2 Nov 2011, https://www.drum.army.mil/1stBCT/Pages/I-87_BattalionHistory_lvl3.aspx, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, McCool with Crombie, 30 Mar 2006, p. 4.

187. Interv, Jenna Fike, CSI, with Maj William T. Rodebaugh III, frmr Ch Logistics Ofcr, 1st Bn, 87th Inf, 10th Mtn Div, 23 Feb 2010, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

188. M Sgt Jorge O. Soriano, "TF Dagger, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, 09/11/2001 to 03/26/2002, (15P5P) Company First Sergeant, 2–160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (Student Experience Paper [SEP], U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, 5 Oct 2006), p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

189. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, pp. 85–86.

190. M Sgt Dale G. Aaknes, "Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan, 09/11/2001 through 04/01/2002, 92Y5S2S, Task Force Dagger J-4 NOCIC" (SEP, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, 29 Sep 2006), p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

for Phase II operations well in advance of conventional logistical assets.[191] Likewise, sending the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit ashore to provide force protection for bases in Pakistan acclimatized its personnel for decisive combat operations in Phase III.

Keenly aware that additional troops and equipment placed a growing burden on the undeveloped support infrastructure in the region, CENTCOM also closely managed the projected arrival dates of Phase III forces. Some units, such as the 101st Airborne Division's 3d Brigade and 507th Support Battalion provided by XVIII Airborne Corps, were not immediately called forward in order to permit logisticians sufficient time to build up stocks. The early November release of Bright Star participants, including Third Army/ARCENT, the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, the 5th Special Forces Group's 2d Battalion, and 160th SOAR's 3d Battalion, also was a critical milestone. By synchronizing the end of Bright Star with the arrival of conventional units from the United States, CENTCOM not only enhanced General Mikolashek's ability to transform a disparate group of units into a team, but also gave those units time to prepare for combat.[192]

191. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 61.

192. Interv, Reardon, Degen, and Smith, with Franks, 4 Dec 2015.

Chapter Two

Initial Combat Operations



General Richard B. Myers assumed the position of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from General H. Hugh Shelton on 1 October 2001. On the following day, he attended a National Security Council meeting where President George W. Bush expressed his willingness to approve air strikes before Combat Search and Rescue units were in place. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld agreed with Bush, offering a compromise in which B–2 stealth bombers would hit targets in the north before Karshi Khanabad reached full operational capability.[1] The attendees agreed that bombing could start on 6 October with air strikes by the Navy carriers and Air Force heavy bombers based at Diego Garcia and in the United States, as well as Tomahawk missiles launched from warships and submarines sailing in international waters.

On 3 October, Henry A. Crumpton, the CIA counterterrorism special operations chief, met with General Tommy R. Franks at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, to lay out how the agency planned to work with CENTCOM in the coming weeks. Over the next two to three weeks, the CIA would send several more teams under the leadership of Gary Berntsen, a senior intelligence officer with experience in the region. Berntsen's teams would operate under the codename of Jawbreaker. Rather than ask Crumpton to provide updates at regular intervals, Franks formalized the future exchange of information by assigning R. Adm. Albert J. Calland as the primary liaison between the agency and the military. However, Franks passed on the first piece of critical information to Crumpton himself by informing the CIA official that American planes were preparing to strike Taliban and al-Qaeda targets any time after 6 October.[2]

The First Shots

Phase II of Operation Enduring Freedom began at 2045 local time on 7 October 2001 when manned aircraft and Tomahawk missiles launched from four American warships in the North Arabian Sea struck thirty-one targets in and around Kabul, Herat, Shindand, Shibirghan, Jalalabad, Mazar-e Sharif, and Kandahar. Before the attacks began, President Bush provided

1. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 188–89.

2. Ibid., pp. 193–94.

advance notice of American intentions to key world leaders.[3] Shortly afterward, he announced the start of air strikes in a nationally broadcast address: "More than two weeks ago, I gave Taliban leaders a series of clear and specific demands: Close terrorist training camps. Hand over leaders of the al-Qaeda network, and return all foreign nationals, including American citizens unjustly detained in our [*sic*] country. None of these demands were met. And now, the Taliban will pay a price."[4]

The heaviest attacks were conducted by ten B–52 bombers raining hundreds of Mk–82 500-pound unguided bombs on al-Qaeda training camps around Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan. A combination of other aircraft, including Diego Garcia–based B–1B heavy bombers, twenty-five Navy F–14 and F/A–18 fighters from the USS *Carl Vinson* and USS *Enterprise*, and two B–2 stealth bombers from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, struck Mullah Mohammed Omar's residence and the airport at Kandahar; the Defense Ministry and airport in Kabul; armored units and two divisional headquarters near Mazar-e Sharif; MiG fighters and transport aircraft at Herat airport; and surface-to-surface missile launchers, air defense sites, and early warning radars across the country.[5] Although Taliban antiaircraft artillery vainly attempted to down the aerial attackers, the American pilots did not encounter surface-to-air missiles or enemy interceptors.

Determined to demonstrate that the American military could do more than launch air strikes, Rumsfeld also sought to commit Special Forces teams to the fight as soon as possible. [6] The arrival of additional 5th Special Forces Group personnel at Karshi Khanabad broadened the available tactical options. By 10 October, sufficient resources were in Uzbekistan to support the deployment of Special Operations teams into neighboring Afghanistan. However, a combination of imposing terrain, mechanical issues with the CIA's Soviet-built Mi–8 helicopters, and deteriorating weather stymied TF Dagger's initial attempts to link up with Gary C. Schroen's team at Mohammed Fahim's headquarters.[7]

---

3. Michael Hirsch and John Barry, "Behind America's Attack on Afghanistan," *Newsweek* Web Exclusive on NBC News, 7 Oct 2001, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/3067589/t/behind-americas-attack-afghanistan/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. "Text: Bush Announces Strikes Against the Taliban," *Washington Post*, 7 Oct 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_100801.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, pp. 78–82; "Afghanistan Wakes after Night of Intense Bombings," CNN, 7 Oct 2001, https://www.cnn.com/2001/US/10/07/gen.america.under.attack/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Defense Officials: Air Operation to Last Several Days," CNN, 7 Oct 2001, https://www.cnn.com/2001/US/10/07/ret.attack.pentagon/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. DoD News Brfg, Sec Rumsfeld and General Myers, 15 Oct 2001, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2108, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Gary Berntsen and Ralph Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker : The Attack on Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda: A Personal Account by the CIA's Key Field Commander* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005), p. 214.

Into the Heart of Taliban Country

The USS *Kitty Hawk* provided CENTCOM with an additional means of striking the Taliban and al-Qaeda in mid-October. Steaming at high speed, the aircraft carrier traversed the 5,800 kilometers from the Strait of Malacca to Oman in six days, anchoring near Jazirat Masirah on 13 October. Before sailing out of sight a few hours later, the carrier embarked a 600-strong contingent from TF Sword and twenty helicopters.[8] The Special Operations elements on the USS *Kitty Hawk*, as well as their compatriots now on Masirah, were selected to carry out simultaneous strikes against three objectives in southern Afghanistan codenamed Rhino, Gecko, and Badger.

Rhino was an airfield, owned by the United Arab Emirates minister of defense, located around 150 kilometers southwest of Kandahar. Along with gathering intelligence and eliminating any Taliban present at the location, the raiders were ordered to evaluate its feasibility as a future base for U.S. troops.[9] Gecko pinpointed Omar's presidential palace situated several kilometers north of Kandahar. In addition to gathering any intelligence they could find, with particular emphasis on determining whether al-Qaeda possessed weapons of mass destruction, both strike elements were instructed to kill or capture any senior enemy leaders they encountered. Badger's initial target was an electrical power line connecting Kandahar with Herat. After a high-level debate, however, CENTCOM decided Badger did not warrant being labeled a target.

General Franks approved a version of the plan calling for a two-pronged night attack against Rhino and Gecko. The opening assault on Rhino consisted of Oman-based MC–130s airdropping two companies of Rangers onto the desert airstrip. A team of Air Force combat controllers accompanied the Rangers to determine if the airstrip could accommodate American aircraft. After delivering the Rangers, the MC–130 transports were tasked to land at Rhino in order to act as stationary refueling points for the Gecko helicopters. As a result, the Rangers not only had to clear their designated objective, but also had to secure the airstrip until the refueling operation ended.

The second assault force consisted of helicopters launched from the USS *Kitty Hawk* carrying TF Sword special operators and Rangers to Kandahar. The Ranger component provided outer security while Special Forces personnel assaulted Omar's presidential compound. Although the helicopters planned to stop for additional fuel at Rhino on their return trip, the rotary-wing aircraft could divert to the Pakistani base at Dalbandin if they incurred battle damage. Special Operations helicopters would position a platoon from Company B, 3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, to secure the Dalbandin site. Preparatory fires from fighter-bombers, AC–130 gunships, or

---

8. Memo, Commanding Ofcr, USS Kitty Hawk, to Director of Naval History, Ofc of the Ch of Naval Opns, 8 May 2002, sub: USS Kitty Hawk Command History for Calendar Year 2001. p. 7.

9. Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Gen Tommy R. Franks, Commanding Gen (CG), CENTCOM, 12 Jun 2002, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/interviews/franks.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Black Hawk MH–60L armed helicopters preceded the insertion of ground troops into Afghanistan. The dual raids also received dedicated support from CIA Predator drones.

On the evening of 19 October, elements of Ranger Companies A and C of the 3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, departed Masirah aboard four MC–130 transport aircraft bound for Rhino. The transport planes entered Afghan air space without being detected by Taliban air defenses. Just before the MC–130s arrived, strike aircraft targeted two buildings suspected of housing security personnel on the objective with 2,000-pound laser-guided bombs. The explosions startled a third group of guards into running away, prompting an orbiting AC–130 gunship to engage the fleeing enemy with 105-mm. and 40-mm. shells. Moments later, the quartet of MC–130s carrying the assault element appeared overhead. As the Rangers exited the transports, the pilots released flares designed to decoy man-portable surface-to-air missiles. The pyrotechnic display only angered the Rangers, as the light from the flares revealed their positions while they were still more than a hundred meters above the ground.[10] The enemy did not take advantage of the Rangers' temporary misfortune, however, and only two soldiers sustained injuries, both from landing on rocky ground. The Rangers fanned out, meeting no resistance as they cleared buildings and established a defensive perimeter. The orbiting MC–130s landed once experts on the ground confirmed the runway's suitability. After touching down, the MC–130 flight crews prepared to refuel the helicopters that were en route to the USS *Kitty Hawk* from Kandahar.

As the Rangers occupied Rhino, helicopters deposited a mixed force of Rangers and TF Sword operators near the Taliban's presidential compound. During the flight to Gecko, the formation encountered a Taliban antiaircraft position, but an armed CIA Predator drone eliminated it before the enemy could fire a shot.[11] As the pilots prepared to touch down, they struggled to identify the landing zone through the dust raised by their churning rotor systems. Although one Chinook aborted its first attempt to land, it struck the side of a hill and sheared off part of its landing gear.[12] Despite the damage, the pilots made a second attempt to deliver their passengers. The Chinook hovered close to the ground as the crew chief helped the assault team exit through a partially open rear ramp. The damaged helicopter then made its way to Jacobabad in Pakistan where it landed safely.[13]

While the Rangers established a security cordon, the TF Sword personnel entered the compound. The air strikes had reduced half of the buildings to piles of bricks and masonry, which complicated the task. Omar's house,

---

10. Cpt Brent W. Clemmer, "Raid on Objective Rhino, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 19–20 October 2001" (PEP, U.S. Army Inf School, n.d.), pp. 28–34.

11. Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), p. 221.

12. DoD News Bfg, Asst Sec Def for Public Affairs Victoria Clarke and Rear Adm John D. Stufflebeam, 23 Oct 2001, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2155, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. Dick Camp, *Boots on the Ground: The Fight to Liberate Afghanistan from Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, 2001–2002* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2011), p. 252.

with its four-meter-thick reinforced concrete roof, remained largely intact.[14] In sweeping the compound, several Americans were accidentally wounded by fragments from grenades thrown into rooms thought to be occupied by Taliban. Although the task force failed to locate any top-ranking Taliban, the Americans scooped up documents and computers. With information and equipment in hand, the raiders departed without making contact with the enemy. The MH–47E Chinooks flew southwest, where they touched down near the MC–130s at Rhino. Once their helicopters were refueled, the Kandahar raiding force departed, followed by the Rangers of Companies A and C, who reboarded the MC–130s and returned to Oman.[15]

Until the twin raids, the Taliban had considered the Pashtun tribal areas to be secure. They had fixed their attention on containing any United Front attempt to advance in conjunction with the ongoing air strikes. The Americans not only appeared from an unexpected direction, but also used ground troops, helicopters, and fixed-wing aircraft with speed and precision at night. As one senior CIA official observed, "Our HUMINT [human intelligence] reporting covered the Taliban's shock and outrage that U.S. soldiers should penetrate so deeply, so quickly, into the heart of their safe haven."[16] General Franks boasted that the raid succeeded in spreading "shock and awe" among the Taliban beyond all expectations.[17] Despite the CENTCOM commander's enthusiasm and attendant publicity, however, the raid's true impact on the Taliban was little more than a temporary psychological setback.

Although no Americans were seriously injured by enemy action, two Company B Rangers died in a related helicopter mishap in Pakistan. The helicopters ferrying them to the refueling and repair site were directed to land on specific points pre-treated with oil to limit the chances of dust obscuring the pilots' view. Unfortunately, one MH–60K from Company C, 1st Battalion, 160th SOAR, rolled over after touching down. The pilots had approached at the wrong angle, raising enough dust to prevent them from realizing that they were alighting on sloping ground.[18] Spec. John J. Edmunds and Pfc. Kristofer T. Stonesifer, the first American service members to give their lives in Enduring Freedom, received mortal injuries after being ejected from the stricken Black Hawk. Both Rangers were evacuated from the crash site aboard an MH–53 Pave Low helicopter and died en route to medical care.[19]

---

14. Jon Lee Anderson, "Letter from Afghanistan: After the Revolution," *The New Yorker*, 21 Jan 2002, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/letter-from-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. "Objective Rhino and Gecko," American Special Ops, https://www.americanspecialops.com/operations/rangers-delta-afghanistan-2001/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, p. 222.

17. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, OEF Study Group, with Col Brian J. Mennes, frmr Special Opns Forces planner 2001–2002, 27 Apr 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. Interv, John McCool, CSI, with Maj Robert Bowers, frmr 75th Ranger Rgt Judge Advocate General, 1 Feb 2006, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Darrell D. Whitcomb, *On a Steel Horse I Ride: A History of the MH–53 PAVE LOW Helicopters in War and Peace* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 2012), p. 513.

Bringing the United Front into the Fight

A second CIA paramilitary team, known as Team Alpha, entered Afghanistan during the early hours of 17 October courtesy of the 2d Battalion, 160th SOAR. The CIA officers departed Karshi Khanabad just before midnight on 16 October bound for a meeting with militia chieftain Abdul Rashid, who went by the nom de guerre Dostum (Uzbek: friend) in the Suf River Valley about 100 kilometers south of Mazar-e Sharif.[20] After a flight lasting almost two and a half hours, the CIA team safely disembarked at the appointed rendezvous. The Americans carried personal weapons, but their real power consisted of cases of money intended to persuade Dostum to fight and to encourage the Taliban to defect.

Although the CIA team provided noticeable American support, Dostum required more than money and promises. To provide the United Front with more tangible evidence of U.S. commitment, General Franks authorized additional bombing missions in the north. However, the CENTCOM air planners hesitated, because CIA officials had voiced concerns about this plan, fearing that providing substantial aid to the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras would antagonize potential Pashtun allies.[21] In addition, CENTCOM targeting cells still lacked detailed information on the location of enemy ground units, even though Schroen's CIA operatives had made every effort to collect this information. Secretary Rumsfeld publicly confirmed the latter dilemma. In response to a reporter's comment that Taliban troops in the north felt safe from air attack, he admitted, "At the moment, we have had less than perfect targeting information in the areas I think people are speculating about."[22]

An unequivocal demonstration of American aerial capabilities would be needed to convince the United Front to go on the offensive. To rapidly collect enough information to justify the use of massed airpower against Taliban ground units, CENTCOM ordered Special Operations teams equipped with laser designating devices capable of guiding precision munitions into Afghanistan. After two abortive insertions, six helicopters from the 2d Battalion, 160th SOAR, departed Karshi Khanabad carrying two Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) twelve-man teams on the evening of 19 October. The formation had three separate elements: two MH–47Es carrying ODA 555, one MH–47E and a pair of armed MH–60L Black Hawks bearing ODA 595, and a single MH–47E loaded with extra fuel. ODA 555, led by CWO2 David W. Diaz, would rendezvous with Schroen's CIA team accompanying General Mohammed

20. Brian Glyn Williams, *The Last Warlord: The Life and Legend of Dostum, the Afghan Warrior Who Led US Special Forces to Topple the Taliban Regime* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2013), p. 103.

21. Schroen, *First In*, pp. 162–63.

22. DoD News Bfg, Rumsfeld and Myers, 15 Oct 2001.



U.S. Special Operations Command

ODA 595 of the 5th Special Forces Group "Horse Soldiers" ride with General Dostum's forces south of Mazar-e Sharif.

Qasim Fahim. The second detachment, ODA 595 under Capt. Mark D. Nutsch, would join Team Alpha and Dostum.[23]

Although the Chinooks carrying Diaz's team touched down in different locations several kilometers apart at 0300 on 20 October, ODA 555 linked up with Schroen's team before daylight. On the following day, Diaz met with General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, the United Front's deputy minister of defense and a trusted lieutenant of General Fahim. On 22 October, Diaz relocated to Bagram Air Base, where dug-in Taliban and United Front troops faced each other across the open runway. The move afforded ODA 555 a golden opportunity to demonstrate what the newcomers could accomplish.[24] Four U.S. soldiers made their way to the shattered control tower. Using their elevated vantage point to pinpoint numerous camouflaged targets, the Americans called in devastating air strikes against the Taliban. Further burnishing their newly won battlefield credentials, ODA 555 repeated that feat several times, directing forty to fifty planes on each occasion against enemy troops who remained in place despite the punishing assault.[25]

23. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 119.

24. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, p. 120.

25. John D. Gresham, "Triple Nickle at Bagram," *The Year in Special Operations: 2011–2012 Edition: Operation Enduring Freedom – Ten Years Later* (Tampa: Defense Media Network, 2012), pp. 105–06.

Captain Nutsch's ODA 595 landed near the designated landing zone in the Suf River Valley at 0200 on 20 October.[26] Within six hours of its arrival, General Dostum met with the CIA operatives and Captain Nutsch to devise a mutually agreeable course of action for the coming days. At the end of the discussion, half of ODA 595 mounted horses to accompany Dostum to his forward headquarters while the remainder stayed behind to establish a base camp. The mounted group led by Nutsch accompanied the United Front leader to a forward position where the Americans put on a convincing demonstration of the lethality of aerially delivered precision munitions.

Dostum faced a foe that both outnumbered and outgunned his own force. The Taliban deployed local militia in forward positions, backed by fortified positions containing machine guns, mortars, and truck-mounted antiaircraft guns. They had armored vehicles and tanks in reserve so as to deliver counterattacks and recover any lost terrain. Although the Taliban defenses would have proven costly to defeat by a ground force lacking close air support, ODA 595 provided the ever-aggressive Dostum with a significant edge. To provide Dostum with the tactical flexibility he needed to maneuver against the dug-in enemy fighters, Captain Nutsch split his forward element into three smaller teams, each with a trained combat controller. Over the next several days, the Uzbek fighters launched a succession of slashing cavalry charges against their foes immediately after the Americans had directed air strikes against every visible Taliban defensive position.[27] In quick succession, Dostum's forces captured Bishqab on 21 October, Chobaki on the following day, and Chapchal on 25 October.[28]

Soon afterward, the DoD circulated photographs showing Army SOF and Air Force personnel riding horses into battle alongside Uzbek fighters. Although only a few SOF operators relied on equine transport for a limited period, these dramatic images were intended to reassure Americans that the U.S. soldiers battling the Taliban would not find themselves in an unwinnable predicament similar to the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. The photographs offered equally compelling proof that a few well-trained and well-led Green Berets, fighting with indigenous militia, could influence a campaign as significantly as conventional forces.[29]

---

26. Pushies, *Night Stalkers*, pp. 57–58.

27. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, pp. 132–36.

28. William M. Knarr Jr. and John Frost, *Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Battle Reconstruction: Battle Site Survey and Ground Force Data Reconciliation* (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analysis, 2010), pp. V-6–V-9.

29. Warner Bros. Pictures would later produce a feature-length film, *12 Strong*, dramatizing those events. See Justin Kroll, "Chris Hemsworth, Michael Shannon to Star in Afghan War Drama 'Horse Soldiers,'" *Variety*, 30 Sep 2016, https://variety.com/2016/film/news/chris-hemsworth-michael-shannon-horse-soldiers-1201875049/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The film was released in early 2018.



U.S. Special Operations Command

An ODA 595 Forward Air Controller calls in close air support of United Front forces near Kunduz. Timely and accurate close air support from B–52s and other strategic bombers prevented Taliban attempts to halt the advances of the United Front.

The United Front

Concerns about the unfolding campaign now surfaced as other United Front leaders hesitated to follow Dostum's example. The suitcases of cash delivered by CIA operatives in recent weeks had not erased the long-held conflicting agendas of the United Front's disparate elements. Bound only by a common hatred of the Taliban, some opposition leaders refused to cooperate with rivals while others were more interested in postconflict spoils rather than taking on the Taliban in open battle. Dostum, the most aggressive of the faction leaders, aimed to recapture Mazar-e Sharif and expand his dominion to the Uzbek-Afghan border. Fahim, by contrast, sought to push west to seize the cities of Taluqan and Kunduz before veering south to Kabul. Ismail Khan, the exiled governor of Herat, also planned an offensive to the west with the ultimate goal of recapturing his former city, and Hazara leader Karim Khalili wanted to gain control of Bamyan and the area west of Kabul.[30] None of the United Front factions expressed any interest in operating south of Kabul, which meant that before venturing into the Pashtun homelands of the Taliban, the Americans would have to ally themselves with a new collection of Afghan warlords.

On a positive note, additional Special Forces personnel had arrived to work with a growing number of United Front military efforts. At 0200 on

30. Henry A. Crumpton, "Intelligence and War: Afghanistan, 2001–2002," in *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, eds. Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), p. 166.

26 October, a pair of MH–47E helicopters delivered M. Sgt. Armand J. "John" Bolduc's ODA 585 to Dasht-e Qal'ah in northeast Afghanistan.[31] A mixed group of Afghan fighters and several CIA operatives greeted the Green Berets. Bolduc's men were taken to General Bariullah Khan near Taluqan. At the same time, Diaz's team added needed weight to CIA efforts to convince Fahim to initiate offensive operations by relocating to the Tajik leader's headquarters.[32] In addition to Bolduc's team, 160th SOAR helicopters delivered Operational Detachment Charlie 51, composed of headquarters personnel from the 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, led by Colonel Haas, to Samangan Province approximately 160 kilometers south of Mazar-e Sharif. From that central location, Haas could oversee the ODAs in the Mazar-e Sharif and Taluqan areas as well as the SOF teams in the Bamyan region.[33] (*See Map 2.1.*)

On 31 October, General Franks flew to Dushanbe in Tajikistan for a meeting with Fahim and his intelligence chief, Mohammed Arif Sarwari, also known as "Engineer Arif." Other participants included Admiral Calland, CIA counterterrorism chief Henry Crumpton, Col. John P. Mulholland, and Gary Berntsen, the last of whom had been chosen as Schroen's replacement.[34] After listening to Fahim's impassioned pitch for taking Kabul as soon as possible, Franks explained that, after securing Mazar-e Sharif, "Dostum's forces would then take a hard right and march east to support [United Front] Tajik forces, commanded by [Bariullah] Khan, for an all-out assault on Taloqan [Taluqan]. General Fahim's army, further [*sic*] south on the Shomali plains, would maneuver westward to cut off retreating Taliban troops and trap them in a large kill box. Once trapped, the Taliban army of the North could either surrender or be decimated by repeated U.S. bombing runs."[35] Franks also informed Fahim that the United Front would soon receive significantly more air support.[36]

A lively discussion followed before Fahim agreed to follow the plan outlined by Franks. When Franks asked Fahim to pressure the Taliban at Bagram, Henry Crumpton recorded that Fahim demanded "an outrageous sum of cash in monthly payments."[37] General Franks uttered an expletive before walking out of the meeting. With the general out of earshot, Crumpton and Berntsen admonished Fahim, explaining that Franks considered it unprofessional to haggle for money. After ten or fifteen minutes, Franks returned to the meeting where he defused lingering tensions by predicting that Kabul would fall before 25 December. Before the meeting ended, the CENTCOM commander made

---

31. HQDA, GO 10, 25 Sep 2006, sub: Units Credited with Assault Landings, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, pp. 149–50; Schroen, *First In*, pp. 264–65.

33. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, pp. 108–09; GO 10, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. When arrival dates and units in any source differ from General Orders 10, the latter will be used.

34. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, pp. 89–93; Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, pp. 228–30.

35. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, p. 91.

36. Schroen, *First In*, p. 305.

37. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, p. 230.

Fahim promise that Tajik fighters would obtain American permission before entering Kabul in force.[38]

More Special Forces teams departed from Karshi Khanabad bound for Afghanistan over the next several days. One flight of helicopters delivered Operational Detachment Charlie 53, consisting of headquarters personnel from Lt. Col. Max Bowers' 3d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, to Dostum's encampment on 2 November.[39] A second insertion deposited Capt. Dean S. Newman's ODA 534 at a landing zone about fifty kilometers southwest of Mazar-e Sharif.[40] The Americans linked up with twenty opposition fighters who led them to Tajik chieftain Ustad Mohammed Atta Nur.[41] Newman knew little about Atta Nur, except that he had battled Dostum on numerous occasions over the past two decades.[42] In addition to ODA 534, several members of the CIA's Team Alpha were also working with Atta Nur.[43] Early the next morning, a flight delivered ODA 553 to Naylor, a small town about 200 kilometers due south of Mazar-e Sharif, where they linked up with the CIA's Team Delta and Khalili's Hazara fighters. Khalili planned to support the upcoming assault on Mazar-e Sharif by seizing Bamyan in order to prevent the Taliban from threatening Dostum's rear.[44]

During this period, Dostum met with the Americans and other Afghan opposition leaders to plan the attack to seize Mazar-e Sharif. The planning benefited from up-to-date intelligence on the Taliban defending Mazar-e Sharif passed to Dostum by a senior enemy commander.[45] The proposed offensive called for simultaneous attacks by Atta Nur through the Balkh River Valley in the west and Dostum through the Suf River Valley in the east. After rendezvousing where the two valleys met, Dostum's 2,500 horsemen and Atta Nur's 1,000 fighters would push northward toward the Tiangi, a well-defended gap. A third force under Hazara commander Mohammed Mohaqiq would conduct supporting attacks in the mountainous area of Safed Kotal to screen Dostum's right flank. All three opposition groups would combine to assault the Tiangi. Once through the gap, they would be only forty kilometers south of Mazar-e Sharif.[46]

The combined offensive by Atta Nur and Dostum began on 5 November, with the former meeting little opposition for the first several days. Captain

---

38. Franks with McConnell, *American Soldier*, p. 313.

39. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 77; GO 10, p. 2.

40. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 98.

41. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, p. 143.

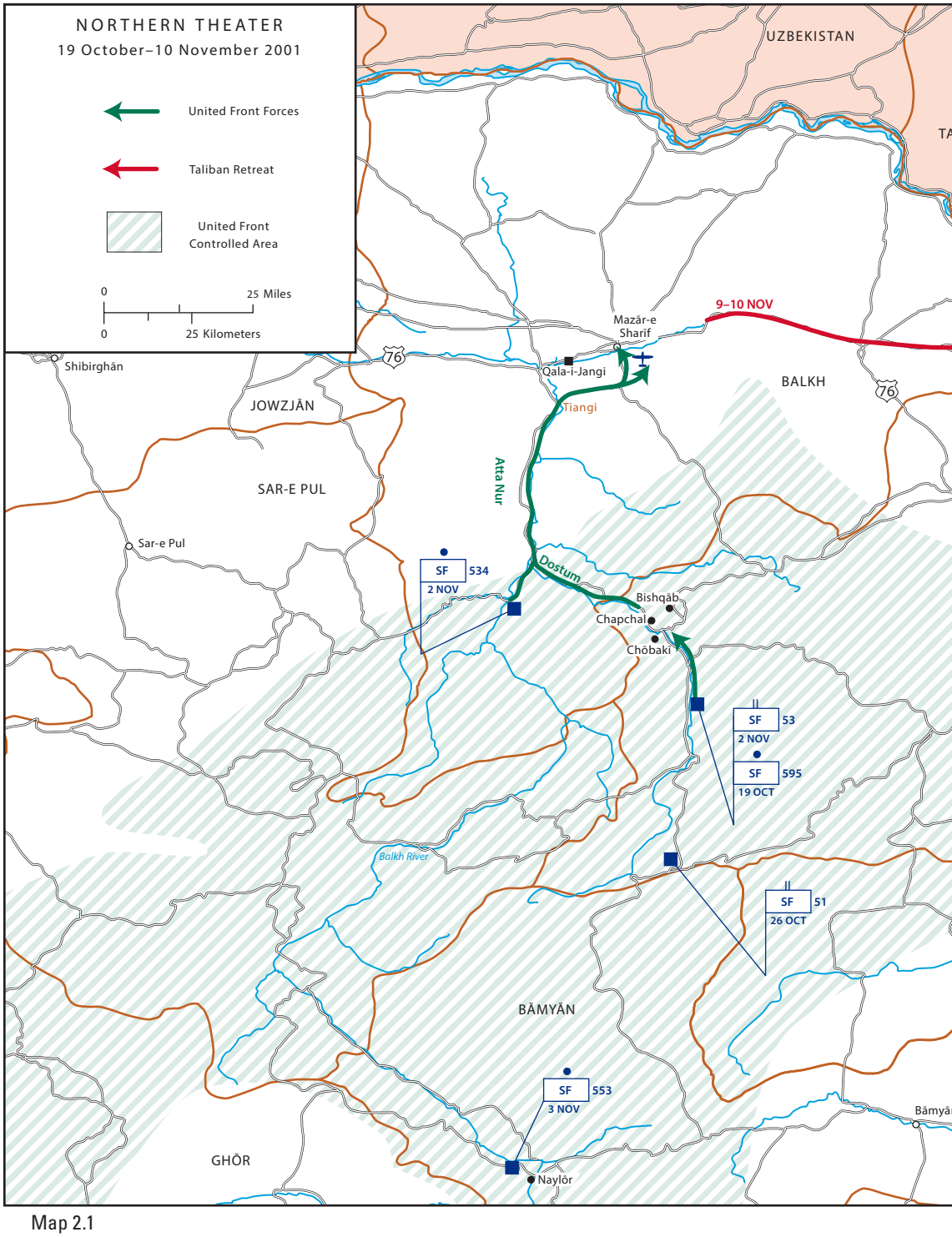
42. Interv, PBS *Frontline* with U.S. SF Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 534, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/interviews/534.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Schroen, *First In*, pp. 228–29.

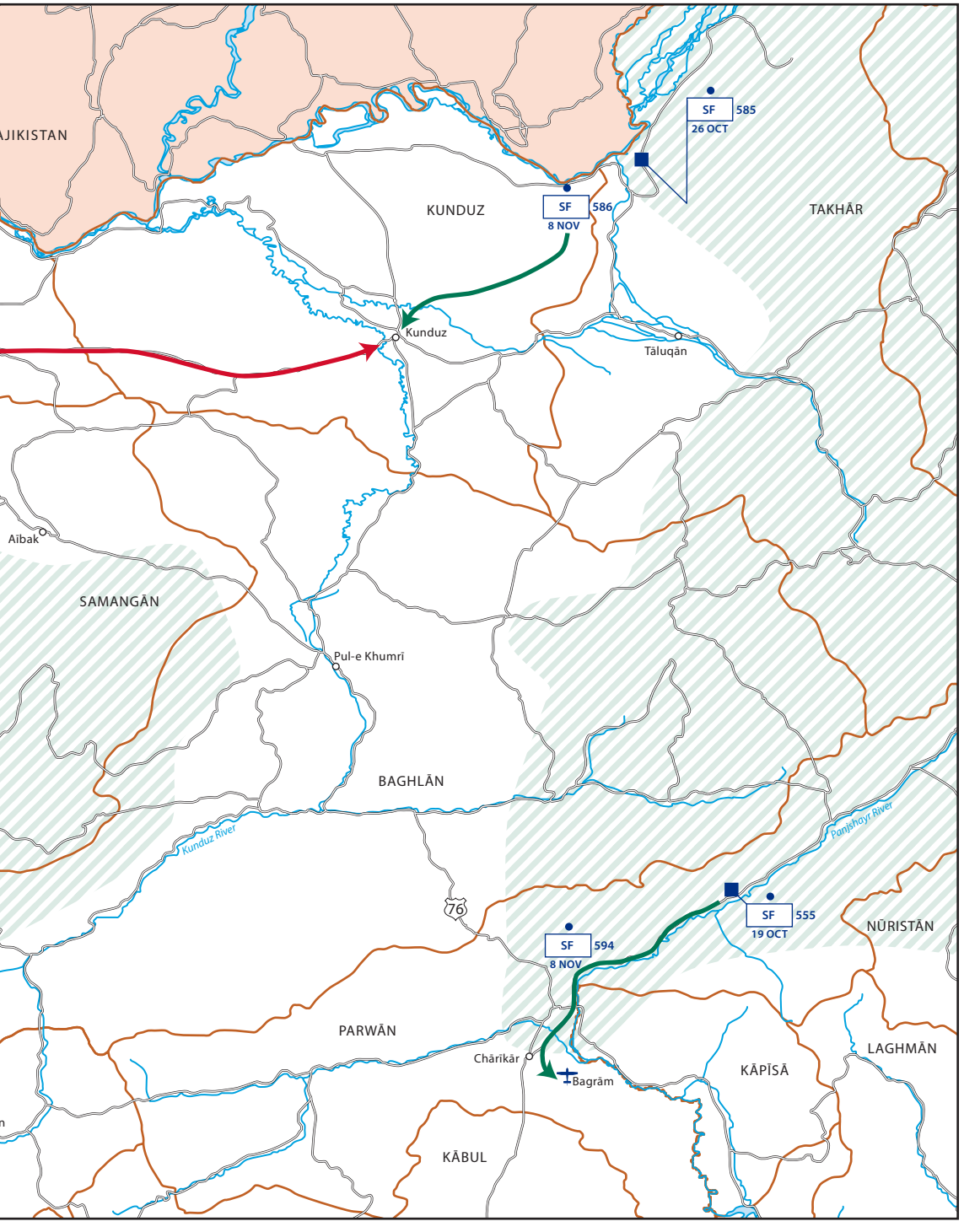
44. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, 155–56; GO 10, p. 2.

45. Knarr and Frost, *Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Battle Reconstruction*, pp. III-35–III-36.

46. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, p. 141; Knarr and Frost, *Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Battle Reconstruction*, pp. III-2–III-4.


NORTHERN THEATER
19 October–10 November 2001
United Front Forces
Taliban Retreat
United Front Controlled Area
0
25 Miles
0
25 Kilometers
UZBEKISTAN
9–10 NOV
Mazār-e Sharif
Qala-i-Jangi
Tiangi
BALKH
JOWZJĀN
SAR-E PUL
Shibirghān
Sar-e Pul
Atta Nur
Dostum
SF 534
2 NOV
Bishqāb
Chapchal
Chobaki
SF 53
2 NOV
SF 595
19 OCT
Balkh River
SF 51
26 OCT
BĀMYĀN
SF 553
3 NOV
GHŌR
Naylōr
76

Map 2.1


AJIKISTAN
KUNDUZ
SF 586
8 NOV
SF 585
26 OCT
TAKHĀR
Kunduz
Tāluqān
Aibak
SAMANGĀN
Pul-e Khumrī
BAGHLĀN
Kunduz River
Panjshayr River
76
SF 555
19 OCT
NŪRISTĀN
SF 594
8 NOV
PARWĀN
Chārīkār
Bagrām
KĀPĪSĀ
LAGHMĀN
KĀBUL

Newman called in air strikes whenever he encountered Taliban defensive positions, with one or two bombs usually sufficing to convince the enemy to retreat. In sharp contrast, Dostum's troops launched a two-pronged attack from the southwest and southeast pitting 2,300 Uzbek horsemen against 2,000 entrenched Taliban foot soldiers. In a series of mounted charges preceded by air strikes, Dostum's men overran enemy positions on six successive ridgelines, killing hundreds of Taliban and capturing 300 to 400 more, mostly ill-trained Pakistanis. Enemy opposition totally collapsed by the late afternoon.[47] By the end of U.S. and United Front operations in northern Afghanistan, numerous senior opposition leaders would be killed or captured. The fatalities included Juma Namangani, leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the captives included Taliban leaders Abdul-Razzaq Nafiz and Abdul-Qahir Usmani (both of whom were wounded), as well as Fazil Mazloom and Nurullah Nuri.

After reaching the southern end of the pass on 8 November, Dostum met with Atta Nur and Mohaqiq to finalize plans for an attack on the Tiangi the next day. The renewed advance succeeded in capturing the pass as the Taliban, who suffered numerous losses from air strikes directed by ODA 595, made preparations to retreat. During the night of 9–10 November, the Americans directed air strikes against hundreds of Taliban vehicles streaming eastward out of Mazar-e Sharif toward Kunduz. Although both Atta Nur and Dostum put aside their rivalries during the advance on Mazar-e Sharif, the former's troops claimed the airport on the city's eastern outskirts as a prize of war by advancing before the agreed-upon time. Captain Newman noted that "access to air then had to be approved by Atta Noor [*sic*]."[48] Dostum rode into Mazar-e Sharif to a hero's welcome as the inhabitants stood by the road cheering.

Part of Dostum's force occupied the Qala-i-Jangi fortress located just northwest of Mazar-e Sharif while the remainder searched the city for Taliban stragglers. That afternoon, Dostum's men located a group of 300 to 400 Pakistani Taliban hiding in a girls' school. When emissaries went forward to negotiate their surrender, the holdouts opened fire. Dostum asked ODA 595 to coordinate an air strike against the building. In an impressive display of airpower, Navy F/A–18s destroyed it without inflicting civilian casualties or collateral damage.[49] All of the enemy holdouts were killed or wounded by the air strike. This signaled the end of the struggle for Mazar-e Sharif, the first Afghan city to be liberated from Taliban rule. Fortunately for the Taliban forces, Sufi Mohammed, the leader of the Pakistan fighters who had been killed or captured in the school building, escaped and slipped back into Pakistan just before the allied forces arrived.

Soon after the capture of Mazar-e Sharif, CENTCOM designated the city as the initial distribution hub for humanitarian assistance flowing

47. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, pp. 145–46; Knarr and Frost, *Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Battle Reconstruction*, pp. III-18–III-23.

48. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, p. 148.

49. Knarr and Frost, *Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Battle Reconstruction*, p. V-32.

into Afghanistan from Uzbekistan and Germany. TF Dagger dispatched engineers to repair the local airport and teams from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion to assess what supplies needed to be delivered first. The civil affairs teams would also provide limited direct aid to show the Afghans that the Americans were liberators and not occupiers. The Americans also found themselves in the midst of a power struggle within the newly liberated city as Atta Nur, Dostum, and Mohaqiq sought to amass as much influence as possible. Admiral Calland and TF Dagger responded by brokering an agreement assigning responsibility for specific services, rather than geographic areas, to each group.[50]

More Americans Join the Fight

While the dramatic victory achieved by Atta Nur and Dostum's fighters convinced American officials that CENTCOM could rely on indigenous allies, General Franks continued to plan to deploy U.S. conventional forces to Afghanistan. His actions did not indicate a lack of faith in the Afghan opposition as much as lingering concern that the enemy would retreat into urban sanctuaries rather than continue fighting in open terrain. Although the United Front had considerable experience with fighting on open terrain, it lacked the experience and equipment necessary to fight in Afghan cities. The CENTCOM deputy commander, Marine Lt. Gen. Michael P. "Rifle" DeLong, echoed that concern: "After Mazar-i-Sharif fell, we thought we'd have long, hard battles ahead of us for the remaining cities."[51]

CENTCOM already had laid the foundation for U.S. ground troops to build upon the initial successes of the United Front. Two weeks before Mazar-e Sharif fell, General Franks asked naval headquarters to plan a series of amphibious raids into southern Afghanistan. On 1 November, V. Adm. Charles W. Moore, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, directed Brig. Gen. James N. Mattis, Commanding General of 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, to conduct "a minimum of three to five raids into Afghanistan over a thirty-day period."[52] For this purpose, Mattis established Naval Expeditionary Task Force 58 (TF-58), which consisted of the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable). Both units were organized around reinforced infantry battalions (respectively, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and 3d Battalion, 6th Marines) augmented with additional logistical elements plus dedicated rotary and fixed-wing assets.

While Mattis' staff developed a number of different concepts, CENTCOM ultimately settled on directing him to seize and hold a forward operating base at Rhino.[53] Mattis assigned the task of securing Rhino to the 15th

50. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 102.

51. Lt Gen Michael DeLong, Noah Lukeman, and Tony Zinni, *Inside CENTCOM: The Unvarnished Truth about the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2004), p. 51.

52. Native Sum, Opn Enduring Freedom, Combined Task For ce (CTF) 58, Operations in Afghanistan, 27 Oct 2001 to 26 Feb 2002, pp. 7–13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

53. Ibid., pp. 19–22.

Marine Expeditionary Unit, while elements of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted raids from the forward operating base into the surrounding countryside.[54]

Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek accelerated the preparatory measures needed to transform his headquarters into a CFLCC as the Marines were planning for an incursion into southern Afghanistan. Rather than deploy separately from Egypt and Fort McPherson, Georgia, Mikolashek decreed that Bright Star personnel and equipment would rejoin the Third Army/ARCENT staff at Fort McPherson before returning to the Middle East. The Third Army/ARCENT commander also enjoyed considerable support from senior Army leadership as he prepared CFLCC for deployment. After learning that the CFLCC advance party now planned to depart for Kuwait within the week, followed by the rest of the staff shortly before mid-November, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General John M. "Jack" Keane promised to adjust the projected flow of additional personnel and equipment to Mikolashek to fit the accelerated timeline.[55]

General Mikolashek's land component command inserted itself into the existing chain of command immediately upon its arrival at Camp Doha in mid-November.[56] In response to General Franks' orders to send humanitarian aid and security forces to Mazar-e Sharif, Mikolashek's staff began working with TF Dagger to overcome the challenges of transferring civil affairs, engineers, explosive ordnance disposal, and logistical assets to the newly liberated city.[57] To coordinate ongoing efforts at Mazar-e Sharif, while lightening the burden shouldered by TF Dagger, Mikolashek sought CENTCOM approval to send a division assault command post to Uzbekistan.[58]

While Franks considered Mikolashek's proposal, Colonel Mulholland prepared for the arrival of his 2d Battalion and logistical assets dispatched by the XVIII Airborne Corps. Several teams from Lt. Col. David G. Fox's battalion, including ODA 553 and ODA 555, were already working with Afghan opposition forces. The advance party from the 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, departed from Jordan via a commercial airline in early November. They were followed several days later by two companies plus the battalion headquarters and the battalion's support company, all of which flew to Germany on military aircraft with a second stop at Vicenza, Italy, before completing the final leg of the journey.[59] The 2d Battalion's arrival

54. Maj Michael L. Valenti, "The Mattis Way of War: An Examination of Operational Art in Task Force 58 and 1st Marine Division," Masters of Military Art and Science Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2014, pp. 26–27.

55. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 15 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 15 Nov 01, 1829 hrs, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.; Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 16 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 16 Nov 01, 1748 hrs, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

58. Memo, Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 16 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 16 Nov 01.

59. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Col David G. Fox, frmr Cdr, 2d Bn, 5th SF Grp, 30 Nov 2006, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

infused TF Dagger with sufficient forces to deploy ODAs simultaneously into both northern and southern Afghanistan if the situation demanded.

An ad hoc logistical group, consisting of the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment from Lt. Col. Edward F. Dorman III's 530th Supply and Service Battalion and the 7th Transportation Battalion's 58th Maintenance Company arrived at Karshi Khanabad soon afterward.[60] The two companies, designated as Logistical Task Force 530, could provide a wide range of support to American ground forces. In addition to the logistical task force, sorely needed construction expertise and earth-moving equipment appeared in the form of Company B of the 92d Engineer Battalion.[61] Although Company A, 528th Support Battalion (Special Operations), sustained all needs at Karshi Khanabad over the past month, the arrival of additional assets allowed Colonel Mulholland to deploy logistical support to locations other than Karshi Khanabad as needed.

During this same period, Lt. Col. Ronald E. Corkran's 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, deployed from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Jacobabad, Pakistan, to replace the marines securing Shahbaz Air Force Base. Corkran initially learned of the movement from the brigade commander, Colonel Francis J. Wiercinski on 5 November. Seven days later, the aircraft assigned to ferry Corkran's unit to Pakistan began arriving at Fort Campbell, where loading operations occurred during darkness for security reasons.[62] A portion of Corkran's headquarters, along with two rifle companies (B and C) each reinforced with an antitank platoon mounted on High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs), took over security within forty-eight hours after their arrival.[63] During the handover, the marines informed Corkran that in addition to securing the air base perimeter, his troops were expected to help retrieve downed CIA drones.[64]

Catastrophic Success

The lavish support provided to Dostum and Atta Nur convinced all but the most skeptical opposition commanders to work closely with the Americans. To link these geographically and operationally disparate bands with the U.S. operational plan, TF Dagger dispatched additional Special Forces teams into north-central and northwestern Afghanistan. Capt. Glenn R. Thomas' ODA 594 arrived in Bagram on 8 November to augment the advisory team already in place with Fahim. Thomas' arrival permitted Chief Warrant Officer Diaz's

60. Kenneth Finlayson, "Not Just Doing Logistics: LTF 530 in Support of TF Dagger," *Veritas : The Journal of Army Special Operations History* 3, no. 2 (2007): 45.

61. Interv, Laurence Lessard, CSI, with Maj Kevin J. Lovell, frmr Cdr, Co B, 92d Engr Bn, 24 Aug 2007, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

62. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col (Ret.) Ron Corkran, frmr Cdr, 1st Bn, 187th Inf, 9 May 2007, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

63. Interv, Laurence Lessard, CSI, with Maj Greg Ford, frmr S-2, 1st Bn, 187th Inf, 23 May 2007, pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

64. Interv, Jenna Fike, CSI, with Maj Joseph Claburn, frmr Air Movement Ofcr, 1st Bn, 187th Inf, 13 Sep 2011, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

ODA 555 to return to Bagram and prepare to direct air strikes against Taliban fighters in that area. That same morning, Capt. Patrick O'Hara's ODA 586 joined General Douad Khan near Kunduz. Two days later, ODA 554 under CWO3 James P. Newman linked up with Ismail Khan at Den Berenj Qal'ah, located northeast of Herat in western Afghanistan.[65] The deployment of these ODAs expanded TF Dagger's presence across Afghanistan north of the Hindu Kush.

The growing number of Special Operations teams, when added to greater cooperation by the United Front and CENTCOM's commitment of substantial air power in support of indigenous allies, presaged a major change in the campaign. As a result, events accelerated dramatically as the United Front set into motion the plan discussed earlier by General Franks and General Fahim. On 11 November, a simultaneous push by all Afghan opposition groups, aided by air strikes, resulted in the capture of Taluqan, the capital of Takhar Province, located 61 kilometers east of Kunduz and Bamyan in the heart of the Hazara region of central Afghanistan, 130 kilometers northwest of Kabul. Bamyan controlled the valley of the same name that served for centuries as a vital link on the key trade route, known as the Silk Road, linking China with India via Afghanistan. The provincial capital of Herat, located approximately 500 kilometers south-southwest of Bamyan and home to 1.7 million Afghans, fell soon after Taluqan. The seizure of Herat was a major positive development because the city sat astride the Ring Road linking Kandahar in the south with Mazar-e-Sharif in the north. The tide of battle had turned so suddenly that hundreds of Taliban foot soldiers switched allegiance to the United Front.[66]

Replacing his horses with tanks, personnel carriers, and artillery pieces abandoned by the Taliban, Dostum advanced from Mazar-e Sharif in pursuit of retreating Taliban units attempting to regroup in the provincial capital of Kunduz, about 150 kilometers to the east. Kunduz, home to a quarter-million Afghans, was the last northeastern city still in Taliban hands. General Bariullah Khan's forces at Taluqan sought to envelop the Taliban in Kunduz from the west without assistance from Master Sergeant Bolduc's ODA. Given the uneven American relationships with participating United Front commanders and the presence of Pakistani military and intelligence service personnel advising the Taliban in the city, the two-pronged push on Kunduz promised to be a complicated affair.[67]

Following the capture of Herat, Taluqan, and Bamyan, CENTCOM switched the priority of aerial effort to Bismillah Khan Mohammadi at Bagram. After twenty-four hours of unrelenting bombardment of the Shomali Plain, which cost the enemy twenty-nine tanks and several thousand

---

65. Yaniv Barzilai, *102 Days of War: How Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda, & The Taliban Survived 2001* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013), p. 72; Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, pp. 153, 159, 209; GO 10, p. 2.

66. Satinder Bindra, "Afghan Rebels Report Taliban Defections," CNN, 11 Nov 2001, https://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/central/11/11/ret.satinderbindra.otsc/index.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

67. Camp, *Boots on the Ground*, pp. 152, 156, 161; Barzilai, *102 Days of War*, p. 72.

casualties, Bismillah Khan's fighters shattered the Taliban's defenses, astride the highway that led to the Kotal-e Tonal-e Salang, a tunnel linking Bagram and the northern Afghan cities with Kabul. By the end of the day, the United Front fighters pushed within several kilometers of the Afghan capital. The capture of Bagram and the subsequent rapid advance on Kabul was a critical decision point for both the U.S. government and CENTCOM.

Although the Bush administration did not expect Kabul to fall so rapidly, senior American leaders never doubted that it would. Several weeks previously, the National Security Council discussed in detail what steps should be taken when the Taliban abandoned Kabul. The State Department argued that the administration ought to turn Kabul over to an international body, in order to avoid accusations that the United States was creating a puppet government in Afghanistan.[68] Bowing to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's logic, the attendees agreed that a UN-sponsored international security force, rather than U.S. troops or United Front fighters, should maintain order in the Afghan capital following its liberation. However, the plan depended on the United Front acquiescing to an American request to remain outside Kabul until the international security force arrived.[69]

Powell followed up the National Security Council discussion with a visit to the United Nations, where he suggested reconvening the dormant "Six plus Two" group—a committee of Afghanistan's six neighbors (China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), plus the United States and Russia, which had been assembled in the mid-1990s to broker ceasefires between warring Afghan factions—to map out a path for a post-Taliban Afghanistan. Working in conjunction with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the group sought to establish broad-based international support for any emergent non-Taliban government in Afghanistan. Ambassador James F. Dobbins, representing the United States, played a leading role in this effort along with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi.

With the United Front on the northern outskirts of Kabul, the Six plus Two group sought to establish key parameters for Afghanistan's future by issuing a Declaration on the Situation in Afghanistan.[70] The UN declaration affirmed the U.S. State Department's original position that a political solution to the Afghan crisis should entail a "broad based[,] multi-ethnic, politically balanced, freely chosen Afghan administration representative of their aspirations and at peace with its neighbours."[71] It also stated that rather than dictating what should be accomplished, the Six plus Two group should support "the efforts of the Afghan people" to reach a suitable political solution, and that its members welcomed the opportunity to assist "the

68. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 229–34.

69. Ibid., pp. 306–08.

70. Dobbins, *After the Taliban*, p. 39.

71. "Declaration on the Situation in Afghanistan by the Foreign Ministers and Other Senior Representatives of the 'Six plus Two,'" United Nations (UN), 12 Nov 2001, https://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/sixplus.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Afghan people in developing a political alternative to the Taliban regime."[72] In addition, Brahimi suggested that an international multilateral security force be deployed immediately to the Afghan capital.[73]

Discussions about an international security force seemed prescient as Taliban units evacuated Kabul during the night of 12–13 November. Although Fahim promised the Americans that his forces would not occupy Kabul until an agreement for a broad-based government was in place, his troops entered the city on the following morning. Ironically, television pictures of their triumphant entry were not broadcast globally because an errant American bomb demolished the Kabul office of the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera television network.[74] Although United Front leaders later explained to the Americans that to do otherwise would have chanced a complete breakdown of law and order in the capital, their actions demonstrated that Afghan agendas would always trump the U.S. agenda.

The relatively few enemy fighters remaining in Kabul were able to slip away undetected, but 10,000 or more Taliban in the northern city of Kunduz were surrounded by the United Front. Unwilling to loosen his hold on Kabul in order to help Dostum, Fahim limited further operations to pushing eastward, in concert with local tribal allies, toward the mountainous region along the Afghan-Pakistan border. A former mujahideen commander who joined the United Front cause, Younis Khalis, took control of the strategic city of Jalalabad astride the main road from Kabul to Pakistan on 14 November. Any Taliban not surrounded in Kunduz appeared to be regrouping around Kandahar in the south. The situation in the south now posed CENTCOM's biggest challenge given that United Front forces could not move south without inflaming its Pashtun inhabitants.

Although most Taliban hailed from the Pashtun region of southern Afghanistan, the Americans were in a position to exploit divisions between tribes that supported the Taliban, and those that did not. Unlike in northern Afghanistan, the United States needed to establish a firm foothold in the south before CENTCOM could rally Pashtun groups that opposed the Taliban. Accordingly, General Franks tasked TF Dagger to send ODAs to link up with these potential Pashtun allies. Departing from the operational model he employed in the north, Franks envisioned a mixture of U.S. Special Forces and conventional troops operating together in southern Afghanistan. These forces included elements of TF Dagger, the soon to be created CJSOTF-South, and Marine amphibious groups sailing off the Pakistani coast.

International political considerations grew increasingly important as CENTCOM reshaped its campaign priorities. On 13 November, UN Special Representative Brahimi hosted a meeting to discuss the creation

---

72. Ibid.

73. Sean Maloney, "The International Security Assistance Force: The Origins of a Stabilization Force," *Canadian Military Journal* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 4.

74. Muhammed Najeeb, "NA in Control of Kabul, Taleban Confirms Fall," Rediff.com – India Abroad, 13 Nov 2001, https://www.rediff.com/us/2001/nov/13ny2.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

of a transitional political authority in Afghanistan.[75] Although Brahimi wanted United Front leaders to attend, he balked at their request to hold the meeting in Kabul because of security concerns. On the following day, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1378, exhorting Afghans to accept an invitation to establish a transitional administration that would lead to the formation of a new "broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative" government. In addition to the appeal for Afghan involvement, the resolution urged UN member states "to support efforts to ensure the safety and security of areas of Afghanistan no longer under Taliban control, and in particular to ensure respect for Kabul as the capital for all the Afghan people." It also called on member states to support the economic and social rehabilitation of Afghanistan through a combination of "quick-impact projects" and "long-term assistance."[76]

While Kabul monopolized the UN's attention, CENTCOM looked at Bagram with equal interest. Although he knew its facilities were damaged and surrounded by uncharted minefields, General Franks envisioned Bagram as an ideally located operational and logistical hub. With improvements and added capabilities, Bagram could decrease the United States' dependence on Uzbek and Pakistani facilities. As a result, CENTCOM directed TF Dagger to survey the airfield. Answers to critical questions such as which U.S. and coalition forces could deploy there and what fixes were required to support rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft, depended on Colonel Mulholland's findings.[77] Mulholland passed that mission to Colonel Dorman of Logistical Task Force 530. Accompanied by engineers, maintenance specialists, and airfield repair experts, Dorman conducted a thorough examination of Bagram. He reported to Mulholland that Bagram would suffice as a forward operating base for coalition forces and an entry point for aerially-delivered humanitarian aid.[78]

Second Foray into the Taliban's Heartland

After Kabul's fall, Special Operations Command Central directed TF Dagger to send ODAs to connect with influential Pashtuns opposed to Taliban rule. The CIA strongly recommended sending a Special Forces team to contact Gul Agha Sharzai, a member of the Barazaki tribe and son of a prominent mujahideen leader. After the collapse of the Afghan communist regime, Sharzai served as governor of Kandahar Province until ousted by the Taliban. Sharzai and his followers fled to Pakistan, where they awaited an opportunity to return to Kandahar.[79] The American team selected to

---

75. UN Security Council, 4414th Meeting, S/PV.4414, 13 Nov 2001, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.4414, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

76. UN Security Council, Resolution 1378, S/RES/1378, 14 Nov 2001, http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1378, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

77. Memos, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 18 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 18 Nov 01, 1516 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

78. Finlayson, "Not Just Doing Logistics," pp. 46–47.

79. Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar*, pp. 148–49.

work with Sharzai initially knew nothing of the Afghan leader's past, and this reflected poorly on the ability of the U.S. intelligence community to collect such information on short notice. The Special Forces captain chosen to work with him later remarked, "The initial report on Sharzai was horrible. I received a power point slide with an old picture of him. . . . At the top of the slide the name Karzai had been scratched out in pen and Sharzai written in." Fortunately, a face-to-face discussion with newly arrived CIA officers a few days later succeeded in clearing these misconceptions and discerning Sharzai's personality.[80]

The CIA also suggested a Popalzai tribal leader named Hamid Karzai, about whom it had mixed opinions.[81] He was the son of Abdul Ahad Karzai, a prominent Afghan politician from the precommunist years. In the mid-1990s, the Taliban offered Hamid Karzai an ambassadorship, but Karzai refused because of his misgivings about excessive Pakistani influence over the new regime. Karzai then moved to Quetta, Pakistan, where he lobbied for the return of the former Afghan monarch, Mohammed Zahir Shah. In 1999, Taliban assassins killed Abdul Ahad Karzai, which prompted his son to openly support the United Front. Although Karzai had garnered an international reputation as a vocal opponent of Taliban rule, he had no military experience or armed followers. Nonetheless, American Special Forces personnel could easily evaluate Karzai, who resided at the U.S. compound on Shabaz Air Force Base.[82]

Colonel Mulholland selected ODA 574 under Capt. Jason L. Amerine to work with Karzai while assigning Capt. Hank E. Smith's ODA 583 to Sharzai. The decision to send ODAs south of the Hindu Kush merited some changes in task organization. Rather than risk committing scarce assets in an uncertain environment for little or no gain, Mulholland refrained from deploying full ODAs until Karzai or Sharzai gathered at least 300 fighters.[83] In addition, CIA paramilitary operatives and translators would infiltrate with the ODAs rather than precede them. Once Amerine and Smith established good relationships with their respective Pashtun opposition groups, Mulholland planned to send a detachment from Colonel Fox's 2d Battalion headquarters to southern Afghanistan to improve coordination between the multiple efforts in the south.[84]

Gary Berntsen, the newly arrived head of the CIA paramilitary contingent, decided to send two teams, Echo and Foxtrot, with the ODAs bound for southern Afghanistan. He originally planned to send Echo to Asadabad, a small town in the Pech River Valley in Kunar Province. Success in the north spurred Berntsen to discard that plan in favor of capturing the Taliban stronghold of

---

80. Email Interv, Dr. Terry Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Maj Hank Smith, frmr Cdr, ODA 583, 18 Apr 2007, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

81. Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar*, p. 145; Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, p. 79.

82. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, pp. 67–68.

83. M Sgt Nick S. Nowatney, "SF NCOs in Afghanistan," (PEP, U.S. Army Sgts Maj Academy, 22 Apr 2004), p. 4 https://server16040.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p15040coll2&CISOPTR=6260&CISOBOX=1&REC=1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

84. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, p. 65.

Kandahar. Berntsen's vision meshed perfectly with CENTCOM's emerging concept for southern Afghanistan, which called for Pashtun opposition groups to simultaneously advance on Kandahar from multiple directions.[85] As a result, Team Echo deployed with Amerine's ODA 574 while Team Foxtrot accompanied Smith's ODA 583.

Captain Amerine flew down from Karshi Khanabad to Shabaz during the first week of November. He met with Hamid Karzai several days before being inserted in Afghanistan. After lengthy discussions with the Afghan leader, Amerine informed Mulholland that Karzai had promised that anti-Taliban fighters would flock to him, but only if he arrived in the company of American soldiers. As a result, Amerine received permission to deploy his entire detachment rather than a few select individuals. The ODA 574 detachment commander also arranged for Special Forces helicopters to ferry a group of Afghan tribal leaders from Jacobabad to Uruzgan Province to prepare for the arrival of Karzai, the American soldiers, and CIA officers.

Karzai, Amerine's ODA, and half of Team Echo departed Shabaz Air Force Base aboard two Special Operations helicopters during the night of 14 November, arriving safely in a remote part of Uruzgan Province several hours later. Soon after landing, Amerine realized that an impromptu uprising against the Taliban in the nearby town of Tarin Kot had rendered his plan for building supplies and training troops over the next several weeks impracticable. Amerine knew that the Taliban would react by sending a punitive expedition against the townspeople. The Americans relocated to Tarin Kot at Karzai's urging, where Navy and Marine planes from the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* later destroyed a sizable motorized force approaching the town.[86] The American victory over the Taliban, which the entire population of Tarin Kot witnessed, garnered a massive outpouring of local support for Karzai.[87]

Meanwhile, the ODA 583 advance party led by Captain Smith and including several CIA paramilitary operatives, arrived in southern Afghanistan on 19 November. The remaining personnel joined the ODA three days later. Smith's team did not have as dramatic an introduction to combat as ODA 574 because Sharzai initially wanted to negotiate with the Taliban rather than fight, believing that "[t]hese were his people and if he was ever to be governor of Kandahar again, he would later need support from these people."[88] After a misguided attempt to force the Taliban into submission ended with Sharzai's men being ambushed, fighting finally began. The Americans called in air strikes against the Taliban, which enabled Sharzai to capture Takhtah Pul Kelay by 23 November. Western media later

85. Barzilai, *102 Days of War*, p. 75.

86. Tony Holmes and Jim Laurier, *F-14 Tomcat Units of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008), p. 62.

87. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, pp. 130–54.

88. Nowatney, "SF NCOs in Afghanistan," p. 5.

reported that the Americans were unable to prevent Sharzai from executing 160 Taliban, including some Pakistanis, who refused to surrender.[89]

In addition to the reverses inflicted on Taliban forces by TF Dagger at Tarin Kot and Takhtah Pul Kelay, TF Sword carried out a number of forays into southern Afghanistan on 13 November to persuade the Taliban that American ground forces were attempting to interdict the main highway linking Kandahar with Kabul. These operations involved a series of raids with ground and heliborne elements delivered by MC–130s at night to remote desert landing strips. A team of Rangers secured the landing sites during the day while MC–130s inserted Special Operations MH–6 Little Bird helicopters and TF Sword operators to conduct attacks on the Taliban each night, departing before dawn.[90] The highly successful forays ended on 17 November after participating TF Sword units learned that they were relocating to Bagram to join the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

The fall of Kabul added considerable momentum to Special Operations Command Central plans to form a second Special Operations task force. In mid-November, CJSOTF-South (also known as Task Force K-bar) headed by Navy Capt. Robert S. Harward stood up at Jazirat Masirah, Oman. Harward's command initially consisted of Navy SEALs; coalition SOF from Canada, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey; and Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group. Over the next several months, Harward received additional forces, including the 3d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, and elements of the 528th Support Battalion (Special Operations).[91] Harward gained responsibility for southern Afghanistan from Colonel Mulholland, with the exception of the ODAs working with Karzai and Sharzai. The new command would operate from Oman until Kandahar fell to Pashtun opposition fighters.

Adapting to a Dynamic Operational Environment

When CFLCC declared itself "mission ready" on 20 November at Camp Doha, it assumed responsibility for a battlespace that had doubled in size over the past two weeks. During that period, General Mikolashek's priorities were adjusted frequently before settling on coordinating the movement of international and U.S. forces into Bagram and Mazar-e Sharif, adjusting

89. "160 Taliban Fighters Executed," *Telegraph*, 28 Nov 2001, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1363706/160-Taliban-fighters-executed.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

90. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 144; ibid., pp. 122–36.

91. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF)–South began operations on 22 November 2001, supporting the insertion of Marine Corps elements into Objective Rhino. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 205, 216; John D. Gresham, "OEF-Afghanistan: The Campaign Plan," in *The Year in Special Operations 2011–2012 Edition*, p. 98; Austin Mansfield, "Enduring Freedom Task Force Earns Presidential Unit Citation," Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs, 8 Dec 2004, https://www.navy.mil/submit/display/asp?story_id=16216, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "United States Navy President Unit Citation for 1 NZSAS Regt," *New Zealand Defence Force*, 2 Oct 2014, https://www.nzdf/mil.nz/about-us/nzsof/usnpu-citation.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Department of Defense

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks hold a press conference at the Pentagon shortly after the September 11th attacks. The two would set the early policy and strategic objectives for operations in Afghanistan.

humanitarian efforts to match the growing American footprint, making final coordination for the marines' raid into southern Afghanistan, and standing up a forward headquarters in Uzbekistan.[92] Although not formally tasked to do so, CFLCC sought to better its overall awareness of United Front actions through interacting closely with TF Dagger.[93] Senior commanders created ad hoc liaison methods by working around paltry pre–September 11th doctrine, and by relying on the practical experience of integrating Special Operations and U.S. conventional forces on the battlefield. Further complicating matters, the activities of some Special Operations units were considered so sensitive that they were forbidden to coordinate with other Special Operations units or conventional forces.

Creating workable means of exchanging information with TF Dagger was only one of the numerous challenges facing Mikolashek's headquarters on the eve of major combat operations. With the United Front conduit established, the CFLCC commander turned next to building closer ties with the amphibious forces tabbed to go ashore in Afghanistan. On 21 November, he met with Admiral Moore to discuss what would take place once the Marines established a forward operating base at Rhino. Moore explained that TF-58 under General Mattis required six days to build defensive positions and logistical stocks before it could expand its initial lodgment. In addition to

92. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 23 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 22 & 23 Nov 01, 1350 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

93. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 20 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 19 & 20 Nov 01, 1616 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

serving as a forward operating base for TF-58, Mikolashek envisioned Rhino being utilized by SOF. As a result, the CFLCC commander directed TF-58 to provide common-item logistics support for all collocated SOF. In addition to determining basic logistical relationships, Moore and Mikolashek also agreed that devising an effective coordination system took top priority as the Marines might find themselves in close proximity to CJSOTF-South elements, ODAs deployed by TF Dagger, and their respective Afghan counterparts.

Both commanders examined potential future missions for the marines, including the option of using Rhino as a base for attacking Taliban forces throughout southern Afghanistan and overseeing the start of humanitarian aid operations in Kandahar once Afghan opposition groups secured the city. Mikolashek, aware that the Marine Expeditionary Units did not have a robust civil affairs component, promised Moore that he would send Army personnel capable of coordinating humanitarian aid operations.[94] The CFLCC commander qualified that statement by explaining that, with the exception of a single active-duty battalion, Army civil affairs units belonged to the reserve component and had to be mobilized before deploying to theater.

General Franks arrived at Doha on 23 November to discuss the campaign with Mikolashek. Franks approved Mikolashek's plan to use a division headquarters provided by the XVIII Airborne Corps to establish a forward command post at Karshi Khanabad. He expressed no misgivings about Mikolashek's priorities for Bagram, which were to get the airfield operational and pay locals to build key facilities while still maintaining a small footprint. Mikolashek assured Franks that he would coordinate all movement into the air base through Mulholland. Franks conceded that a sustained U.S. presence might be required at Bagram, but he did not see Mazar-e Sharif in the same light. The CENTCOM commander concluded by telling Mikolashek that he wanted to confine direct U.S. involvement in the upcoming fight for Kandahar to Special Forces teams aiding indigenous militia forces.[95]

That same day, General Franks flew to Bagram for a second meeting with General Fahim. He greeted Fahim before launching into a discussion on how CENTCOM planned to send additional personnel to Afghanistan to support humanitarian relief operations. Franks also explained that U.S. forces were preparing to push south and east in order to apprehend fleeing al-Qaeda and Taliban. He then ended the conference by asking Fahim for "an assessment of combat operations in various parts of the country, including those led by Dr. Karim Khalili in Bamian, [Ustad] Muhammad Atta Noor in Mazar-i-Sharif, and Ismael Khan in Herat."[96]

Believing that victory in the north lay on the horizon, neither commander devoted much time to discussing Kunduz. The city's situation was not static, however. CIA operative Berntsen recounted that United Front sources

---

94. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 21 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 21 Nov 01, 1724 hrs, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

95. Memo, Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 23 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 22 & 23 Nov 01.

96. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, pp. 234–38.

> claimed two Pakistani planes landed in Konduz [*sic*] under the cover of darkness to extract key Pakistani advisors to the Taliban and several high-ranking Taliban officials. I had no way to confirm this, but wasn't surprised. Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate had been a close ally [of the Taliban] for years.[97]

Ahmed Rashid, a respected international journalist, offers additional detail by stating that President Bush granted the Pakistani Air Force unimpeded access to Kunduz at the request of President Pervez Musharraf:

> The request was made by Musharraf to Bush, but [Vice President] Cheney took charge—a token of who was handling Musharraf at the time. The approval was not shared with anyone at State . . . until well after the event. Musharraf said that Pakistan needed to save its dignity and its valued people. . . . Hundreds of ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] officers, Taliban commanders, and foot soldiers belonging to the IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) and al-Qaeda personnel boarded the planes. What was sold as a minor extraction turned into a major air bridge.[98]

In addition to Rashid's exposé, contemporary media reports offered glimpses of what transpired in northern Afghanistan during the last week of November. Reports of an aerial evacuation from Kunduz first appeared in the Indian press, quoting intelligence sources citing unusual radar contacts and an airlift of Pakistani troops out of the city. On 24 November, the *New York Times* featured a front page article describing a two-day airlift by Pakistani aircraft, complete with eyewitness accounts of large numbers of armed men lined up along the runway awaiting evacuation.[99] The DoD subsequently took great pains to discredit those reports, leading General Myers on 26 November to state that "the runway [at Kunduz] is not usable. I mean, there are segments of it usable, but they're usually—they're too short for your standard transport aircraft. So we're not sure where the reports are coming from."[100] Secretary Rumsfeld told American television viewers that "to my knowledge, we have not seen a single airplane or helicopter go into Afghanistan in recent days or weeks and extract people and take them out of Afghanistan to any country, let alone Pakistan."[101] With numerous

---

97. Ibid., p. 241.

98. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking Press, 2008), p. 92.

99. Michael Moran, "The 'Airlift of Evil': Why Did We Let Pakistan Pull 'Volunteers' Out of Kunduz?," NBC News, 29 Nov 2001, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/3340165/ns/world_news-brave_new_world/t/airlift-evil/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

100. Bfg, Sec Def Donald H. Rumsfeld and Gen Richard B. Myers, 26 Nov 2001, DoD, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2460, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

101. Interv, Tim Russert, NBC News' *Meet the Press*, with Donald H. Rumsfeld, Sec Def, 2 Dec 2001, DoD Press Operations, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2585, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

journalist reports contradicting those statements, it is no wonder that many of the DoD's assessments of the situation in Afghanistan were greeted with reasonable suspicion by the media.

Although Musharraf justified the airlift by mentioning the presence of Pakistani citizens who recently joined the Taliban, that rationale violated a specific provision in the Armitage-Ahmed agreement demanding that Islamabad "cut off all shipments of fuel to the Taliban and any other items and recruits, to include volunteers en route to Afghanistan."[102] Washington could have offered to have U.S. troops verify the identity of the evacuees, but it approved the request without doing so—a decision that indicated the Bush administration's willingness to make exceptions to the agreement's original terms. As a result, not only were hundreds of Pakistani citizens ferried out by American built C–130 transports, but a number of prominent Taliban were potentially spirited out of the besieged city. From a long-term perspective, the compromise over the evacuation signaled that despite the strong language in Armitage's document, Islamabad could pursue its strategic interests in the region on a case-by-case basis without fear of automatic American repercussions.

Once the Pakistanis and top ranking Taliban were evacuated, the thousands of Afghan and foreign Taliban fighters remaining in Kunduz laid down their arms on 24 November. Although Secretary Rumsfeld signaled the Bush administration's disapproval of any initiative to grant amnesty to enemy combatants, a United Front spokesman in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, told reporters that the Afghan Taliban would be released while foreign fighters faced possible courtroom prosecution.[103] Once again, Afghan agendas had trumped Washington pronouncements. Rather than go home, thousands of Taliban joined the ranks of the United Front. When a puzzled American journalist asked a veteran mujahideen warrior about the willingness of both sides to accept such an arrangement, the Afghan replied, "In America and other places . . . people have the idea that their countries are important to them. But in Afghanistan the fighters don't have this notion, and the poverty here leads them to join whoever is powerful."[104]

Some Taliban fighters in Kunduz, notably foreigners taking part in what they considered to be a holy war against apostate Shia Hazaras, did not give up peacefully. Although the bulk of the city's estimated 10,000 defenders expressed a willingness to switch sides, more than 3,000 did not. As a result, more fighting ensued as Dostum's forces rooted out diehards within the city.

---

102. Msg, Sec State to U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, 13 Sep 2001, sub: Deputy Secretary Armitage's Meeting with General Mahmud: Actions and Support Expected of Pakistan in Fight Against Terrorism, 140119Z Sep 01, NSA GWU, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc05.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

103. Nikolai Pavlov, "Confusion Cloaks Konduz Surrender Talks," Afghanistan News Center, 22 Nov 2001 [page discontinued], https://www.afghanistannewscenter.com/news/2001/november/nov22j2001.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

104. Jon Lee Anderson, "The Surrender: Double Agents, Defectors, Disaffected Taliban, and a Motley Army Battle for Konduz," *The New Yorker*, 10 Dec 2001, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/12/10/the-surrender, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Many United Front fighters were infuriated that their comrades were being killed and wounded even after the Taliban agreed to capitulate. Survivors of these bitter engagements, both wounded and unwounded, were bundled into metal shipping containers bound for Shibirghan prison. When confronted about media claims that most captives from Kunduz died en route to the prison, Dostum admitted that 270 prisoners perished in the mass movement. The deaths were attributed to lack of medical care, rough roads, poor food, and isolated instances of vengeful guards.

In addition to the foreign fighters in the city who refused to surrender, senior Taliban commanders attempted on two occasions to send troops to Mazar-e Sharif to divert Dostum's attention from Kunduz. The initial attempt involved sending a column of trucks and armored vehicles northwest toward Mazar-e Sharif several days before Kunduz's surrender. American planes destroyed the Taliban vehicles as their drivers attempted to negotiate secondary roads in a remote area near the Afghan-Uzbek border. The second attempt took place just before the mass surrender, when a truck column filled with al-Qaeda and foreign fighters boldly attempted to drive down the main highway from Kunduz to Mazar-e Sharif under the cover of darkness. The enemy leader, Mullah Mohammed Fazl, gambled that American planes would not attack the convoy if it used Dostum's heavily traveled main supply route. His plan failed when a number of trucks broke down during the trip. The al-Qaeda and foreign fighters were still far short of Mazar-e Sharif when dawn broke, and the convoy chose to surrender to Dostum's men rather than face certain destruction from the air.[105]

That afternoon, the foreign fighters loaded themselves onto trucks provided by the United Front. They traveled first to Mazar-e Sharif, where they briefly halted next to the Turkish school housing the administrative and logistical elements of Operational Detachment Charlie 53, designated as Forward Operating Base 53, before continuing to the Qala-i-Jangi fortress eleven kilometers west of the city.[106] During the halt outside the school, Dostum placed a phone call to his men and changed the convoy's final destination from Mazar-e Sharif to the fortress, acting on a well-founded hunch that the foreign fighters were not trustworthy. Dostum suspected that the al-Qaeda fighters were fanatical enough to try to accomplish their original mission even after having surrendered.[107]

The octagonal brick fortress known as Qala-i-Jangi, meaning "house of war" in the local dialect, had been constructed a century earlier. Measuring more than 500 meters in width, Qala-i-Jangi had three-meter-wide perimeter walls anchored on each corner by twelve-meter-high stone towers. Inside, a three-meter wall bisected the fortress, which gave defenders a position to continue fighting even if the enemy succeeded in forcing a breach. A single gate with a metal door connected both halves. The predominantly Uzbek

105. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, OEF Study Grp, with Maj (Ret.) Mark D. Nutsch, frmr ODA 595 Cdr, 13 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

106. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 159.

107. Kalev V. Sepp, "Uprising at Qala-i-Jangi: The Staff of the 3/5th SF Group," *Special Warfare* 15, no. 3 (Sep 2002): 18.



130th MHD

Qala-i-Jangi Fortress, where General Dostum detained initial enemy prisoners during early operations in northern Afghanistan.

garrison lived in a two-story barracks in the northern half, while the southern half was used as an armory and temporary holding facility for prisoners. A one-story building in the center of the southern compound, along with a series of underground rooms, held captives taken earlier by Dostum (*Map 2.2*).[108]

Guards herded the prisoners into a loose formation within the southern courtyard soon after their arrival. When the guard detail began searching the captives, one of the prisoners detonated a grenade that killed himself and one of Dostum's officers.[109]A second prisoner also committed suicide with a grenade, taking several guards with him. After the guards restored order, one of Dostum's officers informed the detainees that they would be turned over to the UN rather than to the Americans. Mollified by the announcement, the prisoners allowed their guards to herd them into cells.[110]

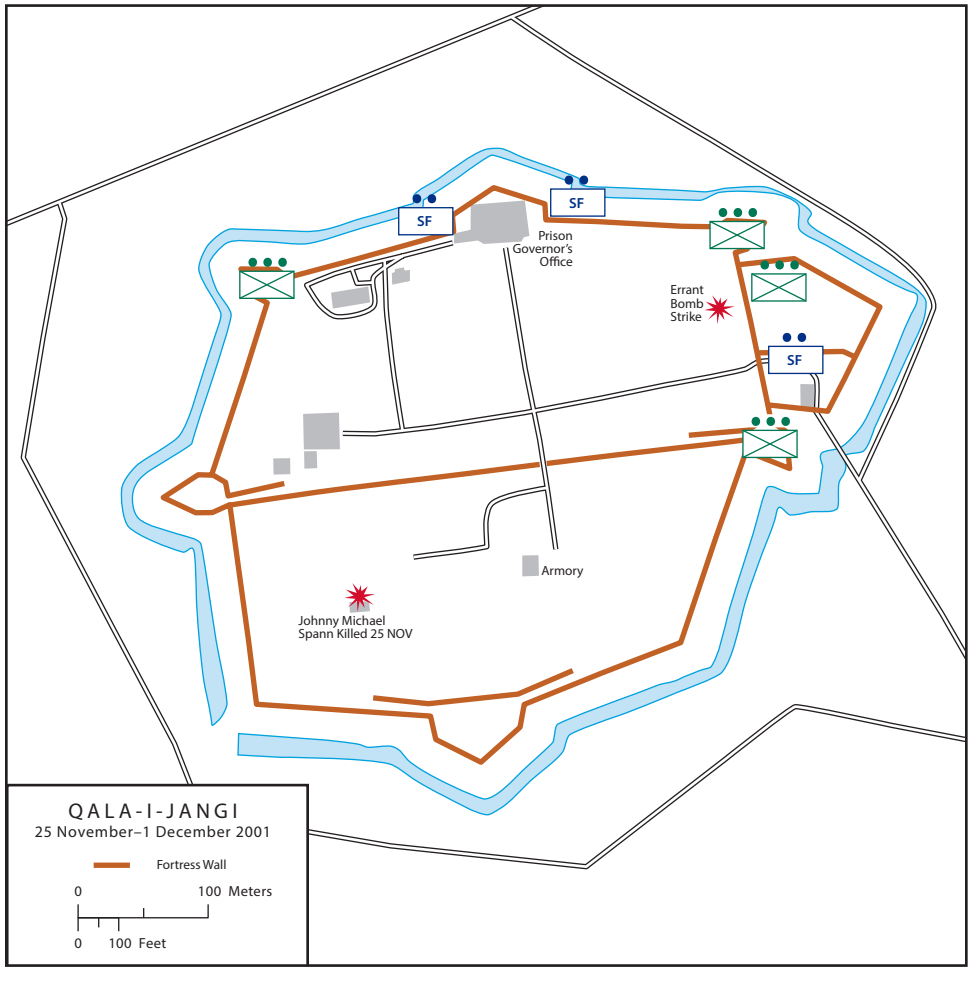
Guards released the captives from confinement the following morning to wash before prayers. At the same time, two members of Team Echo, CIA officers Johnny Michael "Mike" Spann and David Tyson, arrived at Qala-i-Jangi.[111] The appearance of the Americans, which contravened assurances given the previous evening, sparked a riot among the captives. Spann died fighting, along with a number of Dostum's men, while Tyson battled his way

108. Daniel P. Bolger, *Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 2014), p. 53.

109. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 159.

110. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, p. 54.

111. Williams, *The Last Warlord*, p. 264.



Map 2.2

to safety along with the surviving guards. Tyson relayed a desperate plea for aid through CIA channels, who, in turn, contacted TF DAGGER at Karshi Khanabad. Colonel Mulholland directed Operational Detachment Charlie 53 to send a team to get the CIA officers out of danger.

The rescue party consisted of Colonel Bowers' executive and operations officers, several members of the 3d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group staff, eight British Special Boat Squadron operators, two Navy SEALs, and a pair of Air Force tactical air support controllers. Colonel Bowers, along with ODA 534 and ODA 595 and his remaining staff, stayed at Kunduz with General Dostum. In addition to mobilizing Operational Detachment Charlie 53, Mulholland sent a quick reaction force from Karshi Khanabad consisting of 1st Lt. Bradley J. Maryoka's 1st Platoon of Company C, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, via air to Mazar-e Sharif.[112]

112. Williams, *The Last Warrior*, p. 264.

Operating originally on the assumption that one CIA officer had been wounded and a second remained inside the fortress, the rescue force soon learned that the trapped American had died and that the prisoners not only outnumbered the guards, but were as well armed as Dostum's men after ransacking the southern armory. The British commandos directed machine-gun fire against the foreign fighters while the Americans targeted the southern compound with multiple air strikes. The surviving CIA operative and a Western television crew took advantage of the air strikes to make their way out of the fortress. As darkness approached, the rescue force returned to Mazar-e Sharif to await Lieutenant Maryoka's platoon before reentering the fray.[113]

On November 26, the TF Dagger personnel, reinforced by the soldiers from 10th Mountain Division, resumed their assault at dawn. They were joined by the survivors of the original guard detail and a T–55 tank and several mortar crews sent by Dostum. The Americans, British, and Uzbeks resumed the contest, hurling tank, mortar, and machine-gun fire at the foreign fighters while receiving constant small-arms fire in return. The senior U.S. officer called for air support to break the stalemate. The primary joint tactical air controller, Air Force S. Sgt. Michael A. Scortino, called in the first set of target coordinates to several F/A–18C Hornets orbiting overhead. The pilots complied with the request, releasing a single 2,000-pound JDAM (Joint Direct Attack Munition) that unexpectedly landed alongside the lone United Front T–55 tank. Subsequent investigation disclosed that an F/A–18C pilot inadvertently entered friendly coordinates as the desired target.[114] The blast flipped the armored vehicle over, killing four Afghans and wounding a dozen others.[115] Two British commandos and five Americans were also wounded.[116] The uninjured Americans rendered first aid to their wounded comrades as the joint tactical air controller resumed calling in strikes against the enemy.

Dawn brought a change of tactics on the part of the Special Operations personnel and Dostum's fighters. Rather than rely on air support, the combined Anglo-American and Afghan force began waging a deadly room-to-room battle within the southern compound. Dostum's men retrieved CIA officer Mike Spann's remains after defusing an explosive device placed under his body. The remaining foreign fighters fled into the underground cells, where they held out for several days until driven from hiding by cold water pumped into their refuge. The CIA later discovered two Americans—John Walker Lindh from California and Yaser Esam Hamdi from Louisiana—

113. Sepp, "Uprising at Qala-i-Jangi," p. 17.

114. Memo, CENTCOM, 6 Feb 2003, sub: Review of Report of Investigation into Friendly Fire JDAM incident at Mazar-i-Sharif on 26 Nov 2001, Executive Summary, https://www3.centcom.mil/FOIA_RR_Files/5%20USC%20552(a)(2)(D)Records/Friendly%20Fires/26%20Nov%2001%20FF%20Redacted-NAVCENT.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

115. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, p. 62.

116. "Military Awards Ceremony for Service in Afghanistan," CNN.com/Transcripts, 15 Jan 2002, https://cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0201/15/se.03.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

among eighty-six enemy survivors.[117] Dostum then turned Mohammed Fazl over to the Americans.[118]

The issue of prisoners assumed growing importance following the surrender at Kunduz, the Qala-i-Jangi uprising, and reports of Gul Agha Sharzai's men shooting prisoners at Takhtah Pul Kelay. During a Pentagon press conference, a reporter asked Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld if the continued disintegration of the Taliban's field forces would result in American troops accepting the surrender of enemy combatants. Rumsfeld replied in the negative, stating that "in terms of our actually going out and seeking prisoners or looking for the opportunity to hold prisoners, we're not. [Our Afghan allies] have much larger numbers of people on the ground. They are perfectly capable of doing those kinds of things."[119] Rumsfeld's remarks were consistent with U.S. policy, which sought to minimize the number of American ground troops taking part in the conflict. The Bush administration's preference for finding an Afghan solution to battlefield challenges, which in this case involved the care, feeding, and safeguarding of Taliban prisoners, had been designed to avoid casting the United States in the unwanted role of occupying power.

This policy seemed unambiguous to Washington decision makers, yet the American military's commitment to providing logistical support to the United Front meant that it could not avoid becoming involved. On the day Kunduz fell, General Mikolashek decreed that CFLCC needed to deliver food, water, and other supplies for captives held by the United Front. Humanitarian concerns played a part in that decision, but Mikolashek strongly believed the United Front would balk at the prospect of indefinitely maintaining prisoner-of-war camps without U.S. assistance.[120] Over the past six weeks, the campaign plan successfully weathered several major challenges, but CFLCC soon realized that it could not avoid providing for enemy captives altogether. The need to safely detain and aid prisoners, even to a minor extent, was the first of many unanticipated modifications to the U.S. mandate in Afghanistan.

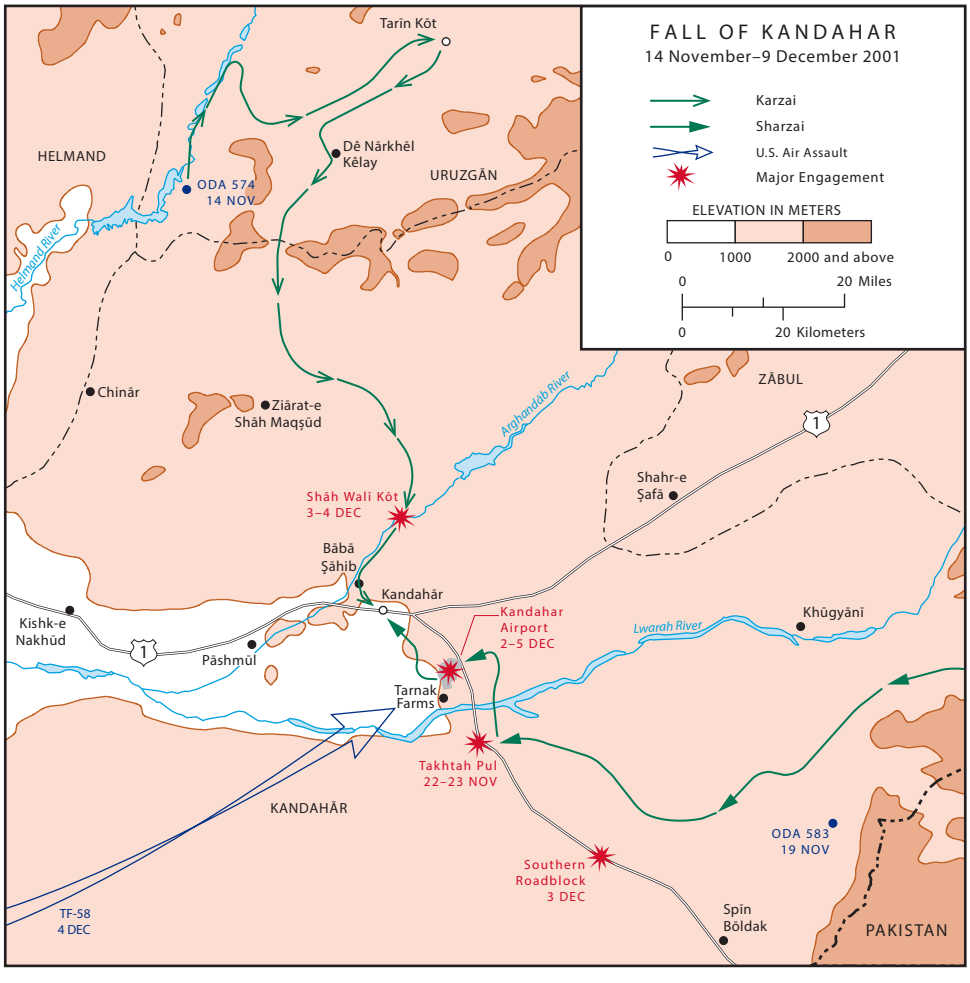
---

117. Sepp, "Uprising at Qala-i-Jangi," p. 18; Bolger, *Why We Lost*, p. 64.

118. Memo, Cdr, U.S. Forces Southern Cmd, to Cdr, Joint Task Force Guantanamo, 23 Feb 2008, sub: Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control (CD) for Guantanamo Detainee, ISN US9AF-000007DP (S), "Mullah Muhammad Fazl," *New York Times*, The Guantanamo Docket, https://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo/detainees/7-mullah-Muhammad-fazl, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. In May 2014, Mullah Muhammad Fazl was one of five high-ranking Taliban members exchanged for Sgt. Beaudry R. "Bowe" Bergdahl, who had been held captive by the Taliban since he deserted his post in June 2009. See Deb Riechmann, "A Look at the 5 Taliban Figures Exchanged for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl," *Military Times*, 27 May 2015, https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2015/05/27/a-look-at-the-5-taliban-figures-exchanged-for-sgt-bowe-bergdahl/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

119. Bfg, Rumsfeld and Myers, 26 Nov 2001.

120. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 24 Nov 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 24 Nov 01, 1319 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.



Map 2.3

THE CONFLICT GOES INTERNATIONAL

While the dramatic developments at Qala-i-Jangi drew widespread public attention, CENTCOM remained focused on the city of Kandahar. TF-58 launched its bid to seize Objective RHINO on 25 November after Special Operations teams confirmed that no enemy troops were defending the isolated airstrip southwest of Kandahar. The first wave of troop-carrying CH–53s, bearing sixty-six riflemen and two Interim Fast Attack Vehicles, preceded by three UH–1N utility helicopters and four AH–1W Sea Cobra gunships, arrived at RHINO just before sunset after a four-hour flight from the USS *Peleliu*. Successive flights delivered more troops and equipment until dawn, when the potential threat posed by portable surface-to-air missiles ended helicopter operations until the following evening.[121] Elements of the

121. Lowery, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2002*, pp. 111–16.

Australian Special Air Service's 1 Squadron, led by Lt. Col. Rowan J. Tink, arrived at Rhino from Kuwait aboard leased Ukrainian Antonov transport planes. As the marines improved their defenses, the Australians conducted vehicle patrols in a northwesterly arc centered on Kandahar.[122]

The appearance of the marines coincided with the preparations for Sharzai and Karzai's planned attack on Kandahar (*Map 2.3*). After lengthy discussion, Captain Smith of ODA 583 convinced Sharzai to begin his offensive by establishing roadblocks north and south of Takhtah Pul Kelay on Highway 4. The northern element immediately drew a barrage of rocket fire from Taliban forces while the southern road block detected signs of increasing enemy activity near Spin Boldak. Rather than await a coordinated enemy assault, Captain Smith persuaded Sharzai to attack first. Smith's plan involved an initial push northwest from Takhtah Pul Kelay ten kilometers to the Arghistan Bridge. Sharzai's forces would have to secure the maze of *wadi*s (dry riverbeds) and irrigation canals stretching northwest and west from the bridge to Tarnak Farms before they could advance. Tarnak Farms, sited less than three kilometers south-southwest of the airport, had long been known as a major al-Qaeda base in Afghanistan.[123]

To degrade Taliban defenses ahead of Sharzai's main attack, Captain Smith deployed several of his troops, including a joint tactical air controller, atop a commanding ridge ten kilometers southeast of the airport on 26 November.[124] The bombing runs called by the controller would be some of the most dangerous missions of the conflict, as the Taliban greeted incoming planes with antiaircraft artillery and shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles. The potent combination of broken terrain, persistent antiaircraft fire, and the Taliban's numerical superiority necessitated almost a week of nonstop bombing before Captain Smith notified Sharzai that the attack could begin.[125]

As Sharzai's forces waited for U.S. air power to weaken the enemy defenses overlooking the Arghistan bridge, opposition fighters led by Karzai were preparing to attack Kandahar from the north. In response to rumors that Karzai might be appointed as the future head of an interim post-Taliban government, Colonel Mulholland ordered Colonel Fox's command group to connect with Amerine's ODA before the attack on Kandahar.[126] In yet another example of Americans believing that they could divine Afghan intentions and impressions, the CIA prevailed upon CENTCOM to limit the number of soldiers accompanying Fox because the agency felt that sending a large advisory contingent made Karzai appear overly dependent on U.S.

---

122. Robert Macklin and Clint Palmer, *SAS Insider: An Elite Fighter Inside Australia's Toughest and Most Secretive Combat Force* (Sydney: Hachette Publishing, 2014), pp. 181–82; Ian McPhedran, *The Amazing SAS: the Inside Story of Australia's Special Forces* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp. 164–69.

123. Ben Farmer, "9/11: HQ where Bin Laden Plotted Atrocities," *Telegraph*, 5 Sept 2011, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/september-11-attacks/8741145/911-HQ-where-bin-Laden-plotted-atrocities.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

124. Nowatney, "SF NCOs in Afghanistan," p. 4.

125. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 169–71.

126. Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar*, p. 253.

assistance.[127] CENTCOM sided with the CIA. As a result, Fox, accompanied only by a communications sergeant and his operations officer, Maj. Donald C. Bolduc, arrived via helicopter north of Tarin Kot on 27 November.[128]

Politics influenced Karzai's advance on Kandahar in other ways. Mullah Mohammed Omar reportedly had departed the city, having handed over control to a pair of subordinates, Mullah Naquib Alikozai and Hajji Bashar, a week earlier.[129] Alikozai and Bashar telephoned Karzai offering to surrender Kandahar if the United Front turned Kabul over to Pashtun opposition groups. Alikozai also asked for a local cease-fire and a halt to U.S. bombing. Karzai replied that the Taliban had to sever all ties with al-Qaeda before he would agree to a cease-fire or bombing halt.[130]

Given that the terrain between Tarin Kot and Kandahar consisted of "extremely rough and wild country that Karzai said the Soviets learned to avoid after a few devastating ambushes," Colonel Fox suggested the attack take place in several stages rather than one continuous operation.[131] Karzai approved Fox's proposal without hesitation, primarily because a decisive military victory by his troops could tip the balance at the international post-Taliban governance conference called into session in Germany. The conference convened at the Petersberg Hotel in Bonn on the day Colonel Fox arrived at Tarin Kot. Four Afghan delegations were present: the United Front delegation led by Yunus Qanooni, influential expatriates with Iranian ties known as the "Cypress Group," a second band of well-to-do exiles living in Pakistan known as the "Peshawar Group," and representatives of former king Zahir Shah. Although Pakistan lobbied vigorously for allowing Mullah Omar's representatives to participate, the UN did not invite the Taliban.[132]

Besides the Afghan delegates, representatives from India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and European countries attended. Ambassador Dobbins, Afghan-born U.S. envoy Zalmay M. Khalilzad, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near East and South Asian Affairs William J. Luti represented the United States.[133] The opening discussions centered on three key issues: the distribution of cabinet positions, security in post-Taliban Afghanistan, and the choice of interim chairman. According to Dobbins, the United States had no preordained position on these matters: "My job was to get an agreement

---

127. Interv, Connors with Fox, 30 Nov 2006, p. 7. The CIA officials involved evidently did not consider the possibility that some good could come from a large number of American troops openly supporting a well-known Pashtun.

128. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, pp. 175–76.

129. Jane Perlez, "A NATION CHALLENGED: KANDAHAR; Taliban Leader Said to be Yielding Grip on Stronghold to 2 Once-Powerful Supporters," *New York Times*, 17 Nov 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/17/world/nation-challenged-kandahar-taliban-leader-said-be-yielding-grip-stronghold-2.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

130. Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar*, p. 253.

131. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, p. 181.

132. "Filling the Vacuum: The Bonn Conference," PBS *Frontline*, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/withus/cbonn.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

133. Dobbins, *After the Taliban*, p. 70.



Department of Defense

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld meets with Hamid Karzai (left) at Bagram on 1 December 2001.

and almost any agreement would do, so long as it resulted in an Afghan government that would replace the Taliban's, unite the opposition, secure international support, cooperate in hunting down al-Qaeda's remnants, and relieve the United States of the need to occupy and run the country."[134]

The attendees recognized that the best interests of all represented parties would be served by facilitating the reestablishment of security within Afghanistan, while at the same time recognizing that time would elapse before those organizations were "fully constituted and functioning."[135] As a stopgap measure, Bonn Conference attendees called on the UN Security Council "to consider authorizing the early deployment . . . of a United Nations mandated force" to "assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas."[136] Attendees also expressed the desire that this force "assist in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure."[137] Crucially, the draft Bonn Agreement left open the possibility that "such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centers and other areas."[138] According to Ambassador Dobbins, this provision was a compromise.

134. Ibid., p. 85.

135. Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, Annex I, 5 Dec 2001, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/AF_011205_AgreementProvisionalArrangementsinAfghanistan%28en%29.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

With the exception of the United Front, the Afghan representatives at Bonn wanted a nationwide peacekeeping force. However, Dobbins and his British counterpart, Robert Cooper, knew that the United States would not commit forces to peacekeeping and that the United Kingdom was the only other country capable of sustaining forces in Afghanistan on its own. They therefore persuaded the Afghans to accept a peacekeeping force—limited, at least for the time, to Kabul.[139]

In comparison to other issues, conference attendees quickly settled on a palatable nominee to lead the provisional government. As Ambassador Dobbins recalled:

> Among the international representatives was a strong consensus in favor of Hamid Karzai. . . . Virtually every foreign official with whom I had met in the past month, including the Pakistani, the Indian, the Russian, the Iranian, the Turkish, and European delegates had mentioned his name unprompted…the unanimity of international support for Karzai was largely Dr. [Abdullah] Abdullah's doing. . . . He knew Karzai as a moderate, personable, conciliatory figure of the sort who might be able to hold a fractious coalition together.[140]

Before the conference concluded on 5 December, the attendees agreed to establish an Afghan Interim Authority with Karzai at the helm as chairman.

The UN Security Council endorsed the conference's political and security pathways on 6 December.[141] The Afghan Interim Authority, slated to assume power in sixteen days, would govern for six months before tribal leaders, meeting in a *loya jirga* (grand assembly, akin to a national convention), would choose its successor. The temporary government approved by the tribal leaders would exist only for the eighteen months needed to draft a constitution and organize national elections.[142] Ensuring that the interim and transitional governments achieved their political milestones—namely, that they completed the Bonn Process on time—became the major focus of coalition efforts in Afghanistan for the next four years.[143]

---

139. Dobbins, *After the Taliban*, p. 88.

140. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, p. 179. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, a Kabul born and educated doctor of ophthalmology, was a senior member of the Northern Alliance working as an adviser to Ahmad Shah Massoud. Following the fall of the Taliban, he served as the Afghan minister of foreign affairs from October 2001 to April 2005. He would become the main presidential rival against Hamid Karzai in 2009 and Ashraf Ghani in 2014. Following the disputed 2014 election, a power-sharing agreement was brokered between Ghani and Abdullah, in which Ghani would be the president and Abdullah would be the chief executive of Afghanistan.

141. UN Security Council, Resolution 1383, S/RES/1383, 6 Dec 2001, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/AFGH%20SRES1383.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

142. Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, 5 Dec 2001.

143. Thomas H. Johnson, "The Prospects for Post-Conflict Afghanistan: A Call of the Sirens to the Country's Troubled Past," *Strategic Insights* 5, no. 2 (Feb 2006), https://calhoun.nps.edu/

All Roads Lead to Kandahar

Karzai and Sharzai launched their respective attacks on Kandahar during the Bonn Conference. Karzai's fighters, along with Colonel Fox and Captain Amerine's team, departed Tarin Kot on 30 November. The convoy reached the village of Petawek by 2200, where it halted for several days to gather recruits and await a scheduled weapons airdrop. The combined U.S.-Afghan force resumed its advance toward Kandahar at noon on 3 December. It moved without incident until reaching a ridge five kilometers north of Shah Wali Kot, a town 16 kilometers from Kandahar overlooking the sole bridge spanning the Arghandab River. When Karzai's fighters reconnoitered the town, the Taliban fired on them. Captain Amerine and the other Americans joined the fight while Colonel Fox and the main body awaited developments. Although the Taliban retained their grip on the town, Amerine and the Afghans of Karzai's reconnaissance element secured vital high ground overlooking the town and bridge before nightfall.

Sharzai's attack had opened the day before Karzai's fighters arrived at Shah Wali Kot. As Captain Smith remembered, "We got our butts kicked and were pushed back to the bridge. It wasn't that the fighting was so intense, though we did take some losses, it was that trying to hold the area around the bridge and advancing to the airport at the same time was too much for that day."[144] The Americans followed Sharzai's men back to the ridge overlooking the bridge and airport. Fighting resumed on the morning of 3 December when a small enemy force probed Sharzai's defensive perimeter. Smith noted, "At this point the Taliban had bugged out and it was mostly AQ [al-Qaeda] we were encountering. They pretty much fought to the death, but there wasn't as many of them as Taliban so it was easier getting around them."[145]

The Taliban defenders of Shah Wali Kot were just as determined to halt Karzai's advance. The evening of 3 December began with an abortive enemy counterattack against Captain Amerine's position overlooking the bridge. Just before noon on 4 December, Amerine launched an assault to seize a second hill overlooking the southern end of the bridge. The attack succeeded in forcing the Taliban away from the bridge but halted after enemy fire wounded an ODA 574 team member.[146] TF Dagger then directed ODA 574 to pull back from the bridge for the night.[147]

Captain Smith received cautionary guidance from TF Dagger. After learning ODA 583 intended to outflank Kandahar International Airport, Colonel Mulholland denied Smith permission to operate west of the city.[148] In

---

bitstream/handle/10945/11226/johnsonFeb06.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

144. Email Interv, Beckenbaugh with Smith, 18 Apr 2007, p. 10.

145. Ibid.

146. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, p. 246.

147. Interv, Connors with Fox, 30 Nov 2006, pp. 11–12; Interv, Terry Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Lt Col Donald Bolduc, frmr Opns Ofcr, 2d Bn, 5th SF Grp, 23 Apr 2007, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

148. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 178.

turn, Smith convinced Sharzai to limit his activity for the next forty-eight hours to conducting reconnaissance patrols along the city's outskirts.[149] The morning of 5 December found Smith's detachment on the ridge overlooking the Kandahar airport while small groups of Sharzai's fighters circled the city.

To the north of Kandahar, Amerine's troops sorted through newly delivered supplies in preparation for retaking the hill abandoned the previous day. In addition to supplies, 160th SOAR delivered reinforcements and vehicles from TF Sword, along with personnel from the 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces command group. The 2d Battalion joint tactical air controller soon found himself pressed into service to aid the Marine F/A–18s in their unsuccessful efforts to lob bombs into a cave serving as a Taliban bomb shelter. Puzzled that the bombs did not land where he intended, the joint controller tried to determine what might be wrong. After the Marine jets departed, he recalibrated the designator according to the user's manual. Noticing a low-power warning after he finished the calibration procedure, he replaced the batteries.

The controller then called in an orbiting B–52 to deliver a Global Positioning System–guided 2,000-pound penetrator against the cave, but instead of hitting the cave, the bomb exploded among friendly troops. Being unfamiliar with the model of designator being employed, the controller had not realized the equipment readings reset automatically to the user's location after replacing the batteries. These default readings remained in the device's memory until the operator lased a target once again. Tragically, twenty Afghans were killed and fifty wounded, while American casualties numbered two dead and nineteen wounded. The blast also knocked Karzai off his feet, inflicting a small head wound as a result of the fall.[150] The uninjured began treating the wounded as a dazed Karzai learned that the Bonn Conference attendees had chosen him to head the Afghan Interim Authority.[151]

Kandahar fell on 7 December after Sharzai's patrols reported that the enemy, with the exception of isolated pockets of foreign fighters, had departed. Captain Smith left part of his team at the airport while the remainder, along with a recently arrived British Special Operations detachment, convoyed into Kandahar accompanied by fighters loyal to Sharzai.[152] The American presence prevented a clash between Karzai and Sharzai. Karzai had promised the governorship of Kandahar to Naquib Alikozai in exchange for surrendering the province while Sharzai single-mindedly pursued his quest to reclaim his former post. Harsh words were exchanged when Karzai arrived to find Sharzai in the governor's residence, prompting Captain Smith and Colonel Fox to intervene in a successful effort to prevent factional fighting.[153]

---

149. Email Interv, Beckenbaugh with Smith, 18 Apr 2007, p. 12.

150. Blehm, *The Only Thing Worth Dying For*, pp. 301–07.

151. Jean MacKenzie, "Karzai's Fall," *The New Republic*, 1 Dec 2009, https://www.newrepublic.com/article/economy/karzais-fall, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

152. Email Interv, Beckenbaugh with Smith, 18 Apr 2007, p. 12.

153. Interv, Connors with Fox, 30 Nov 2006, p. 14; Email Interv, Beckenbaugh with Smith, 18 Apr 2007, p. 12.

Expanding the Hunt for al-Qaeda

CENTCOM's operational focus widened beyond Afghanistan's borders as the Bush administration sought to deny al-Qaeda sanctuary in other parts of the region. As early as 21 November, General Myers had been asked to assemble a range of military options focusing on Iraq. General Franks learned of the White House's changing perspective six days later when Secretary Rumsfeld asked him to look again at existing plans for Iraq.[154] Although the Bush administration initiated preparations for a potential conflict with Iraq, it still had no intention of allowing Osama bin Laden to flee Afghanistan. Reports from Afghan sources on bin Laden's whereabouts started pouring in immediately after Kabul's liberation. CIA officer Berntsen investigated the most promising tips from his new headquarters in the Afghan capital while also sending teams to reconnoiter suspected al-Qaeda training camps roughly 120 kilometers to the east in Nangarhar Province and 80 kilometers to the south in Logar Province. Both locations were located in predominantly Pashtun areas, which left Berntsen uncomfortable about using Tajik and Uzbek militia fighters from the United Front. As a result, Berntsen sought and received approval to enlist the aid of additional Pashtun militia groups.[155]

As news of Berntsen's request spread throughout the agency, he received a call from the CIA station in Islamabad suggesting Haji Ghamsharik Zaman, a former mujahideen commander who recently returned to Jalalabad from France, as a potential Pashtun ally.[156] The CIA team chief recruited not only Ghamsharik Zaman and his followers, but also hired groups led by former United Front commander Hazarat Ali and Abdul Zahir, son of the former governor of Nangarhar Province.[157] The three commanders, each of whom claimed to have 700 fighters, were collectively dubbed the Eastern Shura.[158] However, the potential for future problems surfaced when Berntsen learned that Hazarat Ali not only considered Zaman an unreliable battlefield partner but that the militia leaders were all long-time political rivals.[159] Although

---

154. Franks with McConnell, *American Soldier*, p. 329.

155. Peter John Paul Krause, "The Last Good Chance: A Reassessment of U.S. Operations at Tora Bora," *Security Studies* 17 (Dec 2008): 650.

156. Although the specific identity of the station is blacked out in Berntsen's book, the Islamabad CIA station is the likely candidate, as it had a telephone link to Berntsen and unmatched contacts among the expatriate Pashtun community in Pakistan. Grenier, *88 Days to Kandahar*, p. 187.

157. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, p. 238. Journalist Philip Smucker identifies "Babrak" as Hazarat Ali and "Nuruddin" as Haji Zaman; see Philip G. Smucker, *Al- Qaeda's Great Escape: The Military and the Media on Terror's Trail* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2004).

158. Lutfullah Mashal and Philip G. Smucker, "Afghan Puzzle: Who Shot Qadir?," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 Jul 2002, https://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0708/p06s01-wosc.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

159. The CIA suspected Hazarat Ali of being complicit in the murder of Haji Zahir's father in 2002; see Dexter Filkins, "Afghan Official Is Assassinated; Blow to Karzai," *New York Times*, 7 Jul 2002; https://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/07/world/afghan-official-is-assassinated-blow-to-karzai.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Berntsen had little choice but to utilize all of the Pashtun militia groups in the region willing to fight for pay, the information highlighted just how little U.S. officials knew about the rivalries and personalities of its Afghan proxy allies.

Despite the potentially fractious nature of the newly formed Eastern Shura, the CIA team chief felt he had collected enough information by the end of November to ask Colonel Mulholland for personnel to work with Pashtun militia groups. The TF Dagger commander considered the request premature because he had received unverified reports suggesting large bands of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters were operating in the areas suspected of sheltering bin Laden.[160] With tacit approval from his superiors who ostensibly read the same reports, Colonel Mulholland told Berntsen to "send your team in. If in a week they're still alive and operating, I'll send a team to work with them. The same thing goes for the team you send south."[161] Absent aid from TF Dagger, Berntsen initially deployed an ad hoc group of U.S. intelligence operatives and military personnel, known as Team Juliet, on 18 November.

The Milawa Valley, three hours south of Jalalabad near the Tora Bora cave complex, drew the immediate attention of Juliet.[162] Hazarat Ali agreed to provide guides for the team after the Americans arrived at Jalalabad. The CIA paramilitary operatives planned to rely on a combination of aerial bombing and Eastern Shura fighters to destroy any sizable al-Qaeda force located there. The friendly Afghans would deploy on the eastern and western edges of the valley while Juliet worked its way south toward the Afghan-Pakistan border. With the Eastern Shura fighters positioned on either flank to prevent the enemy from slipping away, al-Qaeda's choices would be reduced. They could die under a hail of American bombs or make a risky trek across a range of mountains up to 4200 meters high that separated Afghanistan from Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas.[163] In retrospect, some might question the willingness of the United States to expend a tremendous amount of resources to kill or capture a single man hiding among some of the most rugged terrain in the world, but prevailing emotions among most Americans at the time demanded the effort be made.

On 30 November, Team Juliet infiltrated the high ground overlooking the al-Qaeda camp in the Milawa Valley, whereupon Berntsen authorized it to initiate air attacks (*Map 2.4*). Air strikes succeeded in destroying most of the enemy's communications equipment and heavy weapons which, in turn, forced al-Qaeda to rely on unencrypted walkie-talkies and limited their defensive firepower to mortars, small arms, and a few machine guns.[164] After suffering several hundred casualties, the al-Qaeda fighters abandoned the

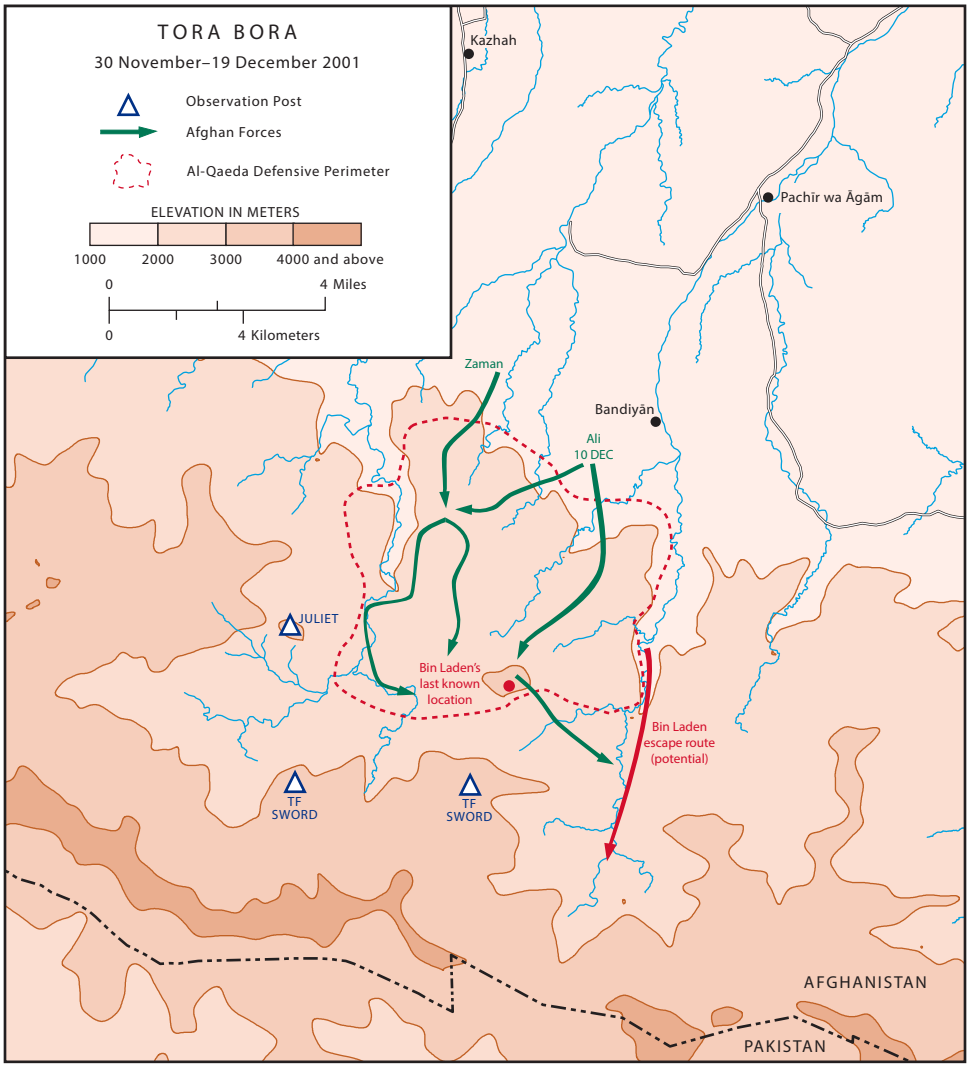
160. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 213.

161. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, p. 214.

162. Peter Bergen, "The Account of How We Nearly Caught Bin Laden in 2001," *The New Republic*, 30 Dec 2009, https://www.newrepublic.com/article/the-battle-tora-bora, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

163. Barzilai, *102 Days of War*, p. 90.

164. Krause, "The Last Good Chance," p. 651.



Map 2.4

Milawa Valley for the Tora Bora cave network that had been constructed during the Soviet-Afghan war.

Berntsen took advantage of the successes gained by JULIET to approach TF DAGGER once more for a Special Forces ODA. Given the changed circumstances, Colonel Mulholland agreed to send ODA 572 to Team JULIET. The Special Forces team departed Bagram for Jalalabad via ground convoy on 2 December.[165] After it arrived, the senior Special Operations representative and Berntsen agreed to revise the existing plan. The new concept called for positioning Special Forces teams with close air support controllers on dominating "peaks south and west—one on Tonga mountain,

165. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, p. 94.

another closer to Slinga further south—while the original post near Milawa would be reestablished further [*sic*] the east."[166] Once the newly arrived U.S. personnel were in place, Berntsen planned to resume the assault on bin Laden and his followers at Tora Bora.[167]

On 6 December, ODA 572 moved from Jalalabad to Hazarat Ali's headquarters near Pachir wa Agam.[168] Over the next two days, the detachment established outposts to the east and west of the 9.5-kilometers-by-10-kilometers mountainous area occupied by al-Qaeda. Before the assault resumed in earnest, Jawbreaker turned over responsibility for the upcoming battle to incoming elements of TF Sword on 8 December. The TF Sword contingent commander initiated operations by establishing two observation posts during the night of 10–11 December. In addition to the observation posts, the TF Sword element dispatched several personnel with thermal sights to augment each of ODA 572's forward-deployed elements.

On the morning of 10 December, Hazarat Ali informed the Americans that a subordinate commander claimed to have located a weak point in the enemy defenses. TF Sword agreed to send a three-man team forward to call for air support should the Afghan fighters need assistance. An advance by the mujahideen hours later, now accompanied by the three Americans, provoked devastating mortar and machine-gun fire. The Sword operators were so busy calling air strikes on a host of emerging targets that they failed to notice Afghans slipping to the rear in ones and twos. As dusk approached, only a few Afghan fighters and the Americans remained in contact with al-Qaeda.

In the midst of the fighting, the Sword contingent received the electrifying news that Osama bin Laden's location had been pinpointed. Rather than wait for permission from higher headquarters, the TF Sword contingent moved forward in an effort to get closer to the reported bin Laden sighting. The operators encountered Hazarat Ali's convoy, minus their attached American element, returning to base. After admitting that the chances of successfully finding their comrades in the dark mountains were extremely low, the Americans temporarily abandoned the search. In a hectic effort that lasted until the following morning, the stranded soldiers succeeded in returning to friendly lines without sustaining any casualties.[169]

In the seventeen hours separating their departure and return, the isolated TF Sword operators and members of the easternmost ODA 572 observation post called numerous air strikes on previously undetected targets as al-Qaeda reacted successively to Hazarat Ali's advance, the discovery of Americans in their midst, and Sword's brief foray onto the battlefield. The bombing missions destroyed almost all of the remaining al-Qaeda crew-served weapons, paving the way for Afghan militia fighters to secure terrain overlooking bin Laden's presumed location. While the U.S. Special Operations Command described

166. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, p. 274.

167. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, p. 94.

168. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 214.

169. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, pp. 95–96.



Department of Defense

A cave complex in the Tora Bora area of Afghanistan. Cave complexes littered the mountainous terrain near the Pakistan border and made it difficult to find enemy combatants and munitions dumps. Al-Qaeda had spent years in these environments.

the incident as a "comedy of errors," it also noted that those confused hours "proved to be the decisive ones of the operation at Tora Bora."[170]

During the predawn hours of 12 December, the TF Sword contingent learned that Zaman had entered into negotiations with al-Qaeda. When the Americans attempted to occupy new observation posts, Zaman's men forced them to halt until the negotiations were concluded.[171] By relying on proxy allies, American aims were once more overcome by an Afghan agenda. Some al-Qaeda fighters made good use of this time to reposition while others began trekking south toward the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.[172] Although the U.S. government refused to support his unauthorized initiative, CENTCOM called off planned air strikes for the next eleven hours to ensure Zaman did not turn on his American allies.

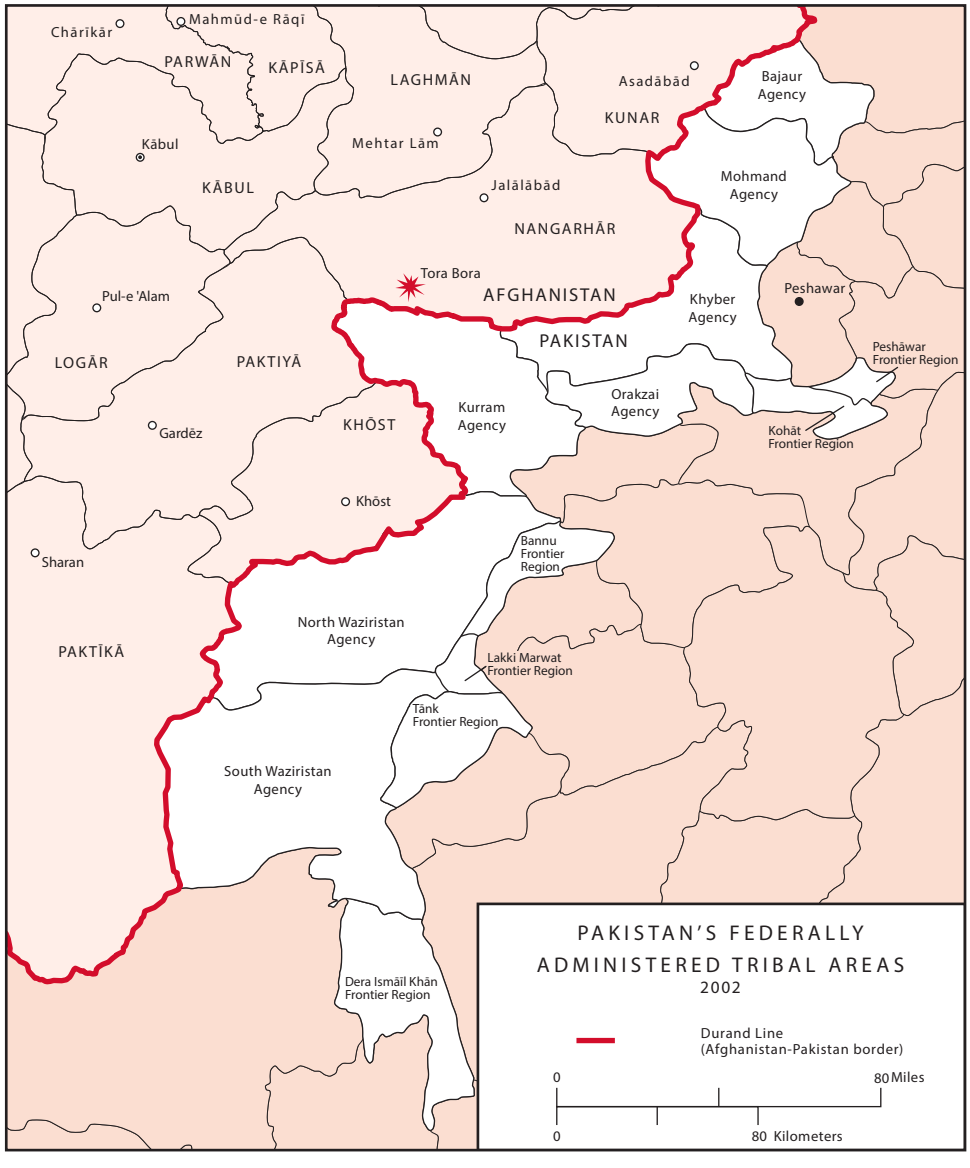
Alerted to the possibility that the Eastern Shura forces lacked the same level of motivation as Uzbek fighters under Dostum, Berntsen requested a Ranger Battalion through CIA channels.[173] After querying CENTCOM, Henry Crumpton informed the CIA team chief that "General Franks wants

170. Ibid., p. 96. The events at Tora Bora subsequently generated intensive debate, much of it emanating from within the Army. It would seem that the American experience with Dostum was the exception rather than the rule when dealing with Afghan militia leaders. For additional insight into Tora Bora, see Stephen D. Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, Nov 2002).

171. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007, p. 97.*

172. Barzilai, *102 Days of War*, p. 96.

173. Schroen, *First In*, pp. 277–78.



Map 2.5

to stick with what has worked, our small teams with our Afghan allies. He also says it will take too much time to plan. Time to deploy Rangers. Too much time."[174] In addition, the CENTCOM commander felt that, unlike the

174. The request did not specify the mission envisioned for the Rangers. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, p. 259.

United Front, militia groups in Nangarhar Province were far less accepting of American troops.[175]

Even if Franks agreed the Rangers could be employed usefully at Tora Bora, the deployment area suggested by the CIA challenged all but the most powerful helicopters operating in good weather, which meant that it could take several days to deploy 600 or more personnel. The lengthy insertion timeframe carried the risk of compromising tactical surprise while also increasing the vulnerability of the helicopters ferrying Ranger units. If the weather worsened during this process, the chances of American personnel being killed or injured in a helicopter mishap grew significantly.

Although the mountains on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border were a formidable barrier that hampered the American use of heliborne troops, al-Qaeda operatives could take advantage of the rugged terrain, using it to escape by hiring locals familiar with well-worn smuggler trails leading into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (*Map 2.5*). The tribal areas are just across the Durand Line, which designates the internationally recognized border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The U.S. government asked Islamabad to seal the border to help prevent these escapes, but increased regional tensions following a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament would hamper Islamabad's ability to meet this request. The Indian government mobilized troops after accusing Pakistan of supporting and arming the terrorists. In response, the Pakistani Army redeployed a number of units from its western frontier to new positions opposite Indian military forces massing along the border between both countries. The remaining Pakistani troops near Tora Bora were limited to Frontier Corps paramilitary units whose ranks included many individuals with anti-American or pro-Taliban sympathies.[176]

Bombing recommenced at 1700 on 12 December as U.S. operators resumed their forward movement. Not only did the new observation posts allow the Americans to direct air strikes in areas previously inaccessible to them, but the increased bombing prompted bin Laden to address his wavering fighters via radio more frequently. Although the shrinking battlefield left bin Laden with few options, it also imposed greater burdens on the combatants of both sides. The potential for hypothermia and altitude sickness grew as the battle moved higher into the mountains. Conditions worsened for the American troops, who were heavily burdened and unaccustomed to high altitudes. On the afternoon of 14 December, Afghan militia reported seeing the terrorist chief with several dozen bodyguards. Although the report could not be verified, the Americans directed multiple air strikes against a cave complex allegedly sheltering the enemy force.[177]

---

175. Memo, 6 Jun 2006, sub: TORA BORA, file: TORA BORA_CINCtestimonychg1.docx, CENTCOM History Office folder, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

176. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, p. 258; DeLong, Lukeman, and Zinni, *Inside CENTCOM*, p. 57; Eric Schmitt, "Officer Leads Old Corps in New Role in Pakistan," *New York Times*, 6 Mar 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/07/world/asia/07frontier.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

177. Barzilai, *102 Days of War*, pp. 97–99.

The unconfirmed sighting of Osama bin Laden spurred General Franks to reexamine whether or not U.S. troops could play a part in the fighting. On 17 December, CENTCOM directed CLFCC to assess if conventional forces could be employed at Tora Bora. Mikolashek responded that using a single battalion seemed too risky, suggesting instead that the mission merited sending the 82d Airborne Division's entire ready brigade. CENTCOM rejected that idea, citing its preference for using conventional units already in theater. However, those troops were already protecting Bagram, Kandahar International Airport, and Forward Operating Base Rhino. As a result, Tora Bora would remain the responsibility of U.S. SOF until the fighting concluded.[178]

The Special Operations Command history published six years later recorded "TF 11 [Sword] departed the battlefield on 19 December . . . without knowing whether or not they had killed UBL [Osama bin Laden] and destroyed AQ [al-Qaeda] in Afghanistan."[179] Although the terrorist leader's fate could not be ascertained, CENTCOM remained determined to eliminate al-Qaeda's surviving enclaves within Afghanistan. In addition to this goal, CENTCOM placed growing emphasis on creating a post-Taliban security environment that prevented other terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a launching pad for further attacks against the American homeland.

178. End of Mission Rpt, CFLCC C–3 Future Opns, Dec 2001, Overview of Future Opns, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

179. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, p. 97.

Chapter Three

Path to Victory

By late December 2001, U.S.-led coalition and Afghan forces had toppled the Taliban regime, helped to establish the Afghan Interim Authority, and removed al-Qaeda forces from all but the most remote areas of the country. Pockets of resistance remained, but U.S. forces would have "unique opportunities to exploit intelligence from materials, documents, and detainees" as they worked to eliminate them. With CENTCOM reporting that it had "succeeded in virtually eliminating Taliban military capability in Afghanistan" and "severely degraded" al-Qaeda's capabilities, the interest of Washington policymakers, military leaders, and intelligence officials began turning elsewhere.[1] Indeed, by late November President George W. Bush had already ordered Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to update existing Iraq war plans.[2]

Changing outlooks within the Bush administration were triggered in large part by intelligence reports suggesting roughly 75 percent of the al-Qaeda leadership still remained at large.[3] CENTCOM analysts were already predicting that Osama bin Laden and his surviving lieutenants would "relocate to Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, or another safe haven to reconstitute C2 [command and control] and continue operations against U.S. interests."[4] In the worst-case scenario, CENTCOM estimated that al-Qaeda might carry out attacks with weapons of mass destruction, or that U.S. adversaries such as Iraq or North Korea might "take advantage of U.S. focus on al-Qaeda activity in Central Asia" by carrying out acts of aggression against Americans, their allies, or U.S. interests.[5]

Thus, with some major objectives accomplished but many enemy leaders still unaccounted for, CENTCOM began transitioning from Phases I (Initial Strike Operations) and II (Continued Operations) toward Phases III (Decisive Operations) and IV (Sustain and Prevent).[6] In anticipation of starting Phase

1. CFC OPORD 03, Opns in Afghanistan Phase III and IV, CENTCOM, 22 Dec 2001, sec. 1.B.1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Note: References in subsequent orders date OPORD 03 to 24 Dec 2001.

2. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 1–4, 54.

3. Crumpton, "Intelligence and War: Afghanistan, 2001–2002," p. 162.

4. Ibid.

5. CFC OPORD 03, Opns in Afghanistan Phase III and IV, CENTCOM, 22 Dec 2001, sec. 1.B.3.

6. Ibid.

III, CENTCOM issued Operations Order 03 outlining the tasks that would be needed to prevent the reemergence of international terrorist organizations in Afghanistan. These included supporting the Afghan Interim Authority and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (which was the incoming UN mission), conducting civil-military operations, and exploiting information gleaned from captured documents and detainees.[7]

Fleshing out Phase IV tasks, which, in theory at least, would begin in the many parts of Afghanistan that had no enemy presence, drew growing interest with the Bonn Conference's creation of an Afghan Interim Authority. Although Phase IV tasks overlapped in some instances with the preceding phase, they included creating post-Taliban Afghan security forces, identifying whether detainees required long-term detention or repatriation, and monitoring Afghanistan for signs of returning al-Qaeda terrorists. As CENTCOM entered Phases III and IV, its desired end state called for the destruction of the al-Qaeda network and other designated terrorist organizations in Afghanistan; retention of sufficient coalition forces in Afghanistan to detect, deter, and either defeat or destroy international terrorist organizations seeking to return there; sustained support of humanitarian assistance efforts; efforts to enhance the legitimacy of the Interim Authority; and a focus on positioning ISAF for future operations.[8] These tasks and end states indicated a shift from unconventional warfare to counterterrorism as the dominant operational approach.

The new emphasis on counterterrorism, when coupled with the transition from Phase II to Phase III along with growing preoccupation with planning for Iraq, made it more difficult to envision how the situation within Afghanistan fit within the changing U.S. strategic vision. Counterterrorism-related directives were clear enough, as was the directive to "establish logistics bases."[9] Yet American efforts to facilitate regime change in Afghanistan were now given equal priority with killing or capturing the enemy. In addition, the concept of what actually constituted a supporting role in regime change was difficult to define. As a result, CENTCOM's orders to support a wide range of entities and operations—including the Afghan Interim Authority, provincial leaders, regional allies, ISAF, other U.S. government agencies, coalition partners, humanitarian assistance operations, and civil-military operations—were subject to interpretation.[10] Most ambiguous of all was the Phase IV task "support setting the conditions to prevent the re-emergence of terrorist organizations with global reach in Afghanistan."[11] The commanders on the ground would have to determine when such support would be appropriate and what form it would take.

---

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. CFC OPORD 03, Opns in Afghanistan Phase III and IV, CENTCOM, 22 Dec 2001, sec. 3.B.3.J.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

As the Afghan campaign entered its fourth month, few in the international community or U.S. government—to say nothing of the U.S. military—had a common understanding of what the future held. Rumsfeld felt it was in the United States' interest "to be attentive to what kind of government comes along," because "obviously we don't want Afghanistan a year from now to go right back to becoming a place that harbors terrorists."[12] CENTCOM's plans to realize that goal called for a "functioning and stable" Afghan government as part of its end state, and recognized that, after two decades of war, Afghanistan's "economy [was] in shambles, farmland [was] not productive, and large portions of the population [were] displaced and/or in need of sustainment."[13] Without a "functioning and stable" Afghan state, killing or capturing all the terrorists in the country would not necessarily prevent the terrorist safe havens from reemerging. Yet CENTCOM either did not recognize the importance of American military involvement in placing any postconflict Afghan political construct on a stable foundation or decided to downplay its own involvement in that process by stating that initial efforts along those lines would be led by the UN with "minimal military support" from the United States.[14]

With the mission of killing or capturing terrorists and their Taliban supporters in Afghanistan apparently winding down, the public and media alike began seeking insights into the next phase of the Global War on Terrorism.[15] Legitimate questions on that topic laid bare the problems that Washington decision makers were having with articulating the way forward in Afghanistan. Indeed, when a reporter asked him if the United States had an exit strategy, Rumsfeld answered:

> We do. We know what we want to do, and when we've done it, we'll do it someplace else. And what it is we want to do is we want to capture or kill the senior Taliban leadership and see that they are punished. We want to make sure that the Taliban is out of power, which it now is. We want to make sure that the rest of the Taliban are disarmed and/or have become part of various other forces and no longer trying to kill people. And with respect

---

12. Interv, Lally Weymouth, *Washington Post*/*Newsweek*, with Sec Def Donald H. Rumsfeld, 13 Dec 2001, DoD, Press Opns, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2660, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. CFC OPORD 03, Opns in Afghanistan Phase III and IV, CENTCOM, 22 Dec 2001, sec. 1.B.1.

14. Ibid.

15. Postbattle criticism of U.S. efforts at Tora Bora stems in large part from repeated statements by the Bush administration linking success with the death or capture of Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants. Although these critics often overlook weather conditions, terrain, and other operational constraints, the U.S. military's reluctance to prepare the Rangers or the 82d Airborne units for battle at either Tora Bora or along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is a legitimate concern. Osama bin Laden's supporters subsequently viewed Tora Bora as a victory rather than a defeat because the United States failed to kill or capture him. Thomas E. Ricks, "Rumsfeld's Hands-on War: Afghan Campaign Shaped by Secretary's Views, Personality," *Washington Post*, 9 Dec 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A14464-2001Dec8.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> to the al-Qaeda, we want to capture or kill the senior leadership, and we want to catch and imprison the remainder so that they don't go back to their countries and terrorize people and kill people. . . . When those things have been accomplished, from a military standpoint we will have done our job.[16]

General Tommy R. Franks followed his boss' lead in describing the American exit strategy to the public in similarly general terms. When *PBS NewsHour* anchor Jim Lehrer asked him in early January 2002 if he had termination criteria in mind, Franks replied:

> At some point, there'll come a time when I talk to my boss, Secretary Rumsfeld, and when he chooses to talk to the President on this subject. And that time will come when we're able to say, "We have been on the ground, we have been to every place in Afghanistan in a way that satisfies me as the commander-in-chief that we have destroyed al-Qaida [*sic*] in this country and that we have destroyed the remaining pockets of the Taliban and I would recommend, Mr. Secretary, that you take that to the President." And, Jim, that's a long ways off in the future because we still have a lot of dangerous ground to cover. But that's how it will happen.[17]

The U.S. Army Enters in Force

The projected deployment of conventional forces into Afghanistan heralded major changes in how CENTCOM addressed basing and logistical issues. General Franks and his team now faced the additional strategic challenges of jump-starting Phase IV, planning for Iraq, and identifying termination criteria for Afghanistan. Air-dropped supplies had previously proven sufficient to meet the combined needs of the United Front and the small U.S. footprint within Afghanistan. Committing conventional forces in numbers necessary to conduct offensive operations signaled a shift from relying on bases outside Afghanistan, and meant that parachuting supplies into ad hoc drop zones would no longer suffice. Transitioning from air-dropped supplies to aerially transported sustainment drove U.S. forces to acquire airfields that could support cargo-hauling aircraft and rotary-wing platforms within Afghanistan. These airfields required specially trained support units to maintain and operate them along with combat units to provide dedicated security. As a result, coalition forces would have to construct bases large enough to house supporting facilities and personnel with defensive positions sited along the entire perimeter. Correspondingly, the acquisition of fixed bases placed more emphasis on civil affairs providing humanitarian aid to nearby communities.

Both Bagram and Rhino could support Phase III operations by U.S. conventional forces. Although Bagram required a sustained demining effort

16. Ibid.

17. Interv, *PBS NewsHour* with General Tommy R. Franks, 8 Jan 2002, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism-jan-june02-franks_1-8/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

to remove unexploded ordnance dating as far back as the Afghan-Soviet conflict, Col. John P. Mulholland sent a forward element there to maintain liaison with the United Front. TF Sword followed Mulholland's lead by deploying advance elements to Bagram, including command and control assets as well as a reconnaissance element from Jazirat Masirah off the coast of Oman.[18] Local security in the form of a rifle company and headquarters element from 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, arrived soon afterward.[19] In addition, General Franks dispatched his security director, Army Brig. Gen. Gary L. Harrell, to Bagram to head an interagency task force that would oversee detainee operations, conduct border surveillance, and distribute U.S. humanitarian aid.[20]

CENTCOM had already begun to invest in improving runways and clearing mines at critical entry points into Afghanistan during the Tora Bora fighting.[21] Transforming Bagram into a forward operating base became General Franks' top priority.[22] Even so, clearing the base proved challenging to the explosive ordnance disposal teams and combat engineers. To provide assistance, CENTCOM dispatched Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck's 10th Mountain Division headquarters, minus the elements still serving in Kosovo, to Karshi Khanabad instead of Bagram. General Hagenbeck and his staff arrived in early December 2001, declaring themselves fully operational on 7 December.[23] As commander of CFLCC-Forward, Hagenbeck was responsible for virtually all coalition ground forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan, including airfield security and logistics support.[24]

Although explosive ordnance disposal teams and combat engineers were already committed to improving Bagram, CENTCOM acknowledged the need to acquire an airfield in southern Afghanistan other than the remote airstrip at Rhino. Rather than wait for forces outside of Afghanistan to arrive, General Franks directed CFLCC to employ TF-58 to occupy Kandahar

---

18. Backgrounder, Lt Col Pete Blaber, Cdr, Advance Force Opns, Opn Anaconda, American Enterprise Institute, 1 Mar 2012, p. 2, https://www.aei.org/press/operation-anaconda/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Capt Timothy L. Gittins, "OPERATION ANACONDA: The Lower Shah-I-Khot Valley" (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 04–03, 5 Feb 2003), p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Brig. Gen. Gary L. Harrell led a joint, multiagency organization in Afghanistan known as Task Force Bowie. Berntsen and Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker*, p. 213; Matthew Bogdanos with William Patrick, *Thieves of Baghdad: One Marine's Passion to Recover the World's Greatest Stolen Treasures* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006), pp. 55–62.

21. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update 14 Dec 01, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

22. Interv, OEF Study Grp with Gen Tommy R. Franks, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 4 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. Interv, Maj Richard M. Brown, 130th Military History Detachment (MHD), with Maj Gen Franklin Hagenbeck, Cdr, 10th Mtn Div, 15 Mar 2002, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

24. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 127.

International Airport.[25] In addition to ordering the military airfield restored to operational condition, General Franks indicated that he wanted the marines to determine if weapons of mass destruction were being manufactured or stored in abandoned al-Qaeda training camps near Kandahar.[26]

CFLCC published a warning order on 11 December notifying TF-58 to prepare to deploy an advance party from Rhino to the Kandahar airport within the next forty-eight hours. The advance party would be followed by elements of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit and explosive ordnance demolition teams, contracting officers, civil affairs elements, engineers, and a robust command and control element. The move presaged the eventual transfer of all U.S. forces from Forward Operating Base Rhino to Kandahar once an agreement had been reached with Afghan government officials. The marines were also instructed to prepare for a relief-in-place with a brigade-sized Army element.[27]

On the morning of 14 November, TF-58 successfully established a forward operating base at Kandahar International Airport.[28] Brig. Gen. James N. Mattis soon found himself cast in the unfamiliar role of jailor after being directed to construct a 500-person holding facility within his perimeter.[29] Lt. Col. Edward F. Dorman III's Logistical Task Force 530 built a similar holding facility at Bagram.[30] Media reports of potential war crimes—including dozens of Pakistanis killed at a school in Mazar-e Sharif, summary executions following the Kunduz surrender, claims of Pashtun allies of the United States executing 160 Taliban fighters outside Kandahar, and coverage of the Qala-i-Jangi prison uprising—argued against using Afghan militia as long-term jailors. Although many reports of alleged atrocities were exaggerated and speculative, the news accounts were "sufficiently disturbing and prominent" to capture the attention of Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.[31]

Up to this point in the campaign, CIA and Special Forces had been able to collect information by interrogating captured enemy combatants. Unlike Iraq, where U.S. reconnaissance satellites monitored Saddam Hussein's

---

25. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update 7 Dec 01, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

26. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update 13 Dec 01, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

27. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 11 Dec 2001, sub: ARCENT Update 11 Dec 01, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

28. Narrative Sum, Brig Gen James M. Mattis, Opn ENDURING FREEDOM, Naval Support Activity Bahrain, Opns in Afghanistan, 27 Oct 2001–26 Feb 2002, 21 Feb 2002, p. 44, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update 16 Dec 01, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

30. Finlayson, "Not Just Doing Logistics," p. 47.

31. Serge Schmemann, "A Nation Challenged: HUMAN RIGHTS; Unsure Ground for Fight against Atrocity," *New York Times*, 29 Nov 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/30/world/a-nation-challenged-human-rights-unsure-ground-for-fight-against-atrocity.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Department of Defense

Early detention operations to control enemy combatants were rudimentary but better than those at Qala-i-Jangi Fortress. This Kandahar facility was manned by the 65th Military Police Company. Detention operations would become a major effort in Enduring Freedom.

military activity, Afghanistan offered few opportunities to exploit the capabilities of surveillance technology. Consequently, U.S. officials relied on human sources to learn al-Qaeda's plans and intentions, seeking not only to prevent another September 11th–type attack but also to fully destroy the organization. Until CIA operatives were able to penetrate al-Qaeda's global network, the United States depended on information provided by prisoners taken on the Afghan battlefields.[32]

The ability of the CIA to interrogate prisoners in a timely fashion came into question when representatives from General Harrell's task force visited Shibirghan prison several weeks after the fall of Kunduz. The Americans were confronted with the sight of hundreds of foreign fighters along one wall of the prison's interior while captured Taliban stood near the opposite wall. The latter did not want to be mistaken for foreign fighters because United Front general Abdul Rashid Dostum had promised early release for all local Taliban.[33] CFLCC dispatched Company C, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, from Karshi Khanabad to assist a platoon from 65th Military Police Company (Airborne) with processing the foreign fighters at Shibirghan in preparation for transporting them to holding facilities at Bagram and Kandahar.[34]

32. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 159.

33. Interv, Mark J. Reardon, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Mark D. Nutsch, frmr ODA 595 Cdr, 5th SF Grp, 13 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Interv, Laurence Lessard, CSI, with Maj Sarah K. Albrycht, frmr 65th Military Police Co (Abn) Cdr, 13 Mar 2007, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Capt Nelson G. Kraft, "Lessons Learned from a Light Infantry Company During Operation Anaconda," *INFANTRY* 91, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 31.

As the number of prisoners in coalition hands exceeded 4,000, it became clear that vital information might remain untapped for too long. Prompted by that revelation, CFLCC identified the detention, processing, handling, and criminal investigation of al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees as one of its top priorities.[35] CENTCOM responded by sending the Army's 202d Military Intelligence Battalion from the 513th Brigade at Fort Gordon, Georgia, to Kandahar. The newly arrived battalion established a Joint Interrogation Center adjacent to the holding facility constructed by the marines.[36] Part of the incoming unit also went to Bagram to assist with interrogations there. Bagram's interrogators were directed to sift through the prisoner population to uncover time-sensitive information and identify detainees worthy of further interrogation. Individuals determined to be senior al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders, non-Afghan Taliban fighters, other personnel deemed as a potential threat to U.S. interests, and individuals subject to prosecution for past terrorist acts remained in American custody after being interviewed.

Although the deployment of Army interrogators signified CENTCOM's ability to address changing circumstances within the theater of operations, the policy for a long-term detainee solution lay with General Franks' superiors. Secretary Rumsfeld agreed with a CENTCOM proposal to create long-term arrangements for certain high-value prisoners, but only if those individuals remained in Afghanistan. CENTCOM deputy commander Marine Lt. Gen. Michael P. DeLong rebutted that caveat by reminding Rumsfeld that "we want to keep our number of troops down, and the ones that are there need to be fighting and looking for al-Qaeda, not guarding prisoners."[37] A subsequent series of lengthy discussions by Bush administration principals eventually led to the creation of a military detention facility under Marine Brig. Gen. Michael R. Lehnert at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba, in January 2002.[38]

Success Creates Growing Complexity

The fall of Kandahar removed the Taliban as a major player from the Afghan scene while ushering in the arrival of international peacekeepers. CENTCOM supported the deployment of ISAF to Kabul in order to safeguard the creation of a new Afghan central government and to allow American troops to concentrate on other tasks and leave for missions outside of Afghanistan. On 19 December, the United Kingdom informed the UN that it was willing to lead the inaugural ISAF deployment. Although British representatives discussed the initiative with CENTCOM before sending the memorandum, the United Kingdom required UN approval before deploying a headquarters

35. Msg, Cdr in Ch CENTCOM (CINCCENT), sub: CFC FRAGO 03-005 CFLCC ISO ISAF OPS IN AFG, 030243Z Jan 02, sec. 1, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

36. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 219.

37. DeLong, Lukeman, and Zinni, *Inside CENTCOM*, p. 59.

38. Karen J. Greenberg, "When Gitmo Was (Relatively) Good," *Washington Post*, 25 Jan 2009, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/23/AR2009012302313.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

element and appropriate supporting units to Afghanistan. The next day, the Security Council reaffirmed the Bonn Agreement's call to send ISAF to Kabul by issuing Resolution 1386. The UN approved the request, but further discussion led to a Security Council decision that the British commitment would end in April 2002 when another nation would assume the lead for the remaining ninety days of the initial deployment.[39]

Hamid Karzai's appointment as chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority was Afghanistan's first step toward a new political future, but it also signaled a major shift in the dynamics influencing the ongoing campaign. As Karzai began choosing provincial and district administrators, he found himself with limited options and several challenges to overcome. First, the U.S. military was unwilling to get involved in post-Taliban Afghan internal affairs. Next, the candidates for administrative positions in southern and eastern Afghanistan required credentials acceptable to the Pashtun majority, but Kabul was currently occupied by 20,000 ethnic minority Tajik and Uzbek fighters. Many administrative candidates were former militia commanders whose personal fortunes depended on income from various criminal enterprises. A few nominees, including Pacha Khan Zadran in Paktiya Province, proved so unpalatable that they were rejected, while others, such as narcotics kingpin and future Helmand Province governor Sher Mohammed Akhundzada, joined the government.[40]

An even greater complication involved Jalaluddin Haqqani and his tribal following. Haqqani was allied with the Taliban, but he was careful to maintain his autonomy. Although a fervent Islamist, he was tolerant of Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and other Afghan traditions considered heterodox. Just as important, he had local interests separate from the Taliban and perhaps even from al-Qaeda. The Bush administration's policy in the Global War on Terrorism, however, did not tolerate ambiguity. Haqqani rejected an American offer to surrender. He and his sons then attempted to reintegrate in the traditional Afghan way by switching to the winning side. However, warlord entanglements brought American military power against the Haqqanis before reconciliation could be made. The process was complex, but the end result left the Haqqani family with lasting enmity toward Karzai and his American backers.[41]

---

39. Sean Maloney, "The International Security Assistance Force: The Origins of a Stabilization Force," *Canadian Military Journal* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 6.

40. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 532; Damien McElroy, "Afghan Governor Turned 3,000 Men Over to the Taliban," *Telegraph*, 20 Nov 2009, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6615329/Afghan-governor-turned-3000-men-over-to-Taliban.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

41. Alissa J. Rubin, "Questions Lurk in a Dead Village," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 Jan 2002, https://articles.latimes.com/2002/jan/08/news/mn-21146, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. For a summary of U.S.-Haqqani interactions following 11 September 2001, the initial attack against the Taliban, and how these relationships may have constructed a war that was not there, see Anand Gopal, "Tomgram: Anand Gopal, How to Lose a War That Wasn't There," TomDispatch.com, 29 Apr 2014, https://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175837, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The book-length treatment on the same topic

On 3 January 2002, a small group of Americans visited Khost to investigate reports that both Osama bin Laden and Haqqani, still viewed as the Taliban's top commander in the southern provinces, were in the area. While in Khost, the U.S. detachment unknowingly stepped into the middle of a feud between Pashtun warlords from the Ghilzai clan when they accepted help from Zakim Khan Zadran, a long-time rival of Pacha Khan Zadran. In an attempt to convince the Americans they should not work with his rival, Pacha Khan staged an ambush that killed Sfc. Nathan R. Chapman of the 1st Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, and seriously wounded a CIA operative, and then blamed it on his rival.[42] This was just one of many incidents throughout the entirety of Operation Enduring Freedom in which one faction persuaded coalition forces that its competitors backed the Taliban in order to eliminate a rival with American assistance.

Recognizing that security could not remain indefinitely in the hands of a diverse collection of warlords, CENTCOM accepted the mission of creating security forces loyal to the Afghan Interim Authority on 23 January.[43] An incident the next day highlighted the unsuitability of current arrangements. New Zealand Special Air Service and 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, personnel targeted two compounds near Hazarqadam, a small village about 150 kilometers northeast of Kandahar. As the Special Forces soldiers approached the first compound, guards began shooting, wounding one American. The second compound's occupants also opened fire, sparking a melee that resulted in fourteen Afghan deaths. The Special Forces personnel were surprised to learn their opponents had sworn allegiance to Karzai two weeks previously.[44] An investigation disclosed that locals falsely identified the compound's occupants as al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters in a bid to gain control of weapons caches buried nearby. In the raid's aftermath, General Franks told media representatives that, "I've asked everybody be sure that our coordination is O.K. . . . since we're operating inside Afghanistan, we've got to be sure to coordinate our activities with their government."[45]

Playing the "Long Game"

The early American presence in Afghanistan included sending a Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force to Kabul. Lt. Gen. Paul T.

---

is Anand Gopal, *No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014).

42. John F. Burns, "A Nation Challenged: A Soldier's Story; U.S. War Victim Rode into Afghan Turf Fight," *New York Times*, 9 Feb 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/09/international/asia/09SOLD.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) 03-028, Modified CFC Guidance Phase III Afghanistan Theater of Opns, 232201Jan02Z, sec. 1, pp. 3–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 241.

45. Eric Schmitt, "A NATION CHALLENGED: THE MILITARY; After January Raid, Gen. Franks Promises to Do Better," *New York Times*, 8 Feb 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/08/world/nation-challenged-military-after-january-raid-gen-franks-promises-better.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Mikolashek chose Army Brig. Gen. David E. Kratzer, deputy commanding general of the 377th Support Command (Theater), to head the new organization. The civil-military organization consisted of a few active component soldiers from Third Army/ARCENT and National Guardsmen assigned to the 122d Support Detachment (Rear Tactical Operations Center), commonly referred to as the 122d Rear Area Operations Center, led by Col. Cassel J. Nutter.[46] Virtually all of the reserve component soldiers, including Kratzer, were chosen because they were available and not because they had specific job skills. General Kratzer recalled, "[General Mikolashek] told me I would probably have a pretty free hand because it was a notional organization that had never been fielded and I couldn't get it wrong in that there wasn't that much to measure against at that point."[47]

Kratzer, whose career included service in the armor, signal, and logistics branches, faced a steep learning curve. The joint doctrinal reference in effect at the time stated that "civil-military operations are to be conducted to minimize civilian interference with military operations, to maximize support for operations, and to meet the commander's legal and moral obligations to civilian populations within the commander's area of control."[48] Company D of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion was the only readily available unit capable of performing that mission in Afghanistan. Kratzer and his staff were expected to assist that unit while working with international and nongovernmental humanitarian organizations as well as the nascent Afghan government. The greatly accelerated pace of the campaign gave Kratzer only four days to prepare his command to depart Fort McPherson for Afghanistan.[49]

Kratzer recognized that CENTCOM envisioned the American military facilitating civil affairs in the early phases of the campaign while the U.S. Agency for International Development assumed responsibility for the overall humanitarian effort. General Franks therefore expected the new civil-military affairs command to achieve operational control of ongoing humanitarian assistance operations in the CENTCOM area of responsibility in order to integrate available coalition forces, provide rapid and appropriate responses to requests for military support to humanitarian assistance operations, and demonstrate U.S. and coalition commitment to prevent human suffering and death.[50]

CENTCOM's approach in Afghanistan was a major departure from recent civil affairs deployments. Civil affairs in support of peacekeeping operations during the Clinton administration were founded upon an expectation of a long-duration commitment, mobilization of reserve component units, and

---

46. Interv, Maj John Warsinske, 47th MHD, with Maj Gen David Kratzer, frmr Cdr, CJCMOTF, EFIT-047-039, 16 Jul 2002, p. 2, Hist File, OEF Study Grp.

47. Interv, Dennis Van Wey, CSI, with Maj Gen (Ret.) David Kratzer, frmr Cdr, Coalition Joint Civil-Military Opns Task Force (CJCMOTF), 5 Jul 2007, p. 3, Hist File, OEF Study Grp.

48. Interv, Warsinske with Kratzer, 16 Jul 2002, p. 2.

49. Interv, Van Wey with Kratzer, 5 Jul 2007, p. 3.

50. Msg, CINCCENT, 280846ZOCT01, sub: Frag 038, sub: Establishment of JCMOTF, para. 1.E.(2), p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

extensive cooperation with both partner nations and nongovernmental organizations. As a result, the United States almost always gravitated toward a central role, which subsequently made it difficult to extricate itself from nation-building missions or downsize its peacekeeping commitments. To emphasize the different approach being taken in Afghanistan, Franks forcefully informed Kratzer: "[W]e are not going to [re]create Bosnia. We were going to come in with a little bit of money for a short period of time to be the bridge between war and peace and to help the Afghan people [with] whom we are not at war."[51]

In accordance with Phase IV of the campaign plan, CENTCOM allocated a growing amount of resources to ensuring that terrorists could not regain a foothold in Afghanistan following the capture of Kabul. These efforts were intended to support ongoing operations as well as garner domestic support for the Afghan Interim Authority. CENTCOM still intended to give long-term responsibility for humanitarian efforts to other agencies as soon as possible. However, the risks associated with depending on outside agencies emerged when U.S. military forces initially received little help from international and nongovernmental organizations consumed with the challenges of relocating from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Ironically, the early success of the military's civil affairs efforts worked against building a closer relationship between the U.S. military and humanitarian organizations. Early press reports showcasing American military personnel helping Afghan villagers overshadowed coverage of similar nongovernmental and international efforts. The uncoordinated efforts of these other organizations contrasted so sharply with the results achieved by the U.S. Army civil-military efforts that a UN official admitted to Kratzer that, "I really don't want this repeated [to] the non-governmental organization community, but will you share with us where you're thinking about going because you're moving faster than we are, so we will follow you."[52]

The emergence of General Kratzer's organization as a lead player in humanitarian efforts led some nongovernmental aid organizations to view it as a competitor rather than a partner. Within a few short weeks, Kratzer noticed that the corporate offices of several major U.S. agencies were exerting significant effort to find fault with the military's civil affairs programs.[53] Even after humanitarian organizations finally arrived in Kabul, they often hesitated to cooperate with the American military openly for fear of compromising their image of neutrality. As a result, Phase IV opened more tentatively than CENTCOM had hoped, requiring leadership to revisit how the U.S. military would manage the transition from decisive operations to postconflict reconstruction. Adjusting operational plans in light of the dramatic successes of past weeks, however, consumed most of the time and interest of Franks' headquarters.

---

51. Interv, Warsinske with Kratzer, 16 Jul 2002, p. 8.

52. Ibid., p. 11.

53. Ibid., p. 9.

The Bonn Conference's decision to impose a centralized government on post-Taliban Afghanistan presented further unanticipated challenges to the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force. General Kratzer found himself shouldering the responsibility of teaching governance skills to interim authority representatives because the nongovernment and international aid organizations were unable to do so. Rather than confine his efforts to humanitarian missions, he remembered, "I ended up having at least an officer and sometimes a team working as advisers to almost all of the twenty-seven ministries of the Karzai government and doing what we could to help them stand up and help them be successful."[54]

The first significant success for civil-military task force efforts came when Kratzer, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, and U.S. Special Envoy Zalmay M. Khalilzad attended a donors conference in Tokyo from 20 to 22 January 2002.[55] A preliminary needs assessment, provided by Afghan officials with considerable assistance from Kratzer's organization, formed the basis for determining how to distribute reconstruction funding and prioritize humanitarian projects. After opening pledges of almost a billion dollars by the European Union and Japan, contributions by Iran ($560 million), the United States ($291 million), Saudi Arabia ($220 million), India ($100 million), Pakistan ($100 million), and Kuwait ($30 million) raised the overall amount of pledges to rebuild Afghanistan to more than $4.5 billion. It is important to note that the U.S. contribution at Tokyo was only the first year's total, whereas the amounts pledged by other nations reflected the amount to be contributed over several years.

Hamid Karzai met with President Bush in Washington, D.C., less than a week after the Tokyo Conference on 28 January. The two leaders focused on security issues. The private talks ended with the American president publicly expressing his willingness to train new police officers and help establish and train an Afghan national military rather than support a broader mandate for ISAF.[56] Although Karzai did not present Bush with a formal plan for training Afghan security forces during their meeting, Defense Minister Mohammed Qasim Fahim passed a proposal for a new national army to Secretary of State Powell a week earlier. It called for an initial force of 200,000, including 140,000 enlisted soldiers and 60,000 officers, to be drawn from the estimated population of 700,000 armed Afghans. Priority would be given to recruiting soldiers from militia groups that "played a significant part in the defeat of the Taliban and al-Qaeda."[57] After meeting with Bush, Karzai visited the Pentagon where he endorsed Fahim's plan.[58]

---

54. Interv, Van Wey with Kratzer, 5 Jul 2007, p. 13.

55. Ibid., pp. 26–27.

56. "Bush Meets with Afghan Head Karzai," *Columbia Daily Spectator* 126, no. 6 (29 Jan 2002): 3, https://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Franks, 28 Jan 2002, sub: Afghan National Army, Attachment, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/436/To%20General%20Franks%20re%20Afghan%20National%20Army-%20Memo%20Attachment%2001-28-2002.pdf, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 150.

Powell had already forwarded Fahim's plan to the DoD, where Secretary Rumsfeld's staff scrutinized it. The proposed program included $144 million for salaries paid to 60,000 officers, equating to an average annual pay of $2,400 each, and $33.6 million for the $240 annual salaries of 140,000 enlisted soldiers. The price tag for feeding 200,000 officers and men for a year totaled an impressive $182 million. In sharp contrast, Fahim placed the first year's cost of rehabilitating infrastructure and paying for operating costs of the new Afghan army's six main bases at a mere $67.47 million.[59]

Rather than sit down with the Afghans to determine how much it would cost to reconstitute their army, Rumsfeld tasked General Franks to assess what size army Afghanistan really needed, what missions it should pursue, how militia members should be integrated, and what it would cost.[60] CENTCOM reported to the secretary of defense that the Afghan National Army (ANA) needed only $4 million in startup costs.[61] Although the United States contributed $79.2 million to rebuilding the Afghan army during fiscal year 2002, the DoD's share was a paltry $4.3 million.[62] Even procuring this modest sum required legal and financial gymnastics on the part of DoD accountants because the State Department had statutory authority for all foreign security assistance, including train-and-equip missions. Melding the two sources of money led to General Kratzer's appointment as head of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan while he was also serving as the commander of the Civil-Military Operations Task Force.

In retrospect, it is clear the DoD viewed the ANA's reconstitution through a near-term budgetary lens rather than a long-term strategic one. By passing responsibility for the inaugural ANA funding estimate to CENTCOM rather than negotiating with Afghans, the United States signaled to Kabul that it did not consider the Afghan Interim Authority competent to determine its own needs. The DoD's course of action reflected a commendable sense of fiscal propriety, but it neglected the potential impact on Afghan and international opinion. In addition, limited early investment in Afghan security institutions placed far more vulnerable and costly nation-building initiatives at risk of Taliban interference. Without Afghan forces to secure the construction of new schools, clinics, and wells, American troops would have to perform those tasks. Finally, the DoD's fiscal conservatism during this period demonstrated that its leadership had yet to absorb the concept that money also could be an effective tool in the U.S. wartime arsenal.

Funding questions aside, Mikolashek sent a small group of CFLCC operations and planning officers, headed by Col. Michael B. Weimer, to

---

59. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Franks, 28 Jan 2002, sub: Afghan National Army, Attachment, pp. 5–6.

60. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 150.

61. Ibid., pp. 150–51.

62. The State Department provided the bulk of the funding. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 151; Rpt to U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Committee on International Relations, U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, But Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Office, Jun 2005), p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Kabul in mid-February to assist Kratzer. Discussions began on 18 February 2002 to determine the composition, armament, and deployment of the new force. At the onset, the Americans decreed that certain restrictions would be placed on prospective volunteers. Recruits had to have fought with the United Front, fled their homes in avoidance of Taliban rule, or resisted the Taliban. In all other matters, the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan solicited Ministry of Defense input on creating a new Afghan military. The discussions consumed much of General Kratzer's day, which led him to concentrate on security issues while his deputy, Colonel Nutter, assumed the duties of de facto Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force commander.

New Boots on the Ground for Evolving Missions

The Bush administration's expectations that the United States could transfer responsibility for security and reconstruction to the international community were enhanced by the arrival of ISAF in Kabul. Its commander, British Maj. Gen. John C. McColl, initially sought permission to deploy 8,000 ISAF personnel, including a sizable combat element. Representatives of the Tajik-dominated defense ministry vetoed that proposal while calling for no more than 1,000 personnel. Subsequent meetings produced a Military Technical Agreement, signed by McColl, Yunus Qanooni, and Kratzer on 4 January 2002, which capped the incoming international force at 4,500 soldiers with no more than 1,000 combat personnel.[63] Although no provisions were made to withdraw United Front warriors from Kabul, Fahim agreed to confine his troops to their barracks after ISAF arrived.[64] Following news of the signing, CENTCOM and CFLCC issued directives explaining the ISAF mission, how it would flow into Afghanistan, what facilities it would occupy upon arrival, and what support would be furnished to it.[65]

Recognizing the importance of working closely with ISAF, General Mikolashek dispatched a liaison officer, Col. Wayland E. Parker, to Kabul several days after McColl's arrival. CFLCC would send forty officers and enlisted personnel over the next several weeks, enough to create self-sufficient signal communications, intelligence, and administrative sections. In addition to maintaining a constant flow of information to CFLCC and CENTCOM, the liaison cell provided ISAF with both secure and open communications channels to their national representatives at Mikolashek's and Franks' headquarters. Colonel Parker's liaison cell also provided ISAF

63. Maloney, "The International Security Assistance Force," p. 7; Interv, Van Wey with Kratzer, 5 Jul 2007.

64. "Gurkhas Poised for Afghan Mission," *BBC News*, 9 Jan 2002, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1751037.stm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

65. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Updates 20 and 27 Dec 01, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

with ready access to information collected by U.S. intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems.[66]

Other U.S. military organizations also were arriving in Afghanistan during this period. Some of the incoming units were slated to replace forces departing for anticipated missions elsewhere, while others augmented ongoing efforts, such as civil affairs operations, that required different skills or more resources. The most significant changeover involved a relief-in-place between Col. Francis J. Wiercinski's incoming 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and General Mattis' TF-58. The relief-in-place mainly turned over security functions and flight operations at Kandahar International Airport as well as missions such as sensitive site exploitation and security for remote CIA and Special Forces outposts.[67] Given that several major al-Qaeda training camps were located in southern Afghanistan, the incoming Army brigade undoubtedly would play a major role in Phase III operations.

Initially scheduled for 10 January, the transfer began several days later due to unexpected difficulties moving Wiercinski's brigade combat team by air from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, into theater.[68] The delays reflected the fact that many aircraft in the Air Force's transport fleet were developing maintenance problems after three months of nonstop usage.[69] Given the challenges facing the overworked strategic airlift fleet, CFLCC decided to transfer Capt. Patrick C. Aspland's Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, from Pakistan to Kandahar on 15 January.[70] Upon disembarking, Captain Aspland's men joined other early arrivals, including Wiercinski's brigade headquarters and Lt. Col. Charles A. Preysler's 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry.

Although Wiercinski's brigade combat team left behind the 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry; most of the 3d Battalion, 320th Field Artillery; and its habitually supporting air defense battery, the units it did bring roughly matched TF-58 in combat power. Wiercinski's headquarters company and other attached units, such as Lt. Col. Thomas L. Pirozzi's 626th Forward Support Battalion and Capt. Micah R. Duke's Company D, 311th Military Intelligence Battalion, departed Fort Campbell with slightly less than their full complements. To the brigade's benefit, Capt. Mark C. Quander's

---

66. Interv, Maj John Warsinske, 47th MHD, with Col Wayland E. Parker, CFLCC International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Liaison Ofcr, 10 July 2002, pp. 23–24, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

67. Narrative Sum, Opn Enduring Freedom, CTF 58, Opns in Afghanistan, 27 Oct 2001–26 Feb 2002, p. 62, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

68. TF Talon helicopters were transported in roundabout fashion to California, Hawaii, and Guam on C–5s before reaching Diego Garcia, where they were reloaded onto C–17 aircraft that took them to Kandahar. Several C–5s broke down en route to Diego Garcia. Interv, Laurence Lessard, CSI, with Maj Paul E. Berg, frmr Bn Personnel Ofcr, 7th Bn, 101st Avn, 5 Feb 2008, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

69. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Charles A. Preysler, frmr Cdr, 2d Bn, 187th Inf, 8 May 2007, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

70. Capt Peter Aspland, "1-187 INF Comments," Rakkasan Rpt No. 1, 3d Bde Family Readiness Grp Newsletter 1, Issue 1 (13–19 Jan 2002): 2, https://www.angelfire.com/ns/yourwizard/stogransheroes/rep1-2.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Company C, 326th Engineer Battalion, deployed with more personnel and equipment than normally authorized. Quander needed the extra troops to maintain Kandahar Airfield.[71] Although not part of Wiercinski's brigade, the 519th Military Police Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Paul K. Warman also arrived during this period to assume the mission of securing the detention facility.[72]

Army rotary-wing assets appeared at Kandahar during the third week of January in the form of Lt. Col. James M. Mayre's Task Force Talon. Mayre's unit deployed with the 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation headquarters and headquarters company plus Company A, equipped with CH–47 Chinook medium lift helicopters, as well as attached companies of UH–60L Black Hawk assault helicopters (A/4–101st Aviation), AH–64 Apache attack helicopters (A/3–101st Aviation), aviation maintenance (A/8–101st Aviation), air traffic control (C/1–58th Aviation), and a forward support medical evacuation (medevac) team (50th Medical Company).[73] While the bulk of the rotary-wing aircraft remained at Kandahar to support Wiercinski's brigade, a number of UH–60Ls and several Chinooks were soon transferred to Bagram.

One of the final components of Wiercinski's force, the light infantrymen from Company B, 3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, arrived on 1 February. Company B began ten days of training on U.S. tactics and equipment in anticipation of working with Wiercinski's brigade while simultaneously assuming responsibility for defending a portion of the Kandahar Airfield perimeter. The remainder of the Canadian battalion led by Lt. Col. Patrick B. Stogran—including two additional infantry companies, reconnaissance and mortar elements of the combat support company, an armored reconnaissance squadron, an engineer company, and logistical elements—arrived piecemeal over the next several weeks.[74]

Planning for the Shahi Kot

Reports about al-Qaeda remnants hiding in the eastern reaches of Afghanistan led to the first significant engagement of Phase III taking place in the Shahi Kot Valley in early March 2002. Planning and preparation for a foray into that region began more than a month earlier when information obtained by ODA 594 from Afghans convinced Colonel Mulholland to send more reconnaissance assets into the Khost-Gardez region. These initial efforts failed when several Afghan scouts dispatched to the area by Capt. Robert S. Harward's TF K-bar never returned. On 7 February, a concerned

---

71. Interv, John McCool, CSI, with Maj Mark Quander, frmr Cdr, Co C, 326th Engr Bn, 7 Mar 2007, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

72. Lowery, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2002*, p. 201.

73. Lt Col Jim Mayre, "TF 7–101st AVN Comments," Rakkasan Report No. 2, 3d Brigade Family Readiness Grp Newsletter 1, Issue 2 (20–26 Jan 2002): 3, https://www.angelfire.com/ns/yourwizard/stogransheroes/rep2-3.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

74. "3 PPCLI [Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry] Battlegroup in Afghanistan, January–July 2002," Stogransheroes.com, 4 Feb 2002, https://www.angelfire.com/ns/yourwizard/stogransheroes/index.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Afghan civilian provided TF Dagger with more specific information about a sizable group of enemy fighters in the Shahi Kot Valley.[75] Rather than continue to rely only on Afghan sources, TF Sword prepared to dispatch its own reconnaissance teams into the valley.[76]

Like Tora Bora, the 150 square kilometers of the Shahi Kot, with its two valleys, the Upper Shahi Kot and the Lower Shahi Kot, made for a potentially difficult operating environment. The Lower Shahi Kot, located 1,500 meters above sea level, was eight kilometers long and four kilometers wide. Up to 1,000 Afghan civilians were reported to live on the valley floor in the villages of Marzak, Babul Khel, and Sher Khan Khel. A prominent ridgeline, soon nicknamed "the Whale" by U.S. forces because it resembled a well-known geographic landmark of the same name at Fort Irwin National Training Center in California's Mojave Desert, dominated its western side.[77] The eastern ridgeline, Takur Ghar, appeared even more foreboding, reaching 3,200 meters at its highest point. A narrow secondary ridgeline, dubbed "the Finger," protruded into the southeastern end of the valley. Whoever controlled the decisive terrain along the ridgelines, specifically those on the Whale, the Finger, and the eastern ridge, held an important tactical advantage.

The reports of massing enemy fighters in that area had surfaced as Captain Harward's command reached full operating capability and Colonel Mulholland's headquarters prepared to turn over its responsibilities to the incoming 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command. Keenly aware that his own staff had far more combat experience and greater insight into working with Afghan militia forces, Mulholland agreed to help Harward devise a plan to destroy the rumored enemy concentration. The initial concept jointly developed by planning cells collocated at Bagram between 6 and 13 February mirrored TF Dagger's proven method of pairing a small number of Special Forces with Afghan militia fighters and massive air support to overcome enemy forces in rugged terrain.[78]

When updated information placed the estimated number of al-Qaeda fighters in the Shahi Kot Valley at 150 to 200 strong, Colonel Mulholland and Captain Harward decided to solicit assistance from General Hagenbeck. All agreed that the 10th Mountain Division should have overall command of any major operation. Hagenbeck and Mulholland prepared a recommendation along those lines for General Mikolashek, who also agreed the idea had merit. CFLCC directed Hagenbeck to relocate to Bagram to enhance his ability to oversee the upcoming operation.[79] Mikolashek's staff tentatively redesignated

---

75. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 132; Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 279.

76. Although TF Sword was renamed Task Force 11 in January 2002, this account will use the original designation to avoid confusing readers.

77. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 280.

78. Rebecca Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda: An Airpower Perspective," HQ, U.S. Air Force, ATTN: [Office of the Air Force Lessons Learned], 7 Feb 2005, p. 22. This study presents the Air Force version of events following a lengthy published interview by Maj. Gen. Franklin Hagenbeck in which he discussed fire support problems that appeared in the September–October 2002 issue of the U.S. Army's *Field Artillery Journal*.

79. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 132.

Hagenbeck's new command as Combined Joint Task Force–Afghanistan (CJTF-Afghanistan) before renaming it CJTF-MOUNTAIN several days later.[80]

The new title could not disguise the fact that the 167 officers and enlisted personnel of CJTF-MOUNTAIN were only a fraction of the staff normally allocated to the 10th Mountain Division headquarters. Digital technology might have offset the personnel shortfall, but as General Myers noted during a visit to Bagram, "The Army had equipped Buster Hagenbeck's Tactical Operations Center so that it looked like something out of a World War II movie, with paper maps instead of interactive screens. CENTCOM had not provided Hagenbeck the facilities he needed to command and maneuver his forces in a rapid and flexible manner."[81]

Although bad weather delayed the 10th Mountain Division's movement from Karshi Khanabad, Hagenbeck's staff began refining existing plans upon arriving at Bagram. Mulholland's planners, led by Lt. Col. Mark D. Rosengard, offered to assist their CJTF-MOUNTAIN counterparts headed by Hagenbeck's chief operations officer, Lt. Col. David Gray, and deputy fire support coordinator, Lt. Col. Christopher F. Bentley.[82] The TF SWORD reconnaissance element also began liaising informally with CJTF-MOUNTAIN.[83] The fact that representatives from the Combined Forces Air Component Command (CFACC) were not present at Bagram at this point did not disturb the other organizations involved. In fact, the projected threat estimate did not seem to warrant making different air support arrangements. The information from various sources—some not fully verified—indicated that the concentration of fighters in the Shahi Kot were the security detail for low- and mid-level al-Qaeda leaders who would flee rather than stand their ground.[84]

Even though conventional forces were entering the fight, which arguably added a new dimension to tactical operations, CENTCOM did not mandate that CFLCC or its Air Component Command review existing policies, plans, and procedures. If that had occurred, CFLCC might have realized General Hagenbeck faced greater wartime command and control challenges than perhaps any other U.S. division commander in recent memory. Not only did Hagenbeck lack organic engineers, artillery, aviation, and reconnaissance assets, but his skeletonized division staff also formed the core of a combined joint task force, responsible for planning, conducting, and supporting the full range of coalition conventional and special forces operations and also for coordinating with theater headquarters.[85] While Hagenbeck could now

80. Interv, Brown with Hagenbeck, 15 Mar 2002, p. 2.

81. Myers with McConnell, *Eyes on the Horizon*, p. 211.

82. Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," p. 22.

83. Backgrounder, Blaber, p. 6.

84. Presentation, Maj Francesca Ziemba, sub: Operation Anaconda: CJTF-Mountain C2 Plans, "Threat Summary" slide, n.d., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The presentation's PowerPoint file was entitled "TRADOC [U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command] Roadshow," intimating that it was intended for internal professional development purposes and disseminated to U.S. Army audiences at training and instructional centers within the continental United States.

85. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, pp. 132–133.

draw upon the resources of several other organizations, many of the parties involved had little or no experience working with their counterparts. In fact, during the post–Cold War era, conventional forces were rarely afforded the opportunity to work with Special Operations elements and vice versa. The various Special Operations elements, ranging from Navy SEALs to Army Green Berets to the multiservice counterterrorist forces of TF Sword to the Australian Special Air Service, also were not used to working together on an operational level. Finally, Hagenbeck's staff had little or no experience coordinating with the CIA's paramilitary arm, which meant that they had to rely on Special Operations intermediaries to do so.

Impending combat operations led CENTCOM to designate General Harrell and the intelligence community's top military liaison, Brig. Gen. Michael D. Jones, as Hagenbeck's deputies. That move permitted Hagenbeck to interact with TF Sword elements and the CIA.[86] Having deputies familiar with many of the other organizations aided Hagenbeck, but their presence did not solve the issues created by inserting a partially staffed conventional headquarters within ongoing planning efforts involving the CIA and three different Special Operations elements. All of these elements were expected to participate in the upcoming operation, which resulted in each demanding a say in the planning. Although many of those involved with coordinating the upcoming operation knew of the problems within the new command and control arrangements, the fact that intelligence reports indicated the enemy fighters were more likely to flee than fight quelled their concerns.

As the new operational plan began to take form, its authors christened it Operation Anaconda in deference to the similarly named Union plan to blockade, encircle, and crush the Confederacy during the American Civil War. The 10th Mountain planners opposed a TF Dagger proposal to use air power to blast a path for Green Berets and Afghan militia entering the valley from all sides. Representatives from each organization sought to convince their counterparts of the merits of their respective proposals. Ironically, the lack of an Air Force coordination cell magnified rather than decreased the challenges facing General Hagenbeck, as all of the Army and Special Operations plans relied on massive close air support. Hagenbeck settled on a compromise version involving near simultaneous assaults by a combined U.S.-Afghan ground force and American conventional forces inserted via helicopter. The use of helicopters exerted tremendous influence on ongoing planning efforts, which included determining the overall timing, composition of conventional forces, and numbers of U.S. troops involved.[87]

Unlike in Tora Bora and earlier operations, the potential presence of numerous innocents complicated fire support planning. In addition to several hundred enemy fighters, intelligence sources estimated that 1,000 to 1,500

86. Backgrounder, Maj Gen Franklin "Buster" Hagenbeck, Cdr, TF Mtn, Opn ANACONDA, 1 Mar 2012, American Enterprise Institute, https://www.aei.org/press/operation-anaconda/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

87. Interv, Brown with Hagenbeck, 15 Mar 2002, pp. 3–4.



Department of Defense

Left to right: Wiercinski, Hagenbeck, Smith, Harrell, and Mulholland oversee early moves during Operation ANACONDA.

Afghans were living in the Shahi Kot region.[88] Concern for the valley's civilian inhabitants led CJTF-MOUNTAIN to restrict the use of preparatory fires and to task Afghan irregular forces, rather than American troops, to clear a trio of villages within the objective area. Intelligence assessments also predicted the enemy would fight only long enough to allow its leadership to seek sanctuary in Pakistan. Hagenbeck therefore defined success as preventing enemy leaders from escaping by establishing "three [concentric] circles around the Shah-i-Khot Valley to block off the primary escape routes."[89] The "circles" (which resembled arcs rather than full circles) would be created, beginning with the outermost circle, three days before the start of ANACONDA.[90]

Keenly aware that Cold War–era intelligence collection systems were ill-suited to provide real time information about diffuse threat arrays, CJTF-MOUNTAIN deployed more than two dozen TF K-BAR reconnaissance teams furnished by U.S. Navy SEAL Teams 2, 3, and 8; 3d Special Forces Group; Canada's Joint Task Force 2; New Zealand Special Air Service; Norway's Jegerkommando; Denmark's Jaegerkorpset; and the German Kommando Spezialkräfte along the northern half of the outer circle to maintain constant surveillance over east-west trails and roads. Lt. Col. Rowan J. Tink's Australian Special Air Service, now designated as TF-64, was responsible for the southern half. Despite unfavorable weather during the week before the planned assault, most teams were inserted successfully by helicopter atop

88. Capt Glen T. Helberg, "OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM: Eyes of the Eagle," (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 04 -02, 6 Feb 2003), p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

89. Interv, Brown with Hagenbeck, 15 Mar 2002, p. 3.

90. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 139.

prominent terrain across the north and south of the Shahi Kot. The teams were prepared to remain for as long as necessary in order to target enemy personnel fleeing toward Pakistan with close air support.[91]

The middle circle around the Shahi Kot Valley included two Afghan militia contingents supported by ODAs from the 3d and 5th Special Forces Groups that would move into place one day before the operation's start. Dubbed TF Anvil, these Afghan fighters were supposed to split up to establish two northern blocking positions dubbed Chevy and Ford as well as another pair in the south designated as Jeep and Oldsmobile.[92] The group led by Kamel Khan Zadran, consisting of 500 militiamen from Khost as well as ODAs 571 and 572, was responsible for the northern roadblocks. A second group led by Zakim Khan Zadran consisting of 300 to 500 fighters from the Urgun region supported by ODAs 542 and 381 had responsibility for the southernmost blocking positions.[93] To preserve operational security, the attached ODAs did not reveal details of the upcoming mission to their Afghan counterparts until just before it began.[94]

The villages of Marzak, Babul Khel, and Sher Khan Khel in the center of the valley were collectively designated as Objective Remington (*Map 3.1*). The innermost circle, consisting of heliborne elements from Colonel Wiercinski's 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, would be inserted at dawn on D-Day to occupy positions Amy, Betty, Cindy, Diane, Eve, Ginger, and Heather, which were oriented north to south along the eastern edge of Remington. In addition to his own personnel, Wiercinski received Lt. Col. Paul J. LaCamera's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry. Colonel Preysler's 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry, and LaCamera's unit were selected to conduct the air assault. Preysler's troops were responsible for Amy, Betty, Cindy, and Diane, while LaCamera's force established Eve, Ginger, and Heather. Lt. Col. Ronald E. Corkran's 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, remained in reserve at Bagram. Wiercinski, Corkran, and three members of the 1st Battalion staff planned to observe the initial assault into the valley from a command and control helicopter orbiting overhead.[95]

The concentric circles were only useful if the assault force pushed defenders out of the valley. Lacking sufficient American troops for the task, CJTF-Mountain assigned the task of pushing the enemy eastward out of the valley toward waiting American troops to Afghan militia fighters. This force consisted of 500 fighters led by Hazara commander Zia Lodin accompanied by Capt. Glenn R. Thomas' ODA 594 and Captain Matthew M. McHale's ODA 372. Two other groups of Afghan fighters, one led by a Pashtun commander named Khoshkeyer and the other by Zia Abdullah, agreed to cooperate with Zia Lodin.

---

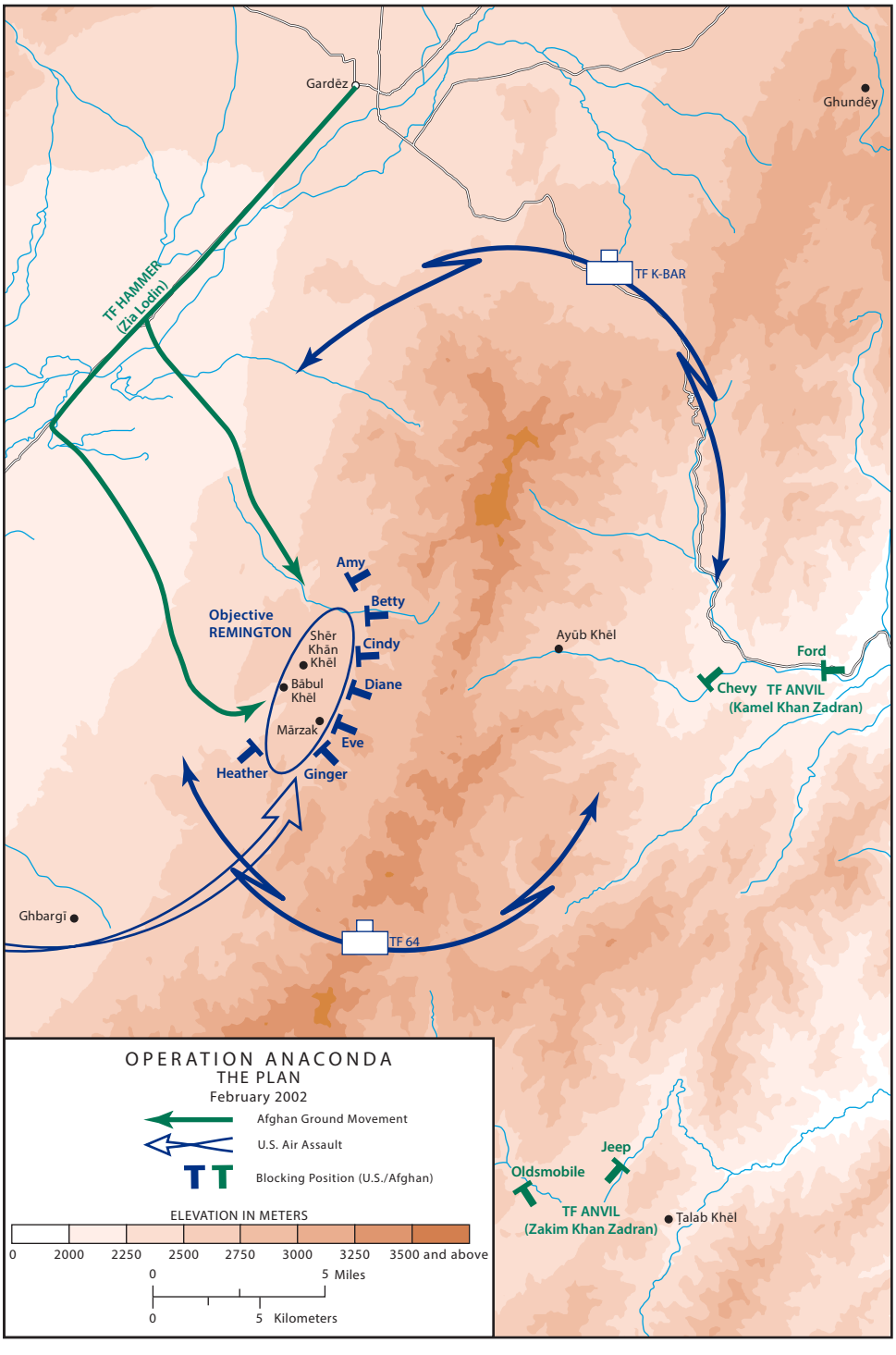
91. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 281.

92. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 139.

93. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 281–82.

94. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 141.

95. Ibid., pp. 139–40.


Gardēz
Ghundēy
TF HAMMER
(Zia Lodin)
TF K-BAR
Amy
Betty
Objective
REMINGTON
Shēr
Khān
Khēl
Cindy
Bābul
Khēl
Diane
Mārzak
Eve
Heather
Ginger
Ayūb Khēl
Ford
Chevy
TF ANVIL
(Kamel Khan Zadran)
Ghbargī
TF 64
OPERATION ANACONDA
THE PLAN
February 2002
Afghan Ground Movement
U.S. Air Assault
Blocking Position (U.S./Afghan)
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
2000
2250
2500
2750
3000
3250
3500 and above
0
5 Miles
0
5 Kilometers
Jeep
Oldsmobile
TF ANVIL
(Zakim Khan Zadran)
Talab Khēl

Map 3.1

Afghan participation added complexity and uncertainty to the plan because it entailed a lengthy night road march of more than 150 kilometers, separating the militia gathered at Gardez from their objective in the Shahi Kot. The final leg of the route would tax the capabilities of the militia to the utmost because they had to travel along unimproved roads in darkness and without lights. During the march, Captain McHale planned to detach his second-in-command, CWO2 Stanley L. Harriman, with a small Afghan force to block the northern entrance to the valley prior to the opening assault on the dominating ridgeline known as the Whale located on the western edge of the valley. The remainder of Zia Lodin's force, supported by the bulk of both ODAs along with all available 82-mm. mortars, would attack through the valley's southern entrance. Once the Afghan fighters cleared the Whale, they were instructed to assault Objective Remington, pushing the enemy to the west toward the Americans.[96]

Although the Afghan force was a key component of the overall American plan, CJTF-Mountain did not include their leadership in its pre-mission rehearsals and intelligence updates. Despite TF Dagger's confidence in the Afghan fighters, Hagenbeck's staff strongly believed that operational security likely would be compromised if Zia Lodin learned about the plan in advance. As a result, both he and his subordinates would not be briefed by their supporting ODAs until a few hours before his fighters departed for the Shahi Kot.[97]

General Mikolashek received the final version of the operational plan at Bagram on 17 February.[98] All commanders of participating American units, including General Hagenbeck and his Special Operations counterparts, attended in person or through video teleconference. The CFLCC commander did not express any serious reservations, stipulating only that, while he did not want the operation to begin before 25 February, it had to be initiated within thirty days to forestall any al-Qaeda attempt to launch a counteroffensive timed for the onset of the Islamic New Year on 21 March. As a result, Hagenbeck decided to launch Anaconda on 28 February. Mikolashek also suggested that Hagenbeck give the CFACC commander at Prince Sultan Air Base a copy of the final plan.[99]

---

96. Conducting a night road march under blackout conditions over this distance with little or no notice would be extremely difficult for even the best-trained American units. The Afghans, moreover, had received almost no training to sharpen their night driving or convoy skills before the attack. It is difficult to understand why Combined Joined Task Force (CJTF)Mountain attempted to synchronize this type of operation with an air assault requiring split-second timing unless it had no other options. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 282–83.

97. CJTF-Mountain factored the loss of surprise into its calculations because planners were certain the Afghans would notify the enemy of the impending assault. Presentation, Ziemba, sub: Operation Anaconda: CJTF-Mountain C2 Plans, "D-6 to D-1" slide, n.d.

98. Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek also received an update from Hagenbeck on 21 February 2002 before returning to Camp Doha. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update Kabul Trip 17–22 Feb 02, 24 Feb 02, 1129 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

99. Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," pp. 25–26.

As the start date for Anaconda neared, the TF Sword reconnaissance detachment supporting CJTF-Mountain shifted its priorities to pinpointing likely enemy locations. At sundown on 27 February, TF Sword dispatched three teams—Juliet, India, and Mako–31—into the Shahi Kot to establish observation posts overlooking key terrain in the valley. India took up position where it could observe the route being used by TF Hammer while Juliet set up overlooking the helicopter landing zones. However, Mako–31 halted just short of its intended destination when daylight threatened to expose its presence.[100] After holing up in a hide position for the day, the team resumed its trek at sundown on 28 February. Zero visibility produced by driving snow forced Mako–31 to suspend the effort once again. Several minutes later, CJTF-Mountain informed the TF Sword liaison that unsafe flying conditions would result in Anaconda being postponed until 0620 on 2 March 2002.

When dawn broke on 1 March, Mako–31 discovered an enemy antiaircraft position within fifty meters of its hiding place. After reviewing digital photographs of the heavy machine gun sent by Mako–31, Special Operations liaison personnel at Bagram realized that the enemy occupied the high ground, not the villages, and seemed ready to defend rather than beat a hasty retreat. The liaison team asked CJTF-Mountain not to land troop-carrying helicopters on the valley floor. Facing the prospect of cancelling the entire operation just before it began, Hagenbeck's chief of staff replied, "I know [we shouldn't land the helicopters there], but it's too late to do anything about it."[101]

Into the Shahi Kot

Operation Anaconda opened with a pair of AC–130 Special Operations gunships surveying the Shahi Kot Valley during the night of 1–2 March. One gunship confirmed that no enemy troops were in position to contest the movement of the Afghan assault force. The second gunship reported that its thermal sights detected no activity at Amy, Betty, Cindy, and Diane, with the exception of a few people walking near some buildings. Owing to mechanical problems, that same gunship returned to base before conducting a similar prebattle reconnaissance of Eve, Ginger, and Heather.[102] This development proved singularly unfortunate as Taliban reinforcements were in the process of occupying fighting positions near the southern landing zones after receiving a tipoff from one of the TF Hammer militia commanders. The tipoff not only triggered the Taliban's arrival, but also alerted between 300 and 400 Uzbek fighters located in that area. Unfortunately, the senior al-Qaeda leaders also

100. Backgrounder, Blaber, p. 6.

101. Ibid., p. 7.

102. Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," p. 61.

heeded the warning by leaving the valley through the southern passes before the Americans even appeared.[103]

The convoy carrying Zia Lodin's fighters departed Gardez as scheduled, but vehicle breakdowns and poor march discipline soon caused problems. The convoy's main body split in two following a truck rollover that injured a dozen or more Afghan militia.[104] When the lead elements reached a point just west of the Shahi Kot before dawn, Chief Warrant Officer Harriman's blocking force headed for the northern valley entrance. As the vehicles neared their designated objective, an explosion destroyed the lead HMMWV, mortally wounding Harriman and injuring two other Special Forces soldiers. Additional hits killed and wounded more than a dozen Afghans.[105] An outbound CH–47 picked up the wounded several hours later, but Harriman died soon after arriving at Bagram.[106] Several weeks elapsed before CENTCOM confirmed that an orbiting AC–130 gunship had mistakenly identified the convoy as an enemy unit following a navigational system failure.[107]

During the early hours of 2 March, Mako–31 made preparations to destroy the nearby antiaircraft machine gun position. The Americans planned to wait until one hour prior to the scheduled arrival of the helicopters before engaging the enemy troops. However, when an enemy soldier exited his tent at 0400 to urinate, he spotted the Americans. The Mako–31 team leader fired the first shots of Anaconda a split second later, killing the enemy fighter. The team killed two more al-Qaeda fighters while a fourth and fifth were eliminated by an orbiting AC–130H gunship.[108]

Commander Zia Lodin's column had halted while the northern element treated its wounded. Once word arrived that the casualties were on their way to Gardez or Bagram, Captain Thomas persuaded his Afghan counterparts to resume their advance. The first rays of daylight were appearing when Zia Lodin's column resumed movement toward the southern entrance. As they neared the valley, the Afghans hesitated. Special Operations historians later explained that mounting Afghan concerns stemmed from assurances that American aircraft would unleash fifty-five minutes of bombing against enemy positions before the assault force entered the Shahi Kot:

---

103. Presentation, Ziemba, sub: Operation Anaconda: CJTF-Mountain C2 Plans, "D-1 to D" slide, n.d.

104. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 141.

105. Ibid.

106. Capt James K. Gadoury, "Eleven Days in the Valley: Operation Anaconda from the Eyes of the A/2-187 Company Executive Officer," (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 05 -03, May 2003), p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

107. DoD Pentagon Bfg, Gen Franks, 29 Mar 2002, http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3382, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Maj Sean P. Larkin, "Air-to-Ground Fratricide Reduction Technology: An Analysis" (Master's thesis, U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, n.d.), p. 13, https://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA506423, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

108. Backgrounder, Blaber, p. 7.

> That promise and CAS [close air support] had been key in persuading the Afghans to participate. Expecting a massive allied bombing attack as the Americans had done against the Taliban in November and December, and then to al-Qaeda around Tora Bora, Commander Zia [Lodin] was surprised to observe and hear only seven explosions in the distance along the "Whale."[109]

In retrospect, it is surprising that the Special Forces personnel with the Afghan assault force did not foresee major adjustments to the plan as a result of the delayed arrival of Zia Lodin's force. CJTF-MOUNTAIN knew that many hours would be needed to regenerate the intricately choreographed air assault following a last-minute cancellation. If the helicopters aborted their approach, TF HAMMER would have to either retreat or initiate an assault before the blocking positions could be occupied. In any event, the ultimate responsibility for that decision fell on Colonel Wiercinski.

If the defenders had any doubts about the tip-off being accurate, the AC–130 engagements and bombing attack must have dispelled them. TF HAMMER reached the southern entrance only to encounter a punishing barrage delivered by artillery hidden in a gully on the reverse slope of the Whale. Dragging their wounded with them, Zia and Khoshkeyer's men retreated out of range. The ODA team leaders were trying to reorganize the Afghans when the American helicopter formation appeared. Recognizing that further air support would not be forthcoming, the ODA team leaders and Afghan commanders called off the assault. Thus, the elements considered to be the main effort of ANACONDA played little or no role in the start of the battle.[110]

As the heavily laden CH–47 and UH–60 helicopters neared the southern entrance of the valley, the air force liaison officer accompanying Wiercinski reported that "not all the targets have been struck. We are fifteen minutes from touchdown and it's obviously your call." Colonel Wiercinski replied, "[S]hut off the air strikes. We're going in. I want to get the guys on the ground, and then we can worry about bombing targets." The brigade air force liaison officer responded by broadcasting, "This is a *global knock it off!* The helicopters are five minutes out, and there will be no more air strikes until we get everybody on the ground."[111] That single call had sufficed to bring all bombing to a halt temporarily.

The initial air assault element led by Colonel Mayre of TF TALON, consisting of two UH–60L Black Hawks, five AH–64A Apache gunships, and six CH–47 Chinooks, entered the Shahi Kot Valley from the south just before dawn. The AH–64 Apaches preceded the troop-carrying helicopters by fifteen minutes to clear the valley of unforeseen threats. The Chinooks bearing Capt. Franklin F. Baltazar's Company C, 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry, passed a short distance from the antiaircraft position silenced by MAKO–31.

---

109. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 286.

110. Ibid.

111. Lester W. Grau, "The Coils of the Anaconda: America's First Conventional Battle in Afghanistan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2009), pp. 260–61 (emphasis in original).

Neither the Apaches nor Chinooks provoked an enemy reaction. Hagenbeck recalled:

> As the [*sic*] Al-Qaeda and Taliban were patting themselves on the back for their great victory of turning Zia [Lodin] away right at dawn, our helicopters went streaming in to the Shah-i-Khot Valley behind them onto the East Ridge. . . . In fact, [in] six of the seven landing zones from north to south, we were able to secure not only the landing zones but the designated battle positions [objectives] within two hours.[112]

Two of the leading CH–47s deposited Baltazar's third platoon near Diane and his first platoon near Cindy. Captain Baltazar later observed, "Initially, when I landed, there was no contact. Everyone rushed off the helicopter and kind of waited until the Chinooks left. Then, I would say, within a minute, we heard small arms fire."[113] Another minute or so passed before Baltazar's 3d Platoon informed the company commander it had made contact with enemy troops. A third CH–47 dropped off Preysler's battalion tactical command post, along with Company C's 2d Platoon, near a walled compound located between Amy and Betty.[114] The Americans encountered resistance from isolated gunmen and mortar fire, but a combination of Apache support and air strikes soon silenced the enemy. Preysler then ordered Company C to occupy its designated blocking positions, which it accomplished without loss despite several more brushes with enemy defenders. With the mounting successes, it seemed that the rugged terrain was more a formidable opponent than the enemy was.[115]

The 10th Mountain soldiers bound for the southernmost landing zones included the headquarters and a platoon from Capt. Roger A. Crombie's Company A, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, along with members of the battalion scout platoon; Capt. Nelson G. Kraft's Company C with its headquarters and two platoons; seven members of Colonel LaCamera's tactical command post accompanied by two Australian Special Air Service liaison personnel; and the crew of a 120-mm. mortar with forty-eight rounds of mortar ammunition.[116] Three-man intelligence and translator teams from TF Dagger accompanied each company.[117] All told, Crombie's contingent

112. Interv, Brown with Hagenbeck, 15 Mar 2002, p. 5.

113. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 146.

114. Interv, Clay with Preysler, 8 May 2007, p. 4.

115. Helberg, "OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM," pp. 10–11.

116. Interv, John McCool, CSI, with Maj Roger A Crombie, frmr Co Cdr, Co A, 1st Bn, 87th Inf, 10th Mtn Div, 30 Mar 2006, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Grau, "The Coils of the Anaconda," p. 257. Grau mistakenly states that two platoons of Crombie's company were part of the first lift.

117. Capt Travis Patriquin, "Operation Anaconda, March 2d to 5th, 2002," (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 05 -03, May 2003), p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

numbered forty-three officers and men, while Kraft's and LaCamera's combined force totaled eighty-two personnel.[118]

The CH–47 ferrying Crombie's company headquarters, rifle platoon, and the TF DAGGER liaison team led by Capt. Travis L. Patriquin hovered over the designated landing zone only to find it was unsuitable. The pilot reversed the helicopter to drop the soldiers atop a bare, snow-covered hilltop slightly to the west. Rather than remain where the CH–47 had left them, Captain Crombie ordered his men to occupy a larger hilltop nearby. Covered by Patriquin's team, which had the group's only long-range rifle optics, Crombie's men headed toward their new objective. The Americans were briefly opposed by a single al-Qaeda fighter who subsequently lost his life to an alert M–203 grenadier. Soon after reaching the new location, Crombie could observe at least a hundred al-Qaeda fighters on the valley floor but could not call for fire on them because the 3d Brigade tactical operations center did not know where all the SOF teams were located. Crombie's unit hunkered down atop the hill for the rest of the day, trading shots with al-Qaeda fighters as the sound of fighting to the south steadily increased.[119]

The swelling volume of small arms fire in the southern part of the valley emanated from enemy combatants swarming toward the helicopter landing zones in that area. It turned out that intelligence analysts had correctly predicted that the passes leading southeastward out of the valley would be used by the enemy to escape. However, neither the analysts nor the planners anticipated that the defenders would deploy most of their troops in that area to maintain control of those passes for as long as possible. Later events would reveal that around 500–600 enemy fighters, mostly Uzbek Islamists, defended the southern end of the lower Shahi Kot.[120] Unlike the attackers, the enemy fighters had enough insight into how the battle would unfold to weight their defense in the most critical sector.

In addition to superior numbers, the enemy had antiaircraft cannon and machine guns, several dozen 120-mm. and 82-mm. mortars, nine 122-mm. howitzers, and a 76-mm. cannon.[121] The artillery pieces, which played a key role in repelling the combined U.S.-Afghan assault from the west, had not been pinpointed in advance.[122] Reports of Afghan civilians living in the objective area were erroneous; al-Qaeda had forced the inhabitants out months earlier. While that knowledge might have convinced CJTF-MOUNTAIN to utilize

---

118. DoD News Bfg, Cmd Sgt Maj Frank Grippe at al., Interview with U.S. Soldiers who Participated in Operation Anaconda, 7 Mar 2002, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?Transcript ID=2914, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Macklin and Palmer, *SAS Insider*, p. 12.

119. Patriquin, "Operation ANACONDA, March 2d to 5th, 2002," pp. 5–6; Interv, McCool with Crombie, 30 Mar 2006, pp. 7–8.

120. Presentation, Ziemba, n.d., sub: Operation Anaconda: CJTF-Mountain C2 Plans, "Post-Anaconda View of What Was Actually There: D-6 to D-1" slide.

121. Grau and Billingsly, *Operation Anaconda*, pp. 118–121.

122. These included two recoilless rifles of unknown caliber, two unconfirmed 12.7-mm. antiaircraft machine guns, one antiaircraft cannon of unknown type, and one of the hidden artillery pieces. Presentation, Ziemba, n.d., sub: Operation Anaconda: CJTF-Mountain C2 Plans, "Known Locations, OBJ" slide.

significantly more preparatory fires, it ultimately made little difference given that most enemy defensive positions and heavy weapons were not located. The intelligence failures in the opening stages of Anaconda were numerous.

The unanticipated enemy resistance almost led to the loss of the 3d Brigade tactical command post. Colonel Wiercinski had planned to remain aloft during the initial air assault in order to maintain better situational awareness, but after hearing multiple reports of enemy contact, he directed the pilot of his Black Hawk to land on a ridge just southwest of Ginger. The other Black Hawk in the command and control flight also unloaded its passengers, including Colonel Corkran, on the same ridge. From his new perch, the 3d Brigade commander gained an excellent view of the valley's north-south axis. Although Wiercinski did not know it, he had disembarked only a few hundred meters from Mako–31.

Within a few minutes, Wiercinski's group had two sets of visitors, one welcome and the other unwelcome. The nearby TF Sword operators decided to join the 3d Brigade command group rather than remain in place. The other set of interlopers consisted of a group of nine enemy fighters. After an air strike and an Apache gunship failed to eliminate the approaching fighters, Wiercinski's command group and Mako–31 organized a hasty ambush that inflicted several casualties in the initial volley. The Americans then rose from their positions to hunt down and eliminate the stunned enemy troops. Enemy personnel did not approach Wiercinski's position for the remainder of the day, but tried unsuccessfully to blast the Americans with mortar fire.[123]

The five Apache gunships under Capt. William A. Ryan's Company A, 3d Battalion, 101st Aviation, were increasingly hard-pressed to answer all the calls for support they received. As the AH–64s circled overhead, mortar rounds impacted among the 10th Mountain soldiers on the southern valley floor. The mountainous terrain, coupled with the scattered disposition of both friendly troops and enemy personnel, forced the Apaches to employ running attacks while traversing along the length of the valley in full view of the enemy.[124] An infantryman recalled, "the enemy changed their focus from shooting at us, which I considered a good thing, and then started focusing on the helicopters."[125]

One by one, the Apaches received crippling hits and were forced to abort. Within thirty minutes of the first shots being fired, no American helicopter gunships remained in the air over the valley. Efforts to obtain close air support to replace the Apache gunships proved frustrating and disappointing. The Air Support Operations Cell that stood up at Bagram just prior to the air assault experienced overwhelming challenges on the first day of operations,

123. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col (Ret.) Ron Corkran, frmr Cdr, 1st Bn, 187th Inf, 9 May 2007, pp. 16–17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

124. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 151.

125. Interv, Clay with Preysler, 8 May 2007, p. 8.

including problems created by untested communications systems, tactical air controllers competing for limited resources, and a crowded airspace.[126]

Reports of fierce enemy resistance throughout the day convinced General Hagenbeck to delay sending in more helicopters until nightfall.[127] As darkness approached, CJTF-Mountain reinforced the northern blocking positions with Capt. Kevin J. Butler's Company A, 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry, rather than reinforcing LaCamera.[128] Hagenbeck also directed Crombie's Company A, holding the hilltop near Eve, to exfiltrate seven kilometers northward to the closest helicopter landing zone. It took all night and most of the following morning for the 10th Mountain soldiers to link up with Preysler's scout platoon.[129] Finally, Hagenbeck ordered the withdrawal of the southernmost blocking position due to the number of wounded requiring evacuation and the distinct possibility of losing a helicopter delivering reinforcements. The retrograde took place in two stages, with nine critically wounded soldiers being evacuated at 2000.[130] The remainder of LaCamera's command group and Captain Kraft's company, including lightly wounded soldiers, was airlifted out at midnight. Black Hawks also retrieved personnel from Colonel Wiercinski's tactical command post during this period.[131]

Day Two and Beyond

By dawn on the second day, the Americans faced a far different fight in the Shahi Kot than their planners originally envisioned. The Afghan militia fighters were essentially out of the picture for the time being, leaving the American conventional forces to carry on the fight. For their part, the infantrymen of the 10th Mountain Division and 101st Airborne were singularly ill-positioned to assume the role of both assault and blocking forces. Not only were there more defenders than anticipated, but the village of Marzak and the Takur Ghar ridge also appeared to be heavily fortified. In fact, video from a Predator unmanned aerial vehicle showed the enemy reinforcing the defenders rather than preparing to retreat.

General Hagenbeck had several priority tasks on 3 March 2002. First, he had to decide whether to reinforce Colonel Preysler in preparation for a push southward or instruct him to remain on the defensive. Second, the extraction of LaCamera's troops presented Hagenbeck with the unexpected

---

126. American planes dropped 177 Joint Direct Attack Munitions during the first day of Anaconda. In addition, B–52s dropped seventy-nine Mk–82 weapons. Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," pp. 66–70.

127. Interv, Brown with Hagenbeck, 15 Mar 2002, p. 7.

128. Gadoury, "Eleven Days in the Valley," pp. 6–7.

129. Interv, McCool with Crombie, 30 Mar 2006, pp. 8–9.

130. HQ, Dept of the Air Force, SO G-0063, n.d., sub: Capt Edward J. Lengle, Silver Star Awarded for Action During Global War on Terror, https://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=7443, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

131. Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," p. 65; Kraft, "Lessons Learned from a Light Infantry Company During Operation Anaconda," p. 29.



Spc. David Marck Jr., U.S. Army (USA)

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), scan the nearby ridgeline for enemy movement during Operation Anaconda.

challenge of finding a new way to bring supporting fires to bear on enemy fighters operating in the southern part of the valley. As General Hagenbeck recalled, "We had watched from aerial surveillance platforms, to our great frustration, a continuous infiltration of enemy reinforcements coming up from the south. . . . We really needed eyes there in the daytime to direct fire."[132] This gap in coverage meant that the strategic concentric circles were not as restrictive on enemy movement as originally planned.

TF Sword reacted to the unforeseen coverage gap by alerting two SEAL teams for insertion atop Takur Ghar. Soon afterward, Maj. Gen. Dell L. Dailey's deputy commander, Brig. Gen. Gregory I. Trebon, radioed from Oman to direct the reconnaissance element leader to exfiltrate Juliet, India, and Mako–31 after the SEALs arrived.[133] At the same time, Harward ordered a patrol from 1 Squadron of the Australian Special Air Service, accompanied by a U.S. Air Force combat controller, to establish an observation post on a prominent ridgeline three kilometers south of Takur Ghar overlooking Ginger.[134] While the Special Operations elements were reacting to Hagenbeck's

132. Interv, Brown with Hagenbeck, 15 Mar 2002, p. 8.

133. Backgrounder, Blaber, p. 8.

134. Sgt. Matthew H. Bouillaut of the Australian Special Air Service received the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism in this action. Craig Skehan, "Defence Lifts Lid on Hero's Actions," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 Apr 2002, https://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/04/17/1018333551671.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Ron Laurenzo, "Predator Was 'Point Man' During Operation Anaconda," *Defense Week*, 23 Sep 2002, https://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/756273/posts, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bradley Graham, "A Wintry Ordeal at 10,000 Feet," *Washington Post*, 25 May 2002,

concerns with commendable speed, the various directives risked generating a detectable level of activity as multiple teams were repositioned, inserted, or extracted within a compressed window of time.

Finally, Hagenbeck continued to have reservations about close air support arrangements. He viewed them as very unsatisfactory given the high number of combat controller teams competing for the attention of orbiting aircraft. He also felt there was an overreliance on precision-guided weapons that required either a ground-forward air controller or an Air Force enlisted terminal attack controller to employ. Hagenbeck's concerns led the CFACC to deploy five A–10 Thunderbolt IIs—a rugged, ground-attack platform that was optimal for strafing runs and low-level unguided ordnance delivery—from Ahmad al-Jaber Air Base in Kuwait across the 2,300 kilometers to Bagram. Not only did the A–10s add to the spectrum of close air support options, but they also could be called in by Army personnel.[135] Plus, unlike the AC–130s, the attack planes were authorized to conduct daylight operations in the face of enemy opposition. In addition, CFACC repurposed U.S. Air Force personnel at Bagram to form an Air Support Operations Center to provide CJTF-MOUNTAIN with expert planning assistance and a dedicated conduit to timely air support.[136]

Efforts to reinforce Preysler received high priority on the second day. Fortunately for the 101st Airborne Division personnel, enemy mortars were far less effective than the previous day, wounding only a single soldier. Rather than allow the enemy an opportunity to improve with practice, Colonel Wiercinski arranged for a morning air assault by the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, to eliminate the opposing mortar teams located east of AMY. The troops taking part in the air assault consisted of Colonel Corkran's command group; Canadian snipers; Captain Aspland's Company C; a platoon from Company D armed with .50-caliber machine guns removed from their HMMWVs; and Capt. Christopher Cornell's Company B, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry.[137]

Lacking the element of surprise, the second major air assault of ANACONDA did not unfold as anticipated. Although the helicopters made the journey from Bagram to the Shahi Kot without incident, arriving by noon on 3 March, the leading Chinooks received fire as they approached the landing zone, prompting them to turn away while the trailing flight braved the incoming rounds to offload Captain Cornell's company and part of Aspland's unit in

---

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/05/25/a-wintry-ordeal-at-10000-feet/f2dd16f6-cc53-40e6-9ec9-f1d9ab9a89ac/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

135. Lt Col Christopher F. Bentley, "Afghanistan: Joint and Coalition Fire Support in Operation Anaconda," *Field Artillery Journal*, HQDA PB6-02-4 (Sep-Oct 2002): 10–14.

136. The A–10s, which belonged to the 74th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, temporarily operated from a classified forward location in theater until repairs on the Bagram runway were completed on 5 March. Col Matthew D. Neuenswander, "JCAS in Operation Anaconda – It's Not All Bad News," *Field Artillery Journal*, HQDA PB6-03-2 (May–Jun 2003): 2–4.

137. Interv, Clay with Corkran, 9 May 2007, pp. 17–20.



S. Sgt. Aaron Allmon, USAF

The A–10 Thunderbolt II, or "Warthog," shown here flying near Kandahar, was a vital close air support weapon of choice for Enduring Freedom ground forces.

accordance with the plan.[138] News of those developments prompted General Hagenbeck to postpone the operation until nightfall, whereupon the lead helicopters returned to Bagram with troops still on board.

The Chinooks carrying Corkran's men returned to Bagram as SEAL teams Mako–21 and Mako–30, ordered to establish observation posts atop Takur Ghar, waited at the TF Sword reconnaissance element compound in Gardez. Once again, the profusion of close air support platforms proved to be less helpful than desired. Before teams could be inserted, the helicopters transporting the SEALs returned to Gardez to await a B–52 strike.[139] The Special Operations helicopters remained grounded until Colonel Corkran's task force returned to the northern end of the valley at midnight. Colonel Wiercinski arrived via helicopter at the same time to establish the brigade command post within Preysler's perimeter.[140] Concerned that the arrival of additional Army units might have alerted the enemy, Mako–30's team leader asked to delay the insertion for twenty-four hours, which TF Sword in Oman denied. General Hagenbeck at Bagram knew nothing of these developments.[141]

---

138. Capt Joseph T. Dickerson, "Untitled Paper" (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 05–04, n.d.), pp. 10–11. Then Lt. Dickerson was the 2d Platoon leader in Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, during Anaconda.

139. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice,* pp. 296–97.

140. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 156.

141. Backgrounder, Blaber, pp. 7–9.

The Chinooks carrying the SEALs finally took off shortly after 0230.[142] As the helicopter transporting Mako–30 approached Takur Ghar, a rocket-propelled grenade exploded on its left side, knocking out electrical and hydraulic power. PO1 Neil C. Roberts slipped on hydraulic fluid on the rear ramp, tumbling out of the helicopter to the ground below. The damaged MH–47E fluttered downward to perform a forced landing approximately 600 meters from Preysler's command post.[143]

Over the next eighteen hours, efforts to rescue Petty Officer Roberts consumed virtually all close air support dispatched to the Shahi Kot Valley. The first effort involved Roberts' comrades from Mako–30. The SEALs landed atop the mountain for a second time, but enemy fire killed their radio operator, Air Force Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, and wounded several others.[144] The MH–47E carrying the SEALs also suffered significant damage, rendering it non-mission capable. TF Sword then dispatched a quick reaction force from Bagram: two MH–47Es carrying twenty-two Rangers, an enlisted Air Force controller, and a three-man search and rescue team led by Army Capt. Nathan E. Self. Radio problems arising from an ill-timed frequency change resulted in the MH–47E carrying Self and eight Rangers flying directly to Takur Ghar while the other helicopter carried the remaining thirteen Rangers to Gardez.[145]

The MH–47E loaded with Self and his Rangers set down at 0614 only meters from where Mako–30 had attempted to land. The insertion lacked immediate fire support after an AC–130 gunship orbiting overhead departed at dawn per standard operating instructions. Within seconds of the MH–47E touching down, enemy fire tore through the helicopter, killing or wounding most of the crew and several Rangers. The surviving Americans exited the shattered airframe, seeking cover among nearby rocks. In a brief but intense engagement, the Rangers killed the enemy personnel near the downed Chinook. With the immediate threat neutralized, the Americans were able to treat their wounded while making preparations to take the fight to the other enemy personnel atop the mountain.[146]

The second MH–47E, loaded with Rangers and a senior SEAL, eventually departed Gardez. It landed 300 meters from Mako–30, whereupon the SEAL officer joined his isolated team while the Rangers ascended the Takur Ghar

---

142. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 298–99; Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 157.

143. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 157.

144. The Air Force submitted Sergeant Chapman for the Medal of Honor after reviewing enhanced Predator video suggesting that he continued to fight after Mako–30 retreated down the mountainside. See Sean D. Naylor and Christopher Drew, "SEAL Team 6 and a Man Left Behind for Dead: A Grainy Picture of Valor," *New York Times*, 27 Aug 2016, https://www.newyorktimes.com/2016/08/28/world/asia/seal-team-6-afghanistan-man-left-for-dead.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

145. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 298–99.

146. Nate Self, *Two Wars: One Hero's Fight on Two Fronts – Abroad and Within* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tynedale House Publishing, 2008), pp. 160–64. For a critical and widely accepted account of these events by an *Army Times* reporter in Afghanistan at that time, see Sean D. Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2006).



Spc. David Marck Jr., USA

Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division, participating in Operation Anaconda, prepare to dig fighting positions after a day of reacting to enemy fire.

summit. The next several hours passed slowly, with the enemy attempting to destroy the downed Chinook using mortar fire. The surviving Rangers, led by Captain Self, launched a counterattack that revealed the defenders were fighting from well-camouflaged bunkers.

The two Ranger groups joined forces to launch a successful coordinated assault on the enemy position. There they found the remains of Petty Officer Roberts and Sergeant Chapman, as well as several dead al-Qaeda fighters. As Self began evacuating his force, the enemy launched the first of several counterattacks. The al-Qaeda fighters spent the afternoon trying to overrun the small band of Americans, exposing themselves to fire from the Rangers and close air support strikes. The Rangers prevailed, but Senior Airman Jason D. Cunningham died of his wounds during that interval. Three MH–47Ds carrying fifty-nine Rangers to the scene were finally able to retrieve the dead, wounded, and living from Takur Ghar. A fourth MH–47D picked up Mako–30 and the senior SEAL officer.[147] The fight for Takur Ghar, the northernmost peak on what is now called Roberts Ridge by American forces, ended when the last U.S. service member departed at 2000. Sergeant Chapman and the SEAL team leader, SCPO Britt K. Slabinski, would be awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions on Roberts Ridge. Chapman was the first airman to earn the honor since the conflict in Vietnam.

147. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 311–18.

Pushing South

The 4 March 2002 fighting on Roberts Ridge demonstrated the strides that Bagram's Air Support Operations Center had made in providing what CJTF-Mountain needed in terms of air support. Improvements took the tangible form of more Mk–82 bombs and CBU–87s (cluster bomb units), which were useful against area targets. In addition, the first A–10 Thunderbolt II aircraft, performing in the dual role of airborne forward air controller and strike platform, arrived from Kuwait.[148] At the same time, CJTF-Mountain received rotary-wing reinforcements from AH–1T Sea Cobra helicopter gunships and CH–53E heavy lift helicopters from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The possibility of renewed fighting around Takur Ghar drove CJTF-Mountain to recalibrate existing plans. To revive the attack on Ginger, Hagenbeck planned to send Colonel LaCamera's battalion—consisting of Captain Kraft's company bolstered by two platoons from Company A; Capt. Robert B. Kuth's Company B from 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry; and Capt. Glenn E. Kozelka's Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, into the Shahi Kot once more. The latter two companies, arriving from Pakistan and Kuwait respectively, would accompany LaCamera's soldiers into the valley at 1615 on 5 March.[149]

At 1630, helicopters deposited LaCamera's force just west of Diane without incident. As the newly arrived Americans dispersed into the valley, they discovered six abandoned 122-mm. artillery pieces in the low ground covering the southern entrance to the Shahi Kot. The howitzers were camouflaged in a wadi with sights mounted, firing tables posted, and prepared ammunition stacked nearby. Engineers with LaCamera's force disabled the artillery pieces by placing explosive charges in their breeches. The destruction of the cannons meant that CJTF-Mountain could send ground forces through the southern valley entrance without being targeted by enemy indirect fire.[150]

Once his entire force arrived, LaCamera ordered Captain Kozelka's company and Captain Kraft's company to ascend Takur Ghar. The final element flown in, Captain Kuth's company, occupied an intermediate ridgeline overlooking Eve.[151] Starting at 1800, the two companies moved out toward the objective. Darkness fell soon afterward, making travel more difficult despite night vision goggles. As the lead platoons stumbled over jagged rocks and boulders ascending Takur Ghar, soldiers began to succumb to altitude sickness. Unable to continue without risking more soldiers' lives, LaCamera halted the advance at 0300. On a positive note for LaCamera, Colonel Preysler detached Captain Crombie's Company A, which began

148. Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," pp. 78–82.

149. The order of battle is drawn from Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 162. However, first person accounts from 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, members indicate a 5 March arrival at Bagram. See also CFLCC (Forward) Sitrep cited in Grant et al., "Operation Anaconda," p. 85.

150. Grau, "The Coils of the Anaconda," p. 424.

151. Capt Samuel Edwards, "OPERATION Anaconda: A Rifle Platoon Leader's Perspective" (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 02 -04, 9 May 2004), p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

moving south at dawn on 6 March to link up with the remainder of the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry.[152]

The situation on 6 March differed significantly from the opening day of battle. Coordination problems between coalition air and ground elements operating in the Shahi Kot largely had been overcome. American conventional forces in the valley increased by a factor of four, although units recently transferred from Kuwait and Pakistan had difficulty acclimating. The defenders had lost most of their mortars and artillery pieces. Nonetheless, Uzbek fighters and their Afghan allies were still being supplied with men and equipment through Objective Ginger.

In what can be interpreted as either an impressive demonstration of strategic airlift or the strategic fallacy of CENTCOM maintaining a limit on U.S. troops in Afghanistan even after the start of Phase III, sixteen AH–64s of the 3d Battalion, 101st Aviation, commanded by Lt. Col. James M. Richardson, deployed to Bagram from Fort Campbell.[153] The return of Apache helicopters to the fight, reinforced by Marine Corps AH–1T Sea Cobra gunships, meant that daylight operations by cargo- and troop-carrying helicopters could resume. Although many factors now favored the Americans, the weather did not. Increasing snowfall prevented Wiercinski's brigade from patrolling the foothills of the eastern ridgeline. The snow and lack of American activity also persuaded the defenders that it was time to depart the southern Shahi Kot.[154]

As the weather cleared on 8 March, CJTF-Mountain found itself with few options other than seizing the villages on the valley floor. Takur Ghar continued to attract attention, but the snow and a lack of climbing gear prevented Wiercinski from sending Colonel LaCamera's battalion to occupy the summit. Conceding defeat in the face of the mountain's impassable slopes, Hagenbeck ordered LaCamera to resume moving southward to Ginger. Bombing attacks against Takur Ghar were more successful, setting off secondary explosions that continued for hours after striking stored munitions.[155] Given the evidence that enemy troops were located in Babul Khel, on the Whale, and in Takur Ghar, the Americans still did not suspect that most of the enemy forces in the southern valley were now gone.

The remaining Uzbek and Taliban fighters began pulling off the ridges east of Remington on 9 March as the Americans belatedly detected signs of a withdrawal from Ginger. In response, TF K-bar ordered Australian Special Air Service patrols to move closer to the Shahi Kot's southern passes. LaCamera's task force advanced on Ginger that evening, halting twice to await air strikes by B–52s. Given that "[o]nly the rear guard on the Whale, the slow, and uninformed were left," rough terrain turned

152. Grau, "The Coils of the Anaconda," p. 425.

153. 1st Sgt P. McGuire, TF Rakkasan, 3-101st Avn, 03/02–08/02, "Long Hard Road: NCO Experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq" (PEP, U.S. Army Sgts Maj Academy, 2007), p. 20. Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

154. Grau, "The Coils of the Anaconda," pp. 435–38.

155. Ibid., pp. 448–54.



Spc. David Marck Jr., USA

A soldier with the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), scans the countryside for enemy targets during Operation Anaconda.

out to be more of an impediment to the 10th Mountain soldiers than the conspicuously absent enemy.[156]

Winding Up Anaconda

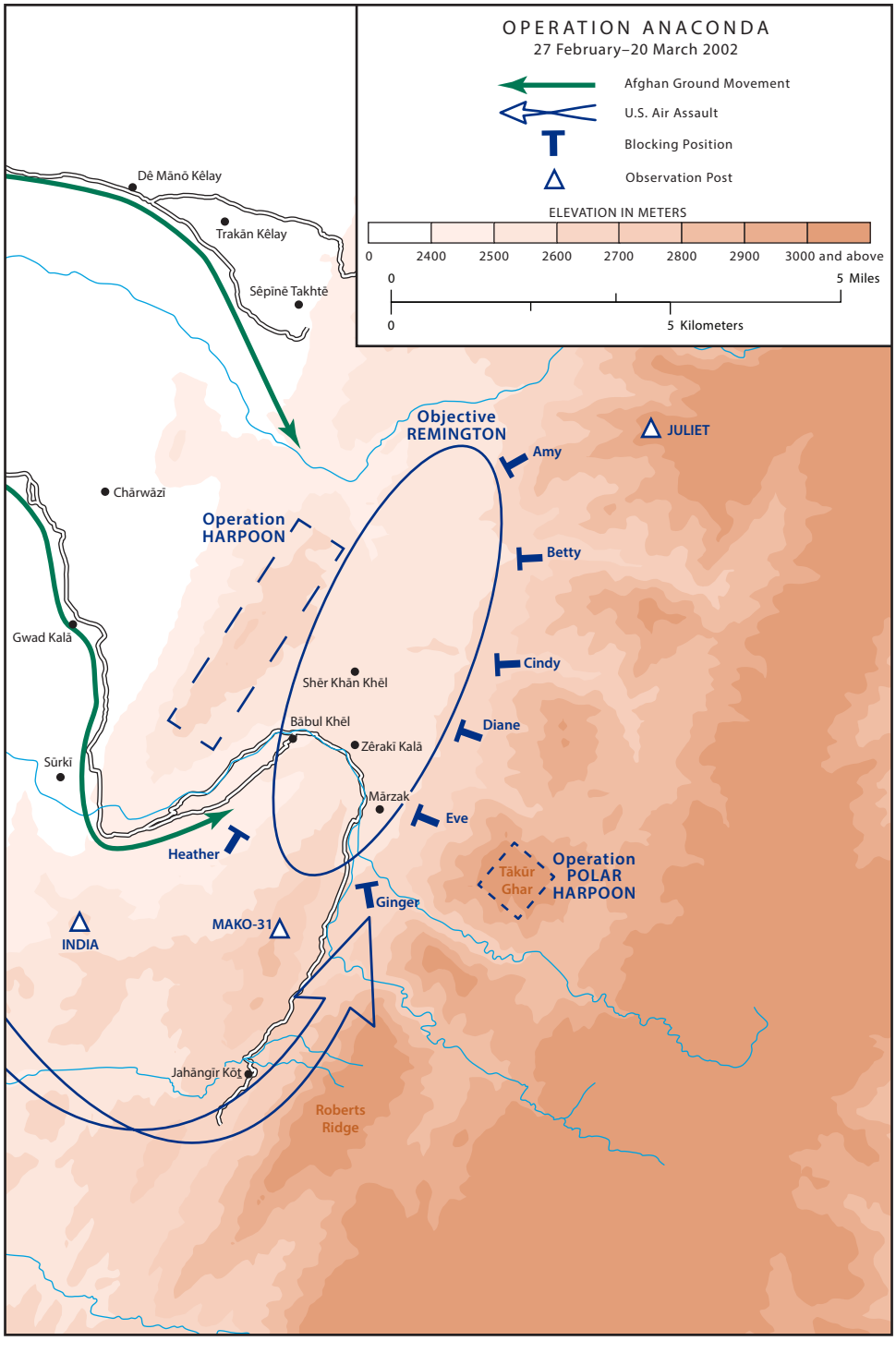
Lessening enemy resistance, mounting logistical requirements, and the impending commitment of Afghan militia forces prompted CJTF-Mountain to begin pulling U.S. troops from the valley. By this stage of the fight, Lt. Col. Patrick L. Fetterman's 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry, had arrived in Kandahar, allowing Hagenbeck to deploy the 3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry to Bagram to take part in Anaconda. The Canadian unit, whose sniper team, along with Corkran's 1st Battalion, had inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy during the recent fighting, deserved an opportunity to make a greater contribution.[157] The move did not surprise the Canadian commander, as Colonel Wiercinski had informed him earlier that his unit might be sent into the valley.[158]

The Canadians would have to wait until Afghan militia reentered the fight to subdue the Whale and clear villages on the valley floor. By this time, however, few personnel from the 5th Special Forces Group remained with the Afghans to help control their actions on the battlefield. Just before the attack,

156. Ibid., p. 459.

157. Ibid., p. 463.

158. Ron Corbett, *First Soldiers Down: Canada's Friendly Fire Deaths in Afghanistan* (Toronto: Durden Press, 2012), p. 98.


OPERATION ANACONDA
27 February–20 March 2002
Afghan Ground Movement
U.S. Air Assault
Blocking Position
Observation Post
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
2400
2500
2600
2700
2800
2900
3000 and above
0
5 Miles
0
5 Kilometers
Dê Mānō Kêlay
Trakān Kêlay
Sêpīnê Takhtê
Objective REMINGTON
JULIET
Amy
Chārwāzī
Operation HARPOON
Betty
Gwad Kalā
Cindy
Shêr Khān Khêl
Bābul Khêl
Diane
Zêrakī Kalā
Sūrkī
Mārzak
Eve
Heather
Takūr Ghar
Operation POLAR HARPOON
Ginger
INDIA
MAKO-31
Jahāngīr Kōt
Roberts Ridge

Map 3.2



Spc. David Marck Jr., USA

A soldier with the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), mans a .50-caliber machine gun during Operation Anaconda in the Shahi Kot mountain range in eastern Afghanistan.

scheduled for 0500 on 11 March, ODA 372 would establish an observation post on terrain that allowed it to observe the Shahi Kot and call in close air support as needed.[159] Both militia bands were instructed to hold in place until the Air Force dropped a massive 15,000-pound BLU–82 bomb on the Whale, signaling the start of the attack (*Map 3.2*).

Once again, Afghan reality did not match American plans. Ignoring instructions to wait until the following morning, the militia fighters seized the northern tip of the Whale during the evening of 10 March. The Afghans climbed up to the top of the ridge without meeting substantial resistance, whereupon they settled down around a roaring bonfire to await coming events. A second group of militia did not join the unauthorized advance, remaining just outside the northern entrance to the valley. The belated discovery of friendly militia atop the Whale forced Colonel Haas to cancel the BLU–82 strike.

Nevertheless, confident that the Canadians and Afghan militia could get the job done, the Americans started to airlift their troops out that evening, beginning with Captain Crombie's Company A, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry. Colonel Wiercinski decided to leave one company from each battalion behind while everyone else returned to Bagram. Colonel LaCamera volunteered to remain with the composite task force, which consisted of Company C from each of the four battalions.[160] Redeployment decreased the daily logistical support required by American forces in the Shahi Kot while freeing up

159. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, p. 322.

160. Grau, "The Coils of the Anaconda," p. 465.

additional capability to support the Afghans. In addition, TF Talon began cycling the CH–47 fleet through much needed maintenance in anticipation of future operations.

The militia attack began at dawn the following morning as scheduled, but it quickly degenerated into a melee as the Afghans exhibited little interest in following the agreed-upon plan. The dismounted troops formed a line atop the Whale in preparation for a north-to-south advance along the spine but soon abandoned that operation in favor of streaming down into the valley to loot abandoned villages. Zia Lodin's column encountered scattered resistance as it pushed through the southern entrance before turning north to join the militiamen holding the villages on the valley floor.[161]

Securing the High Ground

With the valley floor in coalition hands, General Hagenbeck tasked Col. Kevin V. Wilkerson's Karshi Khanabad–based 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, now designated as TF Commando, with clearing the towering ridges overlooking the Shahi Kot. With most of his organic and supporting units in the Balkans or at Fort Drum, Wilkerson would conduct the mission using Colonel Stogran's Canadian battalion, with Capt. Jonathan A. Stevens' Company A of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, attached, and Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165, equipped with three CH–53E Sea Stallion heavy lift helicopters; six Army CH–47s from Company B, 2d Battalion, 159th Aviation; and five Marine AH–1T Sea Cobra attack helicopters in support. In addition to Canadian infantry and Marine helicopters, Wilkerson gained the tactical command post from Lt. Col. Stephen J. Townsend's 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, which allowed Townsend's detached companies to revert to their parent headquarters.[162]

Task Force Commando planned to conduct an air assault, fittingly named Operation Harpoon, onto the Whale. (*See Map 3.2.*) Although clearing the ridge had been the responsibility of Afghan militia, Hagenbeck doubted how well they had accomplished the task. As senior ground commander, Colonel Stogran developed the tactical plan. Stogran decided that the Americans would sweep the spine of the Whale from northeast to southwest while his own Company A scoured the terrain immediately to the east. Company C of the 3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry supported the leading companies; while Company B served as Colonel Stogran's reserve. The western slopes of the Whale were so steep and rocky that Stogran settled for tasking his reconnaissance platoon and the Americans of Stevens' Company A with observing the area rather than ordering foot soldiers to negotiate the treacherous terrain.[163]

The combined force air-assaulted onto the Whale on the morning of 13 March with Stogran's Companies A and B, along with part of Stevens'

161. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 323–24.

162. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 166.

163. Ibid., p. 167.

Company A, in the first lift. Before the remainder of the 3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry arrived the following day, Stogran dispatched his Company B to the northeast to search for the enemy. After Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 delivered the rest of the force on 14 March, Stogran executed the operation as planned. With little time to acclimate after being sent to Afghanistan from Camp Doha in Kuwait, soldiers from Stevens' company experienced acute altitude sickness. Although the soldiers collected documents and destroyed several weapons caches, the sole enemy contact occurred when Stevens' 2d Platoon encountered a bunker held by several al-Qaeda fighters. Antitank rockets destroyed the position and its occupants.[164] Captain Stevens' Company A then returned to Bagram to prepare for Operation Polar Harpoon. On 18 March, Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 airlifted Stogran's battalion from the Whale after he reported mission completion.

Operation Polar Harpoon

General Hagenbeck still placed a high priority on clearing Takur Ghar and the valley immediately to the east. The arrival of Colonel Townsend's tactical command post permitted Colonel Wilkerson to launch Polar Harpoon using a two-company task force to clear all enemy off the Whale. In addition to Company A, Wiercinski directed Colonel LaCamera to return Captain Kozelka's Company C to Townsend. Townsend's plan called for inserting Kozelka's unit atop Takur Ghar approximately 800 meters north of Roberts Ridge while Chinooks transported Captain Stevens' Company A immediately east of Takur Ghar onto lower ground in the Nikeh Valley. Both companies were aided by U.S. Army Criminal Investigative Division experts, combat engineers and ordnance disposal experts, a military working dog team, and an Air Force tactical air controller team.[165]

Polar Harpoon began as scheduled with Townsend's task force lifting off from Bagram on 18 March. After an uneventful flight, the lead helicopter deposited the battalion command group and a platoon from Kozelka's company on a landing zone so small that the front two wheels of the Chinook were not touching the ground. After the troops disembarked without serious mishap, the second Chinook deposited the remainder of Kozelka's company onto the ridge. A few minutes at 2,600 meters altitude convinced Townsend that the heavily burdened soldiers would have to shed most of their gear to climb the remaining 460 meters to the summit. He ordered Kozelka to leave the company mortars and unneeded equipment behind before setting off toward Roberts Ridge.[166]

In a rapid string of successes, the 10th Mountain soldiers discovered dead al-Qaeda fighters, abandoned trenches, crew-served weapons, and

---

164. Capt Gregory Darling, "OPERATION HARPOON" (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course 04 -05, Seminar 1, n.d.), pp. 6–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

165. Dennis Steele, "The Valleys," *ARMY* 52, no. 6 (June 2002): 35–36.

166. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 171.

hidden bunkers honeycombing the mountain peak. In the valley below, Stevens' company similarly cleared each crevasse, cave, and manmade rock shelter. Lt. Andrew Exum's 3d Platoon of Company A encountered and killed an al-Qaeda member who was armed with an M–249 machine gun he had taken from a fallen American on Roberts Ridge. The searchers also recovered equipment left behind by the SEALs and Rangers. In all, Captain Stevens' company destroyed 3,000 mortar and recoilless rifle rounds as it cleared dozens of caves and bunkers.[167] Together, the companies established a defensive position overnight before being airlifted out the following day. The successful clearing of Takur Ghar marked the end of Anaconda.

The outcome of the Shahi Kot fighting satisfied neither combatant. CJTF-Mountain had made some questionable decisions, which included relying on Afghan militia and weighing the opening air assault insertions equally. These errors allowed the defenders to mass, forced the Americans to abandon their southernmost blocking position, and thus opened an escape route once the fighting turned against them. Despite the attackers' awkward tactical plan, al-Qaeda and foreign fighters failed to force their opponents to retreat, even though they had received advanced warning and held terrain and numerical advantages throughout much of the fight.

The American failures stemmed from a number of factors: a lack of accurate intelligence during the planning process, complacent air-ground coordination, employment of unconventional warfare methods when the situation dictated otherwise, and the involvement of far too many organizations—all of whom had little experience working with each other—in both the planning and execution process. Most of these problems can be traced to the fact that, based on CENTCOM guidance, the Army deployed into combat a division that lacked a full two-thirds of its force structure. After redeploying from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan on short notice, General Hagenbeck had to assemble additional combat power from a bewildering variety of sources. Although the additional troops and equipment theoretically provided Hagenbeck with greater capabilities, the unfamiliar challenge of building a team from such disparate forces was an overwhelming task. The shortcomings of Anaconda are attributable to planning and execution miscalculations at the tactical level, but the root cause stems from CENTCOM's inexperience determining what policies and approaches required adjustment during the transition from Phase II (Shaping Operations) to Phase III (Decisive Operations).

167. Steele, "The Valleys," p. 40.

Chapter Four

A Campaign in Transition

Most of Col. John P. Mulholland's 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, departed Uzbekistan and Afghanistan just before the start of Operation Anaconda. CENTCOM replaced TF Dagger with Col. Mark V. Phelan's 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, to form CJSOTF-Afghanistan.[1] Lt. Col. Mark D. Rosengard, former 10th Special Forces Group deputy commander and recent TF Dagger operations chief, volunteered to stay behind to provide continuity. Assuming the mission on 30 March, Phelan shouldered a wide range of responsibilities that included overseeing warlord militias, completing al-Qaeda's destruction, searching for weapons of mass destruction, and tracking down Taliban remnants. The 3d Special Forces Group was augmented by a battalion headquarters and one company from the National Guard's 20th Special Forces Group; 3d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group; Company B, 2d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group; coalition SOF; and a composite battalion of three companies from the Army National Guard's 19th Special Forces Group.[2] Phelan remained under CENTCOM's Special Operations Command operational control while CJTF-Mountain exercised tactical control over Phelan's command to coordinate and synchronize conventional and SOF operations.[3]

In addition to the northernmost Special Operations task force, the civil affairs component in Afghanistan was slated to transition during this timeframe. The Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force staff and 96th Civil Affairs Battalion assessment teams were identified to be replaced by two Army Reserve units, the 352d Civil Affairs Command and 489th Civil Affairs Battalion. Although the United States now had free access to virtually all of Afghanistan, the incoming civil affairs units were deemed sufficient in number to temporarily preside over an effort destined to be downsized by mid-summer from a Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force and supporting battalion to a cell working for the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan.[4]

---

1. "Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – South (CJSOTF-South) (Afghanistan) 'Task Force K-Bar,'" Global Security, n.d., https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/cjsotf-s-af.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 256–57.

3. Maj Richard G. Rhyne, "Special Forces Command and Control in Afghanistan" (Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 18 Jun 2004), , p. 42.

4. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update, 22 Mar 2002, 1420 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.



PH1 Tim Turner, USN

U.S. Navy SEALs conduct sensitive site exploitation operations in Afghanistan's Dzadzi Mountains.

Recognizing that efforts by nongovernmental and international aid entities were not as effective as originally estimated, Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek contemplated abandoning the minimalist approach espoused by President George W. Bush and his administration. On 19 April, he asked the CFLCC chief civil affairs officer to prepare a worst-case estimate on nation building in Afghanistan. In sharp contrast to the vague goal of "preventing the reemergence of terrorism," Mikolashek wanted his staff to prepare a revised Phase IV plan listing what the United States hoped to accomplish, how long it would take, and what it would take to meet those goals. The proposal did not garner much support from more senior headquarters, which forced CFLCC to abandon Mikolashek's attempt to identify the resources and goals needed to achieve a stable post-Taliban Afghanistan.[5]

CENTCOM's plans to transfer responsibility for humanitarian efforts made little progress as nongovernmental and international relief organizations continued to demonstrate reluctance to work with the U.S. military. When the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force asked several organizations to distribute aid to the inhabitants of Khost, their leadership refused, stating that they would not do so because of the lack of representation

5. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 19 Apr 2002, sub: ARCENT Update, 19 Apr 2002, 1614 hrs, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

from the International Committee of the Red Cross, suggesting that the area was not sufficiently secure for them to operate. General Mikolashek vented his frustration with the situation: "[T]hey criticize the military when convenient to them and yet fail to act where we've made it safe to do so."[6] In response, CFLCC directed Brig. Gen. David E. Kratzer to expand the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force's footprint by sending teams from the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion to areas where aid organizations refused to go, while continuing to pressure, cajole, or convince recalcitrant civilian agencies to support a coordinated countrywide effort.[7]

Creating the Afghan National Army

Talks about the future of Afghan security forces began when Ministry of Defense representatives met with General Mikolashek and the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan on 18 February. Many issues defied simple resolution because the parties were focused on different goals. An Office of Military Cooperation planner, Lt. Col. Steven D. Russell, noticed that the Afghans were more interested in broader, long-range milestones. Russell's counterparts were frank:

> [T]hey needed everything. They wanted everything. They had to have all their buildings rebuilt. They had to have all their uniforms replaced, all of their weapons replaced. . . . And then, when we looked at the types of needs that they had, we learned something that we had not considered before and that was they had military industry. . . . [they used to have] military meat packing plants, military wool producing plants that benefited not only the military and raised revenue for them but also provided wool and meat to the community. . . . It was the Soviet model.[8]

The Americans, by contrast, were far more interested in how the first four battalions would be trained and where the first nine ANA battalions would be quartered.

The Americans were also surprised to learn that the Afghans did not see Taliban remnants as their greatest security threat. Their top concern was securing their national borders, particularly to the east and southeast, from unfriendly powers seeking to unseat the interim authority. As a result, the Ministry of Defense prioritized creating 300-man border guard battalions over the 600-man light infantry battalions the Americans preferred. Seeking to avoid a lengthy delay, General Kratzer supported fielding a mix of border and infantry battalions until a force structure agreement could be reached.

---

6. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update, 18 Apr 2002, 1619 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

7. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, 4 May 2002, sub: ARCENT Update, 4 May 2002, 1632 hrs, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.

8. Interv, Maj John Warsinske, 47th MHD, with Lt Col Steve Russell, frmr Plans Ofcr, CFLCC C-5, 8 Jun 2002, pp. 5–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Both parties agreed that the ANA initially would consist of seven major units, known as "regional corps," of nine infantry battalions apiece. In addition, a "central corps" would be stationed in Kabul. Both parties also agreed on the need to train and field border troops. In addition, the Afghans approved the ten-week training program proposed by Kratzer's staff. That said, the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan did not commit the U.S. Army to training all of the regional corps. The Americans agreed to train only the first nine infantry and six border units. At that point, the Office of Military Cooperation stood prepared to either hand training over to the Afghans or remain involved for a second year.[9]

While the talks were underway, Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan representatives toured former Afghan military installations in order to identify potential training sites. The 1960s-era Kabul Military Academy, which survived relatively intact despite a B–52 strike that destroyed its power plant, was the most likely candidate. Though local residents had stripped most buildings of doorknobs, light fixtures, and windows, the survey team estimated that the academy could be refurbished once funding became available.[10] Finding the money to renovate the building, however, was a challenge: by law, Congress could not use security assistance dollars to fund the training of indigenous troops unless American troops provided the instruction. Given the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan's request for a full battalion of Special Forces or light infantry, Joint Staff planners needed time to align projected operational requirements before a specific unit could be provided. Special Forces or infantry units already in country could not be redirected to the training mission because they were already funded by the DoD.[11] As a result, security assistance funds would not be forthcoming until an American unit received the order to train Afghan soldiers. In effect, the bureaucracies and legalities of funding would not allow a fluid transition of the mission.

Efforts to rebuild the ANA faced yet another challenge, albeit from an unexpected quarter, when General Kratzer learned that he had been promoted to major general. Kratzer learned the news from General Mikolashek, who explained that the additional rank meant that Kratzer was leaving the Office of Military Cooperation to take command of the 377th Support Command (Theater). Although Kratzer recommended Colonel Rosengard as his replacement at Military Cooperation, Brig. Gen. John H. Kern, commander of the Army Reserve's 352d Civil Affairs Command, assumed this role as well as the role of commander of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force.[12] Rosengard replaced Kratzer's deputy, Col. Michael B. Weimer,

9. Ibid., pp. 5, 25–26, 65, 75–76.

10. Ibid., pp. 23–24.

11. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Lt Gen (Ret.) Paul T. Mikolashek, frmr Cdr, CFLCC, 13 Dec 2006, p. 14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. Interv, Mark D. Sherry, Contemporary Ops Br, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), with Maj Gen (Ret.) David Kratzer, frmr Cdr, CJCMOTF, 10 Apr 2012, pp. 92–94, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

who also departed during this period, while serving as interim commander until Kern's arrival.

In early April 2002, a second donors' conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss funding options to rebuild Afghanistan's military. The U.S. delegation included both Kratzer and Kern, as well as Colonel Russell. The Tokyo donors' conference had shown the international community's initial reluctance to fund the rebuilding of the ANA, but during the Geneva conference Kratzer discovered that the offers of assistance he received were influenced as much by internal political agendas as by an altruistic interest in post-Taliban security reform. The French, for example, wanted to train several battalions to show voters in their upcoming elections that the incumbent party, led by President Jacques Chirac, had made a material contribution to the fight against terror.[13] Regardless of motivation, all of the international offers of security assistance were valuable, but the conference was yet another cautionary reminder about depending on international venues to achieve U.S. strategic goals. After almost a week of meetings to discuss Afghan-related security issues, the United States, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and Japan agreed respectively to oversee army; police; judiciary; counternarcotics; and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts.[14] The conference attendees left Geneva without agreeing on detailed milestones or a way to synchronize individual efforts.[15] As a result, the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan had to devote significant effort to integrating individual pledges of trainers, equipment, and weapons for future Afghan military training.

Soon after Kratzer and Russell returned to Kabul, CENTCOM received word that Lt. Col. Kevin M. McDonnell's 1st Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group, had been selected to train the ANA. Preparations to begin funding the training mission began concurrently with McDonnell's deployment preparations. Funding would not become available for several weeks, during which time McDonnell could not airlift any of his unit's equipment or send an advance party. Learning of McDonnell's predicament, Colonel Phelan sent a team of nine soldiers, headed by his group executive officer, Maj. James S. Burnside, to help prepare the Kabul Military Academy for its first recruits by the 1 May 2002 start date established by General Tommy R. Franks.[16]

The small group of Military Cooperation staffers whose job it was to open the academy welcomed the newcomers with open arms. They arranged to have Spanish engineers clear some drainage ditches, while the Special Forces and Military Cooperation personnel performed most of the renovation work, which included fixing water pipes, replacing fixtures, and filling sandbags. Emergency funding from CENTCOM allowed the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan to purchase bullhorns, tables, chairs, and bedding from local vendors. A contingent of forty-five French soldiers

13. Interv, Warsinske with Russell, 8 Jun 2002, p. 84.

14. Dobbins, *After the Taliban*, pp. 122–24.

15. Feith, *War and Decision*, pp. 154–55.

16. Interv, Warsinske with Russell, 8 Jun 2002, pp. 93–98.

who arrived during this period managed all administrative aspects of the training. Colonel Rosengard took temporary charge of the organization just as the commander of the first Afghan battalion, Lt. Col. Najibullah Sadiqi, reported along with his staff and company commanders.[17]

The initial contingent of Special Forces trainers, along with essential equipment needed for their mission, were aboard the first C–17 to land at Kabul International Airport on the evening of 30 April. ISAF provided material-handling equipment to offload the aircraft and buses used to ferry personnel from the 1st Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group, to their barracks. The Americans were able to deposit their gear just before the first recruits appeared at the military academy's newly renovated reception station. Although it took several more days before intratheater airlift could ferry the 500 recruits in Colonel Najibullah's ethnically mixed unit, the course of instruction began as scheduled.[18]

CFLCC Prepared to Hand Over

Plans to redeploy Special Forces units in Afghanistan had been put into motion long before Anaconda began, but arrangements for rotating out the land component headquarters were placed on hold until fighting in the Shahi Kot Valley ended. During a 22 March video teleconference examining future requirements for Enduring Freedom, General Franks disclosed to Mikolashek that Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps, would assume Mikolashek's Afghanistan duties as early as 1 May 2002 but possibly not until 1 July. Franks noted that, in addition to Special Forces elements, a conventional brigade formed around two or three infantry battalions with associated combat support and combat service support assets, including rotary-wing aviation, would be available to Mikolashek's successor. The new force would be known as Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180). Navy Capt. Robert S. Harward's headquarters would leave soon after the newcomers arrived. Franks directed Mikolashek to do all he could to prepare the new headquarters to oversee combat operations throughout Afghanistan, rebuild the ANA, support humanitarian aid and civil affairs operations, work closely with ISAF, and remain capable of adjusting to major changes in the tactical situation.[19]

General McNeill learned of the decision to send his XVIII Corps headquarters to Bagram during a March 2002 training exercise hosted by Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia. The news did not come as a surprise because ISAF commander Maj. Gen. John McColl had informed McNeill during a visit to Kabul in February that several ISAF members had made their future participation conditional on the XVIII Airborne Corps deploy-

17. Ibid., pp. 95–96.

18. Ibid., pp. 108–15.

19. Memo, Eshelman for Third Army/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update, 22 Mar 2002.



PH1 Tim Turner, USN

U.S. Navy SEALs interact with local villagers during an operation in the Dzadzi Mountains. Operations such as these were conducted not only to exploit sensitive sites but also to better understand the environment.

ing to Afghanistan.[20] The decision to send the XVIII Airborne Corps to Bagram forced McNeill to ship almost everything he needed from Fort Bragg to Afghanistan instead of using CFLCC facilities in Kuwait. In keeping with previous efforts to maintain the smallest possible U.S. footprint in Afghanistan, General Franks told McNeill to restrict the new headquarters to no more than 400 personnel.[21]

General Franks issued the order authorizing the deployment of the XVIII Airborne Corps to Afghanistan in early April 2002. CENTCOM articulated McNeill's mission as synchronizing "land operations to destroy al Qaida [*sic*] and prevent the reemergence of international terrorist activities within Combined Joint Operating Area–Afghanistan and support humanitarian operations in order to create a peaceful and stable environment in Afghanistan."[22] CENTCOM believed the XVIII Airborne Corps faced "al Qaida [*sic*] pockets of resistance, al Qaida [*sic*] and Taliban leadership, and tribal elements who would actively engage in armed opposition to coalition operations in their areas or actively defend al-Qaeda elements." Although

20. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Maj Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Dan K. McNeill, frmr Cdr, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 180, 18 Sep 2015, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Interv, Col Timothy Reese, CSI, with Gen Dan K. McNeill, frmr Cdr, CJTF-180, 16 Jun 2008, pp. 6–7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Concept of Opns, CENTCOM, 4 Apr 2002, CONOPS for the Establishment of Combined Joint Task Force -Afghanistan (CJTF-AFG), final draft,, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

most low-level Taliban fighters had been integrated into the United Front or returned to their tribes, CENTCOM felt that some were still holding out in Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Zabul Provinces while the Taliban leadership was hiding in northern Helmand and Uruzgan.[23]

On Franks' recommendation, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld invited McNeill to a one-on-one session at the Pentagon soon afterward. Before the meeting, the XVIII Airborne Corps commander called on the senior Army leadership and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Erik K. Shinseki told McNeill to "do nothing that looks like permanency," while General John M. "Jack" Keane declared, "We are in and out of there in a hurry, Okay? . . . No more Camp Bondsteels," referring to the prohibitively expensive mega-base that U.S. forces had constructed in Kosovo during the Balkan peacekeeping operations in the 1990s. General Richard B. Myers echoed Keane's words when McNeill visited the Joint Staff.[24]

When McNeill arrived for his appointment with Rumsfeld, he found the secretary of defense prepared to offer detailed guidance. During the discussion, Rumsfeld admonished McNeill not to engage in nation building or allow American troops to become involved in Afghan internal politics. Rumsfeld wanted McNeill to remain focused on two primary missions: building the ANA and killing or capturing terrorists. McNeill departed the Pentagon with little doubt that security assistance and counterterrorism were the secretary of defense's sole priorities for CJTF-180. Several months later, on his own initiative, McNeill added assisting the Karzai government with extending its reach and helping with the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process to his growing list of priorities.[25]

The transfer process was slated to begin on 23 April with the arrival of the XVIII Airborne Corps' predeployment site survey team. CFLCC would host the survey team to ensure its members learned what they needed to know in order to smooth out the transition. Although both staffs could work side by side at Camp Doha, the transition would not be complete until the XVIII Airborne Corps established itself at Bagram. Fortunately for CJTF-180, the transition did not require the XVIII Airborne Corps to assume all Third Army/ARCENT responsibilities. While McNeill's corps assumed command and control over Enduring Freedom, Mikolashek's headquarters retained its Title 10 service responsibilities. As a result, units such as the 513th Military Intelligence Brigade and 11th Signal Brigade remained behind to provide support after Third Army/ARCENT returned to Fort McPherson.[26]

With the formal changeover set for 30 May, McNeill would start with a virtually clean slate as both the Afghan Interim Authority and ISAF handed the reins to their successors in June. The Bonn Conference had mandated that an Emergency Loya Jirga, a nationwide convention of 1,450 delegates

23. Ibid., p. 2.

24. Interv, Reese with McNeill, 16 Jun 2008, pp. 6–7.

25. Ibid., p. 8.

26. Memo, Col Eshelman for Third Arm/ARCENT Cmd Grp and Staff, sub: ARCENT Update, 20 Apr 2002, 1135 hours, Story CFLCC Collection, OEF Study Grp.



49th MHD

General McNeill engages with Governor Hakim Taniwal in the critical border province of Khost.

representing all communities and tribes, be held in Kabul from 11 to 19 June 2002 in order to form a transitional administration. Among other goals, the loya jirga would select a new leader for Afghanistan who would rule until the presidential elections slated for 2004.[27] It also provided the Pashtun majority with a chance to assume a greater role in the new government, which to date had been dominated by United Front Tajiks and Uzbeks. As a result, McNeill did not know before deploying if he would be working alongside Karzai or any of the interim administration's officials beyond CJTF-180's first three weeks at Bagram. As it would turn out, Hamid Karzai would remain in office.

The United Kingdom planned to relinquish command of ISAF to Turkey on the day after the end of the Emergency Loya Jirga. Although CENTCOM encountered few obstacles assembling the initial ISAF contingent, both the United Kingdom and the United States had to meet several conditions imposed by the Turkish government before it agreed to appoint Maj. Gen. Hilmi Akin Zorlu as General McColl's successor. The first indicator that Ankara viewed the mission differently than the United States came in early April after media representatives reported that UN officials were entertaining Afghan suggestions to deploy peacekeepers beyond Kabul. Secretary Rumsfeld welcomed international peacekeepers taking on a larger role in Afghan stabilization, as long as the United States did not have to fund

27. International Crisi Group, "The Loya Jirga: One Small Step Forward?," Asia Bfg 17, 16 May 2002, https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/loya-jirga-one-small-step-forward, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

their operations, but the Turkish government reacted by immediately making clear that it did not support ISAF expansion.[28]

Even though the Turkish government tentatively agreed to run Kabul International Airport, staff the ISAF headquarters, train a battalion of Afghan recruits, and contribute 1,500 troops between June 2002 and February 2003, final approval remained contingent on financial incentives and improved living conditions for Turkish soldiers.[29] The United States met the former stipulation by adding $28 million in foreign military financing and $200 million in economic support funds for Turkey in the March 2002 emergency supplemental request submitted to Congress. British troops already deployed to Afghanistan accomplished the latter task, which led British government official Steve Brooking to note: "UK soldiers found it somewhat ironic that they were constructing brick buildings in the ISAF headquarters for the Turks, while they themselves were living in tents."[30] It remained to be seen how General Zorlu would view his day-to-day relationship with CJTF-180.

The Last Enclave: Mountain Lion

Although President Bush campaigned fiercely against the Clinton administration's enthusiasm for committing U.S. troops to nation-building missions, his remarks at the George C. Marshall Reserve Officer Training Corps Award ceremony at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, on 17 April 2002 indicated otherwise. He did not specifically commit CENTCOM to a greatly expanded mission, but he did convey the impression that more resources would be allocated to Phase IV of the campaign plan by reminding his audience of the long and costly American program to rebuild post–World War II Europe. Bush also linked a peaceful and democratic Afghanistan to ongoing rebuilding efforts. On the following day, the *New York Times* proclaimed, "President Bush today embraced a major American role in rebuilding Afghanistan, calling for a plan he compared to the one George C. Marshall devised for Europe after World War II, and vowed to keep the United States engaged in Afghanistan until 'the mission is done.'"[31] The speech would have considerable effect on future policy development.

The president also unveiled the last major operation to be planned and executed in Afghanistan before the XVIII Airborne Corps arrived. He noted in his public remarks that "the battles in Afghanistan are not over. American and allied troops are taking risks today in what we call Operation Mountain

---

28. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 157; Carol Migdalovitz, Turkey: *Issues for U.S. Policy*, RL31429 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 22 May 2002). p. 12.

29. Migdalovitz, *Turkey*, p. 12.

30. Steve Brooking, "Early ISAF: 'The Good Old Days,'" Afghan Analysts Network e-Book, Jul 2012, http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/9/8_Brooking_Early_ISAF.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. James Dao, "A Nation Challenged: The President; Bush Sets Role for U.S. in Afghan Rebuilding," *New York Times*, 18 Apr 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/18/a-nation-challenged-the-president-bush-sets-role-for-us-in-afghan-rebuilding-html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Lion, hunting down the Al-Qaeda [*sic*] and Taliban forces, keeping them on the run."[32] Planning for Mountain Lion began in late March after intelligence analysts informed Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck that survivors from Tora Bora and the Shahi Kot Valley were gathering in a village about ten kilometers south of Zhaware Kelay in Khost Province.[33] In response, Hagenbeck directed his staff to devise a plan to prevent them from disrupting the Emergency Loya Jirga in June.[34]

Located in a canyon only four kilometers from the Pakistani border, Zhaware Kelay had been a major logistics transfer point for the mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan war. Supplies and weapons traveled from Pakistani ports and overland routes to Zhaware Kelay, where they were stored in eleven tunnel systems carved into the southeastern face of Shediyaki Ghar.[35] SEAL Team 3 originally investigated the tunnels on 6 January and found documents, radios, inoperable Stinger man-portable surface-to-air missiles, and several mass graves. In addition, the team identified more than sixty buildings and three dozen caves for further investigation in an area measuring five by six kilometers.[36] To continue the search, Captain Harward extended the original mission for another eight days. Using captured al-Qaeda vehicles, the SEALs combed the entire area, destroying newly discovered caches with their own explosives and calling in air strikes against others. On 14 January 2002, helicopters extracted the SEALs and marines without incident.[37]

Capitalizing on the buildup of logistical support and the arrival of Task Force Jacana, a brigade-sized infantry unit led by British Brig. Gen. Richard Lane consisting of 1,700 personnel from the Royal Marine 45th Commando, CJTF-Mountain planners determined that the optimal means of safeguarding the Emergency Loya Jirga was to sustain pressure against known and suspected enemy forces in eastern and southeastern Afghanistan for several months.[38] The 10th Mountain Division's concept of operations now called for revisiting Shahi Kot and Tora Bora, sending conventional forces to Zhaware Kelay, and launching other operations based on new

---

32. President George W. Bush, "President Outlines War Effort," (Remarks, George C. Marshall ROTC Award Seminar on National Security, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va., 17 Apr 2002), p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Capt Timothy B. McCulloh, "Operation Mountain Lion: Combat Monogram" (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course, n.d.), pp. 6–7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 185.

35. Mir Bahmanyar, *Afghanistan Cave Complexes 1979–2004: Mountain Strongholds of the Mujahideen, Taliban and al-Qaeda* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2004), p. 51.

36. DoD press conferences hosted by Tori Clarke and R. Adm. John D. "Boomer" Stufflebeem also confirm the air strikes that took place after the operation. Transcript, "Pentagon Briefing: Zawar Kili Buildings Searched, Destroyed," R Adm John D. Stufflebeem and Victoria Clarke, DoD, CNN, 14 Jan 2002, http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0201/14/se.04.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. Brandon Webb, *The Red Circle: My Life in the Navy SEAL Sniper Corps and How I Trained America's Deadliest Marksmen* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012), pp. 255–92.

38. "Last Marines Arrive in Afghanistan," BBC News, 20 Apr 2002, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1941370.stm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

intelligence.[39] Mountain Lion faced an unfamiliar challenge in the form of diminishing access to intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets as they were being redirected to Iraq.[40] Mountain Lion thus depended far more on Afghan sources—which often had their own agenda—rather than U.S. technical means.

In the opening action of Mountain Lion, Lt. Col. Ronald E. Corkran's 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, departed from Kandahar on 3 April onboard CH–47 Chinooks to seize and clear the Zhaware Kelay tunnel complex. Corkran's plan called for two rifle companies to establish blocking positions while Company A cleared a series of small valleys immediately north of the tunnels. Over the next two days, Company A worked its way south toward the main concentration of caves and tunnels. Although they destroyed caves and buildings with demolition charges, the Americans discovered little of interest. As the battalion prepared to return to Kandahar, storms and high winds forced the troops to remain in place before helicopters finally were able to venture safely once more into Zhaware Kelay on 7 April.[41]

In the wake of Corkran's sweep through Zhaware Kelay, CJTF-Mountain ordered the Canadians and British into the fray. On 16 April, TF Jacana initiated Operation Ptarmigan for the purpose of sweeping through the recent Shahi Kot battlefield.[42] Approximately 1,000 British personnel, aided by 500 Afghan militia, took part in the operation, which did not encounter the enemy. A tragic mishap delayed 3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry's participation in Mountain Lion when a U.S. Air Force F–16 pilot erroneously identified Canadian troops conducting a live-fire training exercise near Kandahar as enemy troops firing on his aircraft. Despite instructions from a controller aboard an orbiting Airborne Warning and Control System E–3A aircraft not to release any ordnance, the pilot dropped a 500-pound bomb on a Canadian infantry platoon, killing four and wounding eight.[43] The incident played a major role in the Ottawa government's decision not to send more ground troops to Afghanistan after Lt. Col. Patrick B. Stogran's battalion rotated home.[44]

---

39. Bfg, CJTF-Mountain, HQ, 10th Mtn Div, n.d., sub: Afghanistan and Operation Anaconda, slides 41–42, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, pp. 184–85.

40. Interv, Reese with McNeill, 16 Jun 2008, p. 3.

41. McCulloh, "Operation Mountain Lion," pp. 8–12; Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 186.

42. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 186.

43. Corbett, *First Soldiers Down*, pp. 131–34.

44. Both the U.S. Air Force and Canadian militaries separately investigated the incident. As a result of the American investigation, the pilot who released the bomb received a letter of reprimand questioning his judgment and integrity, and was pulled from flight status permanently. The flight leader received a written admonishment for failing to exercise proper control over his wingman's actions. Canadian public opinion believed that the pilot who dropped the bomb should have been jailed rather than reprimanded. Canadian soldiers who served in Afghanistan felt little bitterness toward their American counterparts in general, but harbored strong feelings against the pilot who killed their comrades. John Hendren, "Charges Dropped in 'Friendly Fire'

Colonel Stogran's unit reentered the fight to conduct Operation Tori II in the Tora Bora area. The Canadians were ferried from Kandahar to Bagram aboard U.S. Air Force C–17s in late April, whereupon they waited for eight days before receiving their mission. On 4 May, Chinooks airlifted Companies A and C of the 3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, along with Stogran's tactical command post, snipers, and a reconnaissance platoon, to Spin Ghar in the Tora Bora cave complex. American Special Forces personnel, Afghan militia guides, and a team of U.S. forensic scientists also took part. The combined force examined dozens of caves and exhumed twenty-three graves near the village of Ali Khel, but a week of searching disclosed no information about bin Laden's fate.[45]

During the first week of May, TF Jacana launched Operation Snipe into southeastern Afghanistan. While the British marines encountered no enemy fighters, they destroyed four caves filled with tons of mortar ammunition, artillery shells, and surface-to-surface rockets.[46] General Lane returned to Bagram on 13 May to declare the campaign against al-Qaeda and the Taliban "all but won." He elaborated on that statement:

> It is true to say that we did not encounter the enemy during this operation. But from a strategic perspective, this is an encouraging sign. The fact that al-Qaeda had been forced to abandon one of the most strategically well-placed and easily defended location[s] in Afghanistan speaks volumes for the military and psychological impact of the operation.[47]

Lane's subordinates, however, complained privately to reporters about the failure of the Pakistanis to seal the border, prompting media representatives to observe, "British officers now talk openly of al-Qaeda having sanctuaries in tribal areas of Pakistan that are off limits to attack because of 'political considerations.'"[48] Public enthusiasm within the United Kingdom for British troops taking part in Enduring Freedom waned in the wake of these revelations.

Mountain Lion may have helped secure the success of the Emergency Loya Jirga, but it failed to find, fix, and destroy the enemy even though it employed an unprecedented number of conventional combat units. Looking back on

---

Deaths," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Jun 2003, https://articles.latimes.com/2003/jun/20/nation/na-pilots20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Pieter M. O'Leary, "Friendly Fire during the War on Terror: The Law, Procedure, and Likelihood of Recovery Based on the Tarnak Farms Incident," *Gonzaga University Journal of International Law* (2 Feb 2008), https://blogs.law.gonzaga.edu/gjil/2008/02/friendly-fire/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

45. Stephen J. Thorne, "The Caves and Graves of Tora Bora," *Legion Magazine* (1 Sept 2003), https://legionmagazine.com/en/2003/09/the-caves-and-graves-of-tora-bora/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. "Al-Qaeda Arms Dump Destroyed," BBC News, 11 May 2002, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1982059.stm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

47. "Marines' Mission Ends in Frustrating Success," *The Scotsman*, 14 May 2002, https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/marines-mission-ends-in-frustrating-success-1-567010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. Ibid.

this phase of the campaign, General Mikolashek rightfully characterized the wholesale removal of intelligence assets as one of his greatest concerns. American estimates on the intentions of their elusive foe depended increasingly on intelligence gleaned from captives and friendly Afghans as technical collection assets were transferred from Afghanistan in anticipation of future operations in Iraq. This situation forced Mountain Lion planning efforts to rely on a worst-case assessment of enemy capabilities rather than verified intelligence.[49] Because the American forces lacked accurate intelligence, they wasted considerable effort in their operation and had to release a growing number of apprehended Afghans after they discovered that their erstwhile captives were not Taliban.[50]

The formal handover between CJTF-Mountain and CJTF-180 took place at Bagram on 30 May 2002. The Bush administration's interest in assembling general purpose forces for upcoming campaigns, coupled with a pervasive belief that U.S. gains would not be seriously challenged in the near term, triggered tremendous turnover within CJTF-180 soon afterward. The original contingent of U.S. active component, general purpose forces departed, and were replaced either by reserve component organizations that lacked comparable training, equipment, and experience or (in the case of Canadian and British infantry contingents) by no one at all. Although ISAF remained in Afghanistan, General McNeill found himself working with new coalition leaders when the Turks replaced General McColl's staff in June 2002.

The turnover occurred in part because the Bush administration felt McNeill faced a far more permissive operating environment than his predecessor. As a result, CJTF-180 needed less access to resources, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems, than CFLCC. Although the White House considered the environment in Afghanistan as more permissive, McNeill still had to abide with operational limitations prohibiting employment of CJTF-180 forces in neighboring Pakistan. That restriction was logical only if the government of Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf could prevent the Taliban from reconstituting within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The Bush administration's efforts to limit long-term investment in post-Taliban Afghanistan thus confined McNeill's antiterrorism efforts to securing the Bonn Process, fielding the ANA, and mentoring key officials as Afghans learned how to exercise political power within a centralized government framework. Given the minimal near-term risk, this limited approach seemed feasible, but success would be far less certain if the Taliban proved resilient enough to challenge the new government in Kabul.

---

49. Interv, Connors with Mikolashek, 13 Dec 2006, p. 14.

50. During the third week of May, for example, U.S. forces detained fifty-five people at a compound west of Kandahar, only to discover that one man was a former junior Taliban official. See News Bfg, Sec Donald Rumsfeld and Vice CJCS Gen Peter Pace, 30 May 2002, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3469, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Conclusion



Senior Bush administration officials established the Global War on Terrorism policy before the shock generated by the September 11th attacks had subsided. Their approach differed from past experiences by seeking to eliminate stateless terrorist groups and coerce nation-states to end their support of such organizations. Their deliberations suffered, however, from a lack of information and existing plans for a conflict in Afghanistan. The initial concept developed by CENTCOM influenced cabinet discussions, which drove General Tommy R. Franks to refine draft plans to match changing guidance from his superiors. That cycle forced the military to discard deliberate planning for a more dynamic, adaptive approach. In addition, the DoD advocated a warfighting style that promoted transformational initiatives and was championed by senior administration officials. These factors, combined with a joint planning doctrine that placed greater emphasis on the opening rather than the closing phases of a campaign, produced a constantly evolving war plan that in some respects had been examined meticulously and yet in other respects was severely underdeveloped.

Although a small circle of key individuals successfully produced strategic guidance for the opening campaign in a remarkably short time, the lack of detailed information and preexisting plans hobbled CENTCOM's ability to visualize what might occur after hostilities began. Key elements required by military planners, such as the termination criteria—"specified standards approved by the President and/or the Secretary of Defense that must be met before a joint operation can be concluded"—were not immediately forthcoming.[1] Once hostilities began on 7 October 2001, the relentless pace of events ensured that key administration figures had to amend the initial plan in response to unforeseen developments rather than deliberately refine it in an effort to shape the trajectory of the campaign. After the first bombs dropped, White House strategy sessions focused more on near-term developments than on charting a broader path toward a sustainable end-state.

In an impressively brief period of time and with few casualties, U.S. Special Forces, airpower, and allied indigenous militias dominated the battlefield in Afghanistan. Conventional forces followed up by reducing the remaining al-Qaeda strongholds in the Shahi Kot Valley before expanding

1. This topic had been discussed in military academic circles since the end of the Gulf War in 1991. The president's senior military advisers are responsible for pressing for this information if the collaborative decision-making forum fails to do so. Joint doctrine from that period, however, does not mention this critical requirement to any extent. See Lt Col Robert S. Soucy et al., "War Termination Criteria and JOPES: A Dangerous Omission in U.S. Crisis Action Planning," Armed Forces Staff College Intermediate Program, Class 94-1, 25 Mar 1994, https://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/research/p180.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

their scope of operations to encompass all of southern Afghanistan. Those dramatic developments, when combined with the premature decision to begin planning for operations against Iraq, obscured the need to reexamine the Global War on Terrorism's trajectory. A sober re-evaluation at this point in the campaign would have revealed that only one of its three main goals—ending Taliban rule—had been achieved.

Even though CENTCOM expelled the Taliban government and al-Qaeda from Afghanistan, both organizations had sufficient transnational support to survive elsewhere. With U.S. interest fixed on al-Qaeda, the Bush administration did not place enough emphasis on denying Taliban leaders sanctuary in nearby Pakistan. As a result, although General Dan K. McNeill was charged with preventing the reemergence of terrorism until the Afghan Interim Authority demonstrated its own capability to do so, he could only delay the Taliban's eventual return. A large number of rank-and-file Taliban remained in the relative safety of their home villages to await developments. In this instance, U.S. forces in Afghanistan could not achieve the desired level of success because strategic guidance did not reflect the realities of post-Taliban Afghanistan.

For the most part, the unexpected issues that emerged at the end of what was characterized as one of the most successful military campaigns in recent history did not stem from deliberate decisions. Neither the Bush administration, nor the U.S. military, nor the CIA had detailed knowledge of Afghan personalities, customs, or tribal dynamics, and had not fully considered the economics of the failed state at this point in the campaign. These shortcomings surfaced in unanticipated ways following the surprising successes of mid-November 2001, which meant that the original CENTCOM plan envisioning the start of the main effort in May 2002 was no longer valid. As a result, the DoD did not appreciate the fact that the United Front could not readily transition itself into the primary military defense force of post-Taliban Afghanistan.

The Bush administration's faulty assumption that indigenous allies could assume a large share of security responsibilities in post-Taliban Afghanistan would have long-term detrimental effects on the country's security. When Tajik and Uzbek militias proved reluctant to operate in southern regions of the country, the XVIII Airborne Corps deployed its forces in Pashtun-dominated areas rather than accept a security vacuum in that vital region. Lacking indigenous support comparable to that available to TF Dagger, Special Operations task forces supporting the XVIII Airborne Corps had to rely on irregular militias with uncertain loyalties and motives. The rising number of irregulars working with U.S. Special Forces, when combined with Tajik and Uzbek reluctance to contribute fighters to the new Afghan Army, undermined the authority of the nascent Kabul government over time. The DoD, focused on marshaling its resources for the upcoming campaign in Iraq, did not see the need to immediately remedy this situation, thus necessitating a greater investment several years later.

Because of this combination of recognized and unacknowledged factors, the United States unwittingly surrendered the strategic initiative to the Taliban—who, unlike the Serbians in the Balkans, did not interpret their early

defeats as an end to the struggle. By focusing primarily on avoiding a long-term commitment of U.S. forces, the administration discounted the potential need for a robust post-Taliban U.S. presence. Even though the defeated Taliban forces were not a near-term threat, the risk they posed increased when their reconstitution efforts in Pakistan began to outpace the growth of Afghan government security forces. The United States had two options to deal with this situation: devote more resources to increase the capacity and capability of the Afghan security forces, or interfere with the Taliban's rearmament efforts. Cost concerns made the former option undesirable, and the latter proved difficult as the Taliban's leadership and support elements remained within Pakistan.

SECTION II

SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION


J.C. MUÑOZ 2019

Section II

Introduction



Events in Afghanistan between November 2001 and May 2002 appeared to validate the unconventional approach to warfighting advocated by CENTCOM and supported by the Bush administration. The initial campaign had been conceived in a matter of weeks and executed months earlier than envisioned, though many al-Qaeda leaders remained at large and Phase IV remained to be completed. The overthrow of the Taliban regime also produced several unanticipated changes in policy that affected the course of the campaign. The most significant change involved recognizing the Bonn Conference timetable for introducing democracy to Afghanistan. This would culminate with national parliamentary and provincial council elections in September 2005. Although the DoD accepted that some American troops needed to remain in Afghanistan throughout the process, its strategic focus shifted to planning for a preventative conflict aimed at deposing Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

A second change occurred in April 2002 when President George W. Bush pledged to implement a "Marshall Plan" program to help Afghans return to a semblance of normalcy following two decades of conflict. Just as President Harry S. Truman understood in 1945 that nation building was the most effective means of preventing the spread of communism among war-weary populations in postwar Europe, the Bush administration realized that Afghanistan required a long-term commitment of energy and resources to prevent militant Islam from once again taking root within its borders.[1] That policy shift not only was a major departure from Bush's presidential campaign rhetoric against using military forces for nation building, but it also heralded the fact that major changes needed to be made to Phase IV of the CENTCOM campaign plan.

The Army itself entered the first full year of the Global War on Terrorism with 180,000 soldiers deployed or forward-stationed in 120 countries, amounting to 17 percent of the Army's 1,044,302 officers, warrant officers, cadets, and enlisted soldiers. The overall end strength included 486,542 soldiers in the active component, 206,682 Army Reservists, and 351,078 in the Army National Guard. Those figures reflected an increase over the previous year of 5,741 active component personnel and 1,054 National Guardsmen,

1. John A. Smith, "Afghanistan's Marshall Plan," *New York Times*, 19 Apr 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/19/opinion/afghanistan-s-marshall-plan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

balanced in part by a decrease of 751 Army Reservists.[2] All components met or exceeded their retention and recruiting goals during 2002, thus assuring the Army's ranks would remain filled, at least for the near term, as the Global War on Terrorism progressed.[3]

As of October 2002, the Army's senior leaders ranked their three most critical tasks as follows: (1) helping to win the Global War on Terrorism, (2) transforming to meet future challenges, and (3) securing the resources needed to simultaneously fight terrorism and transform the Army. The war itself was a formidable challenge, given that the Army was a core component of America's military response to the September 11th attacks. Soldiers taking part in that mission were serving both in the United States and overseas, with approximately 14,000 soldiers deployed in the CENTCOM area of responsibility as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, while more than 32,000 Army Reserve and National Guard personnel protected the United States from subsequent terrorist attacks. The latter figure did not include more than 11,000 National Guardsmen called up by state governors for similar tasks, such as securing airports, dams, seaports, and power plants. In addition, more than 5,000 Army personnel took part in securing the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. Thousands of Army personnel continued other security-related missions, which included a presence in Kuwait to deter Iraqi aggression and long-term peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Sinai.[4]

Transformation continued along an unwavering, pre–September 11th trajectory during 2002, in large part because senior Army leaders viewed involvement in Afghanistan as a reason to accelerate existing efforts rather than reexamine their basic premise. The May 2002 cancellation of the Crusader 155-mm. self-propelled howitzer program was an exception to that trend, but the program was cancelled only at the insistence of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. However, the Army continued to invest in the Future Combat System, which had been designed to replace Cold War–era combat vehicles. The Future Combat System program sought to produce a lighter, rapidly deployable family of manned and unmanned vehicles with a common design linked by a state-of-the-art digitized communications architecture beginning in 2010. The development of the first Stryker-equipped medium-weight brigade, slated to be fully operational by May 2003, continued in 2002 as the unit successfully completed exercises that tested its deployability and digitized command and control network. The Army planned to field a total of six Stryker brigades by 2007.[5]

---

2. William M. Donnelly, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2002* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011), p. 13.

3. Ibid., p. 14.

4. The peacekeeping missions involved a mix of active and reserve component elements. The Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Infantry Division assumed responsibility of the Bosnia mission for six months near the end of 2002, providing all deploying elements including aviation support. Thomas E. White Jr., "The Army Is Dedicated to Delivering Victory," *Army Green Book 2002–2003* (Oct 2002): 17.

5. Ibid., p. 18.

The strategic landscape changed following the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, where the Army overcame scattered resistance from an overwhelmed conventional opponent unable to cope with the tempo of operations imposed on them by U.S. ground forces. Although that effort culminated with the capture of Baghdad on 9 April, postcombat operations increasingly focused on countering an insurgency that rapidly expanded in scope and level of violence by spring 2004. Troop levels in Iraq during 2003 and 2004 reached 67,700 and 130,600 respectively, with casualties totaling 2,279 killed and wounded in 2003 and 4,886 during the following year. By comparison, operations in Afghanistan resulted in 96 casualties in 2003 and 189 in 2004 while involving approximately 85 percent fewer troops (10,500–15,200).[6] The Iraqi insurgency increasingly monopolized the attention of the Bush administration, DoD, CENTCOM, and the Army. That conflict would also steer Army transformation in unanticipated directions.

In 2002, the Bush administration continued to believe it did not need to mobilize the nation for the Global War on Terrorism. CENTCOM had to monitor the allocation of military power and other resources destined for Afghanistan while ensuring that it had sufficient resources to attack Saddam Hussein's forces. Finally, the swiftness and perceived decisiveness of the initial campaign in Afghanistan convinced the administration of the wisdom of embracing transformation. However, when the DoD repositioned most of the existing high-tech assets to support the impending conflict with Iraq, it left U.S. forces in Afghanistan with far fewer capabilities than they originally possessed.

While American troops remained in Afghanistan to oversee the installation of a democratic central government, the Bush administration realized that some of the Afghan warlords recruited to defeat the Taliban did not necessarily share that vision. It would take years before the Bush administration realized that a number of prominent Afghans within the Kabul government placed personal, tribal, and ethnic goals above the formation of a democratic, fully representative central government. For the time being, the administration focused on building a nonsectarian ANA capable of defeating threats to the democratization of Afghanistan, which included not only recalcitrant warlords but also extremist groups seeking to take advantage of the Taliban's ouster.

American commanders also committed much of their limited available resources to fulfilling President Bush's pledge to rebuild Afghanistan. The original mandate for Provincial Reconstruction Teams focused on building goodwill by providing aid and services to Afghans living near American bases while setting the conditions for the arrival of international humanitarian organizations. Beginning with task forces such as CJTF-180, these teams worked with Afghans in order to build popular support for the nascent

6. Although soldiers did not represent 100 percent of the troop levels for Iraq or Afghanistan, they constituted the overwhelming majority for both countries during the period in question. The casualty figures are exclusively Army personnel. Sezgin Ozcan, "Casualty Profile of the United States Army in Afghanistan and Iraq" (student thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012) https://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a562838.pdf, pp. 5–6, 14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

democratic government in Kabul. Although U.S. military humanitarian efforts indicated the Bush administration's desire to associate itself closely with Hamid Karzai and the Afghan Interim Authority, Karzai's willingness to ally with regional strongmen in an effort to offset the political domination of Tajiks and Uzbeks from the United Front made that relationship an uneasy one.

American troops in Afghanistan also faced operational challenges that differed from those of the initial phase of Enduring Freedom. The United Front's Tajik and Uzbek militias, which played a significant role at the onset, were unable to provide Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill's CJTF-180 and subsequent headquarters with similar aid given the unwillingness of their commanders to operate in the Pashtun-dominated south. Additionally, the primary focus of Special Forces elements changed from unconventional warfare to foreign internal defense as they sought to replace the United Front's militias with indigenous militia proxies that would operate within their local areas. Conversely, CENTCOM adopted a bifurcated approach to creating indigenous security forces as U.S. conventional forces assumed the mission of training the ANA.

As the United States struggled to understand Afghan culture and politics, popular goodwill toward Americans began to dissipate as U.S. forces continued to rely on air- and space-based assets during postconflict operations. From the start of the conflict through July 2002, on eleven occasions, American air strikes killed or wounded approximately 400 innocent Afghans. As long as the bulk of the bombs were aimed at Taliban military targets, most ordinary Afghans could accept the collateral damage, but that attitude changed as U.S. air strikes continued to kill innocents following the Taliban's defeat. The deadliest of these incidents resulted in 54 deaths and 120 wounded on 1 July 2002 when an AC–130 gunship mistakenly identified a group of civilians in Uruzgan Province as Taliban fighters.[7] As a result, even when air strikes inflicted damage on enemy forces, collateral civilian casualties rekindled support for the Taliban and eroded enthusiasm for the presence of foreign troops and the democratic regime taking shape in Kabul.

Political Setting as of May 2002

Success for the United States after Operation Anaconda hinged on how well the Afghan government could serve as an effective counterterrorism partner. In 2002, the United States' chief partner in this process, Hamid Karzai, was in a precarious situation. As interim head of state, he had no army or revenue of his own. He struggled even to exert influence in his capital. At the time, the "Panjshiri Troika" of Mohammed Qasim Fahim, Yunus Qanooni, and Abdullah Abdullah—Tajik protégés of Ahmad Shah Massoud, who served as defense minister, interior minister, and foreign minister, respectively—

7. Dexter Filkins, "Flaws in U.S. Air War Left Hundreds of Civilians Dead," *New York Times*, 21 Jul 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/21/world/flaws-in-us-air-war-left-hundreds-of-civilians-dead.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

dominated Kabul. Outside the capital, warlords reigned—and because some were employed by American units, Karzai could not touch them.

Faced with these realities, the Bush administration sought to publicly maintain its distance from Kabul's internal politics by focusing instead on reconstruction and respect for Afghan sovereignty. "I want to do what people there want to do," Rumsfeld told the press in April 2002. "The last thing you're going to hear from this podium is someone thinking they know how Afghanistan ought to organize itself."[8] Privately, however, Rumsfeld was convinced the United States should "decide what ought to happen" in Afghanistan, and he quietly asked how the United States could "get control of the levers."[9] The United States sought to do just that at the Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002. At this first milestone of the Bonn Process, Afghan delegates were to elect an interim president of the Afghan Transitional Authority that would govern Afghanistan until a constitution could be written and national elections held. According to reports, the United States—with UN approval—manipulated the election process to keep Hamid Karzai as the head of state instead of restoring the Afghan monarchy under the former king, Zahir Shah.[10] Washington believed that Karzai was the only leader in Afghanistan who represented the country's Pashtun plurality and had the anti-Taliban bona fides to work with, or around, the Tajik ministers holding important government posts.

Having secured Karzai's transitional presidency, the Bush administration then demonstrated that its support would remain covert. When a southeastern warlord named Pacha Khan Zadran challenged Karzai's authority over

---

8. DoD News Briefing, Sec Def Donald H. Rumsfeld with Gen Richard B. Myers, 22 Apr 2002, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3410, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Memo, Sec Donald H. Rumsfeld for Under Sec Douglas J. Feith, 17 Apr 2002, sub: Afghanistan, NSU GWU, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc23.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

10. Tomsen, *Wars of Afghanistan*, pp. 641–42; Anders Fänge, "The Emergency Loya Jirga," in *Snapshots of an Intervention: The Unlearned Lessons of Afghanistan's Decade of Assistance (2001–11)* eds. Martine van Bijlert and Sari Kouvo (Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2012), p. 15; Laura Secor, "The Pragmatist," *The Atlantic* (July–August 2004), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/07/the-pragmatist/302992/; S. Frederick Starr and Marin J. Strmecki, "Afghan Democracy and Its First Missteps," *New York Times*, 14 Jun 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/14/opinion/afghan-democracy-and-its-first-missteps.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Omar Zakhilwal and Adeena Niazi, "The Warlords Win in Kabul," *New York Times*, 21 Jun 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/21/opinion/the-warlords-win-in-kabul.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Carlotta Gall, "Former Afghan King Rules Out All but a Symbolic Role," *New York Times*, 11 Jun 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/11/world/former-afghan-king-rules-out-all-but-a-symbolic-role.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Carlotta Gall, "Traditional Council Elects Karzai as Afghan President," *New York Times*, 14 Jun 2002, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/14/world/traditional-council-elects-karzai-as-afghan-president.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Zalmay Khalilzad, then a member of Afghanistan's National Security Council, thought that resistance came from the king's inner circle, not the king himself. Zalmay Khalilzad, *The Envoy: From Kabul to the White House, My Journey through a Turbulent World*, advance copy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), p. 144.

Gardez, the capital of Paktiya Province, in May 2002, the Americans informed Karzai that they wanted him to rely on "political methods" to consolidate power. As Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas J. Feith put it: "In Rumsfeld's view, Karzai should learn to operate as the mayor of Chicago did, forging coalitions through consultations, flattery, jobs, and other types of patronage."[11] In January 2003, the CIA began delivering bags of cash monthly to the presidential palace—one month after learning that the Iranians had started to do so—in order to provide Karzai with greater "political" influence. This off-the-books aid program continued throughout Enduring Freedom and reportedly funded the same warlords, opium trade, and corrupt officials that other elements of the United States were trying to eliminate in Afghanistan.[12]

The Bush administration's preference for maintaining a low public profile to avoid being accused of meddling in Afghan affairs meant that its early assistance efforts lacked focus, were poorly coordinated with both recipients and donors, and could not be accounted for in terms of either expenditures or results.[13] Congress was slow to fund aid on the scale the president implied was needed in his April 2002 speech at the Virginia Military Institute. A divided Senate took eight months to pass the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act that the House of Representatives had approved months earlier.[14] By the time Bush signed the bill in December 2002, most of the appropriations it contained would not be available until after October 2003, when the next fiscal year started. Moreover, the act authorized just $450 million in nonmilitary funds for each of the next four fiscal years, well short of Afghanistan's estimated needs.[15] International assistance hardly fared better. In particular, Finance

---

11. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 143.

12. Matthew Rosenberg, "With Bags of Cash, CIA Seeks Influence in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 28 Apr 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/29/world/asia/cia-delivers-cash-to-afghan-leaders-office.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Matthew Rosenberg, "C.I.A. Cash Ended Up in Coffers of Al Qaeda," *New York Times*, 14 Mar 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/world/asia/cia-funds-found-their-way-into-al-qaeda-coffers.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. General Accounting Office, *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Deteriorating Security and Limited Resources Have Impeded Progress; Improvements in U.S. Strategy Needed*, Jun 2004, pp. 2–5, https://www.gao.gov/assets/250/242726.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. For the challenges facing the U.S. reconstruction effort, see Dov S. Zakheim, *A Vulcan's Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2011).

14. The House introduced the bill in March 2002 (H.R. 3994) and passed it in May, but the Senate could not muster the votes to pass it. The Senate introduced a new version in July 2002 (S. 2712) and did not pass it until 14 November 2002. The House passed it one day later, and the president signed it into law on 4 December 2002. "H.R. 3994, Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002," 107th Cong., GovTrack, 21 May 2002, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/hr3994, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; and "S.2712, Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002," 107th Cong., GovTrack, 14 Nov 2002, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/s2712, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. *Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002*, PL 107-327, 107th Cong., 2d sess., 4 Dec 2002, sec. 108(a), https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ327/pdf/PLAW-107publ327.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and World Bank, *Afghanistan*

Minister Ashraf Ghani struggled to convince aid organizations to support his ministry's National Solidarity Program.[16] Instead, international donors routed money directly to organizations that implemented programs across Afghanistan, effectively taking the nascent Afghan government out of the loop. Donors were slow to deliver on the pledges made in Tokyo and reluctant to coordinate with leaders in the new Afghan government.

As part of the Bonn Process, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States agreed to implement security sector reforms, real progress remained elusive because no nation assumed overall responsibility. To address Afghanistan's most urgent need, Germany instituted a police academy in Kabul and taught a few hundred officers in multiyear courses.[17] However, the German plan did not approach the vision outlined in the Afghan Interim Authority's National Development Framework, which would have trained 25,000 police a year.[18] Under the British counternarcotics program, poppy cultivation rebounded from a historic low of 8,000 hectares in 2001, when the Taliban banned it in response to low opium prices, to 74,000 hectares in 2002, on par with the levels seen in the mid-1990s.[19] Italy did not send advisers to reform Afghanistan's judiciary.[20] Delays and program design flaws hindered Japan's effort to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate warlord forces.[21] The American-led effort to build and train the ANA, though slightly more successful, produced only 1,800 troops by January 2003.[22]

Slow security-sector progress led Rumsfeld to observe, "We are never going to get the U.S. military out of Afghanistan . . . unless we take care to see that there is something going on that will provide the stability that will be necessary for us to leave."[23] However, he also opined that "the critical problem in Afghanistan is not really a security problem. Rather, the problem that needs to be addressed is the slow progress that is being made on the civil

---

Preliminary Needs Assessment for Recovery and Reconstruction, Jan 2002, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/748E9C42622856FBC1256B430045B74C-undp-afg-15jan.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Jack Fairweather, *The Good War: Why We Couldn't Win the War or the Peace in Afghanistan* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), pp. 61–74.

17. Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), pp. 164–65; Feith, *War and Decision*, pp. 54–55.

18. Afghan Interim Authority, *National Development Framework*, draft, version 2 Apr 2002, p. 48, https://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN016262.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2002," 2002, https://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/afg_opium_survey_2002.pdf, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Feith, *War and Decision*, p. 155.

21. Caroline A. Hartzell, *Missed Opportunities: The Impact of DDR on SSR in Afghanistan*, Special Report 270 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, April 2011), pp. 1, 8.

22. James Dao, "Threats and Responses: Afghanistan; Wolfowitz, in Kabul, Calls for Rebuilding," *New York Times*, 16 Jan 2003, https://nytimes.com/2003/01/16/world/threats-and-responses-afghanistan-wolfowitz-in-kabul-calls-for-rebuilding.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. Memo, Rumsfeld for Feith, sub: Afghanistan, 17 Apr 2002, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

side."[24] Rumsfeld worried that security would deteriorate if reconstruction aid did not flow.[25] In response, he tried to refocus governmental attention on reconstruction, explaining that overemphasizing the security challenge facing Afghanistan would force the United States to deploy more troops, pointing out to Bush that the Soviets "had over 100,000 troops [in Afghanistan] and failed."[26]

Although Rumsfeld recognized Afghanistan needed some foreign troops to offset the influence of the United Front, the Pentagon wanted to conserve resources for future conflicts in the Global War on Terrorism. Beginning in March 2002, both CENTCOM and the CIA had begun diverting assets from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Middle East and undertaking "preparatory tasks" for invading Iraq.[27] A year before Operation Iraqi Freedom officially began, Saddam Hussein's dictatorial government already was the newest "central front" in the Global War on Terrorism. Operations in Afghanistan would have a lesser priority even as the Bonn Process continued to unfold.

The Operating Environment

The commanders of Enduring Freedom from May 2002 to September 2005 were expected to create their own campaign plans, but there was much that they could not control. Policy from Washington, the collateral impact of events in Iraq, and the reemergence of an enemy that had changed significantly since

---

24. Rumsfeld continued: "Karzai needs the institutions of government, a budget that is funded and resources from the international community, so he can develop political strength in the regions. He needs to be able to show the Afghan people that he is delivering for them and that it is in their interest to help keep the Taliban out. Only with progress on the civil side will Karzai gain the strength and leverage he needs with the regional political leaders (warlords)." Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for President Bush, sub: Afghanistan, 20 Aug 2002, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/439/To%20President%20George%20W%20Bush%20et%20al.%20re%20Afghanistan%2008-20-2002.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 136–37; Dave Moniz and Steven Komarow, "Shifts from bin Laden Hunt Evoke Questions," *USA Today*, 29 Mar 2004, https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2004-03-28-troop-shifts_x.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Philip James, "Running Scared," *The Guardian*, 26 Mar 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/mar/26/uselections2004.comment, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Barton Gellman and Dafna Linzer, "Afghanistan, Iraq: Two Wars Collide," *Washington Post*, 22 Oct 2004, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A52673-2004Oct21.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Says a Covert Force Hunts Hussein," *New York Times*, 7 Nov 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/07/world/pentagon-says-a-covert-force-hunts-hussein.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, PBS *Frontline* with Gary Schroen, 20 Jan 2006, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/darkside/interviews/schroen.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bob Graham, *Intelligence Matters: The CIA, the FBI, Saudi Arabia, and the Failure of America's War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2004), pp. 124–26; David Rohde and David E. Sanger, "How a 'Good War' in Afghanistan Went Bad," *New York Times*, 12 Aug 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/12/world/asia/12afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, pp. 133–34.

the campaign's beginning belonged in this category. So too did the staffing, training, organization, and equipping of their commands, as well as the Afghan personalities with whom they interacted and the actions that their allies took. Finally, the geography presented obstacles impossible for senior American commanders to ignore and difficult for them to overcome.

The Bush administration's decision to maintain a small footprint in Afghanistan had operational-level consequences after major combat operations ended. Without enough U.S. conventional troops to deploy throughout the country, Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck initially relied on U.S. Special Forces partnered with local paramilitaries for protection, intelligence collection, and combat power. Before General McNeill's headquarters arrived, the U.S. Special Forces elements in theater rotated back to the United States in anticipation of operations in Iraq. The United Front militias, which had been invaluable early in the campaign, would not fight outside of their traditional areas of influence. In addition, fewer Special Forces personnel were projected to deploy to Afghanistan because of the perception that the Taliban had been defeated. These developments meant that Special Forces units arriving during this period were expected to perform the same missions as before but with fewer numbers while simultaneously forging ties with unfamiliar militia commanders in a totally different operating area.

Unencumbered by the now-deposed Taliban government, the warlords leading the militias working with U.S. Special Forces gained unprecedented power despite the fact that their presence weakened the Afghan Interim Authority and invalidated attempts at land reform, economic development, and anticorruption measures. In lieu of sufficient U.S., ISAF, or Afghan government troops, American commanders had to rely on warlords to protect local Afghans. Karzai also found himself embracing selected warlords, albeit for different reasons. With no effective control over residents outside Kabul, the chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority used his access to American military and financial power to convert warlords into proxies for his government.

After being appointed interim president of the Afghan Transitional Authority by the Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002, Karzai began placing warlords in potentially lucrative positions such as provincial governors and government ministers to solidify his influence beyond the capital. They were personally beholden to him but often acted in their own narrow interests. In some cases, appointees who lacked strong personal or financial support took extraordinary measures to ensure their own (and their clients') survival. One of the worst of these opportunists was Sher Mohammed Akhundzada, Karzai's fellow Pashtun and governor of Helmand Province.[28] Akhundzada

28. For Akhundzada, see Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), pp. 44–45. For Helmand Province's share in opium production, see United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem* (New York: United Nations, 2003), p. 213 and United Nations Office on Drug Control and Crime, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004," 2004, https://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan_opium_survey_2004.pdf, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

oversaw the revitalization of the drug trade in his province, fueling social and political conflicts and enhancing his own power. Even before the XVIII Airborne Corps arrived in Afghanistan, strongmen such as Akhundzada were ensuring that tribal affiliations determined patronage, clientage, loyalty, and obligation.

This new elite withheld customs revenues, promoted smuggling and the drug trade, clashed with each other, and plotted against perceived competitors.[29] They propagated patronage down to villages, and institutionalized the bribery of civil servants, executives, and police officials. Even in the Pashtun south, where Karzai's personal and family connections gave him the greatest sway, warlordism became the norm. The Taliban's defeat also freed armed leaders to profit from opium cultivation and heroin production. Unfortunately for the Afghan Interim Authority, for many Pashtun farmers poppy cultivation became the sole deciding factor between economic sufficiency and destitution. The drug trade worked against land reform, economic development, communal security, and governance. It undermined local economies, disrupted justice, and supplemented the incomes and resources of militia warlords—even those who ostensibly were working with the coalition.

Americans sent to Afghanistan after Operation Anaconda expected to face articulated opposition from al-Qaeda and Taliban remnants, not warlord intransigence. Unsure how to collect intelligence against an enemy who "waged primarily a guerilla war," intelligence officers struggled to brief their commanders on the enemy intentions.[30] Because they found it hard to identify the exact source of the threat, they chose to ascribe the attacks to anticoalition militias such as the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's HIG, and directed their military power against these supposed targets.[31] Without a deep knowledge of the opposition, American forces identified their opponents using little more than their battlefield locations. When units operated in Khost, Paktika, and Paktiya Provinces, U.S. leaders assumed they faced the Haqqani Network. In the northeastern provinces of Kunar, Laghman, Logar, and Nuristan, the purported opposition was HIG. Everywhere else, American forces branded all enemy forces as the Taliban.[32]

---

29. Martine Van Bijlert, "The Battle for Afghanistan: Zabul and Uruzgan," Afghan Analysts Network, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/publication/other-publications/the-battle-for-afghanistan-zabul-and-uruzgan/, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Rpt, Joint Center for Lessons Learned, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), 6 Jun 2003, sub: Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. Most recent operational use: OPORD 04–07, Lt Gen David W. Barno, Cdr, CFC-A, to Maj Gen Eric T. Olson, Cdr, CJTF-76, copied Maj Gen Craig P. Weston, Ch, OMC-A. See also "Operation Enduring Freedom III, Tactics, Techniques, Procedures," CALL Handbook, No. 05-6, Ft Leavenworth, Kans., Jan 2005. When the Southern European Task Force took the CJTF-76 mantle in May 2005, it initially referred to enemy forces as al-Qaeda Associated Movements, using language borrowed from the March 2005 National Military Strategy Plan for the War on Terrorism.

32. Interv, Peter Connors and Lisa Mundey, CSI, with Lt Gen (Ret.) John R. Vines, frmr CJTF-180 Cdr, 27 Jun 2007, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia,

Although these labels often accurately described which forces were involved, this oversimplified template blinded the military to differences in enemy tactics and motivation. The American forces also assumed that the anticoalition militias were united in their resistance to the interim government. Although it is believed that sometime in 2003, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Jalaluddin Haqqani, and al-Qaeda made a tactical alliance to fight American forces in Afghanistan, the Afghan government and U.S. forces were to some extent responsible for their enemies loosely banding together, as they had treated all three opponents as equal threats to Afghan and American security.[33]

Geography was an equally uncontrollable environmental factor. Tactically, the biggest impediments were spatial: the heights of mountains and the distances between urban and rural areas. Operationally, the terrain determined how military force in Afghanistan could be employed. Because airpower was the main means of striking enemy forces, U.S. forces had to establish, activate, and deactivate engagement zones so as to prevent fratricide and limit collateral damage to civilians. The long distances required to traverse objectives and the poor roads in Afghanistan meant that troops and supplies had to be airlifted, putting a heavy burden on a limited helicopter fleet.

Constrained by geography, operating with incomplete knowledge of Afghan politics, and relegated to secondary priority in the Global War on Terrorism, American commanders in the post-Anaconda period faced serious challenges in securing Afghanistan. Although they were free to design their own campaigns, they could not predict, stop, or influence certain events. American and coalition forces were not able to prevent the Taliban from regenerating by drawing upon the ranks of disaffected Afghan Pashtuns and foreign volunteers eager to fight Western interlopers. This problem became more apparent throughout the Bonn Process and further complicated American attempts to maintain the military initiative after Operation Anaconda.

Enemy Situation as of May 2002

Operation Mountain Lion demonstrated that Enduring Freedom units faced little organized resistance from either the Taliban or al-Qaeda in the immediate wake of Anaconda. Although survivors from both the Taliban and al-Qaeda fled to neighboring Pakistan, the ties that had existed between these organizations before 2001 were now broken. Free from Arab, Pakistani, and American interference, Mullah Mohammed Omar and his colleagues established an enclave in the Baluch capital of Quetta where they began preparing to return to power. A few al-Qaeda fighters chose to remain in Afghanistan, but most of Osama bin Laden's followers went to Yemen to

---

CSI, with Brig Gen William B. Garrett, III, frmr 1st Bde, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 5 Jun 2007, p. 14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Carlotta Gall, *The Wrong Enemy: America in Afghanistan, 2001–2014* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), pp. 67–73.

reestablish training camps and logistical sites, while bin Laden himself took up unobtrusive residence in Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda's departure from Afghanistan lent credence to coalition assessments that at least eight of the twenty top al-Qaeda leaders were killed by United Front militia, U.S. bombing, or during the Tora Bora assault. Two more had been reported captured. With significant help from the United Front, eleven training camps and many other al-Qaeda facilities had been destroyed or overrun. Contemporary estimates suggested that 8,000 to 12,000 Taliban troops died in battle, captivity, or by aerial bombardment, with twice that number wounded and incapacitated.[34] Counting the thousands of prisoners taken at Kunduz and other locations, the Taliban lost nearly half of its 60,000 rank-and-file members.[35] Among the dead were also perhaps as many as 600 to 800 fighters affiliated with al-Qaeda (out of an original total of 2,000 to 3,000).[36]

The Taliban leadership, which had been guilty by association and not directly complicit in the September 11th attacks, found sanctuary in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas as American interest in their destruction subsided following the liberation of Kabul, Jalalabad, and Kandahar. Cultural, ethnic, and tribal linkages, not to mention a common history as mujahideen in the anti-Soviet jihad, propelled many surviving Taliban fighters into Pakistan. Although some of the Afghan Taliban castigated Mohammed Omar for refusing to surrender bin Laden—a policy that guaranteed the destruction of his regime—Omar's own intransigence solidified his reputation in Pakistani tribal circles as a selfless, religiously pure, and transcendent figure. Comfortably ensconced in Quetta, Omar and his assembled followers began planning their return within days of their arrival in Pakistan.

The Pakistani government viewed the Taliban collapse and United Front ascendance with alarm. When the United Front captured Kabul, President Pervez Musharraf called together his senior Army commanders to announce "Pakistan would henceforth look after its interests more 'carefully' and not trust anyone."[37] Historically, Pakistan's regional preoccupation had been with India and, by extension, the ongoing low-grade civil war in Kashmir. The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence had spent substantial resources supporting the Taliban in order to train and recruit for the Kashmir jihad in a way that would not directly implicate Pakistan. The intelligence agency's commanders felt no pressure to turn over their protégés. On the contrary, elements within the agency provided money, logistical support, medical

34. Michael E. O'Hanlon, "A Flawed Masterpiece," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May–June 2002): 47. O'Hanlon quotes casualty estimates from *New York Times* correspondent Nicholas Kristof, who placed Afghan civilian deaths at less than 1,000. No figures for United Front losses during this period have been located.

35. Council on Foreign Relations, "The Taliban," CFRInfoguide, n.d., https://www.cfr.org/interactives/taliban#!/#islamic-emirate, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

36. Carl Conetta, *Strange Victory: A Critical Appraisal of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Project on Defense Alternatives, January 2002), p. 4.

37. Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, p. 79.

treatment, and political cover to Mohammed Omar.[38] To complicate matters, India moved troops to the Line of Control (the de facto border between India and Pakistan in the disputed Kashmir region) shortly after the start of Enduring Freedom, asserting its right to act against Pakistan-based militants and terrorists. Pakistan responded with a major deployment of forces to the Kashmir border. Unfortunately, this redistribution of Pakistani forces coincided with the American counterterrorism operations at the porous Afghanistan border, where the United States had been hoping for Pakistan's assistance.[39]

Even after the crisis with India was resolved, Islamabad took only half-hearted measures to address the rise of Taliban-inspired extremism within the tribal areas.[40] When the Pakistan Army attempted to suppress the Afghan Taliban or Pakistani Pashtuns—who generally were sympathetic to the ideals of al-Qaeda and each other—results were dismal. A few short months after committing troops in the tribal areas, the Pakistani forces found themselves engaged in heavy combat against foreign extremists supported by two prominent tribes, the Mehsud and the Wazirs. Both tribes were opposed to government intrusion and Musharraf's collaboration with the United States, and neither would willingly surrender its guests. In the end, Pakistan's dysfunctional efforts during 2002 proved more successful at radicalizing Pashtun tribes than weaning them away from supporting the Taliban and other belligerent groups.

Whereas Pakistan earlier sought to use the Taliban to ensure strategic depth against India, Omar now turned the tables; it was the Afghan Taliban that enjoyed strategic depth and stood in a position to call upon its Pashtun brothers for help in a war against the American-backed Karzai government.[41] Taliban efforts to reconstitute their ranks benefited from a combination of self-serving policies instituted by former United Front members within the Kabul government, uncertain economic times, American unwillingness to distinguish between opponents, and the Bush administration's refusal to extend Geneva Convention protections to enemy combatants.[42] Former Taliban fighters who hoped to retire in peace in Afghanistan faced retaliation;

---

38. Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan, 2002–2007* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 2, 13, 23.

39. Conetta, *Strange Victory*, pp. 13–14, 19, 69n19.

40. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 221, 244; Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, pp. 380–81.

41. State Department Cable Islam 09489, "S/P Ambassador Haass' Call on [excised]," 13 Nov 2002, NSU GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB325/doc12.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, pp. 94–120.

42. In retrospect, it is clear the Bush administration did not view the detainee issue as an information operations opportunity to influence the global Muslim community. Otherwise, it would have taken steps to ensure Americans behaved in a just and compassionate manner toward defeated enemies. In fact, the opposite impression prevailed when photographs were published showing shackled prisoners kneeling before their open-air cells. Although Secretary Rumsfeld attempted to defuse the issue, other Pentagon officials undercut that message by intimating that enemy combatants did not deserve Geneva Conventions protections given the heinous nature of crimes committed on 11 September 2001. O'Hanlon, "A Flawed Masterpiece," pp. 47–51.

many were left with a stark choice: arrest, dishonor, or death on one hand, or resistance on the other.[43] With little genuine effort to promote reconciliation and with civilian casualties from bombings and night-time raids into Pashtun homes being common, many Pashtuns believed that Westerners were targeting them.[44] Without any tangible reason to make peace with the Americans or accept the Tajik- and Uzbek-dominated regime in Kabul, most Pashtuns remained susceptible to calls for resistance delivered by Taliban leaders from the safety of Pakistan.[45]

The Emergence of Drone Strikes in Pakistan

By spring 2004, a number of militant groups that fled Afghanistan to seek shelter in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan were preparing to reenter the fight. Their agenda included not only restoring Taliban rule in Afghanistan, but also creating a similar regime in Pakistan. The latter development began in July 2002 when Pakistani troops, at the insistence of the Bush administration, launched an abortive attack on militant strongholds in the area's Tirah Valley. The attack failed with significant casualties in the face of heavy resistance, but the careless employment of air and artillery bombardments by government forces infuriated the local tribes. The Pakistani Army did not achieve all of its objectives; worse, it inadvertently played a major role in creating the "Pakistani Taliban," a group determined to overthrow the secular government in Islamabad and replace it with one based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law.

The extremist groups spent the next eighteen months solidifying their control over portions of the tribal areas by killing tribal chiefs who opposed their agenda and terrorizing ordinary citizens into unquestioning compliance.[46] In addition, the militants prepared for another incursion by the Pakistani Army by turning key passes, ridgelines, and villages into fortified strongpoints. Fighting erupted once again in late March 2004 when Pakistani troops unsuccessfully attempted to take into custody al-Qaeda members hiding in South Waziristan.[47] The Pakistani government forces suffered another reversal and numerous casualties, this time at the hands of

---

43. Tomsen, *Wars of Afghanistan*, p. 632; Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser*, p. 192; Bette Dam, *A Man and A Motorcycle: How Hamid Karzai Came to Power* (Lexington, Ky.: Ipso Facto Publishers, 2014), pp. 190–98.

44. Barfield, *Afghanistan*, pp. 40–42, 73–74; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 142; Conetta, *Strange Victory*, p. 27.

45. James Fergusson, *Taliban: The True Story of the World's Most Feared Guerrilla Fighters* (New York: Bantam Press, 2010), p. 153; Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, pp. 206–07.

46. These developments are described in detail by a Pakistani investigative journalist who was later abducted and killed. See Syed Saleem Shahzad, *Inside Al-Qaeda and the Taliban: Beyond Bin Laden and 9/11* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

47. Pakistani reports of senior al-Qaeda members in that region were not entirely accurate. However, Tohir Abduhalilovich Yuldashev, head of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and a major ally of Bin Laden, was hiding there.

the Pakistani Taliban, prompting Islamabad to negotiate a ceasefire in an effort to defuse the deteriorating situation in the tribal areas.

The ceasefire had been brokered by Nek Mohammed Wazir, a charismatic Pashtun fighter from South Waziristan who fought with the Taliban against the Americans in 2001. Almost immediately after signing the treaty, Wazir declared his intention to wage jihad against not only the Americans, but also Islamabad. An increase in violence immediately followed in May 2004, with suicide bombings by militant groups that killed forty-seven people. Those attacks were followed on 10 June by a failed attack on a Pakistani Army corps commander's convoy, which missed the intended target but resulted in eleven deaths.[48] One week later, a missile strike targeting a South Waziristan compound killed Wazir and four other militants as they ate dinner with an Afghan expatriate friend.[49]

The Pakistani military claimed credit, suggesting that artillery or helicopters equipped with night-vision equipment delivered the attack. However, the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* ascribed Wazir's death to "a spy drone flying overhead minutes before the missile attack."[50] The strike thus heralded a major development in Operation Enduring Freedom as the Bush administration sought an effective means of attacking Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters ensconced within the tribal areas on Afghanistan's eastern borders. Periodic drone attacks would eliminate other enemy leaders over the next several years, albeit with collateral civilian casualties that reflected the challenges of precisely targeting enemy personnel based only on signals intelligence and overhead imagery. The drone attacks also fueled growing protests from Pakistanis and peace activists across the globe.

48. P. Nasir, "Letters: A Failing War on Terrorism," *Dawn*, 30 Jun 2004, https://www.dawn.com/news/1066150, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. Mark Mazzetti, "A Secret Deal on Drones, Sealed in Blood," *New York Times*, 6 Apr 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/world/asia/origins-of-cias-not-so-secret-drone-war-in-pakistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Quoted in Brian Glyn Williams, *Predators: The CIAs Drone War on al Qaeda* (Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2013), p. 48; Nek Mohammed Wazir's successor, Haji Umar, sought to carry on his legacy, but he died in similar circumstances in 2010. "Top Militant Leader Killed in Drone Attack," *Dawn*, 2 Jan 2010, https://www.dawn.com/news/847884, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Chapter Five

Counterterrorism as an Operational Approach

The rapid collapse of first the Taliban government and then the al-Qaeda network forced CENTCOM planners to reassess Afghanistan's future stability. Up to this point, thinking about postwar conditions had been influenced by recent experience in the Balkans and dominated by the need to convince Afghans that Americans were not occupiers.[1] As a result, the initial CENTCOM plan relied on international and nongovernmental aid organizations to provide assistance to the Afghan people. When these organizations were unable to meet American expectations in a timely manner, the Bush administration shouldered a much larger share of that task than originally envisioned. The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, however, were incapable of conducting business in post-Taliban Afghanistan without assistance from CENTCOM. In addition to providing aid to the Afghan people, the U.S. military gained responsibility for training the ANA and overseeing the confinement of enemy combatants. In addition, General Tommy R. Franks tasked Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, the CJTF-180 commander, with defeating all remaining opposition and with conducting civil affairs and setting "conditions to prevent the re-emergence of international terrorist organizations."[2] These requirements substantively reshaped the original Phase IV mission.

The Bush administration's December 2001 decision to plan for possible combat operations in Iraq was another factor influencing CENTCOM's continued involvement in Afghanistan. The timing of that decision meant that General Franks had to plan a campaign against a regional power with conventional military capabilities while maintaining pressure on al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The latter task now involved conducting military operations within Afghanistan while working with the Musharraf regime to apprehend enemy leaders and fighters seeking shelter in Pakistan.

The change of strategic priorities affected CENTCOM's operational focus and had a significant impact on combat operations in Afghanistan. General McNeill initially could call upon 6,533 American troops, reinforced by 2,582 allied soldiers, but many had newly arrived in theater or were slated

1. CFC OPORD 03, Opns Afghanistan Phase III and IV, CENTCOM, 24 Dec 2001, part 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. OPORD 07, TOA to CJTF-AFG for Phase III and IV Opns in CJOA AFG, CENTCOM, 28 May 2002, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

to rotate out of Afghanistan in the coming months.[3] For instance, Col. John P. Mulholland's TF Dagger began redeploying to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in January 2002. The departing Green Berets were replaced by elements drawn from the 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The 10th Mountain and 101st Airborne Division elements that took part in Anaconda were to be replaced by a brigade from the 82d Airborne Division well before the end of the year. Finally, the Canadian infantry battalion and British Royal Marines also were recalled from Afghanistan in 2002.

McNeill's own staff members were new to the theater, and they faced the added challenge of adapting to the ad hoc facilities allocated to Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck's CJTF-Mountain rather than the more developed and supported environs of Camp Doha, Kuwait.[4] Camp Doha's state-of-the-art facilities and extensive communications infrastructure would be set aside for use as a key command and control node for upcoming operations in Iraq rather than having the installation continue in its role as CENTCOM's primary conduit for operations in Afghanistan. In addition to working in spartan conditions, McNeill's staff had to adjust to operating with fewer troops because of the personnel ceilings that remained in place for the Afghan effort. The shift in priorities did not mean, however, that CENTCOM would ignore Afghanistan in the coming months. Assigning McNeill, a three-star general—a leader who was capable of planning, changing tactical direction, and synchronizing efforts—to Bagram to oversee the completion of Phase III and transition to Phase IV sent a powerful strategic message to the Afghans, coalition partners, and the international community.

Planning Collides with Reality

Counterterrorism took clear precedence over CJTF-180's other missions in late spring 2002. Reflecting the Bush administration's concern with another attack on the United States, CENTCOM commander Franks' guidance to McNeill emphasized the need to remove militarized Islamic fundamentalists from Afghanistan.[5] According to the original campaign plan, that task involved the application of "continuous pressure against all known nodes of global terrorist organizations, associated terrorist groups, and sponsoring states."[6] Continuous pressure against the terrorists who had launched the September 11th attacks and the radical Islamic political party that had sheltered them would involve targeted operations against developing threats.

---

3. Presentation, CENTCOM, 17 Apr 2002, sub: Personnel in Afghanistan AOR, slides 3, 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Assessment, Future Planning Element, CENTCOM, 17 Apr 2002, sub: OEF-Afghanistan, Phase III, p. 50, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Concept of Opns, CENTCOM, 4 Apr 2002, sub: Establishment of CJTF-180, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Concept of Opns, Final Draft, CENTCOM, 16 Apr 2002, sub: Establishment of CJTF-180, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. Theater Campaign Plan, CENTCOM, 26 Nov 2001, sub: Operation Enduring Freedom, p. 29, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

As Franks wrote in the order dispatching McNeill's headquarters, "the exploitation of intelligence from sites, detainees, and materials enabling the preemption and disruption of future global acts of terrorism [will be] . . . the most critical product of our [Phase III] operations."[7]

According to this premise, ending combat precipitously in Afghanistan in order to focus on nation building would make it harder for coalition forces to gather information on their elusive enemy. Large-scale engagements, such as at Tora Bora and the Shahi Kot Valley, had been productive, and American troops had collected significant amounts of documents from the battlefield. Both engagements also produced collateral benefits, as large numbers of enemy combatants fled from Afghanistan to Pakistan, where the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence apprehended a number of foreigners and turned them over to coalition forces. Pakistani intelligence, however, was far less willing to apprehend Afghan Taliban fighters. That development, coupled with the Taliban's decision to avoid open confrontations with the Americans and the withdrawal of U.S. collection assets, made it far more difficult to acquire vitally needed intelligence with the methods employed by CFLCC.

Lacking a direct means to gain information on the Taliban and al-Qaeda, CJTF-180 relied on assistance from indigenous partners. Although the United Front had been a reliable ally in the opening phase of the recent campaign, after Kabul fell many of its leaders refocused on promoting their ethnic or personal agendas. As the initial complement of Western soldiers rotated home from Afghanistan, some proxy militias furthered their own agendas by taking advantage of coalition and U.S. unfamiliarity with Afghan culture and history. CJTF-180 thus inherited a collection of ideologically diverse proxy forces when compared to the Afghan militias that aided TF Dagger.

Other factors contributed to the challenges facing CJTF-180 as it assumed responsibility for counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan. The withdrawal of intelligence and surveillance assets, when coupled with the reduction of Special Forces assets and the growing reliance on militias, materially impacted CJTF-180's ability to locate and engage al-Qaeda and Taliban remnants in Afghanistan. The reduced numbers of air- and space-based intelligence collection platforms made it increasingly vital to extract information from captive enemy fighters. That responsibility rested with American troops after the United Front demonstrated on two occasions—the suffocation of detainees transported from Kunduz to Shibirghan prison and the uprising at the Qala-i-Jangi fortress—that it could not process, safeguard, or secure detainees in a consistent manner. This development placed the burden of extracting targetable information from enemy combatants on CIA operatives and U.S. Army interrogators. Unfortunately, the sheer number of prisoners, combined with growing emphasis on the timely collection of information from captives, drew less-qualified personnel to the task, such as U.S. Army Special Forces and military police.

Few Pentagon or CENTCOM officials predicted the degree to which detention and interrogation operations would draw the American-led

7. OPORD 07, TOA to CJTF-AFG for Phase III and IV Opns in CJOA AFG, CENTCOM, 28 May 2002, p. 6.

coalition into a lengthy justification of its policy toward captured enemy combatants. These prisoners wore no uniform and had no recognizable military hierarchy, yet an understaffed intelligence apparatus had to determine which of them had information of immediate value, which posed a threat to U.S. forces or the United States itself, which were merely opportunists or misguided youths, and which were innocent civilians caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. A scarcity of vetted translators fluent in Pashto, Urdu, and Dari significantly hindered the collection of information. Further complicating this critical battlefield function, Army intelligence in 2002 was still transitioning from the Cold War model of locating and identifying large conventional maneuver forces to understanding networks, ideological warfare, and individual targeting. An intelligence system that had deemphasized human intelligence collection suddenly had to rely on that very source for actionable intelligence.[8]

The arrival of General McNeill's command did not significantly improve the situation. Detailed detainee operations were not normally part of the peacetime training regimen for a corps headquarters; for that level of command, computer simulations focused solely on combat operations usually were sufficient. Peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, where civilian authorities held jurisdiction over detainees in all instances, had not provided opportunities for practical experience in detaining individuals under military jurisdiction. Subsequent investigations into detention irregularities identified deficiencies such as a lack of standardized techniques, inadequately trained personnel, and scarce assets for facility construction. The pressing need for actionable intelligence, coupled with the limited initial capacity at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba, meant that military authorities at Bagram and Kandahar held prisoners for far lengthier periods than anticipated.

Another factor that prolonged detainments was the difficulty in ensuring that terrorist organizations did not reemerge within Afghanistan after the Taliban's defeat and al-Qaeda's flight to Pakistan and Yemen. As tactical operations increasingly relied on information from human sources, interrogations became more important. The personnel who questioned captive enemy fighters used the techniques prescribed in *Intelligence Interrogation* (Department of the Army Field Manual 34–52), published in 1992. The fourteen authorized approaches used when interrogating enemy detainees were designed to break down a prisoner's resistance to questioning and collect information in a manner permitted by the Geneva Conventions. None permitted physical contact, sleep deprivation, or the withholding of food, water, or shelter.[9]

Nevertheless, detainees flown to Guantanamo Bay Naval Base were subject to different rules. In February 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and President George W. Bush determined that al-Qaeda and Taliban captives were "unlawful combatants" and not entitled to enemy

8. Interv, Col Bryan R. Gibby, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Mary Legere, HQDA Asst Ch of Staff G–2, 4 Aug 2015, pp. 2–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 221.

prisoner-of-war protections, even though the conflict in Afghanistan would be "consistent with the principals of Geneva."[10] However, lumping the Taliban and al-Qaeda together in the same general category merely obscured intelligence collection priorities, mainly by neglecting to separate actual practitioners of global terrorism from followers of Mullah Mohammed Omar's brand of Afghan-centric Islamic rule.

The Bush administration implied that detainees would receive humane treatment, but its "unlawful combatant" classification was problematic, especially as interrogation techniques approved for high-level strategic detainees held at Guantanamo migrated to the Enduring Freedom theater. Interrogations at Guantanamo included "enhanced techniques," such as sleep deprivation and waterboarding, which had been established by the DoD but were limited to specific individuals and were to be conducted with adequate leadership and safeguards.[11] By contrast, soldiers at the Bagram facility, lacking sufficient guidance and resources, began applying unapproved interrogation methods and techniques to uncooperative detainees in 2002. According to one investigation, a sudden influx of detainees combined with supervisory failure, low unit cohesion, unclear policy, and unfamiliarity with doctrine created an environment in which detainee abuse was likely to occur.[12] Three unapproved techniques alleged to have been employed in Afghanistan—sleep deprivation, threats to family, and physical abuse—were used in incidents leading to the deaths of Mullah Habibullah, the brother of a Taliban commander, and Dilawar, a 22 year-old taxicab driver.[13]

Although there is no direct connection between the abuses committed at the Bagram facility and decisions made by leaders in theater or at the

---

10. James Schlesinger et al., *Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations*, Aug 2004, p. 33, http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a428743.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The topic of Guantanamo is an emotional one for opponents and supporters. For an example of how audiences in Southwest Asia reacted to CIA revelations about interrogation techniques used there, see Ahmad Tariq, "6 Most Horrific Torture Techniques Used by Americans at Guantanamo," *Daily Pakistan Global*, 17 Aug 2016, https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/opinion/blog/6-most-horrific-torture-techniques-america-used-at-the-guantanamo-bay/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Senior CIA officials characterized a 2014 Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report detailing interrogation techniques at Guantanamo as a "one-sided study marred by errors of fact and interpretation—essentially a poorly done partisan attack on the agency that has done the most to protect America after the 9/11 attacks." See "Ex-CIA Directors: 'Interrogations Saved Lives,'" *Wall Street Journal*, 10 Dec 2014, https://www.wsj.com/articles/cia-interrogations-saved-lives-1418142644, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11. Schlesinger et al., *Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations*, p. 35.

12. Ibid., pp. 29, 37.

13. V Adm A. T. Church, *Review of Department of Defense Detention Operations and Detainees Interrogation Techniques*, Ofc of the Sec Def, 7 Mar 2005, p. 228, http://humanrights.ucdavis.edu/resources/library/documents-and-reports/ChurchReport.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Carlotta Gall and David Rohde, "New Charges Raise Questions on Abuse at Afghan Prisons," *New York Times*, 17 Sep 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/17/world/asia/new-charges-raise-questions-on-abuse-at-afghan-prisons.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Pentagon, CENTCOM's decision to deploy CJTF-180 without its normal associated military intelligence and military police brigades made McNeill's position more difficult. That decision reflected the difficulty of identifying what changes needed to be made to the campaign plan after the transition from Phase II to Phase III. The requirement to secure, screen, safeguard, and extract useful knowledge from detainees in a timely manner presented CJTF-180 with increasingly complex logistical, administrative, security, and legal challenges. Although the presence of the 202d Military Intelligence Battalion helped mitigate some issues, McNeill still operated under an unofficial and ambiguous cap on the number of soldiers he could deploy, which forced him to weight his force with frontline combat formations and leaders over enablers and supervisors. The cap on the size of his headquarters produced a relatively low ratio of support personnel to combat troops, but it also flattened the chain of command to a point where McNeill's staff became directly involved in tactical missions normally left to subordinate headquarters. The absence of intelligence and military police brigades, therefore, hobbled CJTF-180's capabilities to manage and interrogate detainees during the crucial initial months of its deployment.

Even as the detainee population in Afghanistan continued to grow, CJTF-180 did not receive the interrogators, translators, and trained military police it needed to swiftly process and interrogate prisoners in a safe and timely manner. DoD instructions to hold any detainee who "may pose a threat to U.S. interests, held intelligence value, or may be of interest for U.S. prosecution" further complicated McNeill's position.[14] This shortcoming prevented U.S. forces in Afghanistan from understanding the hierarchies, plans, operations, and personalities of al-Qaeda, Taliban, and others right when such information would be most useful to CJTF-180, as it extended its reach in search of terrorists and their sanctuaries.

Counterterrorism

The XVIII Airborne Corps exercised operational authority over or was the supported command for all American combat units in Afghanistan.[15] Upon arrival, their forces were arrayed with 3,352 service members at Kandahar Airfield, 2,567 at Bagram Air Base, 368 in Kabul, 89 in Khost, and 30 in Mazar-e Sharif.[16] Along with the staff in McNeill's reduced-strength headquarters and coalition soldiers who had deployed under the Enduring Freedom banner, these troops constituted the means the CJTF-180 commander had to conduct counterterrorism. In addition to counterterrorism operations, CENTCOM

14. Schlesinger et al., *Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations*, pp. 64–66.

15. Concept of Opns, final draft CENTCOM, 16 Apr 2002, sub: Establishment of CJTF-180, pp. 3, 18; Annex J (Cmd Relationships) to CFC OPORD 07, CJTF-180, CENTCOM, 20 May 2002, pp. 2–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. The remaining 127 service members were dispersed throughout the country, mostly at Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) safe houses. Presentation, CENTCOM, 17 Apr 2002, sub: Personnel in Afghanistan AOR, slide 3.



Spc. David Marck Jr., USA

Troops from the 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, on a search-and-attack mission near Narizah as part of Operation Mountain Lion.

tasked the XVIII Airborne Corps to plan the transition from Phase III to Phase IV. The changeover from intelligence-driven combat operations to a predominantly civil-military approach would formally occur when efforts by coalition forces and their indigenous proxies to prevent international terrorist organizations from reemerging showed consistent signs of progress.[17] To prepare for that change, CENTCOM directed McNeill to plan a "reshaping of the force" and "complete active HA [humanitarian assistance] projects" simultaneously with combat operations.[18] In General Franks' view, initiating civil-military operations in Phase III would pacify the populace, aid the XVIII Airborne Corps' counterterrorism efforts, build support for the Afghan Interim Authority, and set the conditions for disengagement at the end of the Bonn Process.

McNeill did not change how Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek and General Hagenbeck were operating during his first three months in Afghanistan. Arriving in the middle of Operation Mountain Lion, a multiphased sequel to Operation Anaconda that lasted until August 2002, he continued existing

17. Assessment, Future Planning Element, CENTCOM, 17 Apr 2002, sub: OEF-Afghanistan, Phase III, p. 36.

18. In his concept of operations for the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters, Franks approved a mission statement that ended with "when directed, transition to FID [foreign internal defense] and security assistance ISO [in support of] international organizations and the emerging government of Afghanistan." OPORD 07, TOA to CJTF-AFG for Phase III and IV Opns in CJOA AFG, CENTCOM, 28 May 2002, secs. 3.C.2.H, 3.C.3.B.7, 3D.1.B.15; Concept of Opns, final draft, CENTCOM, 16 Apr 2002, sub: Establishment of CJTF-180, p. 5.

operations and authorized new ones to remove international terrorists from Afghanistan.[19] McNeill sustained Mountain Lion and launched a new operation, Champion Strike, because he recognized that the enemy had either melded into village life or fled to Pakistan. At this stage of his campaign, McNeill sought intelligence by ordering active patrolling by combat units in areas that CENTCOM had designated as terrorist-laden, in hopes that they would make contact with enemy forces (*Map 5.1*).

McNeill's main strength in these efforts came from his own XVIII Airborne formation in Fort Bragg. In August 2002, Col. James L. Huggins' 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division (Task Force Panther), composed of Lt. Col. Ronald Rice's 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry; Lt. Col. David T. Gerard's 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry; Lt. Col. Martin P. Schweitzer's 3d Battalion, 505th Infantry; Lt. Col. Charles K. Hardy's 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery; and a number of supporting units, replaced both Col. Kevin V. Wilkerson's 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division and Col. Francis J. Wiercinski's 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.[20]

Operation Champion Strike shifted the focus of operations eastward. Like Mountain Lion, it was based on an understanding of the enemy presence in Afghanistan that predated Operation Anaconda. The operation targeted the valley running between western Pakistan and the Bermal District in Paktika Province thought to be "an alternate route for possible AQ/TB [al-Qaeda/Taliban] reconstitution efforts."[21] After reconnaissance, cordon, and search missions, elements of Colonel Huggins' TF Panther executed "search and attack" operations to defeat the enemy.[22] During the course of the operation, Colonel Gerard's 1st Battalion detained eight men, including a suspected al-Qaeda financier. The Americans also seized 150 AK47 rifles, 200 improvised explosive devices (IEDs), a mortar, cases of hand grenades, rocket launchers, heavy machine guns, "a bucketful of satellite phones, passports, a poster of Osama Bin Laden, and Taliban and al-Qaeda documents."[23]

To conduct these operations, CJTF-180 employed a variation of a targeting method known as Effects-Based Operations. Initially devised by Air Force theorists during Operation Desert Storm before being adopted by Army Special Operations for use during ground operations, this method

---

19. As McNeill reflected in retirement, "It was always my understanding . . . that the goal was to enable the Afghans so that they could take responsibility for their own turf." Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Gen (Ret.) Dan K. McNeill, frmr ISAF Cdr, 21 Apr 2009, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

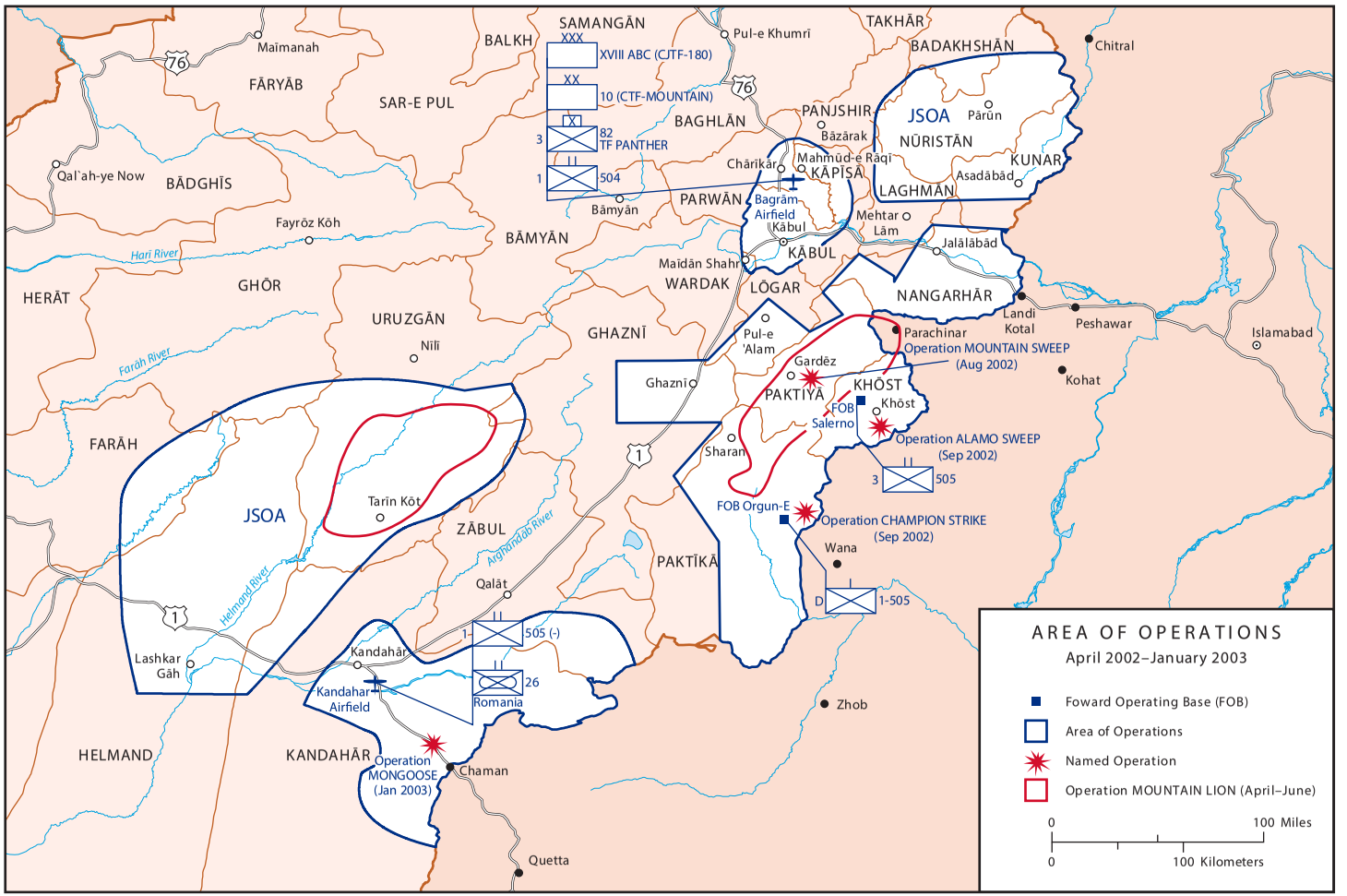
20. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 333. Colonel Huggins also gained additional troops in the form of the 26th Romanian Mechanized Battalion stationed in Kandahar.

21. FRAGO 138 to OPORD 02–03, CJTF-180, 27 Aug 2002, attached to CTF-82 Cmd Rpt, D.1.A.1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Cmd Rpt, CTF-82, A.1.A.3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. FRAGO 138 to OPORD 02–03, CJTF-180, 27 Aug 2002, attached to CTF-82 Cmd Rpt, D.1.A.2.

23. Ryan Chilcote, "U.S. Forces Capture 'Al Qaeda Financier,'" CNN, 11 Sep 2002, https://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/central/09/11/ar911.afghan.sweep, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Map 5.1


SAMANGĀN
BALKH
XXX
XVIII ABC (CJTF-180)
XX
10 (CTF-MOUNTAIN)
82
TF PANTHER
504
Maīmanah
FĀRYĀB
SAR-E PUL
Pul-e Khumrī
TAKHĀR
BADAKHSHĀN
Chitral
BAGHLĀN
PANJSHIR
Bāzārak
JSOA
Pārūn
NŪRISTĀN
KUNAR
Asadābād
Mahmūd-e Rāqi
KĀPĪSĀ
Chārīkār
LAGHMĀN
Qal'ah-ye Now
BĀDGHĪS
Bāmyān
PARWĀN
Bagrām Airfield
Kābul
Mehtar Lām
Jalālābād
Fayrōz Kōh
Hari River
BĀMYĀN
KĀBUL
Maīdān Shahr
WARDAK
LŌGAR
NANGARHĀR
HERĀT
GHŌR
URUZGĀN
GHAZNĪ
Pul-e 'Alam
Landi Kotal
Peshawar
Islamabad
Nīlī
Parachinar
Operation MOUNTAIN SWEEP (Aug 2002)
Farāh River
Ghaznī
Gardēz
PAKTIYĀ
KHŌST
Kohat
FOB Salerno
Khōst
FARĀH
Sharan
Operation ALAMO SWEEP (Sep 2002)
505
Tarīn Kōt
JSOA
FOB Orgun-E
Operation CHAMPION STRIKE (Sep 2002)
ZĀBUL
Helmand River
Arghandāb River
PAKTĪKĀ
Wana
Qalāt
1-505
505 (-)
Lashkar Gāh
Kandahār
26
Romania
Kandahar Airfield
Zhob
HELMAND
KANDAHĀR
Operation MONGOOSE (Jan 2003)
Chaman
Quetta
AREA OF OPERATIONS
April 2002–January 2003
Foward Operating Base (FOB)
Area of Operations
Named Operation
Operation MOUNTAIN LION (April–June)
0
100 Miles
0
100 Kilometers

theoretically offered commanders a way to scale, coordinate, and tailor lethal and kinetic engagements in order to achieve predictable and transformative results.[24] Although not yet codified in Army or joint doctrine at the time, Effects-Based Operations appeared suited for a counterterrorist campaign focusing on killing or capturing individuals or discrete groups.

General McNeill's chief of staff, Brig. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, was familiar with how Special Operations units planned and executed missions using this effects-based approach. McChrystal championed the use of similar methods by McNeill's command during CJTF-180's first months in theater.[25] Persuaded that the technique would prove exceptionally effective in the fluid environment of Afghanistan, CJTF-180 planners used effects-based operations methodology to decide which missions to conduct, who should conduct them, and what methods of engagement would best achieve the intended result.[26]

Although the effects-based operational approach seemed like a viable means of utilizing conventional forces for counterterrorism operations, McChrystal's faith in the methodology derived from peacetime training exercises rather than proven battlefield results. The approach might have been a conceptual step in the right direction for Army leaders who were placed in unfamiliar operational environments, but doing so proved of little value in Afghanistan. As conceived, the method not only required thinking about consequences beyond what officers had been trained to consider but also depended on dedicated support from intelligence organizations robust enough to gather, sort, and analyze cultural data. CJTF-180 could not measure the effects of nonlethal engagements because no one on its staff knew what those effects would be. Further, the headquarters lacked the personnel for such an intensive warfighting process; only one staff member interacted regularly with Afghans.[27] Even if the staff had been trained to implement Effects-Based Operations, virtually all of the available intelligence collection

---

24. Military thinkers originally conceived of Effects-Based Operations as a component of Rapid Decisive Operations, the idea that projecting power against an enemy's weakness, if done with speed and from multiple directions, can overwhelm an adversary. J–9 Joint Futures Lab, "A Concept for Rapid Decisive Operations," Whitepaper, v. 2.0, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Group. For other understandings of the concept, see Paul K. Davis, *Effects-Based Operations: A Grand Challenge for the Analytical Community*, Ofc of the Sec Def and United States Air Force (Arlington, Va.: RAND Corporation, 2001), pp. 8–11; and Brig Gen David A. Deptula, "Effects-Based Operations: Change in the Nature of Warfare," *Air & Space Power Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 4–5.

25. Interv, Col Timothy Reese, CSI, with Gen Dan K. McNeill, frmr CJTF-180 and ISAF Cdr, 16 Jun 2008, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Interv, Maj Philip H. Karns, 49th MHD, with Maj William L. Bialozor, frmr CJTF-180 Future Opns Fires Planner, 31 Aug 2002, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Peter Connors and Lisa Mundey, CSI, with Lt Gen (Ret.) John R. Vines, frmr CJTF-180 Cdr, 27 Jun 2007, p. 18, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. This was British Col. Nick Carter, the head of the corps' planning staff. Interv, OEF Study Grp with Gen Nicholas P. Carter, frmr CJTF-180 Plans Ofcr and Regional Command (RC) South Cdr, 21 Jan 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

systems seemed ill-suited to identifying the whereabouts and intentions of both individuals and discrete groups of enemy personnel.

The Effects-Based Operations theory also had other flaws that became apparent over time. The targeting method originally assumed that causality is simple, linear, and immediate. In Enduring Freedom, planners who relied on that assumption soon came to the erroneous conclusion that military action could transform societies in predictable ways. In reality, the changes CJTF-180 was trying to induce were hard to predict, instigate, or measure. Removing Taliban leaders from local communities, although welcome to most Afghans, created power vacuums. Delivering humanitarian assistance provided immediate aid to isolated areas, but this approach was not sustainable and did not improve long-term stability. Even if detained Taliban leaders were replaced by individuals who supported the nascent central government and sustained humanitarian assistance could be provided, the lack of a nationwide communications infrastructure prevented CJTF-180 from advertising those successes in order to influence Afghan opinion. In the end, tactical decisions about how, when, where, and whom to engage had little effect on Afghan willingness to resist a Taliban resurgence.

Decisions about where to conduct missions were just as important to McNeill's counterterrorism approach as decisions about how to operate. CENTCOM had identified more areas of concern than McNeill had troops to patrol. Enemy locations within those areas remained largely unknown by the time CJTF-180 arrived in theater. McNeill responded to this intelligence deficiency in three ways. First, he kept troops at Bagram Air Base and Kandahar Airfield, using them as platforms from which to stage and project combat power. Combined, they provided responsive coverage over most of the area that CENTCOM had identified as being unfriendly to coalition presence. Second, he used helicopters to project companies and battalions on intelligence-gathering missions. This tactic, called air-assaulting, allowed units to surprise, overwhelm, and apprehend individuals in potentially hostile areas in the hope that they would provide actionable intelligence. Third, he relied on Special Forces. Deployed alpha detachments, who often spent weeks living among locals, could learn who the enemy was and who it was not, and the intelligence they provided often was the only information that conventional units received before going out on missions.[28]

Special Forces elements were crucial to the success of early CJTF-180 operations. Soon after TF Panther arrived, Australian Special Forces set out to establish a working relationship with their new partners. A pattern quickly developed in which the Australians spent weeks on mission and then informed Huggins' planners what they had learned. Their reports fed effects-based targeting processes used to establish missions.[29] Missions often

---

28. Rpt, Joint Center for Lessons Learned, 10th Mtn Div (Light Inf), 6 Jun 2003, sub: Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Afghanistan, p. 8; Capt John W. Page, "Operation Viper in the Baghran Valley" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course, Inf Capts Career Course, 9 Feb 2004), p. 2.

29. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Lt Col (Ret.) Ronald M. Stelmasczyk, frmr CTF-82 Ch of Staff, 30 Nov 2006, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Sean A. Terry, USA

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division secure an area as explosive ordnance and disposal teams deal with a cache of ordnance found during Operation Mountain Lion.

began with reconnaissance by Special Forces and continued with cordon-and-searches, operations in which conventional forces would air-assault into a town or village, secure a perimeter, and methodically search the buildings within the perimeter. These missions, if based on accurate intelligence, would locate the individuals that CJTF-180 wanted to detain without unnecessarily harming or aggravating the local population.[30]

When task forces did not rely on assistance from units familiar with targeted areas, they risked alienating villagers or creating friction between themselves and Special Operations elements already in country. During Operation Mountain Sweep (August 2002), the first mission planned by CJTF-180, TF Panther entered Zurmat District just south of Gardez, the capital of Paktiya Province, without consulting the two Special Forces detachments in the district.[31] According to a report submitted by ODAs 986 and 314, the brigade initiated the mission with "no intelligence to indicate that any of the targets sought . . . [were] actually in the area."[32] Operating without clear knowledge of who was bad and who was not, soldiers frisked women, destroyed wells, and damaged a house that the ODAs had already cleared.[33]

30. Despite efforts to standardize detention procedures, prisoner yields differed greatly across theater. Rpt, Brig Gen Charles Jacoby, 26 Jun 2004, sub: Inspection of CFC-A AO Detainee Operations, p. 948, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. AAR, Opn Mountain Sweep, ODAs 986 and 314, 25 Aug 2002, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. Ibid., p. 5.

33. Ibid., p. 4. According to the ODA, the Panther brigade set "U.S. efforts in the region back by 4–6 months." TF Panther offers a far different version of events, noting that weapons had

Despite its usefulness to conventional forces, Special Forces' expertise came at a cost. They lacked heavy weapons, which meant they had to siphon heavy mortar teams and mounted machine-gun platoons from deployed conventional forces, thus reducing the latter's numbers and potential scope of operations even further. The widely deployed operational detachments and civil affairs teams depended on armed Afghans for security. ODAs overpaid warlords at the ten firebases they established in Afghanistan, creating employment and financial imbalances that conventional units later had to resolve.[34] Called Afghan Military Forces, Afghan Security Forces, Afghan Guard Forces, or Afghan Security Guards, these armed tribesmen became a source of authority that competed against the Afghan government for influence.[35]

Even though missions during the half year after McNeill established CJTF-180 made it difficult for the Taliban and al-Qaeda to act collectively, sweeps by U.S. troops were not preventing attacks or increasing popular support for the Afghan government created by the Bonn Conference.[36] Operation Mountain Lion "eliminated over 120 sanctuaries, nearly 500 weapon caches and destroyed over 1.2 million pounds of captured ammunition" but did not kill or capture any enemy fighters.[37] TF Panther discovered only five weapons and two document caches in Mountain Sweep, a sure indicator that preparatory intelligence collection efforts were ineffective.[38] Results did not improve over time as solutions for pervasive intelligence shortcomings remained elusive. When American troops conducted Operation Alamo Sweep on 22 September, the same task force cleared two objectives east of

---

been found in a house that belonged to a man personally vetted by the 19th Special Forces Group officer in charge. See Interv, Connors with Stelmasczyk, 30 Nov 2006, p. 11.

34. Rpt, CJTF-180, Sep 2005, sub: Afghan National Police Program, Version 8, p. 90, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

35. CENTCOM supported using Afghan Military Forces, which did little to smooth relationships between conventional and Special Forces. Assessment, Future Planning Element, CENTCOM, 17 Apr 2002, sub: OEF-Afghanistan, Phase III, pp. 45–46. Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, who replaced Vines as the senior American commander in Afghanistan, thought the Afghan Military Forces program was a credit to Special Forces ingenuity and retained the program. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Col Bryan R. Gibby, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen (Ret.) David W. Barno, frmr CFC-A Cdr, 20 Jan 2016, p. 38, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. U.S. forces in Afghanistan did not decide to disband these groups, now called Afghan Security Forces, until two months after the 2005 parliamentary elections. See OPORD 05–03, ASF Demobilization and/or Transition to GOA ANSF Service, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

36. Memo, Cdr, CJTF-180, 1 Nov 2002, sub: Operational Assessment for Oct 2002, with CJ–3 Info Paper attached, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Maj Philip H. Karns, 49th MHD, with Brig Gen Benjamin R. Mixon, Director CJTF-180 Staff, 22 Oct 2002, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. Bfg, CJTF-Mountain, 13 Jul 2002, sub: Operation Mountain Lion Assessment, slide 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

38. Operational Sum, OEF II, Task Force (TF) Panther, n.d., p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Spc. Eric E. Hughes, USA

Soldiers from Company C, 3d Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne, gather at a safe distance from a local village as the 307th Engineer Battalion destroys a weapons cache during Operation Alamo Sweep.

Khost City without making contact with the enemy or seizing significant amounts of documents, weapons, or ammunition.[39]

Throughout this period, CJTF-180 found it difficult to locate the enemy even with the help it received from Special Operations units aided by proxy militia elements. Because Effects-Based Operations required knowledge about targeted populations, commanders often had to conduct operations to gather intelligence instead of letting intelligence drive operations.[40] Existing intelligence systems were ill-suited to meet tactical requirements in Afghanistan. In addition, both CJTF-180 and CENTCOM were slow to acknowledge the extent to which remaining al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders had relocated to Pakistan. As McNeill recalled in a postconflict interview, after the Taliban had gone "to ground" and al-Qaeda had largely perished or fled, CJTF-180 chased "a lot of straws in the wind."[41] McNeill's approach to this problem would evolve over time, but during Mountain Lion, Mountain Sweep, and Champion Strike (September 2002), it remained centered on launching combat units on forays into CENTCOM-designated areas of interest.[42]

---

39. Ltr, TF Panther Opns Ofcr to CTF-82 Opns Ofcr, n.d., sub: TF Panther results for Alamo Sweep, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. Interv, Reese with McNeill, 16 Jun 2008, p. 10.

41. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

42. Ibid., p. 10. Before the XVIII Airborne Corps departed Fort Bragg, North Carolina, CENTCOM identified four pockets of resistance for it to address: Paktiya/Paktika/Khost (including Pakistan), Northern Helmand/Uruzgan, Kunar (Pech River Valley), and Kunduz

CJTF-180's continued reliance on intelligence collection systems and information gained through interrogating enemy captives stemmed in part from the limited amount of combat power available to McNeill. American doctrine included the option of employing combat units to aid intelligence collection efforts by conducting operations intended to force the enemy to react, respond, or relocate. CJTF-180's lack of infantry and limited dedicated aviation support constrained its ability to employ those methods. The fierce topography of Afghanistan, with few trafficable roads, placed such a high premium on Army helicopters that McNeill could not afford to dedicate the bulk of those assets to developing the tactical situation through successive air assault operations. As a result, conventional Army rotary-wing assets, and to a lesser degree fixed-wing U.S. Air Force airlift platforms, were involved in myriad everyday tasks such as command and control, close-combat fire support, medical evacuation, reconnaissance, logistics support, transport of ANA recruits to Kabul, counternarcotics support, ballot submission in support of Afghan elections, and movement of detainees to and from interrogation centers.

General McNeill successfully pleaded his case for additional helicopters, which helped to ease the tacit personnel cap that had been in place since November 2001. By summer 2003, one battalion-sized aviation task force operated from Kandahar and one from Bagram. Between them, they had airframes at Khost and fueling points across southeast Afghanistan.[43] In all, seventy-five to eighty helicopters supported both CJTF-180 and CJSOTF-Afghanistan.[44] In comparison, only four helicopters serviced the 5,500 ISAF soldiers, even though ISAF began transitioning from UN to NATO control in April 2003.[45] With only four airframes available for its use, NATO ISAF had only limited ability to help the central Afghan government extend outward.

More helicopters gave CJTF-180 more flexibility, but the additional airframes did not solve McNeill's operational problem. Airframes provided mobility to CJTF-180 at the price of anchoring Army units to airfields. With conventional assets ranging across both CJTF-180 and the Special Operations task force battlespaces, the theater's combat aviation assets

---

Province. Assessment, Future Planning Element, CENTCOM, 17 Apr 2002, sub: OEF Afghanistan, Phase III, p. 5.

43. Interv, Connors and Mundey with Vines, 27 Jun 2007, p. 8.

44. Interv, Charles Stuart Kennedy, United States Institute of Peace, Afghanistan Experience Project, with unidentified Foreign Service Ofcr, frmr member Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team, 10 Dec 2004, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Conventional aviation supported Special Forces as well as conventional forces. According to Col. Walter Herd, the CJSOTF commander from summer 2004 to summer 2005, almost all of his aviation support came from the conventional units: "In fact, I did the math and about 95 percent of all our aviation support, like I said, came from the JTF [Joint Task Force], out of either the 10th Mountain Division or the 25th ID [Infantry Division]." Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Col Walter Herd, frmr Combined Joint Special Opns Task Force–Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) Cdr, p. 8.

45. Interv, Kennedy with unidentified Foreign Service Ofcr, 10 Dec 2004, p. 4. The handover from UN to NATO control was completed on 11 August 2003.

regularly traversed lengthy distances.[46] More aviation capability meant more air fields and fuel points, which increased force protection requirements. Constant use of helicopter airframes also necessitated more frequent maintenance, which in turn required additional repair and servicing assets. The influx of additional rotary assets, when combined with the validated need for personnel to satisfy evolving mission requirements, eventually required higher force levels.

From Civil Affairs Task Forces to Reconstruction Teams

Civil-military affairs presented opportunities and challenges different from combat operations. DoD and CENTCOM strategists originally hoped that relieving Afghan suffering would solidify coalition support and generate favorable world opinion.[47] McNeill agreed. In his view, humanitarian efforts gave coalition forces time and space to complete their mission. He understood that counterterrorism included preventing humanitarian disasters—at least those for which coalition forces could be held responsible—and coordinating reconstruction efforts. Noncombat operations would be an important element of his campaign to secure Afghanistan.

Civil-military operations entailed more than humanitarian assistance. Every interaction between service members and Afghan civilians, from providing medical and dental aid to connecting nongovernmental organizations with indigenous populations, was part of civil-military operations. Once combat operations had diminished in size and frequency, noncombat operations would help prevent Afghanistan from serving as a staging base for future terrorists.

CENTCOM resourced CJTF-180 for civil affairs by establishing the Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force and deployed it in support of General Mikolashek's Coalition Forces Land Component Command. Led by Brig. Gen. John H. Kern since May 2002, this organization consisted of the Army Reserve's 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, which had replaced the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, under a brigade-level headquarters.[48] It provided guidance, coordinated with U.S. Civil Affairs Teams–Afghanistan and international coalition humanitarian liaison

46. Interv, Connors and Mundey with Vines, 27 Jun 2007, pp. 14–15.

47. One analyst has argued that "ethical foreign policy has become of central importance to . . . [a] government's legitimacy at home." David Chandler, *From Kosovo to Kabul and Beyond: Human Rights and International Intervention* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pluto Press, 2006), p. 64. Such policies have become a way of diffusing responsibility for the horrors of intervention, military and otherwise. Ibid., p. 70.

48. The 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, under the impression that it would be in Afghanistan for only a few months, did not deploy at full strength, and operated with reduced personnel until the rest of the unit arrived. As the full scope of its mission became clear, it received individual augmentees from the Army Reserve's New York–based 401st Civil Affairs Battalion.



Sfc. Freddy E. Gurwell, USA

An Army civil affairs unit fords a river in Uruzgan Province.

cells, and advised the transitional government.[49] Civil Affairs Teams–Afghanistan were small, self-contained teams of civil affairs specialists and Special Operations soldiers who interacted with Afghans in unsecure or less accessible areas. Humanitarian liaison cells were teams of six civil affairs soldiers deployed near selected population centers to coordinate with and assist international and nongovernmental humanitarian organizations seeking to deliver aid to the Afghan people. The humanitarian liaison cells assumed a more direct role over time when other agencies were unwilling or unable to provide needed goods and services to Afghans.[50]

After three months commanding the civil-military task force while overseeing the efforts of the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan to build the nascent ANA, General Kern transferred his civil-military responsibilities to Col. George P. Maughan, the 360th Civil Affairs Brigade commander. Almost immediately, Colonel Maughan established two civil-military operations centers outside Kabul. These centers served as secure sites where military representatives, civilians, the medical community, and aid workers could interact without travelling to the Afghan capital.[51] Working with Special Forces and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Maughan posted additional teams and liaisons throughout the countryside.[52]

---

49. Interv, Dennis Van Wey, CSI, with Col Michael E. Stout, frmr CENTCOM Civil-Mil Planner, 24 Apr 2007, pp. 3, 5–6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Mark D. Sherry, CMH, with Col George P. Maughan, frmr CJCMOTF Cdr, 22 Nov 2002, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Briscoe et al., *Weapon of Choice*, pp. 251– 52; Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 194.

51. Interv, Dennis Van Wey, CSI, with Col George P Maughan, frmr CJCMOTF Cdr, 24 Aug 2007, pp. 9–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

52. Ibid., p. 9.

Although fewer in number and more restricted in scope than he wanted, these organizations provided a rudimentary structure for coordinating humanitarian assistance and identifying candidates for rural reconstruction and development.

By late 2002, the American civil-military effort in Afghanistan involved two operations centers, seven humanitarian liaison cells, and eleven civil affairs teams.[53] One civil-military operations center and its three subordinate humanitarian liaison cells were located north of the Hindu Kush in Uzbekistan; a second civil-military operations center was sited south of the Hindu Kush and tied in with around six humanitarian liaison cells. However, the liaison cells and operations centers, along with Maughan's own staff, numbered only 221 personnel. Recognizing that these resources alone were insufficient to meet the needs of the populace in war-torn Afghanistan, Maughan constantly sought to increase the number of civil-military operations centers in Afghanistan.[54]

Maughan focused on creating more centers because he knew CENTCOM wanted to assist nongovernmental and international aid organizations rather than supplant their efforts using U.S. civil affairs assets. Upon assuming responsibility for Afghanistan, CJTF-180 implemented CENTCOM's guidance by tasking the Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force "to fix responsibility for humanitarian assistance on UN, UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees], NGO/IO [nongovernmental organizations/international organizations], AIA [Afghan Interim Authority], and OGAs [other governmental agencies]."[55] Like his predecessor, however, McNeill discovered that the U.S. military had only a limited amount of influence over civilian humanitarian organizations, despite having a common purpose. Because American civil affairs teams had been interacting directly with Afghans long before international agencies and civilian humanitarian organizations reappeared, this revelation had little impact on CJTF-180's approach. McNeill continued to employ civil affairs in a manner similar to TF Mountain's use of humanitarian liaison cells to determine where to "focus combat operations."[56] Civil affairs personnel collected and reported the local Afghans' perceptions of key aspects of the campaign, such as how they felt about coalition forces, enemy strength, and the need for developmental assistance. Unfortunately, the U.S. military had yet to develop an effective fusion process that allowed analysts to combine information collected by

53. Interv, Brandi Ershif, CMH, with Col George P. Maughan, frmr CJCMOTF Cdr, 13 Oct 2011, pp. 19, 30, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also Concept of Opns, CENTCOM J–5, 16 Apr 2002, sub: CONOP for establishing CJTF-180, p. 25, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Interv, Sherry with Maughan, 22 Nov 2002, pp. 29, 58; Interv, Van Wey with Maughan, 24 Aug 2007, p. 9.

55. Memo, CENTCOM for XVIII Airborne Corps (ABC) (CJTF-180), 6 May 2002, sub: Operation Enduring Freedom, p. 23, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Interv, Neil Rogers, CSI, with Col Don Amburn, frmr 489th Civil Affairs Bn Cdr, 7 Dec 2006, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

civil affairs teams with knowledge gained from Special Forces in order to provide better situational awareness for commanders.[57]

Although CJTF-180 could not use their reporting to the fullest, civil-military operations strove to overcome numerous obstacles to help ordinary Afghans. Metrics gauging the actual benefit of these efforts remained elusive. American authorities highlighted the fact that $296 million in aid "helped avert a famine" in 2002 and 2003, but they did not know whether or not the relief supplies actually went to the parties most in need of assistance.[58] While Maughan reported to CJTF-180 that the civil-military task force approved or was in the process of approving 305 overseas humanitarian disaster and civic aid projects totaling over $14 million by 1 January 2003, he did not differentiate between projects driven by American assessments and those requested by Afghans.[59] The civil affairs effort had other critical flaws. Soon after arriving at Bagram, British Col. Nicholas P. "Nick" Carter, the CJTF-180 planning director, recognized that civil affairs teams and liaisons could project influence on behalf of only the U.S. Army, not the Afghan Interim Authority. Colonel Carter wanted to "connect governance to people" and proposed posting "joint regional teams" in cities other than Kabul for this purpose.[60]

Carter's idea might have remained conceptual if Lt. Col. Michael E. Stout, a reserve civil affairs officer, had not visited Afghanistan with CENTCOM's draft political-military plan for Enduring Freedom.[61] Colonel Stout believed that joint regional teams could transfer theater responsibility from the military to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the agency identified in the plan as the lead for American reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.[62] In a short time, Stout convinced McNeill not only to convert four civil-military operations centers into what Karzai relabeled as Provincial Reconstruction Teams, but also to give each an infantry platoon for security.[63]

---

57. Daniel Helmer, "Twelve Urgent Steps for the Advisor Mission in Afghanistan," *Military Review* 87, no. 4 (Jul–Aug 2008): 75.

58. This figure is arrived at by adding the value of 434,870 metric tons of wheat funded through two programs ($245 million) with the value of 2,489,880 daily rations dropped from transport aircraft into Afghanistan (about $50.9 million). Rpt to Congressional Committees, U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Afghanistan Reconstruction*, p. 16.

59. Memo, Col George P. Maughan, Cdr, CJCMOTF, for Lt Gen Daniel K. McNeill, Cdr, CJTF-180, 5 Jan 2003, sub: OHDACA Status Report as of 1 Jan 2003, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

60. Interv, OEF Study Grp with Carter, 21 Jan 2015.

61. Interv, Van Wey with Stout, 24 Apr 2007, p. 6.

62. Ibid., p. 8.

63. Colonel Stout's role in finalizing and promoting the Provincial Reconstruction Team concept began in a meeting with CJTF-180 chief of staff Brig. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, when he mentioned that CENTCOM's draft political-military campaign assigned leadership of Phase IV to the U.S. Agency for International Development. Stout visited the CJTF-180 joint planning staff after the meeting, learned of the reconstruction concept developed by Colonel Carter, adjusted its organization, and won McNeill's approval of the concept. McNeill had Stout brief the plan in a commander's update, and the combined joint operations

Multiple actors working independently toward common goals made it possible to form these reconstruction teams. The concept had no single progenitor and, in its early development, no agreed purpose. Realizing that current civil affairs entities were few in number and restricted in what they could do, commanders modified organizational structures which, over time, resulted in reconstruction teams replacing operations centers as the accepted instrument for reconstruction, development, and other postconflict missions.[64] Humanitarian liaison cells, which Maughan had placed under civil operations centers, began answering to Provincial Reconstruction Team commanders. Eventually, the Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force completely subordinated all their operations centers and liaison cells to the reconstruction teams. Constituting one of the most original and adaptive elements of the Enduring Freedom campaign, reconstruction teams emerged in form and importance from well-intentioned efforts to increase the effectiveness of civil affairs operations.

General McNeill's planners designed reconstruction teams as self-contained units capable of influencing populations in strategically important areas of the country. In addition to a maneuver platoon, they ideally included a State Department representative, U.S. Agency for International Development officials capable of funding and overseeing developmental projects, U.S. Department of Agriculture experts, engineers, and an Afghan interior ministry colonel to represent the Afghan government. Although rarely filled to their full complement, teams were designed to house experts capable of improving Afghan communities. Geography was the primary factor in determining their initial locations. The first team established was the Gardez team in Paktiya Province, which began operations on 1 January 2003.[65] The site did not require significant construction and could be established quickly.[66] Reachable by air, it could be supported logistically. Gardez was close enough to Kabul to feel the extended reach of the national government, and close enough to their higher headquarters in Bagram.

---

command subsequently issued orders to staff the first three stations. Stout spent the next few months selling the project to American commanders, who did not want to lose resources or personnel to the effort; to coalition partners, who were reluctant to absorb the expenses of team ownership; to President Karzai, who wanted to direct how U.S. development funding was spent; and to audiences back home, which generally were receptive to the idea. Ibid., pp. 6–9, 10, 12, 13–17.

64. According to Colonel Maughan, "It just so happened that it [the establishment of Civil-Military Operations Centers] coincided with CJTF-180's PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team] concept. So, basically, it laid out perfect with the PRT concept." Interv, Van Wey with Maughan, 24 Aug 2007, p. 11.

65. Originally, Bamyan was going to be the first Provincial Reconstruction Team established. Memo, Cdr, CJTF-180, 1 Nov 2002, sub: Operational Assessment for Oct 2002, with CJ3 Info Paper attached, p. 10. After Gardez was chosen, Bamyan became the fourth team established. Mazar-e Sharif (Balkh Province) was the second and Maimanah (Faryab Province) was the third, both in July 2003. After Bamyan, Parwan (November 2003), Herat (December 2003), Kandahar (December 2003), and Kunduz (January 2004) followed.

66. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Gen Victor G. Renuart Jr., frmr CENTCOM Dir of Opns, 31 May 2007, p. 13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The Gardez team and subsequent reconstruction teams soon became many things to many people. Maneuver commanders saw them as a way to strengthen governors; measure support for the interim government; oversee elections; conduct disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration operations; keep the peace among conflicting local factions; and train local police.[67] Their official mandate was as inclusive as their unofficial one. According to a 2003 agreement between the State Department and the DoD, Provincial Reconstruction Teams were to "extend the authority of the Afghan central government, improve security, and promote reconstruction."[68] The multiple expectations for the teams led Stout to refer to them as "Christmas trees": protected enclaves in the Afghan hinterland upon which the goals, actions, and expectations of development, reconstruction, and government agencies were hung like ornaments.[69] As the teams became the default answer for every question about Afghanistan's future stability, they became increasingly difficult for the civil-military task force to coordinate. Even such a basic purpose of the teams—to extend the influence of the central government to the provinces—meant different things to different parties.[70]

The expectations that CJTF-180 had for reconstruction teams grew because Afghanistan did not have an effective central government. In just nine months, operational commanders had begun to expect the teams to produce results that they did not have the civilian expertise, resources, or mobility to accomplish. Although they were supposed to include a Ministry of Interior colonel, the position was largely symbolic; the colonel would represent the Afghan government but would not have a say in whether the coalition decided to initiate reconstruction. Perhaps because of their marginalization, Karzai rarely filled these billets. As with the attempts to connect provinces to Karzai's Afghan Interim Authority, Provincial Reconstruction Team efforts to advance other aspects of their mission depended on the willingness of the Afghan people to accept a centralized political order that few in the country had ever experienced. Without widespread recognition of Kabul's authority, teams could improve security only by sponsoring local militia forces, a practice that complicated disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of those same forces. Likewise, civil-military operations could not promote stability by themselves. Even if operations were successful, U.S. military leaders did not want to encourage local Afghans to look to the civil-military units for future assistance instead of professing their loyalty to their new national government. The counterterrorist operations McNeill believed would defeat Afghanistan's enemies required a functioning indigenous government, not

67. Interv, Kennedy with unidentified Foreign Service Ofcr, 10 Dec 2004, pp. 8–9.

68. Robert M. Perito, *The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: Lessons Identified*, Special Rpt 152 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Oct 2005), p. 2; Ofc of CJCS, EO to Cdr, CENTCOM, 22 Dec 2003, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

69. Interv, Van Wey with Stout, 24 Apr 2007, p. 20.

70. Of their three official missions, Provincial Reconstruction Team commanders generally saw promoting Karzai's interim authority as most important. Perito, *The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*, p. 6.

militarized aid organizations. In the meantime, the Afghan authorities would continue to surrender their right to govern at the local and provincial levels as long as the American-led civil affairs organizations offered a viable alternative.

Replacing Warlords with Government Security Forces

Commanders trying to fill security needs with Afghan troops loyal to the nascent central government in 2002 and 2003 soon realized that attempts to solve one problem gave rise to others. The decision to intervene with few troops made it easier to provision units, but the coalition's reliance on indigenous proxies increased. Employing militias to guard bases enabled coalition humanitarian liaison cells to operate independently, but this contravened efforts to invest stature in the Afghan Interim Authority. In a country where civil life was dominated by tribal protectionism, whoever received aid from the U.S. civil affairs soldiers became allies to them, and whoever did not receive their aid distrusted them. Training national security forces, generally recognized as critical for Afghanistan's existence as an independent state, took time and money. Relying on warlord forces until national forces could be fielded weakened Karzai's effective authority. Regional strongmen like Ismail Khan in the west and Sher Mohammed Akhundzada in the southwest held monopolies on security that their appointments as governor condoned and, in some cases, legalized.[71]

Warlord armies had not always dominated Afghan society. According to Ali Ahmad Jalali, an Afghan scholar and future interior minister, "Traditionally the Afghan governments relied on three military institutions: the regular army, tribal levies, and community militias."[72] Following the invasion, coalition forces did not immediately concern themselves with the first of these institutions, in part because the United Front was a suitable alternative. By summer 2002, with independent strongmen proliferating throughout the country and the shortcomings of the United Front option acknowledged, Operation Enduring Freedom's senior military and political leaders began to recognize the necessity of a military force beholden to the central government.[73]

---

71. Although this situation made little sense at the time to Americans unfamiliar with tribal and ethnic rivalries, Karzai embraced a number of questionable characters in order to weaken the influence of his political competitors. Ismail Khan's influence, for example, could be leveraged against Deputy Defense Minister Abdul Rashid Dostum because the latter had forced Khan to flee to Iran during the Afghan civil war. Sher Mohammed Akhundzada, a fellow Pashtun, was able to counterbalance Tajik and Uzbek influences within the government while also providing Karzai with links to the dominant tribe in Helmand Province.

72. Ali Ahmad Jalali, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army," *Parameters* (Autumn 2002): 75, 82. Jalali believed that Green Berets would have to train only 9,600 soldiers for the regular army and 3,000 border forces.

73. For example, see Ambassador Robert P. Finn's State Department correspondence on Under Secretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith's September 2002 visit to Afghanistan. Memo,

Training Afghan forces proved more difficult than CENTCOM first assumed. When General Franks entrusted McNeill with Enduring Freedom in June 2002, he thought Afghan Army units would start replacing American battalions in half a year.[74] However, this estimate did not factor in the need to generate the number of units necessary to force warlord militias to recognize the Afghan Interim Authority's power. As realized by McNeill and his staff, Afghans could not secure their own country until they had enough formations to counter a resurgent Taliban, neutralize potential internal threats to centralized governance, and safeguard their borders. Fortunately for CJTF-180, CENTCOM had already split the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan off from the Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force. The former was better suited for guiding the interim government in the training and establishment of a national army because it answered both to McNeill and to the State Department representatives responsible for funding.

Afghan leaders originally hoped to field several army corps—each roughly the equivalent of an American infantry division minus supporting artillery, helicopters, and tanks—in Kabul and the provinces simultaneously.[75] This approach offered long-range flexibility by allowing the Afghans to establish government security forces in the potentially restive Pashtun south. Wanting its counterterrorist forces to enjoy freedom of movement throughout the countryside, the coalition disagreed. In a geographically focused approach that placed little emphasis on future threats, the military cooperation headquarters instead planned "to strengthen the center first while working to cement relationships with the regional leaders."[76] That course of action required increasing supplemental funds from $292 million to $350 million in fiscal year 2003. Expenditures would include not only building the ANA but also reconstituting the Ministry of Defense, fielding border guards, and creating an aviation element.[77] Money would also be spent to address systemic problems within existing ANA units. Poor pay, high illiteracy rates, and ethnic friction hobbled ANA recruiting during the second half of fiscal

---

Robert P. Finn, 30 Sep 2002, sub: DOD Under Secretary Feith Discusses National Army Formation, Reconstruction with Afghan and U.N. Officials, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

74. Course of Action (COA) Bfg, CENTCOM to CJTF-180, 16 Apr 2002, sub: Phase III, Afghanistan Operation, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The first three kandaks graduated in July, August, and October 2002 and were sent to the field to partner with ODAs. Although this practice would continue through 2004, it had mixed results, as the kandaks typically rotated out after a two-month operational period, and the Afghan militia working with ODAs initially viewed the kandaks with distrust. Interv, Jenn Vedder, CSI, with Maj David Haskill, 1 Apr 2010, pp. 7–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

75. Interv, Maj John Warsinske, 47th MHD, with Lt Col Steve Russell, frmr Plans Ofcr, CFLCC C–5, 8 Jun 2002, pp. 5–7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

76. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, 107th Cong., 2d sess., S.Hrg 107–801, 7 Feb and 31 Jul 2002 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Ofc, 2002), p. 117.

77. Info Paper, CCJ5-ANA, 14 Nov 2002, sub: Afghan National Army Training Spt, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

year 2002. The first and second *kandaks* (Afghan battalion-sized units) of the ANA had entered training with barely 50 percent of the 600 promised inductees per unit. The third and fourth kandaks, which respectively entered training at 61 percent and 68 percent strength, reflected CJTF-180's increased recruiting effort, leveraging radio programs, videos, and leaflets paid for by State Department contributions equating to $450,000.[78]

Reflecting Washington officials' beliefs that factional fighting was more of a threat to the Kabul regime than a resurgent Taliban operating from Pakistan, CENTCOM established a permanent strength of 50,000 soldiers for the ANA. Supported by American funding, the ANA would temporarily grow to 70,000, or one soldier for every militia fighter thought to be in country. Assuming that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts reduced warlord forces by 50 percent between August 2003 and 2007, the army required only 35,000 troops to maintain the same ratio. By adding another 15,000 as security against an incomplete reintegration effort, the ANA would have excess from which it could make future cuts.[79]

From 24 August to 2 October 2002, a working group convened by the Office of Military Cooperation's newly arrived commander, Army Maj. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, developed a more detailed way forward entitled "A Blueprint for the Afghan Military." Unfortunately, restrictive DoD guidance ensured that General Eikenberry's effort adopted the conceptual flaws inherent in earlier studies by focusing on militias belonging to rogue warlords rather than a resurgent Taliban. Like the CENTCOM analysis, the working group pinned recruitment on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts.[80] As planned, "regional forces [the mujahideen/ Afghan Military Forces]" would be "recruited into the National Guard" and incorporated into "seven ANA Regional Corps."[81] This National Guard would both conduct "internal security operations" and protect the central government against external threats.[82] It would help the coalition in two ways. The first corps to be activated would replace the international force stationed in Kabul.[83] Also, it would grow to "have enough combat power

78. Info Paper, CCJ5-ANA, 18 Nov 2002, sub: Need ATA Commitment for Quality ANA Recruits, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

79. Attachment from Lt Col Michael S. Weaver to Col Jack G. Smith (USA), Col John W. Bullard (USMC), Mr. Michael D. Fitzgerald, Contractor-DPRA (CTR-DPRA), 3 Aug 2004, sub: Extract on History of 70,000 Endstrength for ANA, pp. 2–3, to Msg, CENTCOM, 231306Z, Aug 03, sub: Concept of Operations for the Refinement of Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan (Afg), submitted in response to 242235Z Jul 03 CJCS Planning Order to CDRUSCENTCOM for the Refinement of Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Yaqub Ibrahimi, "Army Develops Despite Militia Disarmament Problems," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 29 Sep 2004, p. 2, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/army-develops-despite-militia-disarmament, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

80. Rpt, OMC-A, Oct 2002, sub: A Blueprint for the Afghan Military: A Joint Afghan/ Coalition Vision to Rebuild the Afghan Military, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.



Sr. Amn. Bethann Hunt, USAF

Colonel Najibullah, ANA, presents the 1st ANA Kandak to President Hamid Karzai at the Kabul Military Training Center during a graduation ceremony on 23 July 2002.

[to] . . . move forward into any area of Afghanistan and impose its will upon any contending factional force."[84]

As originally conceived, the plan ultimately proved too ambitious in the eyes of Eikenberry's superiors.[85] On 2 February 2003, CENTCOM presented CJTF-180 with a modified plan for training the ANA that phased the steps in "A Blueprint for the Afghan Military" over seven-and-a-half years. The ongoing Phase I would conclude by June 2004 when the Afghan Ministry of Defense fielded the Central Corps in Kabul. In addition to two light infantry brigades, the Central Corps included a quick reaction brigade boasting tank, mechanized, and Special Forces kandaks. In Phase II, slated to occur from June 2004 to December 2006, the Afghan government would field ANA corps in northern, western, and southern Afghanistan as well as form an aviation element. Phase III, which would overlap its predecessor for much of 2006, was devoted to generating as much additional force as possible by June 2008. The final phase would occur when the Ministry of Defense assumed full responsibility for employing and sustaining the ANA. As envisioned by CENTCOM, the Ministry of Defense would be ready by December 2009. The CENTCOM plan also embraced the "train the trainer" concept which

84. Interv, Lisa Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Lt Gen Karl Eikenberry, frmr OMC-A Cdr, 27 Nov 2006, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Colin J. Williams with Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr CFC-A Cdr and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 1 Feb 2016, pp. 16–17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

85. COA Bfg, CENTCOM to CJTF-180, 16 Apr 2002, sub: Phase III, Afghanistan Operation, p. 19; COA Bfg, CENTCOM to CJTF-180, 16 Apr 2002, sub: Phase III, Afghanistan Operation, p. 19; Concept of Opns, CENTCOM J–5, 16 Apr 2002, sub: CONOP for establishing CJTF-180, p. 3.

anticipated Afghans incrementally taking over the roles of instructors from American personnel. The number of American and coalition trainers needed to implement the program varied from 600 personnel in 2003 to less than a hundred in 2009.[86]

The DoD, however, rejected CENTCOM's recommended approach. Acknowledging that training structured along the lines of Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense doctrine failed to address future challenges, Pentagon officials transferred that responsibility to the conventional force.[87] The DoD soon settled upon a plan calling for a conventional brigade not only to conduct training, but also to establish school systems, logistics networks, and accelerate the fielding of supporting arms units. Subordinate to the Office of Military Cooperation, this brigade formed the basis of a new organization named Task Force Phoenix, after the mythical bird that could regenerate itself after burning to ashes. Resourcing the training effort also pushed McNeill's maximum allowable strength up to 10,000 troops.[88]

First to assume the TF Phoenix mantle was Col. Mark A. Milley's 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. Choosing an active-duty brigade allowed the DoD to implement the new approach faster than sending a reserve component unit that needed to mobilize before deploying. TF Phoenix trained the ANA from individual to corps level, with the DoD contracting responsibility for ministerial development to a private company, Military Professional Resources Incorporated.[89] The switch from Special Operations to conventional trainers brought attention to new initiatives, including Embedded Training Teams, squads of coalition advisers that joined kandaks two weeks before graduation and mentored them for months afterward.[90] In addition, new kandaks were certified for combat duties after working with U.S. forces in eastern Afghanistan before being returned to Kabul for assignment with the Central Corps. The multinational approach to the training effort—the French still trained Afghan officers and the British still

---

86. Paper, ANA Program, CENTCOM CCJ5-ANA, 5 Feb 2003, pp. 919, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

87. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Eikenberry, 27 Nov 2006, p. 29; Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Timothy Reese, frmr OMC-A Afghan National Army Design Team Ch, 26 Jun 2007, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

88. By this time, the coalition habitually used the term *kandak* to describe an Afghan battalion-sized element regardless of type. Each kandak numbered around 600 to 800 personnel with a headquarters and several company-sized units of 100 to 150 personnel apiece. The 10,000 number comes from Interv, Col Bryan R. Gibby, Brian F. Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John P. Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, p. 29, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

89. Special Inspector Gen for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan* (Arlington, Va.: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Sep 2017), p. 19.

90. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col (P) Mark A. Milley, frmr TF Phoenix Cdr, 6 Jun 2007, pp. 5, 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Embedded Training Teams had been conceptualized before the 2d Brigade's arrival. See Position paper, "Building the New Afghan National Army," 1 Nov 2002, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

trained Afghan noncommissioned officers—and its Kabul focus remained unchanged.

Growing the ANA challenged both the Kabul government and its American sponsors, although some major problems emerged from the latter's unfamiliarity with Afghan history and culture. In short, the effort was about managing three American mandated inputs (trainers, recruits, and resources) to produce three outputs: qualified soldiers, combat-capable units, and societal representation. To ensure no single ethnic faction dominated the Afghan security sector, the Office of Military Cooperation stood by its earlier decision to form units that represented Afghanistan's ethnic tribes proportionately. A recruiting approach that ignored or trivialized centuries of ethnic tension, coupled with the fact that Pashtun soldiers and Hazara officers were particularly hard to find, made this lofty goal difficult.[91] Several times during his command, Eikenberry had to delay training in order to ensure the units were ethnically balanced.[92]

Despite operational and strategic reluctance to increase America's involvement in Afghanistan, the decision to deploy a second maneuver brigade for training swelled Enduring Freedom in scope, troops, and headquarters. Although Colonel Milley's 2d Brigade initially deployed with only two battalion-sized units and a headquarters company, it received reinforcements once in theater. The goal was to grow the ANA rapidly in support of the Bonn Process, which included not only voting for the head of a transitional government but also selecting National Assembly and provincial council members. However, the DoD's decision to have inexperienced conventional forces absorb this training mission while working with indigenous populations demonstrated the DoD's willingness to relegate Afghanistan's near-term needs to a lower priority, thus freeing up Special Forces units for future operations.

The Army Adapts to the Campaigns

By the summer of 2003, the Army's senior leaders acknowledged that they had to plan for lengthy combat operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq.[93] Subsequent changes in the Army's institutional strategy were a reaction not only to the immediate pressures of the two ongoing campaigns, but also to the continued demands of Secretary Rumsfeld's vision of transformation. Rumsfeld's Office of Force Transformation, under V. Adm. Arthur K. Cebrowski, championed a vision of agile, network-centric forces, capable of swift and decisive combat operations, based on the critical operational goals outlined in the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Those goals were predicated on making joint forces able to command and control operations

91. Initially, the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan attempted to balance ethnicity and to mix former communists with former mujahideen and Western-trained officers. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Eikenberry, 27 Nov 2006, pp. 5, 7, 9.

92. Ibid., p. 5; Interv, Chandler Garcia with Reese, 26 Jun 2007, p. 11.

93. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, OEF Study Group, with Maj Gen (Ret.) David A. Fastabend, frmr Ch, HQDA Mil Opns Plans and Policy, 1 Jul 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

at expeditionary distances from their home bases, even against anti-access and area-denial threats. Those forces would be able to deny sanctuary to enemies by persistent surveillance, tracking, and precision strikes in all terrains and weather.[94]

The conduct of the first four months of Operation Enduring Freedom and the march to Baghdad at the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003 seemed to validate the DoD's visions of transformation and Rapid Decisive Operations. What followed, however, did not conform to that vision. Rather than facing an enemy that would capitulate to a tactically and operationally successful combat force, the Army and the DoD found themselves attempting to reestablish order in areas where previous forms of governance had been removed. In the case of Iraq, it was because of the dissolution of the former Iraqi government, whereas in Afghanistan, it was an attempt to create areas that would be under the direct influence of the Kabul government, in many cases for the first time. Doing so, while protecting the force, dramatically increased the demand for ground troops for both security and for the task of delivering basic services to the local population until their own elected leaders could do so.

Top-Driven Change

General Peter J. Schoomaker, who succeeded General Erik K. Shinseki as Chief of Staff of the Army on 1 August 2003, faced the immediate challenge of sustaining the force required to conduct combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Troops drawn from all eighteen divisions in the active Army and National Guard had already been involved in one or both conflicts. In the two years following 11 September 2001, the Army activated more than 244,000 Army National Guard and Army Reserve personnel, while committing more than 300,000 soldiers in forward-deployed locations, including the combat theaters, peacekeeping in the Balkans and elsewhere, deterrence in Korea, and numerous other missions throughout the world.[95] At the same time, the Army was still transforming along the path Rumsfeld envisioned.[96]

General Schoomaker's first articulation of his intent for the Army emerged in his inaugural meeting with the Army General Staff Council on 14 August 2003. Contrary to the "short war" concept that formed the core tenet of defense transformation, Schoomaker believed that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan would be lengthy, and that sustained employment of the force would be the norm, not the exception. In that meeting, he laid out two core competencies of the Department of the Army: "Train and Equip Soldiers and Grow Leaders" and "Provide Relevant and Ready Land Power Capability to the Combatant Commander and the Joint Team." Schoomaker then outlined

94. Ofc of the Sec Def, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, DoD, 30 Sep 2001, p. 30, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

95. Hon. Les Brownlee and Gen Peter J. Schoomaker, "Serving a Nation at War: A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities," *Parameters* (Summer 2004): 5.

96. "Schoomaker Sworn in as Army Chief," DoD News Release, 1 Aug 2003, https://archive.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=5572, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

fifteen focus areas for emphasis in the near-term, while directing the creation of task forces for their implementation.[97]

Not surprisingly, the dialogue among the teams assigned to Schoomaker's focus areas began to reflect a fundamental change in the assumptions governing the near- and long-term employment of Army forces. Before 2003, the Army had anticipated an episodic war where the bulk of the deployed troops would be freed up at the conclusion of the conflict to address other security challenges. With the first major rotation of forces in Iraq after summer 2003, the teams recognized that instead of an episodic war, the Army faced a protracted conflict while supporting existing requirements for maintaining forces in other regions of the globe.[98] The challenge evolved into figuring out how to provide a sustainable rotation of forces trained and equipped to fight insurgencies in two theaters of war while increasing and improving the Army's overall ability to conduct operations across the full spectrum of conflict.[99] The latter focus reflected the Army's worldwide commitments, which included a conventional combined-arms deterrent capability in Korea and missile defense in support of multiple geographic combatant commanders.

General Schoomaker's special operations background made him comfortable working closely with other services and combatant commanders, as well as using a rotational system to sustain a presence in theater.[100] Schoomaker articulated his overarching vision as a "campaign quality Army with a joint expeditionary mindset," and the similarly-named focus area had the guidance of developing "a mindset and program that embraces requirements for modular, capabilities-based Army forces to achieve joint interdependence in support of Combatant Commander[s]."[101] The initial product of that guidance was a white paper bearing not only Schoomaker's signature, but also that of acting Secretary of the Army the Hon. Romie L. "Les" Brownlee. The task of producing the written intellectual underpinning for all focus areas fell to Brig. Gen. David A. Fastabend, the deputy chief of staff for doctrine, concepts, and strategy at U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) headquarters at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

Entitled *Serving a Nation at War: A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities*, the white paper also appeared as an article in *Parameters*, the journal of the U.S. Army War College, which made it available for study by defense-oriented think tanks and academia.[102] The

97. Interv, Park with Fastabend, 1 Jul 2015.

98. Ibid.

99. Gen Peter J. Schoomaker, "The Army: A Critical Member of the Joint Team Serving the Nation at War," *Army* 53, no. 10 (Oct 2003): 25; Lt Col Todd A. Schmidt, "Evolve or Die: The U.S. Army's Darwinian Challenge" (Monograph, U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013), p. 28.

100. Interv, Park with Fastabend, 1 Jul 2015.

101. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, Capabilities Integration Directorate, *Army Planning Priorities Guidance (APPG), 2006–2023* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2004), pp. 16–17.

102. Brownlee and Schoomaker, "Serving a Nation at War," p. 16.

authors of *Serving a Nation at War* built their vision with the expectation of continuous employment of the force. It was a departure from defense transformation in other ways by pointing out that "our current force is engaged, and in ways we could not perfectly forecast." That observation offered a blunt yet persuasive counterpoint to the Rapid Decisive Operations concept's underlying premise that highly networked intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, combined with precision strikes, would be sufficient to terminate conflicts swiftly.[103] In the realities of Afghanistan and Iraq, Rapid Decisive Operations had transformed one-sided conventional fights into far more complex operational situations.

Force Generation Supply and Demand

With the DoD offering little in the way of immediate assistance, senior Army leaders sought their own resourcing solutions for two land campaigns of undetermined duration without any foreseeable increase in force structure. Up to the beginning of Enduring Freedom, the Army had organized its force along divisional lines, with the expectation that it would fight those units as divisions. Divisions deploying to the Balkans for peacekeeping or peace-enforcement missions did not always deploy in full strength, and those that did not rotated personnel and units internally to replace those rotating out. When operational needs dictated major changes in task organization, they generally were made at the brigade level, such as the attachment of most of the 3d Armored Cavalry to the 49th Armored Division in Bosnia in 2000. In cases where the mission required a brigade of combat power augmented by higher-echelon command and control, those higher elements were pulled from the division headquarters or sister brigades. This practice tended to cause at least two detrimental effects. First, critical leadership was stripped from units left at home station, degrading their readiness. Second, units that were soon to deploy would have to pull critical personnel from the next unit, which would in turn pull people from a third unit, creating a domino effect that degraded readiness across the board.

The choices imposed on CENTCOM, combined with the short lead times, resulted in the Army deploying units to Afghanistan with remarkably different task organizations. The limited number of available airfields, transport aircraft, and helicopters precluded the employment of the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, which was the full-strength strategic response force in fall 2001. Rather than sending complete brigade combat teams, the Army pieced together the initial conventional maneuver component sent to Afghanistan from available 10th Mountain Division assets, while the other portions of the division were supporting the Kosovo mission. When more troops were needed following the fall of Kandahar, a second incomplete brigade from the 101st Airborne Division was sent.

A far different situation emerged in late 2002 when the Army began preparing for the invasion of Iraq. Following steady improvements in the

103. Ibid., p. 8; Ofc of Force Transformation, *Military Transformation: A Strategic Approach*, 18 Nov 2003, pp. 28–34.

logistical facilities in neighboring Kuwait in the decade following Desert Storm, the United States built up a ground force for the initial invasion totaling more than 100,000 personnel. Although the Bush administration rapidly achieved its goal of deposing Saddam Hussein, combat operations in Iraq transformed into an unconventional fight instead of concluding. By late 2003, the competing demands for forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were so exacting that a full twenty-four of thirty-three active component combat brigades were deployed, while a third of the maneuver battalions in the National Guard's fifteen Enhanced Separate Brigades also served overseas in combat or peacekeeping assignments.[104] Between March and June 2004, the Army rotated 244,000 soldiers in and out of the CENTCOM area of operations, the largest changeover in the U.S. military's history.[105] The Army was neither structured nor prepared to sustain a commitment of that size for one combat zone, let alone two, especially with other operational commitments around the globe and no respite in sight.

Realities of Sustained Reserve Component Mobilization

Two underlying assumptions made in the first reserve component mobilizations turned out to have unforeseen long-term implications. First, policymakers thought that the conflict in Afghanistan would be short in duration, as would fit with the Rapid Decisive Operations mindset. Second, they believed that reserve components would not need to mobilize more than once. A critical condition set under the terms of the presidential mobilization was that no service member could be mobilized without their permission for more than twenty-four months, including training time. Twenty-four months was a considerable amount of time on a service member's "clock," providing enough time for a year-long rotation plus training and demobilization. However, two rotations did not fit within a service member's clock. This led to a "one and done" mentality for force-planning and created problems as it became necessary to plan for multiple rotations for reserve forces.[106]

The "without their permission" clause forced the DoD to look to volunteerism as the natural method to circumventing the restrictions outlined in U.S. Code. On 19 July 2002, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S. C. Chu issued guidance that volunteerism should be used as the preferred fill method.[107] Volunteering for a mission allowed an exception to the policy, as the mobilization authority only applied the twenty-four-month clock to involuntarily deployed reserve soldiers.[108] However, the

104. Hon. Les Brownlee, "A Brave and Determined Army Is Destroying Terrorism Worldwide," *Army* (Oct 2003): 18.

105. Brown, *Kevlar Legions*, p. 251.

106. Michael D. Doubler, *The National Guard and the War on Terror: Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Alexandria, Va.: National Guard Bureau Historical Services Division, 1 Nov 2008), pp. 40–41.

107. AAR, Army National Guard Mobilization, Army National Guard, 10 Sep 2001–31 Dec 2003, p. 20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

108. Dennis P. Chapman, "Manning the Reserve Component Units for Mobilization: Army and Air Force Practice," *The Institute of Land Warfare: The Land Warfare Papers*, no. 74 (Sep

volunteer option was not without its own set of problems. Though policy stated that volunteers from reserve units should not be used "in numbers which would denigrate the readiness standards of their parent reserve units," volunteerism enabled extensive cross-leveling within the reserve components. For example, when the 45th Infantry Brigade of the Oklahoma Army National Guard mobilized and deployed to provide security force assistance under TF Phoenix in Afghanistan, the mission required volunteers from nineteen states to augment the unit at the required ranks and requisite skills. The preponderance of the volunteers likely would not be available for deployment by their owning units for years after the Phoenix mission was complete.

Complicating the cross-leveling process was the fact that not every reserve component soldier was immediately available for deployment. Although training requirements often drew the most attention in determining readiness, issues with medical and dental readiness also prevented many soldiers from deploying. Following Operation Desert Storm, Congress had passed four statutory requirements to monitor the medical and dental readiness of the reserve component: annual medical screenings, dental screenings, selected dental treatment, and examinations for those over age forty every two years and every five years for those under age forty. These measures were underfunded and inconsistently enforced. A 2003 Government Accountability Office survey found that only about 66 percent of reservists had up-to-date medical records.[109] The Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences conservatively estimated that 25 percent of the reservists mobilized in response to the September 11th attacks were nondeployable due to poor dental readiness. A House Armed Services Committee report claimed an even higher percentage by noting that out of 50,594 reservists mobilized from 2001 to 2004, 27 percent, or 13,777, required dental treatment before being released for overseas duty.[110]

The effects of medical and dental issues rippled across the mobilization process, creating a more substantial burden than anticipated. An effort to work around these challenges led force planners to ask for small hybrid units of individuals with critical skills rather than standing reserve organizations such as battalions and brigades. From 11 September 2001 to December 2004, over half of the mobilization orders passed to the Army Reserve were for six or fewer soldiers.[111] The administrative burden to plan, notify, and prepare units for mobilization did not decrease just because smaller units were being sent to Afghanistan or Iraq. For example, a single person with critically needed dental work could have a catastrophic impact on these small tailored units, rendering the entire unit nondeployable until the dental work could be completed or a replacement could be found and trained. Force planners would

---

2009), p. 19.

109. U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Defense Health Care: Army Needs to Access the Health Status of All Early-Deploying Reservists*, GAO-03-437 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, Apr 2003), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. .

110. AAR, Dental Care – Installation Mobilization Support Observations and Issues, Army National Guard, 24 Aug 2004, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

111. Memo, Lt Gen James R. Helmly for Ch of Staff, U.S. Army, 20 Dec 2004, sub: Readiness of the United States Army Reserve, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

have to decide whether or not to create another derivative unit identification code or deploy the personnel originally mobilized after the dental issues were solved. A three-person detachment thus demanded the same bureaucratic attention as a 200-strong company. In the National Guard, state commands were forced to mobilize hundreds of soldiers just to handle the growing administrative workload required to send guardsmen to war.[112]

The combined demands of Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom were the first real test of the Army's Total Force Policy following its inception after the Vietnam conflict. Reserve component readiness across the force was at a relatively high state as a result of their involvement in numerous peacekeeping missions beginning in the late 1990s. The constant cross-leveling and volunteerism required after 11 September 2001 in order to mobilize these same units caused a domino effect on the reserve mobilizations that followed. By 2004, the reserve components were exhausting what they could provide under peacetime mobilization systems, but the Army's desire to employ reserve component forces to relieve the equally daunting burden on the active component only increased.

Though all Army components were grappling with increased demand, the U.S. Army Reserve was the first to publicly proclaim it. In what became known as the "Broken Force" memorandum dated 20 December 2004, Army Reserve chief Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly notified General Schoomaker that under current policies, procedures, and practices governing mobilization, training, and reserve component staff management, the U.S. Army Reserve would be unable to meet mission requirements for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan or reset and regenerate its forces for future missions. The eight-page memorandum noted that current "capabilities are limited severely by a successive series of [incremental] restrictive mobilization policies and controls" that have "failed to encompass a longer range, strategic view of operational requirements and Army capabilities." It also highlighted a deep concern over the use and abuse of volunteerism as a fill method. The concerns outlined in the "Broken Force" memo were not limited to personnel. The requirement to leave substantial amounts of equipment for other service forces and contractors in theater, policies limiting the training of demobilized soldiers, and failure to modernize retention and personnel-management regulatory policies degraded the Army Reserve's operational stamina. While the memorandum focused on concerns about the Army Reserve's future effectiveness, a National Guard historian observed that it "succinctly summarized many of the same challenges citizen-soldiers faced in the other reserve components, including the National Guard." The Army required both congressional intervention and time to overcome these issues.[113]

---

112. Gary D. Langford, *Power Projection Platforms: An Essential Element of Future National Security Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2004), p. 10.

113. Memo, Helmly for Ch of Staff, 20 Dec 2004, sub: Readiness of the United States Army Reserve; Doubler, *National Guard and the War on Terror*, p. 79.

Special Operations Forces Rise to the Challenge

In the years before 11 September 2001, the Army's five active component and two reserve component Special Forces groups had to take unusual measures to counter the effects of tiered readiness while still meeting global commitments. Because of long-standing funding, resourcing, and staff shortages in the 1990s, several groups decided to shutter the doors on two of the seven detachments (or teams) in all nine of their companies in order to pool equipment and fully staff the remaining detachments. These empty "ghost" detachments had to be reestablished in an incredibly short time to meet the long-term needs of the Global War on Terrorism. The civil affairs and psychological operations units within Special Forces also faced personnel and equipment shortages. U.S. Army Special Operations Command would initially delve deeply into the reserves and the National Guard to sustain operations while the active component regenerated. Determining how to rapidly fill, deploy, support, grow, and sustain a continually evolving and diverse force became U.S. Army Special Operations Command's greatest challenge.[114]

The infiltration of Special Forces teams into Afghanistan in 2001, followed by the deployment of two groups to Iraq during 2003, committed the majority of U.S. Army Special Operations Command's assets to the CENTCOM theater for more than a decade. Before combat operations began in Afghanistan, Special Forces groups were regionally aligned and dedicated to a particular geographic command. This design included language and culture training specific to the particular geographic region and its attendant foreign nations. With one Special Forces group rotating to Afghanistan and Iraq every seven months to command the CJSOTFs, four out of the five active Special Forces groups were supporting CENTCOM. The fifth active component group and elements of both National Guard groups contributed a portion of their strength to both Iraq and Afghanistan, while concurrently supporting other counterterrorism efforts in Asia, South America, and Africa. Breaking regionalization in order to provide forces almost exclusively to support CENTCOM raised significant concerns not only within U.S. Army Special Operations Command, but also within other geographic combatant commands.[115]

To address unit staffing issues, which had dipped below 70 percent in some Special Forces groups, and to speed up the two-year training process for special operators (Military Occupational Specialty code 18X), the Army reinstated a pilot program initially used to fill the newly activated 1st and 3d Special Forces Groups in the 1980s. The initiative involved placing civilians directly into the 18X program in addition to drawing on enlisted soldiers from within the Army. Recruiting began in March 2002 to fill understrength

---

114. Charles H. Briscoe, "Factors Affecting ARSOF, Preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 1, no. 1 (2005), https://www.soc.mil/ARSOF_History/articles/v1n1_factors_affecting_arsof_page_1.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

115. Ibid.



Spc. Eric E. Hughes, USA

Army soldiers search cave complexes in eastern Afghanistan for arms caches as part of Operation Alamo Sweep.

Special Forces groups. Each 18X candidate would attend infantry basic and advanced individual training, as well as airborne school, before starting the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course. As with all candidates attending assessment and selection, those who passed and were chosen then attended the Special Forces Qualification Course. Following a year or more of training, depending on their specialty, they were awarded their green berets and were placed on alpha detachments as sergeants. All 18X candidates who failed to pass assessment, selection, or any portion of the qualification course were sent to infantry units for the remainder of their enlistment.

The 18X program, in combination with the stop-loss for all Special Forces noncommissioned officers, put Special Forces groups on the path to achieving 100 percent staffing by 2005. The Army examined possible ways to accelerate that process, but few alternatives would be sustainable courses of action. For example, some Special Forces–qualified soldiers were transferred from active civil affairs and psychological operations on a limited voluntary basis, but most returned to their original assignments after one or two deployments. The desire to strip the Generating Force to fill the Operating Force placed the Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in a difficult position. They had to increase the output of trained personnel while simultaneously reducing their number of qualified instructors. This offered only a temporary respite at a considerable cost to the training force.[116]

116. Jared M. Tracey, "Victoria Ex Umbra: Activating 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 14, no. 2 (2018), https://www.soc.mil/ARSOF_History/articles/v14n2_victoria_ex_umbra_page_1.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Stop-gap measures designed to alleviate pressures placed on Special Forces groups had little or no impact on other elements of U.S. Army Special Operations Command. Both the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 160th SOAR were integral to the counterterrorism fight. The rapid pace of operations soon outstripped available Ranger forces when their responsibilities expanded first to Iraq, then globally. For the 160th SOAR, the demand placed on their specialized platforms and highly trained aviation crews grew exponentially, because they could deal with rugged, diverse terrain over greatly distributed battlespaces. The challenges facing the Rangers and Special Operations aviators could only be fully addressed through the lengthy process of creating new force structures.[117]

Despite dramatic increases in funding, Army SOF continued to encounter obstacles while seeking to acquire new items and increase existing stocks of equipment. For example, the 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Command, received funding from U.S. Special Operations Command in 2001 and 2002 to revamp M1025 HMMWVs to meet unique Special Operations requirements. These modified trucks, known as Ground Mobility Vehicles, had augmented armor kits, additional gun mounts, and improved suspensions. Four of the vehicles were issued to each twelve-man ODA. Initially, only the 5th Special Forces Group in Afghanistan used these vehicles, but others were sent to Iraq after the 2003 invasion.

As more Special Forces groups were tasked to support rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan, the need to field additional Ground Mobility Vehicles became apparent. However, U.S. Army Special Operations Command first had to persuade the Army to authorize vehicles for all groups, then convince the broader U.S. Special Operations Command to fund a much larger vehicle fleet than originally envisioned. Both efforts met with partial success. Although full sets of Ground Mobility Vehicles were sent to Iraq and Afghanistan, Special Operations units not deployed in theater received only the minimum needed for home-station training. As expensive as the Ground Mobility Vehicles had been, increasing the number of the 160th SOAR's rotary-wing platforms, while replacing combat losses and implementing critical airframe and avionics modifications, further strained the finances of the Department of the Army and U.S. Special Operations Command.[118]

In the weeks following the September 11th attacks, Army Special Operations units were constantly deployed to Afghanistan, the Philippines, Africa, Asia, or South America and sent to support security cooperation missions for their assigned theaters between combat deployments. The tempo of deployments increased significantly in 2003 following the invasion of Iraq. The growing number of operational commitments resulted in major efforts to reorganize the force to support sustained combat rotations, including increasing Special Operations force structure. Fortunately for Army Special Operations, the DoD supported efforts to create additional

117. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, pp. 87–99.

118. "USSOCOM Ground Mobility Vehicle (GMV) Desert Mobility Vehicle (DMV)/'Dumvee,'" Global Security, 27 Oct 2018, https://globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ground/hmmwv-gmv.htm.

forces because it viewed that effort as compatible with transformation. It would take several years to grow the force; in the meantime, existing units would continue their high deployment tempo.[119]

In response to a directive from Secretary Rumsfeld, U.S. Army Special Operations Command took the first steps toward a significant reorganization in late 2004 by reviewing the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command's missions, roles, and functions. After receiving input from all parties involved, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon R. England ultimately recommended to Rumsfeld that the new headquarters and its subordinate reserve units be transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve Forces Command rather than remain under U.S. Army Special Operations Command. That decision, which in some circles was called the "Great Divorce," led to U.S. Army Reserve Command gaining responsibility for all reserve unit readiness and mobilization while U.S. Army Special Operations Command retained control of the active component civil affairs and psychological operations units as well as oversight for doctrine and training. At home, the U.S. Army worked to position all three components along with SOF for a long war on terrorism.[120]

Denying Sanctuary in Eastern Afghanistan

About half a year into his command, General McNeill realized that only his civil affairs personnel were positioned where they could develop localized knowledge of Afghanistan. His combat forces, by contrast, "didn't have the intel[ligence]" for "truly enemy-focused operations."[121] Anticoalition militias operated out of Pakistan and, when threatened or pursued, retreated to the country's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Restricted to areas reachable from Bagram and Kandahar airfields, air assaults by the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, were inadequate to interdict lines of communication across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Recognizing in early November that his forces would continue "to find little evidence of any remaining corporate enemy capability," but still under orders to conduct counterterrorism, McNeill directed Maj. Gen. John R. Vines—commander of the 82d Airborne Division, who had replaced Hagenbeck as Operation Enduring Freedom's tactical commander on 1 September 2002—to focus his efforts on the border and intensify operations in eastern Afghanistan.[122] Starting with Operation Alamo Sweep in September 2002, coalition forces sought to deny the enemy sanctuary in districts west of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.[123]

---

119. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, pp. 87.

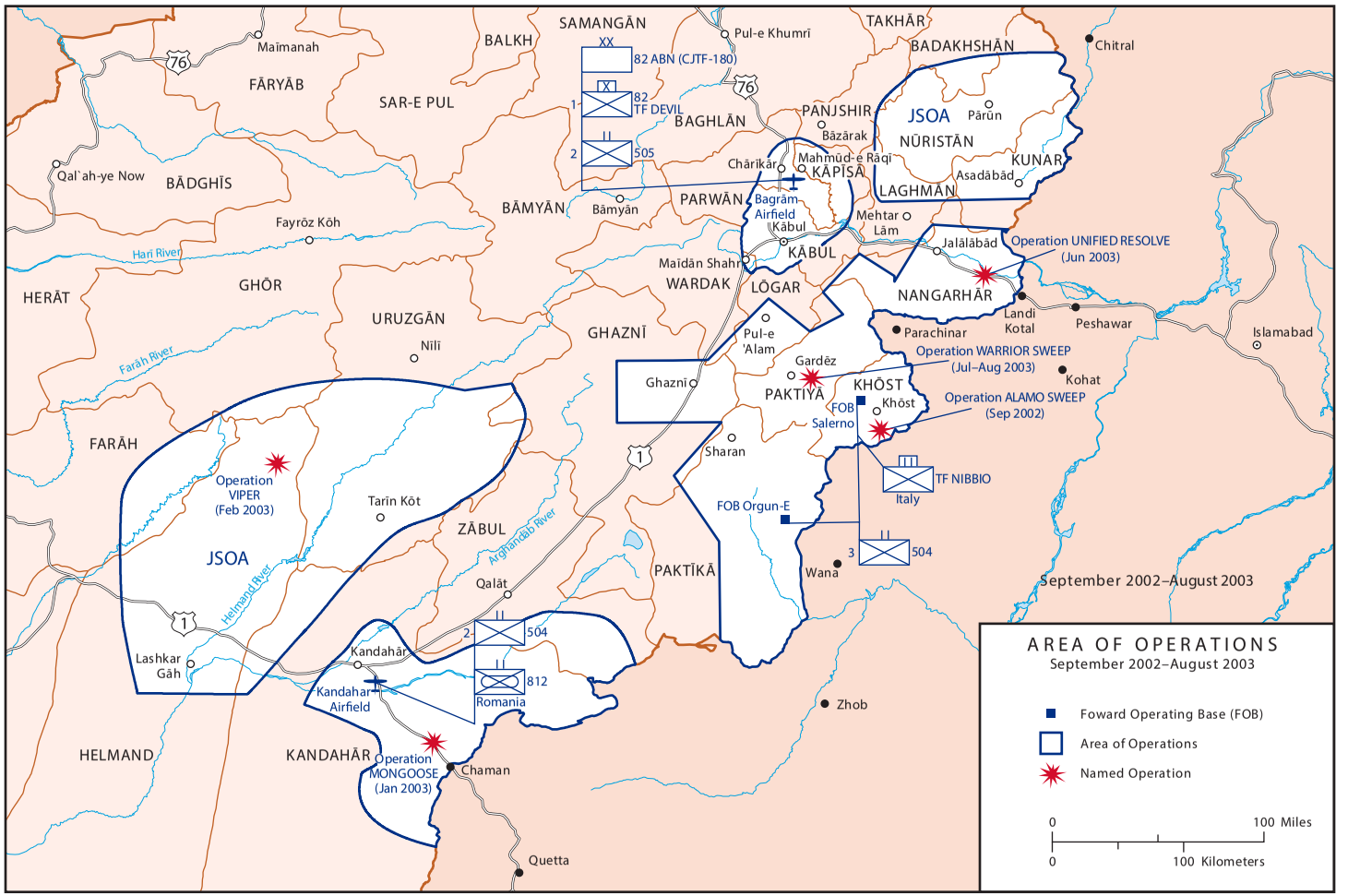
120. "Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne)," Global Security, 16 May 2006, https://globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/ca-psyop.htm.

121. Interv, Reese with McNeill, 16 Jun 2008, p. 10.

122. Memo, Cdr, CJTF-180, 1 Nov 2002, sub: Operational Assessment for Oct 2002, with CJ–3 Info Paper attached, p. 1.

123. OPORD 02–009, Opn Alamo Sweep, CTF-82, 9 Dec 2002, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Map 5.2


SAMANGĀN
BALKH
TAKHĀR
BADAKHSHĀN
Maīmanah
Pul-e Khumrī
Chitral
FĀRYĀB
SAR-E PUL
XX
82 ABN (CJTF-180)
1
82
TF DEVIL
2
505
BAGHLĀN
PANJSHIR
JSOA
Pārūn
Bāzārak
NŪRISTĀN
KUNAR
Qal`ah-ye Now
BĀDGHĪS
Chārīkār
Mahmūd-e Rāqī
KĀPĪSĀ
Asadābād
LAGHMĀN
BĀMYĀN
Bāmyān
PARWĀN
Bagrām Airfield
Kābul
Mehtar Lām
Fayrōz Kōh
Harī River
Jalālābād
Operation UNIFIED RESOLVE (Jun 2003)
KĀBUL
Maīdān Shahr
WARDAK
LŌGAR
NANGARHĀR
HERĀT
GHŌR
URUZGĀN
Landi Kotal
Peshawar
Islamabad
Pul-e 'Alam
Parachinar
GHAZNĪ
Nīlī
Farāh River
Operation WARRIOR SWEEP (Jul–Aug 2003)
Gardēz
Kohat
Ghaznī
PAKTIYĀ
KHŌST
Khōst
FOB Salerno
Operation ALAMO SWEEP (Sep 2002)
FARĀH
Sharan
Operation VIPER (Feb 2003)
TF NIBBIO
Italy
Tarīn Kōt
FOB Orgun-E
ZĀBUL
Arghandāb River
JSOA
Helmand River
PAKTĪKĀ
3
504
Wana
Qalāt
September 2002–August 2003
2
504
Lashkar Gāh
Kandahār
812
Romania
Kandahar Airfield
Zhob
HELMAND
KANDAHĀR
Operation MONGOOSE (Jan 2003)
Chaman
Quetta
AREA OF OPERATIONS
September 2002–August 2003
Foward Operating Base (FOB)
Area of Operations
Named Operation
0
100 Miles
0
100 Kilometers

McNeill wanted Vines to fight a terrain-based battle. Operations Mountain Lion and Champion Strike had been launched to reduce terrorist staging platforms and block reconstitution attempts. The primary objective for Operation Alamo Sweep, however, was to gather information and generate targets. Unlike the earlier operations, it was meant to secure terrain; for this reason, it had a smaller geographical focus. It signified a shift in how CJTF-180 forces operated. For the rest of his command, McNeill looked to deny militants sanctuary by pushing U.S. troops through towns and over inhabited lands (*Map 5.2*).

McNeill's terrain-based approach differed from that used by the 10th Mountain Division. To position forces where he thought they would be most effective, McNeill constructed four forward operating bases—Jalalabad, Gardez, Khost, and Orgun-E—close to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.[124] Units from these bases moved from village to village, "sweeping" anticoalition militia away from their lines of communication. Coalition presence uncovered enemy hideout locations, displaced militants, and engaged them in combat. Col. John F. Campbell's Task Force Devil (1st Brigade, 82d Airborne), which replaced TF Panther in December 2002, and Col. William B. Garrett III's Task Force Warrior (1st Brigade, 10th Mountain), which followed TF Devil in August 2003, launched missions from operating bases established by their predecessors. The original forward operating bases thus became semipermanent establishments that expanded the American footprint in Afghanistan.

Colonel Campbell brought with him an airborne combat team comparable to Colonel Huggins' brigade in size and capability. In terms of maneuver and fire support resources, Campbell had Lt. Col. Charles A. Flynn's 2d Battalion, 504th Infantry; Lt. Col. Richard D. Clarke's 3d Battalion, 504th Infantry; Lt. Col. Michael P. Lerario's 2d Battalion, 505th Infantry; and Lt. Col. Dennis D. Tewksbury's 3d Battalion, 319th Field Artillery. In addition, TF Devil included the 307th Support Battalion, 307th Engineer Battalion, 50th Signal Battalion, and 307th Finance Battalion.[125]

Like their fellow paratroopers from TF Panther, TF Devil struggled to find the enemy. In an attempt to improve their own efforts, the 2d Battalion, 504th Infantry, began working with SOF on a regular basis. Operations began with detachments or the battalion's reconnaissance element entering areas where they suspected the enemy to be active.[126] If contact was made, then Colonel Flynn allowed his companies to develop the situation so as to uproot, capture, or kill as many terrorists as possible.[127] The mission ended when the battalion had exploited sites for intelligence that would feed the next mission.

---

124. Hist Narrative, CJTF-180 Provost Marshal, Oct 2002, pp. 6–7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The area encompassed by the plan included two divisions: a northern sector named Area of Operations Bull for conventional forces (U.S. and coalition) and an operating area for the Special Forces.

125. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 333.

126. Page, "Operation Viper in the Baghran Valley," 9 Feb 2004, pp. 6, 8.

127. Ibid.

This sequence occurred unintentionally in Operation Mongoose (January–February 2003) and intentionally in Operation Viper (February 2003).[128]

Conducting an aggressive counterterrorist campaign when enemy contact was infrequent often meant that minor engagements escalated into full-fledged combat. Operation Mongoose began when TF Devil dispatched its quick-reaction force in late January 2003.[129] Enemy personnel engaged helicopters transporting the force to a cave complex in the Ada Ghar region in Kandahar Province between Spin Boldak and Kandahar City. Escorting AH–64s engaged enemy fighters, CJTF-180 ordered the Devil brigade into the fight, soldiers from the brigade identified cave complexes, and planners hastily developed Mongoose to search and seize the complexes. TF Devil soldiers did not find the assailants. Unbeknownst to anyone in the brigade, Special Forces had already seized the enemy who had fired on American aircraft.[130] Although TF Devil cleared cave complexes, the purpose for the mission had already been accomplished.[131]

Operation Viper in February 2003 proved similarly unrewarding. Conventional forces conducted operations at the southern end of the Baghran Valley near Girishk in Helmand Province while SOF operated in the northern end of the valley in Uruzgan Province. The operations targeted the enemy's main supply route through central Afghanistan that originated in Pakistan and ran through southern Kandahar Province into the Baghran Valley. CJTF-180 had coordinated with the Pakistani military to attack the origin of the route simultaneously so as to "deny [identified] anti-coalition elements sanctuary in Afghanistan."[132] Flynn's 2d Battalion, 504th Infantry, conducted more than two dozen cordon-and-search missions during the operation, none of which resulted in sustained engagement, U.S. fatalities, or any measurable effect on the enemy's ability to field combatants and influence populations.[133]

Success came to the battalion only when TF Devil directed it east into the Bagni Valley. In this branch mission, Company B surrounded a suspected Taliban complex and convinced its inhabitants to surrender.[134] Unfortunately, when Company D was removing Taliban captives from the battlefield, a vehicle driven by U.S. soldiers hit a child who later died after being evacuated by American helicopters to a nearby U.S. medical facility.[135] Tragedies such as this erased any goodwill the 2d Battalion, 504th Infantry,

---

128. Ibid.

129. AAR, Opn Mongoose, TF Devil, 1st Bde, 82d Abn, 27 Jan–8 Feb 2003, 18 Mar 2003, p. 16, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

130. Ibid., p. 19.

131. Ibid.

132. Capt Dennis Fitzgerald, "Operation Viper" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course, 20 Feb 2004), p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Page, "Operation Viper in the Baghran Valley," p. 4.

133. Fitzgerald, "Operation Viper," pp. 4–5; Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Col Charles A. Flynn, frmr 2d Bn, 504th Inf Cdr, 30 Nov 2006, pp. 5, 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

134. Page, "Operation Viper in the Baghran Valley," pp. 13–14.

135. Ibid., pp. 14–15; PEP, Fitzgerald, "Operation Viper," pp. 9–10.



49th MHD

Operation Alamo Sweep required close coordination between air and ground forces in order to seek out enemy forces and possible arms caches.

had gained by removing enemy fighters from the cross-valley community and made it difficult to rely on the inhabitants for intelligence in the future.

These missions provide a fair representation of what maneuver units did in CJTF-180 during this period. Throughout its seven-month deployment, the battalion conducted multiple missions to "deny sanctuary . . . [and] disrupt the ability of Al-Qaeda [*sic*] and the Taliban to resource, facilitate, plan, and execute operations."[136] Although its companies sought to destroy enemy forces, contact rarely occurred.[137] With no specific enemy group or location to target, planners designed missions to deter enemies of central Afghan governance. These missions did not advance policy goals—the removal of the Taliban and the establishment of a legitimate government at peace with its neighbors—for three reasons. First, deterrence lasted only as long as the deterring force was nearby. Second, military operations disrupted communities. Unintended consequences such as apprehending a family provider or running over a child negated positive interactions in ways that no military staff could predict, measure, or counter. Third, offensive operations proved that American forces exercised initiative, not that the central Afghan government could control its own dominion. If denying sanctuary meant searching villages, then units clearly succeeded. If it meant preventing counterterrorist forces from mobilizing in eastern Afghanistan, then their long-lasting success was doubtful.

136. Interv, Connors with Flynn, 30 Nov 2006, pp. 5–6.

137. Ibid., p. 6.

With no confirmation of progress and an unclear vision of how Operation Enduring Freedom was supposed to end, McNeill did not feel comfortable transitioning away from the tactical fight.[138] In October 2002, he judged Enduring Freedom as still in Phase III, although he expected it to shift to Phase IV (postcombat operations) by February 2003.[139] By February, Afghanistan still faced threats to its existence as an independent state, and McNeill decided not to change his priorities. When Vines took command of CJTF-180 in May 2003, combat operations were all he was resourced or expected to accomplish. In Vines' understanding of counterterrorism, security came before reconstruction.

General Vines in Command

Several other factors played a part in CENTCOM's decision not to send another corps headquarters to Afghanistan after McNeill's command left theater in May 2003.[140] The process began months before the end of CJTF-180's deployment when McNeill learned of the pending invasion of Iraq. Rather than take his headquarters completely out of the upcoming fight by replacing his staff at Bagram with personnel drawn from the XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, McNeill convinced CENTCOM to give the Afghanistan mission to a division headquarters instead.[141] With attacks by anticoalition militias infrequent, it looked like Enduring Freedom needed fewer combat troops.

Although the XVIII Airborne Corps did not participate in the initial invasion of Iraq, CENTCOM saw no reason to change its original decision to send a division headquarters to Afghanistan. One of the primary considerations behind maintaining that position stemmed from the limited number of available corps headquarters and competing demands of other strategically important regions.[142] Although coalition forces succeeded in

138. McNeill looked to Franks for guidance on Phase IV, and Franks looked to the administration. See Interv, Colin J. Williams and Brian F. Neumann, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Dan K. McNeill, frmr CJTF-180 and ISAF Cdr, 18 Sep 2015, pp. 66–71, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; and Interv, Mark J. Reardon, Col E. J. Degen, and Maj Matthew Smith, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Tommy R. Franks, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 4 Dec 2015, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

139. Memo, Cdr, CJTF-180, 1 Nov 2002, sub: Operational Assessment for Oct 2002, with CJ–3 Info Paper attached, p. 10.

140. General Abizaid, who was the director of the joint staff when the decision was made, believed the contraction was part of an effort to reduce the American footprint in Afghanistan. According to him, "There was a period where our orders said to get out . . . [one of our] first principles was that we would not occupy Muslim territory over time." Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 29–30.

141. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Col James H. Huggins II, frmr XVIII Abn Corps Inspector Gen, 4 May 2007, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

142. There were only four corps headquarters in the active component at this time: I, III, V, and XVIII Airborne Corps. The last named had just returned from a year in Afghanistan, while the V Corps oversaw the initial invasion of Iraq. With the I Corps responsible for potential operations in the Pacific, the III Corps could be considered as the only viable candidate for a

deposing Saddam Hussein in early April 2003, the emergence of an Iraqi insurgency meant that hostilities there would not end anytime soon. In light of the Bush administration's concerns about whether CENTCOM had enough resources to wage two simultaneous wars, Secretary Rumsfeld visited Afghanistan at the start of May 2003 to declare conditions for postcombat operations to have been met.[143] Within thirty days of that announcement, CENTCOM formally directed CJTF-180 to "continue to conduct combat operations to destroy the enemy . . . with an emphasis on Phase IV, sustain and prevent operations."[144] Reconstruction and stability operations became ENDURING FREEDOM's main effort as offensive combat moved to a supporting effort.[145]

General Vines already had nine months of combat experience in Afghanistan, commanding the 82d Airborne Division, before replacing McNeill as the CJTF-180 commander. As the senior American in Afghanistan once McNeill returned to Fort Bragg, Vines sought to gain and maintain contact with the enemy by launching operations into areas thought to be terrorist-dominated, leveraging camera feeds from unmanned aircraft, and reducing the number of decision-makers in the staff process.[146] Vines would have found it difficult to step away from tactical execution even if he had wanted to do so. With experienced corps personnel accompanying McNeill to North Carolina, the new CJTF-180 commander was not staffed to manage political interactions or develop new approaches. In one telling example, his future plans cell decreased from forty people to one person.[147] Although Vines continued to meet the same Afghans with whom McNeill interacted, he had no one like Colonel Carter on his staff to work with Afghan ministries or link operations to civil initiatives.[148] As a result, he had little or no opportunity to create programs, change missions, or redirect his small staff during his short tenure. Judged by what he did and how he did it, Vines found it difficult to stop viewing events through the familiar prism of a division commander.

---

future deployment. As it turned out, the Army deployed a portion of both the I Corps and the III Corps to Iraq in early 2004.

143. Donald H. Rumsfeld, Joint Media Availability with President Karzai, 1 May 2003, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2562, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

144. FRAGO 07–201, Transition to Phase IV, CENTCOM, 21 Jun 2003, 3.A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

145. Interv, Kennedy with unidentified Foreign Service Ofcr, 10 Dec 2004, p. 3.

146. Interv, Connors and Mundey with Vines, 27 Jun 2007, p. 11; Interv, Christopher N. Koontz, CMH, with Brig Gen Anthony A. Cucolo III, frmr Director CJTF-180 Staff, 17 Jan 2004, pp. 17–18, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

147. Interv, Terry Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Lt Col (Ret.) Carl E. Fischer, frmr Deputy CJ–5 CJTF-180, 18 Jan 2007, p. 14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

148. Brig. Gen. Byron S. Bagby, Vines' chief of staff, expressed his staff's limited dealings with the Afghan government when he said in an interview that "we dealt more with the Army and Ministry of Defense than we did other agencies, like the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Education—we didn't deal with them much." Interv, Christopher N. Koontz, CMH, with Maj Gen Byron S. Bagby, frmr CJTF-180 Ch of Staff, 24 Jan 2007, p. 23, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

From the outset, General Vines continued his predecessor's counterterrorist approach and maintained his eastward focus.[149] Realizing that the safe houses from which ODA teams staged were too small for conventional forces, he decided to create a new base close to Afghanistan's border with Pakistan from which battalions could interdict terrorist movement. Large enough to be supplied by aircraft, Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khost Province extended coalition presence along the border and would remain a key installation for the remainder of Enduring Freedom.[150] Constant activity would make bases in eastern Afghanistan permanent establishments by summer 2003.

Looking for a more effective use of combat power, Vines accepted a request from the Pakistani military for a multination operation.[151] Launched in June 2003, Operation Unified Resolve involved 2d Battalion, 505th Infantry, ODA 312, militia forces from an Afghan general named Ali, and Pakistani units in an attempt to close routes between Jalalabad in Nangarhar Province and the Pakistani border.[152] The mission ended in confusion, with unsubstantiated reports of the targets being forewarned, Ali's Afghan troops crossing into Pakistan, Pakistani troops crossing into Afghanistan, armed insurgents of uncertain affiliation escaping capture, and Pakistani smugglers being fired on by unknown assailants.[153] Like McNeill's attempts in Operation Viper, Vines' efforts to work with the Pakistani military were frustrating and did little to degrade enemy capability.

Vines' next two missions were characterized by inconclusive results. In July and August, CJTF-180 directed Colonel Campbell's brigade combat team to conduct Operation Warrior Sweep, in the Shahi Kot Valley in Paktiya Province with the mission to deny the enemy freedom of movement in the valley. Although TF Devil had a good idea of what the mission's targets would be—"organized ACM [anticoalition militia] forces, major caches, and transit bases"—they did not know key enemy personnel, locations of assembly

149. McNeill received more troops during his year in Afghanistan. Starting with little more than 8,000 in June 2002, he passed on a command of approximately 11,500 soldiers to Vines. Interv, Reese with McNeill, 16 Jun 2008, p. 6.

150. FRAGO 138 to OPORD 02–003, CJTF-180, 27 Aug 2002, attached to CTF-82 Cmd Rpt, D.1.A.1. Forward Operating Base Salerno grew out of Forward Operating Base Chapman, a small base constructed by CJTF-180 engineers and 3d Battalion, 505th Infantry, between August and October 2002. Cmd Rpt, version 2, 1 Oct 2002, Maj Philip H. Karns, 49th MHD, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Jenna Fike, CSI, with Maj Daniel Grieve, frmr 3d Bn, 505th Inf Fire Support Ofcr, 22 Nov 2010, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

151. Bfg, CJTF-180, sub: Opn Unified Resolve, 20–26 Jun 2003, slide 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

152. Although 2d Battalion, 505th Infantry, was habitually part of 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, it was under 1st Brigade for several years after its rotation to Kosovo in 1999. The 3d Battalion, 504th Infantry, replaced the 2d Battalion in 3d Brigade's task organization during that time, which was not readjusted until the 82d Airborne Division began modular conversion in 2005. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 334.

153. Info Paper, CJ–35 Cell, CJTF-180, 24 Jun 2003, sub: Problems Arising during Operation Unified Resolve, pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



49th MHD

Troops on the ground are stacked and prepared to enter a residential compound during Operation ALAMO SWEEP in October 2002.

areas, or possible cache sites.[154] This lack of detail persisted throughout the operation, even though ANA soldiers who could speak the villagers' language served alongside coalition units.[155]

TF WARRIOR, which succeeded TF DEVIL, arrived in country that August to less violence than its commander had expected.[156] Colonel Garrett's brigade consisted of Lt. Col. Michael L. Howard's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry; Lt. Col. David G. Paschal's 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry; Lt. Col. Joseph DiChairo's 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry; and Lt. Col. Christopher F. Bentley's 3d Battalion, 6th Field Artillery. In addition, TF WARRIOR included the Romanian 151st Mechanized Battalion, an Italian airborne battalion task force, and a French Special Forces element. Garrett also belatedly received a fourth U.S. infantry unit, Lt. Col. Harry C. Glenn III's 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry, in November 2003.[157] Like their predecessors, TF WARRIOR soldiers "encountered relatively few native Afghans involved with Al Qaeda [*sic*]" and had to search for opposition elements to target and engage.[158]

---

154. COA Decision Bfg, Opn WARRIOR SWEEP, 14 Jul 2003, slide 59, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

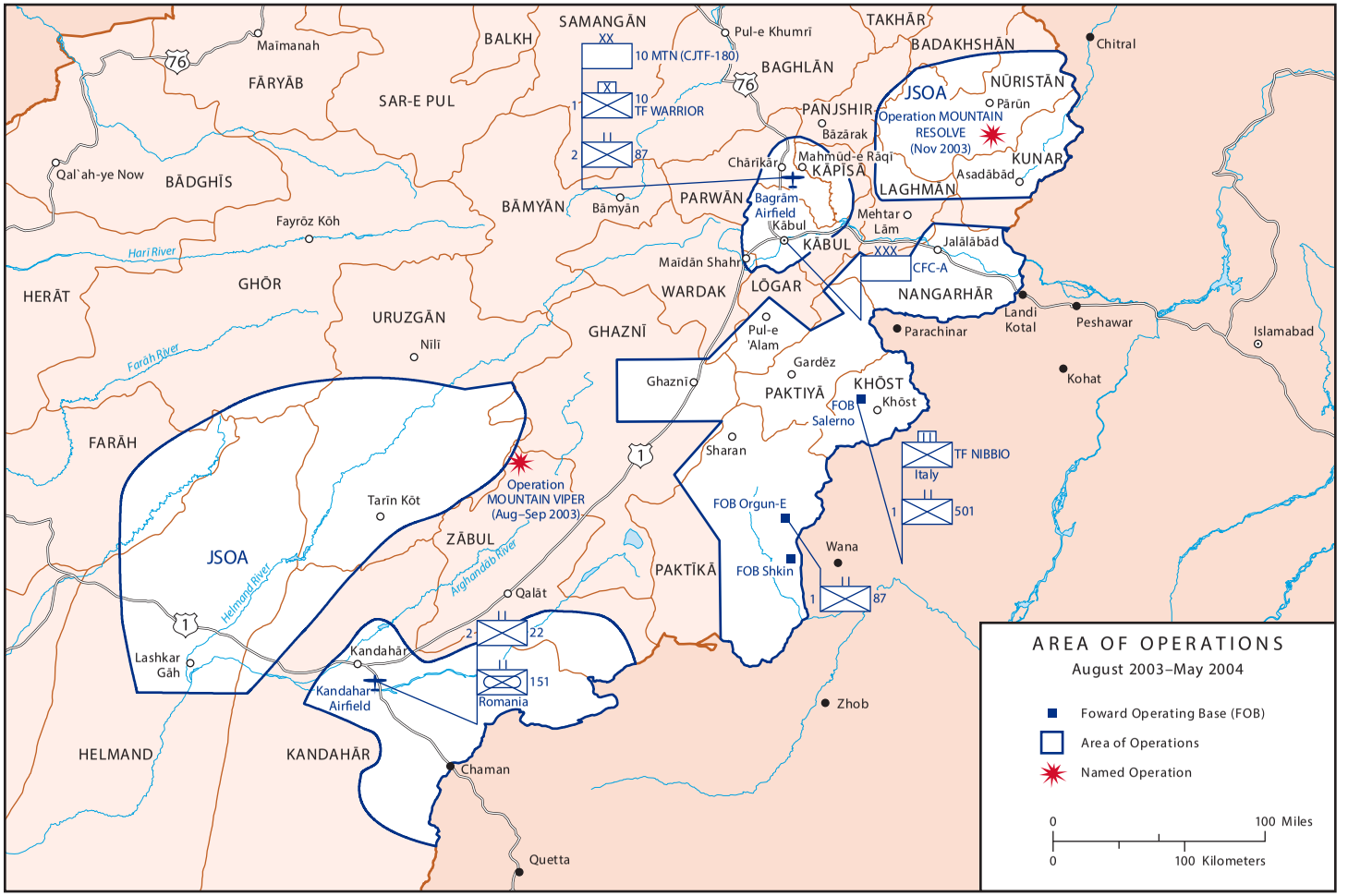
155. The Afghans contributed six companies, approximately 1,000 troops, to the operation. Hooman Peimani, "Mission Impossible for the Afghan Army," *Asia Times*, 26 Jul 2003; COA Decision Bfg, Opn WARRIOR SWEEP, 14 Jul 2003, slide 62.

156. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Brig Gen William B. Garrett III, frmr 1st Bde, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 5 Jun 2007, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

157. Ibid., p. 2.

158. Ibid., p. 9.

Map 5.3


SAMANGĀN
BALKH
Maīmanah
FĀRYĀB
SAR-E PUL
BĀDGHĪS
Qal`ah-ye Now
Fayrōz Kōh
Harī River
HERĀT
GHŌR
URUZGĀN
Nīlī
Farāh River
FARĀH
Tarīn Kōt
JSOA
Helmand River
HELMAND
Lashkar Gāh
KANDAHĀR
Kandahār
Kandahar Airfield
Chaman
Quetta
ZĀBUL
Arghandāb River
Qalāt
Operation MOUNTAIN VIPER (Aug–Sep 2003)
10 MTN (CJTF-180)
10 TF WARRIOR
87
22
151
Romania
BĀMYĀN
Bāmyān
Pul-e Khumrī
BAGHLĀN
PARWĀN
Bagrām Airfield
Chārīkār
Maīdān Shahr
KĀBUL
WARDAK
LŌGAR
GHAZNĪ
Ghaznī
Pul-e 'Alam
Gardēz
PAKTIYĀ
PAKTĪKĀ
Sharan
FOB Salerno
FOB Orgun-E
FOB Shkin
Wana
Zhob
PANJSHIR
Bāzārak
Mahmūd-e Rāqī
KĀPĪSĀ
TAKHĀR
BADAKHSHĀN
Chitral
JSOA
NŪRISTĀN
Pārūn
Operation MOUNTAIN RESOLVE (Nov 2003)
KUNAR
Asadābād
LAGHMĀN
Mehtar Lām
Jalālābād
CFC-A
NANGARHĀR
Landi Kotal
Peshawar
Parachinar
Islamabad
Kohat
KHŌST
Khōst
TF NIBBIO
Italy
501
AREA OF OPERATIONS
August 2003–May 2004
Foward Operating Base (FOB)
Area of Operations
Named Operation
0
100 Miles
0
100 Kilometers

This development had its advantages and disadvantages. Colonel Howard's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, which operated with part of its forces out of Forward Operating Base Shkin, located six kilometers from the border with Pakistan in Paktika Province, used its proximity to rural Afghans to interact with them in a more sustained and meaningful way than cordon-and-search or civil affairs missions offered. According to the battalion's executive officer, Lt. Col. Paul J. Wille, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, "started agriculture and then veterinary care, and then we started looking at road construction, which the follow-on unit, I think, continued and developed."[159] Howard's battalion also established a relationship with ODAs 342 and 344 operating in eastern Paktika near Shkin. According to Wille, the ODAs provided the unit's best intelligence while the 10th Mountain Division soldiers secured the Special Forces operating base and provided them with a quick reaction force.[160]

TF Warrior launched Enduring Freedom's next mission, Operation Mountain Viper (July–August 2003), in an area encompassing northwestern Zabul and southeastern Uruzgan Provinces called Daychopan.[161] The operation, initiated to make contact with Taliban fighters, began with a Special Forces reconnaissance, after which Afghan troops accompanied the Americans into Daychopan.[162] A sustained engagement with enemy forces ensued, which led CJTF-180 to insert Colonel DiChairo's 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, into the fight. Though the Taliban withdrew after suffering losses, its political operatives remained in Daychopan after the Americans left the area to face other threats (*Map 5.3*).

Combat operations provided security for a mission seen as transitioning from peacekeeping to a less lethal peace enforcement. Although Vines pursued a counterterrorist approach, he and his command believed that their efforts were giving Afghanistan the security it needed to become permanently inhospitable to terrorists who threatened the international world order. Vines' command, however, was meant to serve only as a transition to NATO. On 16 April 2003, the North Atlantic Council agreed to assume control of ISAF later in the year.[163]

Apparent Success

CJTF-180's tenure in Afghanistan produced far less in the way of concrete results than CENTCOM had envisioned it would. Not only did General McNeill not have enough troops or adequate intelligence on the ground, but Pakistani reluctance, weak Afghan governance, and the Bush administration's

159. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Lt Col Paul J. Wille, frmr CJTF-Mountain C–3 Plans Ofcr and Bn Executive Ofcr, p. 14, Hist Files. OEF Study Grp.

160. Ibid.

161. Cmd Rpt, OEF Rotation IV, Jul 2003–Mar 2004, 130th MHD, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

162. Ibid.; Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Joseph DiChairo, frmr 2d Bn, 22 Inf Cdr, 27 Aug 2007, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

163. Interv, Connors and Mundey with Vines, 27 Jun 2007, p. 24.

fiscal conservatism all hampered CJTF-180 operations. While the enemy avoided decisive engagement, neither Taliban nor al-Qaeda remnants in Afghanistan scored any successes against U.S. troops.[164] Coalition operations had netted prisoners, exerted pressure, and asserted military superiority on the battlefield while avoiding both accidents and fratricide and keeping friendly casualties low. At the same time, Army forces had established four Provincial Reconstruction Teams and initiated many infrastructure projects. Contracting the Enduring Freedom footprint by combining the operational and tactical headquarters in theater reflected the growing tendency of the DoD and CENTCOM to view these developments in a positive light.

The sense of strategic optimism regarding Afghanistan began to emerge long before McNeill's return to Fort Bragg in May 2003. On 1 October 2002, a month after CJTF-180 refocused operations on denying the enemy sanctuary in eastern Afghanistan, General Franks dismissed a pessimistic CIA analysis in a memorandum he wrote to Rumsfeld.[165] Although CENTCOM recognized that al-Qaeda and the Taliban were mobilizing opposition to Hamid Karzai's recently formed Afghan Transitional Authority, its intelligence section assessed their cohesion as "fractious" and the threat as "manageable."[166] Terrorist networks were weak because they lacked the outside support enjoyed by the mujahideen in their fight against the Soviets a generation earlier.[167]

Reports from the Afghanistan theater seemed to bolster the positive views held by senior American military commanders. The counterterrorist campaign that both McNeill and Vines pursued rested on two assumptions. First, CENTCOM assumed that destroying al-Qaeda and the Taliban would bring security to the Afghan people. Yet the country's multiethnic population, plagued by tribal and cultural discord, could not be protected simply by killing those who were attempting to fill a political void. Second, CENTCOM assumed that Afghans with ingrained hatred for each other could be made to realize that they had common interests. Unaware of the depth of Afghan provincialism, McNeill sent Franks an assessment in November 2002 that agreed with the CENTCOM commander's refutation of the CIA's analysis. According to McNeill, operations over the last month were making "Afghans willing and capable of acting responsibly and collectively."[168] He added that almost $5.8 million of the $6 million overseas humanitarian, disaster, and civic aid funds were being spent on national priorities.[169]

McNeill's statement belied several unrecognized problems. Because he was unable to predict if efforts were moving Afghans away from Taliban fundamentalism and toward an acceptance of Karzai's transitional

---

164. Interv, Koontz with Bagby, 24 Jan 2007, pp. 51–52.

165. Memo, Gen Tommy R. Franks for Sec Def Donald Rumsfeld, 1 Oct 2002, sub: Trends in Afghanistan, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

166. Ibid.

167. Ibid.

168. Memo, Cdr, CJTF-180, 1 Nov 2002, sub: Operational Assessment for Oct 2002, with CJ–3 Info Paper attached, p. 5.

169. Ibid., pp. 5–6.

government, and was not sure what criteria signified a functioning national government, he hesitated to judge the campaign ready for Phase IV operations. Vines was confident that his predecessor's efforts to deny the enemy sanctuary and interdict lines of communication were providing Afghanistan's incipient government with time and space to build anew. He continued to launch aggressive combat missions. While he did so, insufficient intelligence and reluctant participation by the Pakistani government permitted the Taliban and other extremist groups to recover and rearm across the border out of the coalition's reach. To counter this dynamic, McNeill and Vines built bases along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and established four reconstruction teams. By directing their theater commanders to solve a complex security problem, CENTCOM and the Bush administration, intentionally or not, had allowed Operation Enduring Freedom to expand in size and scope.

Chapter Six

Counterinsurgency as an Operational Approach



In July 2003, General John P. Abizaid assumed command of CENTCOM from General Tommy R. Franks. General Abizaid was not satisfied with how Operation Enduring Freedom was progressing when he assumed command.[1] Wanting a different approach, he established a new three-star command in Afghanistan and nominated Maj. Gen. David W. Barno for the position. Abizaid sent Barno to Afghanistan because he believed consolidating tactical and operational headquarters had been a mistake, and because he thought the counterterrorist approach did little to advance American interests in the region. Barno had been Abizaid's fellow company commander in the 1st Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry, during America's 1983 invasion of Grenada, and Abizaid was confident that Barno could handle complex operational problems without being unduly distracted from the broader war on terrorism.[2] As Abizaid made clear, Barno's job was to initiate a new approach for Afghanistan as Enduring Freedom transitioned from a counterterrorism focus to a combined political-military emphasis.[3]

It took time for CENTCOM to prepare written instructions for Barno.[4] Unlike when it had deployed Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill and the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters, the combatant command did not have a ready structure for Barno's political-military command. Instead, the Pentagon had to create one from scratch by constructing a joint manning document. The manning document, along with an official order and strategic analysis,

---

1. Interv, Col Bryan R. Gibby, Brian F. Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John P. Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 29–30, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. Ibid., pp. 38–39.

3. Abizaid told Barno before he left for Afghanistan that he was "to facilitate integration of POL-MIL [political-military] efforts with chief of mission and GOA [Government of Afghanistan]." EO, CJCS to Cdr, CENTCOM, 22 Dec 2003, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, J. Patrick Hughes and Lisa Mundey, CMH, with Lt Gen David W. Barno, frmr CFC-A Cdr, 21 Nov 2006, pp. 3–4, 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. It took four months for Abizaid to gain the DoD's agreement on a combined forces command in Afghanistan and two weeks for his staff to write an order for Barno. The CENTCOM commander offered Barno the job on 26 August 2003, and Rumsfeld's office ordered his headquarters established on 22 December 2003. Barno received his orders on 5 January 2004. Jnl, Lt Gen David W. Barno, Afghanistan: Futures/Ops, vol. 1, 8 Aug 2003–26 Oct 2003, p. 53, Barno Papers, Box 1, OEF Study Grp; EO, DoD to CJCS, n.d., sub: Afghanistan Phase IV, para. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

were to be ready when Barno arrived in Afghanistan in January 2004. The headquarters would be filled over the next few months by the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps.[5]

Given the direction that Enduring Freedom was headed, Abizaid sent Barno to Afghanistan in October 2003. With no staff, no brief from CENTCOM, and his command not yet authorized, the promotable major general devised an approach largely independent of outside influence. Lacking firm, doctrinal guidance with which to plan a campaign, the twenty-seven-year veteran drew on his knowledge of military history for insight into the conflict he was about to oversee.[6] Realizing that the coalition was fighting forces intent on overthrowing Afghanistan's internationally sanctioned government, he developed a counterinsurgency campaign that utilized units in provincial politics and strengthened efforts to build both a central government and a national security apparatus.

Barno may have been the first senior American commander to view Enduring Freedom as a counterinsurgency campaign, but he was not the first to recognize the need for a new approach. Abizaid nominated Barno to lead Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A) to solve the new mission's complex problems.[7] Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, who approved the recommendation, had recognized belatedly that CJTF-180's current methods would not be able to end the conflict. In a memorandum written the month Barno learned of his assignment, Rumsfeld lamented that the detailed information being collected on enemy forces in the country was not "actionable."[8] He wanted targets that would hasten the conclusion of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, and he expected intelligence to provide them.[9]

Rather than couch the strategic picture in Afghanistan in terms of perceived shortfalls in American warfighting capabilities, Abizaid crafted a

---

5. Except for the six personnel who traveled with him and the leaders he took from deployed units, Barno received all of his staff personnel from the individual ready reserves. Many of these service members had been out of the Army for a decade. According to Barno, "the average age in the ops center dropped ten years when I walked into the room." Interv, Lt Gen David W. Barno in *Enduring Voices: Oral Histories of the U.S. Army Experience in Afghanistan, 2003–2005*, ed. Christopher N. Koontz (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2008), p. 47.

6. According to Barno, "I actually took to Afghanistan three West Point textbooks that I had as a cadet, dated 1974, Department of History, 'Counter-Revolutionary Warfare,' and they were up on my bookshelf in the embassy in Kabul, because we really had nothing in the way of doctrine." Ibid., p. 18. Barno did not mention the 1986 edition of Field Manual 90–8, *Counterguerilla Operations,* which includes a chapter on counterinsurgency.

7. When Barno met Abizaid on 26 August 2003, the CENTCOM commander told him that "I've voted and you're my choice," although he also reminded his friend that the defense secretary would make the final decision. Jnl, Barno, Afghanistan: Futures/Ops, vol. 1, 8 Aug 2003–26 Oct 2003, p. 53; Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016.

8. Memo, Sec Def Donald Rumsfeld for Under Sec Def for Intel Steve Cambone, 12 Sep 2003, sub: Intelligence, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Absent from Donald Rumsfeld's nine-sentence memorandum to Steve Cambone is any recognition that operational approaches are driven as much by political ends as by enemy intelligence. Rumsfeld was seeing a problem he had helped to create. Ibid.



Col. Gary M. Bowman, USA

General Barno visits the Transfer of Authority ceremony at the Kunduz Provincial Reconstruction Team in 2004.

more holistic assessment of the situation that he included in the order creating Barno's command:

> [V]iolence is undermining reconstruction, political stability, [and] economic activity. Political tensions include slow security-sector reform, plundering, etc., by regional warlords and efforts by non-Taliban Islamics to form a common front. The Taliban's strategy has shifted to exploiting discontentment within the populace. Other actors, including Fahim's faction, non-Taliban Islamists, and warlords are forging alliances and pursuing goals that are counterproductive to stability and development.[10]

This more pessimistic assessment indicated how dismal Abizaid believed conditions in Afghanistan had become. By giving Barno such an unvarnished evaluation, Abizaid was linking an operational problem-solver to the secretary of defense's frustration with the sluggish pace of developments in Afghanistan.

POLITICAL SETTING AS OF SEPTEMBER 2003

Increasingly concerned that "things [were not] getting done fast enough," Rumsfeld directed Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas J. Feith and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers to

10. FRAGO 07–234, CENTCOM, 5 Jan 2004, sub: Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan – Part 2 of 2, sec 1.A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

double the pace of ANA training.[11] Simultaneously, Rumsfeld asked Marin J. Strmecki, his civilian coordinator for Afghanistan, to propose a new way forward.[12] The latter task resulted in a political-military action plan titled "Accelerating Progress in Afghanistan" (later "Accelerating Success"). The National Security Council deputies approved the program in June 2003; principal members, including the president, endorsed it later that same month. The goal for Enduring Freedom was still disengagement at the earliest defendable opportunity, but the scope of American activity would widen in an attempt to hasten the day when the Afghan government could survive without extensive American troops, money, and political support.

Accelerating Success directed U.S. government agencies to curtail the power of warlords; reform the Afghan interior and defense ministries; accelerate police and army training; stabilize the Pashtun south and east; and build more roads, schools, and health clinics.[13] The program called for significant short-term investment in Afghanistan: spending more upfront to save money in the long term.[14] This new approach repudiated the fiscal conservatism that had dominated DoD thinking only a few months before. Congress supported Accelerating Success by increasing total spending on Afghanistan from $986 million in fiscal year 2003 to $2.58 billion in 2004, a figure that rose again to $4.9 billion in 2005.[15] The administration's aversion to nation building appeared to be waning.

Accelerating Success was a significant change in the administration's Afghanistan policy. In July 2003, the Joint Staff directed CENTCOM to refine its Phase IV plans in accordance with the new program. To curb warlord influence, CENTCOM was to develop a "political influence" strategy

---

11. "I am concerned that next year will be an election year in Afghanistan, and things aren't getting done fast enough. Roads are not getting built. Schools are not getting built. Too much of what is happening is being done through NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and AID [U.S. Agency for International Development] in a way that doesn't benefit the central government. We have a big stake in Afghanistan's success. We have to get metrics developed so we can track what is actually taking place in that country. There is not a sufficient sense of urgency on the part of anybody." Memo, Sec Def Rumsfeld for Under Sec Feith and Gen Myers, 2 May 2003, sub: Afghanistan, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/437/to%20Doug%20Feith%20et%20al%20re%20Afghanistan%2005-02-2003.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. Graham, *By His Own Rules*, p. 435. In another telling, Condoleezza Rice asked Strmecki and future ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad to develop a plan. David E. Sanger, *The Inheritance: The World Obama Confronts and the Challenges to American Power* (New York: Harmony, 2009), p. 149.

13. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, pp. 140–41.

14. "Spending more now will save more money later by advancing U.S. goals and enabling the withdrawal of U.S. forces." Memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 7 Jul 2003, sub: Principles for Afghanistan—Policy Guidelines, p. 5, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/438/2003-07-07%20re%20Principles%20for%20Afghanistan-Policy%20Guidelines.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing on the Nomination of Zalmay Khalilzad to be Ambassador to Afghanistan, 108th Cong., 1st sess., 29 Oct 2003, p. 4.

15. Quarterly Rpt to the U.S. Cong., Special Inspector Gen for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Oct 2008, pp. 21–24, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/sigar/sigar-report-2008-10.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

for Defense Minister Mohammed Qasim Fahim, plan to demobilize private Afghan militias in Kabul, and prepare responses if the militias resisted demobilization or Hamid Karzai was unable to reduce warlord influence.[16] The order directed CENTCOM to set up a training program for the ANA beyond Phase I (the Central Corps), and develop security options for the upcoming Constitutional Loya Jirga—a grand assembly of senior leaders—and the presidential elections.[17] The Joint Staff expected CENTCOM to fully establish the Provincial Reconstruction Teams no later than 1 December 2003, and plan for additional team coverage in all provinces as soon as possible after 30 June 2004. Crucially, the order also directed CENTCOM to join the embassy in developing a comprehensive political-military plan for the south and east in order to prevent a Taliban resurgence and build support for the coalition and moderates in the central government.[18]

The Office of the Secretary of Defense's new policy guidance for Afghanistan, issued in July 2003 just after the National Security Council approved Accelerating Success, also shaped the campaign. In this guidance, the core goal of the war—eliminating terrorist safe havens—remained the same, despite the administration's newfound enthusiasm for state building.[19] For the first time, the DoD specified a vision for the Afghan government it was trying to build:

> Moderate and democratic, though understanding that Afghans will not simply copy U.S.-style institutions; Representative of all responsible elements in Afghan society and formed through the political participation of the Afghan people; Capable of effectively controlling and governing its territory; Capable of implementing policies to stimulate economic development; and Willing to contribute to a continuing partnership with the Coalition in the global war against terrorism.[20]

It would not be easy to determine how to imbue Afghanistan with these characteristics. Given Afghanistan's political culture and the central government's historically limited role in its social order, this end state made campaign termination unlikely if not unfeasible. Nevertheless, the American-

16. Planning Order, CJCS, 19 Jul 2003, sub: PLANORD to CDRUSCENTCOM to Refine Phase IV Plans, secs. 6.B, 6.C, 7.A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

17. Ibid., secs. 6.E, 6.I.

18. Ibid., sec. 6.G.

19. According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Afghanistan was the first arena of the global war against terrorism. Having ousted the Taliban regime, the Coalition is now working to help the Afghans create a stable government and society that will prevent Afghanistan from serving as a base for terrorists. Success could create a model for the region and the Muslim world and an example to other terrorist states. Lack of success—a renewed civil war, a narco-state, or a failed state—would undermine Coalition efforts in the global war on terrorism and could stimulate an increase in Islamist militancy and terrorism." Memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 7 Jul 2003, sub: Principles for Afghanistan—Policy Guidelines, p. 1.

20. Ibid.

led coalition would try to extend the Afghan government's "effective control" for the remainder of President George W. Bush's time in office.

The new policy expanded America's approach to securing Afghanistan. Secretary Rumsfeld's initial strategy memo from October 2001 had stated that the United States would only end the Taliban's rule, not defeat the entire movement. In July 2003, the Pentagon determined that "[t]he Coalition will defeat and eliminate Taliban, al Qaeda [*sic*], and Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) forces seeking to destabilize Afghanistan."[21] This new language signaled that America's war in Afghanistan was undergoing what seemed an imperceptible shift but was in fact a profound change in purpose, from pursuing terrorists to defeating an insurgency. The Office of the Secretary of Defense also made "defending the central government" against armed overthrow an explicit coalition objective, and CENTCOM orders reflected this. Although the coalition would work diligently to avoid intervening militarily in intra-Afghan conflict, it would not rule out using force as a last resort. With continued resistance from Pacha Khan Zadran in Gardez, Ismail Khan's refusal to accept Karzai's interim government in Herat, Abdul Rashid Dostum's unwillingness to demilitarize in northern Afghanistan, and the growing power of Sher Mohammed Akhundzada in Helmand Province, the Bush administration feared seeing its investment in Afghanistan wasted in a coup or, worse, another civil war.

Accelerating Success was not a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. The Pentagon's explicit goal was to complete reconstruction by the end of 2007.[22] Although the program called for more troops, the DoD wanted them in Afghanistan "for as long as necessary to accomplish our goals, and no longer."[23] In practice, this policy translated into a temporary 50 percent increase in U.S. personnel, from approximately 12,000 troops in mid-2003 to roughly 18,000 in 2004, for the coalition to secure the national elections.[24] Notwithstanding his embrace of a larger U.S. role in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld still wished to limit U.S. troop commitments. Iraq was now the "central front" in the war on terrorism.[25] The secretary of defense remained as wary as ever of repeating the Soviet experience or creating "over-dependence," such as he thought the Bosnia and Kosovo peacekeeping missions had done for the United States.[26]

---

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 5.

23. Ibid., p. 1.

24. Amy Belasco, *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001–FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2 Jul 2009), Table D-1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. President George W. Bush, "President Addresses the Nation" (National Address, The Cabinet Room, 7 Sep 2003), https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030907-1.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Belasco, *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001–FY2012*, Table D-2.

26. Memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 7 Jul 2003, sub: Principles for Afghanistan—Policy Guidelines, p. 2.

Enemy Situation as of September 2003

A little over one year after being forced to flee Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammed Omar openly resumed his war against the American coalition from his headquarters in Quetta, Pakistan, providing strategic direction, funding, and military planning. Urging all Muslims to join the struggle against the United States, he threatened severe punishment to Afghans who assisted the coalition or served in the Kabul government. Although it is unclear the degree to which other extremist groups agreed with Taliban ideology, it is believed that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Jalaluddin Haqqani, and al-Qaeda made a tactical alliance to fight American forces about the same time that Omar began reconstituting his political and military strength. Even though the groups had different strategic objectives, they collaborated to ensure that organized and coherent armed groups would stir up trouble in the border region from Nuristan in the north to Helmand in the south.[27]

Quetta was an ideal base for Omar's campaign. With a secure line of communication extending to the port city of Karachi and hundreds of sympathetic agents throughout South Asia, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf States, Omar and his subordinates had access not only to cash but also, more importantly, to trucks, motorbikes, arms, ammunition, radios, and satellite phones. As a refuge for Taliban leaders and a conduit for money, personnel, and resources, Quetta became vital to the movement's ideological and military efforts.

Pakistan harbored two other extremist organizations in 2003. Miran Shah in North Waziristan, inside the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, was home to the Haqqani family and served as headquarters for the network bearing the family's name. Under the leadership of the famous anti-Soviet fighter Jalaluddin Haqqani, the Haqqani Network agreed to subordinate itself to the Taliban. Even so, the network maintained its own command and control structure, relationships with other extremist organizations, and lines of operations in Afghanistan. Jalaluddin Haqqani's son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, assumed day-to-day leadership of the network while his brother, Badruddin Haqqani, oversaw combat operations. Ties to al-Qaeda and other foreign extremists in Pakistan likely enabled the Haqqanis to utilize sophisticated IEDs and suicide bombing early on.[28]

The Haqqanis capitalized on their alliance with the Taliban, using its cross-border contacts to operate in greater Paktiya Province. Jalaluddin Haqqani had maintained significant prestige in the region from the Soviet jihad, and his ability to channel money and other resources made him a dangerous adversary. Through new networks, al-Qaeda and other foreign fighters found easy passage into Paktika, Paktiya, and Khost provinces, where they engaged coalition forces with conventional guerrilla tactics. Other foreign fighters used the Haqqani region to train, recruit, and provide logistics. On the Pakistani side of the border, the Haqqanis sponsored a

27. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 67–73.

28. Jeffrey A. Dressler, *The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2010), pp. 9, 10.

parallel administration, operating schools, providing social services, and addressing judicial issues. The group also ran criminal enterprises that produced substantial revenues for themselves and the Taliban. According to analyst Jeffrey Dressler, the Taliban's national insurgency would have found it difficult to gain traction without the Haqqani Network.[29]

Having sought refuge in Iran during the Soviet era, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's HIG returned to Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Although Hekmatyar had lost much of his former prestige when the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence threw its weight behind the Taliban in 1994–1995, he still supported the Taliban elites. As with Haqqani, Hekmatyar had been a ruthless, selfish warlord, which hindered his ability to marshal resources and attract recruits. Consequently, HIG forces had not conducted many operations after September 2001 or when the Taliban reorganized in Quetta, and most had deserted to other extremist groups. Still, after much effort, Hekmatyar was soon fielding recruits from Pakistani refugee camps and local tribesmen.[30] By late 2003, HIG had established significant influence in the eastern provinces of Kunar, Laghman, Logar, and Nuristan. To a lesser extent, HIG groups could also be found in Ghazni, Wardak, and Khost provinces. Though operationally distinct, HIG and Haqqani fighters supported each other when attacking Afghan and coalition forces in the Loya-Paktia region and surrounding provinces.

Even before September 2003, the Taliban had been a coalition of "shifting tactical alliances of convenience."[31] The challenge now facing Mullah Mohammed Omar and his shura was to keep this reconstructed coalition animated. Crucial to his campaign was spreading an ideology that would unite the movement's disparate members. To become a credible insurgency, the Taliban had to give Afghans (and particularly Pashtuns) something for which to fight, in order to recapture the momentum that had elevated it to power. With help from outside sources, the Taliban generated a sophisticated messaging and propaganda strategy that mobilized popular support; recruited locally and internationally; enforced organizational coherence and discipline; and set military strategy, training, and tactics. The goal was to show that the interim government was corrupt, weak, and the servant of Western infidels. Attacks against coalition forces, Afghan security forces, government officials and infrastructure, and high-profile social targets were publicized, recorded, and exported to strike a "severe blow to local perceptions of their new security forces."[32]

Mohammed Omar concentrated on waging political warfare after the Taliban's significant loss to an American infantry patrol at Spin Boldak in eastern Kandahar Province on 27 January 2003. Spin Boldak, located about one hundred kilometers south-southeast of Kandahar, was where the Taliban

29. Ibid., pp. 11, 14–15.

30. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 221.

31. David Kilcullen, "Taliban and Counter-Insurgency in Kunar," in *Decoding the New Taliban*, ed. Antonio Giustozzi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 231.

32. Joanna Nathan, "Reading the Taliban," in *Decoding the New Taliban*, p. 24.

had first enjoyed success eight years earlier. The district was a traditional entry point for supplies and men coming from Pakistan. In the January engagement, eighty Taliban fighters fought against an American patrol backed by air support. The Taliban scattered and withdrew, but the message had been sent: the Taliban had returned.[33]

After Spin Boldak, the Taliban worked quietly in Afghanistan's southern provinces. Zabul, Uruzgan, Kandahar, and Helmand all were open to the Taliban's influence, as the near-total absence of coalition forces had left governing to local warlord militias. Kandahar was of particular importance for the Taliban. It was the Pashtun cultural capital and a significant trading hub; all parties recognized it as the first step to gaining control of the entire country. Taliban cadres infiltrated villages and districts in early 2003, asserted their presence, and reestablished their infrastructure.[34] Foreign aid workers, Afghan officials, militia leaders, and progovernment religious leaders were easy targets during this early phase. Insurgent cadres exploited tribal rivalries, pledging support to those who had been frozen out of government patronage or who had family disputes with Karzai's administration. When infiltrated cadres branded uncooperative tribal elders as collaborators or American agents, these traditional authority figures rarely had the means to resist, especially if local mullahs also had turned to the Taliban.[35]

Opposition to the Taliban in the riverine districts of Kandahar and Helmand Provinces came from local strongmen with private militias, not Karzai's government. Taliban havens usually emerged in these communities following a three-phase template. First, new mullahs entered a region and preached against the government, encouraging young men to join the Taliban's jihad against thieves and foreign infidels. Next, the Taliban cadres organized recruits and led low-level attacks against government authority. One Pashtun elder described this influence as the "time that the Taliban started coming to our homes at night," a reference to the intimidation that accompanied Taliban presence in the village. Finally, the Taliban challenged the legitimacy and commitment of Kabul-appointed politicians by establishing shadow governments—an unelected bureaucracy that supplanted the internationally recognized political apparatus—and sharia courts.[36] The appearance of a pro-Taliban mullah invariably led to local officials departing, finding accommodation, or changing allegiances.[37]

The Taliban insurgency began launching attacks on a regular basis across southern and eastern Afghanistan during this period. Most attacks

---

33. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 245; Ballard, Lamm, and Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, p. 119.

34. Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, p. 24.

35. Fergusson, *Taliban*, pp. 168–69; Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, pp. 46–51; Scott Baldauf and Owais Tohid, "Taliban Appears to Be Regrouped and Well-Funded," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 May 2003, https://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0508/p01s02-wosc.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

36. Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, pp. 110–11, 116.

37. Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser*, pp. 86–98.

were small, but they were the beginning of organized resistance.[38] Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a close associate of Mohammed Omar who came from the same village in Uruzgan Province, reportedly led the military effort. Subordinate to him were Taliban commanders and religious leaders assigned to different territories. Veteran commanders Akhtar Mohammed Osmani, Mullah Abdur Razzaq, and Mullah Dadullah Akhund took charge of operations throughout the south.[39] Recruiting and training drives in Pakistan produced enough fighters to contemplate more significant military operations against coalition forces, which in turn led to an increase in violence during 2004 and 2005.

A New Operational Approach

General Barno saw his critical task as creating "an integrated security structure that extend[ed] the reach of the Afghan government."[40] His approach to achieving this goal was new to Enduring Freedom. In essence, Afghanistan needed a military force to help stabilize its government and economy, even if doing so required soldiers and marines to operate in roles for which they had not trained. To Barno, the "people of Afghanistan" were the enemies' center of gravity, while the coalition's ability to extend "the reach of the central government" was the friendly center of gravity.[41] Barno's challenge was to pull the population toward the Afghan government. To do so, the Afghan government needed to be able to provide reliable services and consistent security to the people, negating their need to turn to the Taliban.

To help connect the Afghan government with the Afghan people, Barno believed CFC-A needed a staff of almost 350 service members. Starting with only six, the rest had to come from CJTF-180 until personnel could be sent from stateside units. Fortunately, the 10th Mountain Division had deployed with an extra layer of senior staff officers. Barno took the colonels who headed the division's G–2 (intelligence) and G–3 (operations) sections, while Brig. Gen. (Promotable) Lloyd J. Austin III, the CJTF-180 commander upon Barno's arrival, kept the lieutenant colonel deputies.[42] When the DoD finally approved CFC-A's joint manning document—several months after Barno was in theater—the services filled it incompletely with unqualified personnel and with many officers recalled from retirement.[43] The Army's Human Resources

38. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 67–69.

39. Baldauf and Tohid, "Taliban Appears to Be Regrouped and Well-Funded."

40. Presentation, Lt Col David W. Barno, 18 May 2004, sub: Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, slides 7, 10, 13, 15, 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; see also Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Joseph DiChairo, frmr 2d Bn 22 Inf Cdr, 27 Aug 2007, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

41. Presentation, 15 Mar 2005, sub: CFC-A Update, CG (Commanding General) Final Version Brief to Counterpart, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Interv, Christopher N. Koontz, CMH, with Brig Gen Anthony A. Cucolo III, frmr Director CJTF-180 Staff, 17 Jan 2004, pp. 18–19, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Christopher N. Koontz, CMH, with Maj Gen Byron S. Bagby, frmr CJTF-180 Ch of Staff, 24 Jan 2007, pp. 13–14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Interv, Hughes and Mundey with Barno, 21 Nov 2006, pp. 10–16.

Command, for example, sent him no graduates from the School of Advanced Military Studies who were trained specifically to plan operations, while ordering quality officers out of his command to attend that same school.[44]

With little staff of his own, Barno relied on projects begun by other organizations. Soon after assuming command, Barno conferred with Lakhdar Brahimi and Jean Arnault, key figures in the UN's mission in Afghanistan. Arnault shared a paper he had written on security in eastern and southern Afghanistan. Barno read the paper, translated its concepts into economic focus areas he called Regional Development Zones, and decided to establish a prototype around Kandahar City.[45] Barno did not just humor Arnault: he used his analysis as the basis of a new campaign. Although the American commander had arrived in Afghanistan with an idea for development zones, he needed both international support and the knowledge that the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan had accumulated for it to work.

The biggest step Barno took to ensure unity of effort was to nurture a close relationship with Zalmay M. Khalilzad, the new American ambassador to Afghanistan. Arriving at practically the same time, the two developed a close working relationship.[46] Khalilzad helped align allies, agencies, and agendas behind development zones and other initiatives. Barno supported the ambassador with staff, situated Khalilzad's office next to his, and relied on Khalilzad's negotiating skills to solve disputes among Afghan authorities. Both officials acted on behalf of the American government, both did so aggressively, and both consulted with the other to ensure unity of effort. Khalilzad in particular used his relationships, language abilities, and commission from Bush to help shape Afghanistan's future.[47]

---

44. Ibid., p. 16. The School of Advanced Military Studies offers a year-long course that teaches field-grade officers how to become effective planners who help senior leaders understand the operational environment and then visualize and describe solutions to operational problems.

45. Ibid., p. 44; Presentation, CFC-A, 18 May 2004, sub: Campaign Plan, slide 15, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Barno gave his reasoning for Regional Development Zones in a draft directive. According to him, "neither the International Community nor the Coalition has the resources to tackle the security, stability and reconstruction issues within Afghanistan simultaneously. As a result a RDZ [Regional Development Zone] concept has been formulated, in consultation with the UN and ITGA [Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan], to address the situation regionally. The aim is to deliver a package of enduring security, good governance, National police, where possible ANA [Afghan National Army] directed Aid and reconstruction, and economic revival into a Region and capitalize on the effects to extend the reach of the Central Government and demonstrate intent to the people." Memo, CFC-A, n.d., sub: Draft (First Cut) CFC Operational Directive, p. 4, Box 2, Barno Papers, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. Interv, Barno in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, pp. 23–24.

47. Richard Lugar, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, recognized that Khalilzad would hold extraordinary authority in Afghanistan. In the ambassador's confirmation process, the senator told him that "if you're confirmed ambassador from the United States to the country—you're not being designated to be almost an assistant president of the country, yet many of us are going to look to you, because of your extraordinary background and the fact that you have been involved in this diplomacy now for quite a while very successfully, as probably something more than a regular ambassador who simply conveys thoughts." U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Panel II, Hearing on the Nomination of Zalmay Khalilzad to

Barno believed that it would be advantageous to hold units accountable for defined geographic areas. To him, space had to be owned before it could be controlled. Relationships could be established, situational understanding enhanced, and Provincial Reconstruction Team coordination eased by ensuring that soldiers remained in the same provinces and towns throughout their deployment. Placing soldiers in close proximity to Afghans enhanced intelligence gathering and made it easier to separate insurgents from peaceful locals. While commanders still had to conduct offensive, defensive, stability, and support missions, they knew that the populations they affected would remain constant. Accordingly, Barno divided Afghanistan into battalion areas of operations and, when a second maneuver brigade arrived in February 2004, brigade areas.[48]

Assigning areas of operations unified counterinsurgent efforts. When Barno first visited Afghanistan in late summer 2003, the terrain was essentially one large operations area positioned between a Joint Special Operations Area around Nuristan, Laghman, and Kunar Provinces in the northeast and another around Uruzgan, northwestern Kandahar, and northern Helmand Provinces in the west. The actual areas of control, however, did not extend more than fifteen kilometers from the forward operating bases.[49] The immensity of the joint operations areas meant that Special Forces could conduct only limited foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare in even the most coalition-friendly Afghan regions. The detachments were not robust enough to be placed on guard duty, and so they continued to pay Afghan militias to protect their safe houses and assist on missions, a relationship that empowered locals instead of officials answerable to the interim government.[50] Even though seventeen base camps throughout eastern

---

be Ambassador to Afghanistan, 108th Cong., 1st sess., 29 Oct 2003, p. 9. Senior *Washington Post* correspondent Rajiv Chandrasekaran depicted Khalilzad as far more than an envoy: "By his own account, Khalilzad ate dinner six nights a week at the presidential palace, where he met with Karzai and his advisers into the evening. Karzai made no significant decision in that time without Khalilzad's involvement and sometimes his cajoling and prodding." See Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, p. 91.

48. As expressed in his mission statement, troops were to conduct "full spectrum operations . . . to establish enduring security." Presentation, CFC-A, 3 Mar 2005, sub: Campaign Plan Briefing in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom, slide 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. Interv, Chandler Garcia with DiChairo, 27 Aug 2007, pp. 3–4.

50. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Timothy Reese, frmr OMC-A ANA Design Team Ch, 26 June 2007, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The existence of these militia forces, whose numbers were estimated as high as 60,000 during this period, contributed in no small part to recruiting problems for the Afghan National Army (ANA). The militia fighters were paid an average of $200 per month and could serve near home. ANA recruits were initially paid $30 per month and were often stationed far from home. In addition, the U.S. policy of mixing ethnicities in ANA units encouraged rather than discouraged abuse of minorities by Afghan military officers. Stephen M. Grenier, "UNITED STATES: Examining America's Longest War," in *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance*, eds. Gale A. Mattox and Stephen M. Greiner (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2015), p. 61.

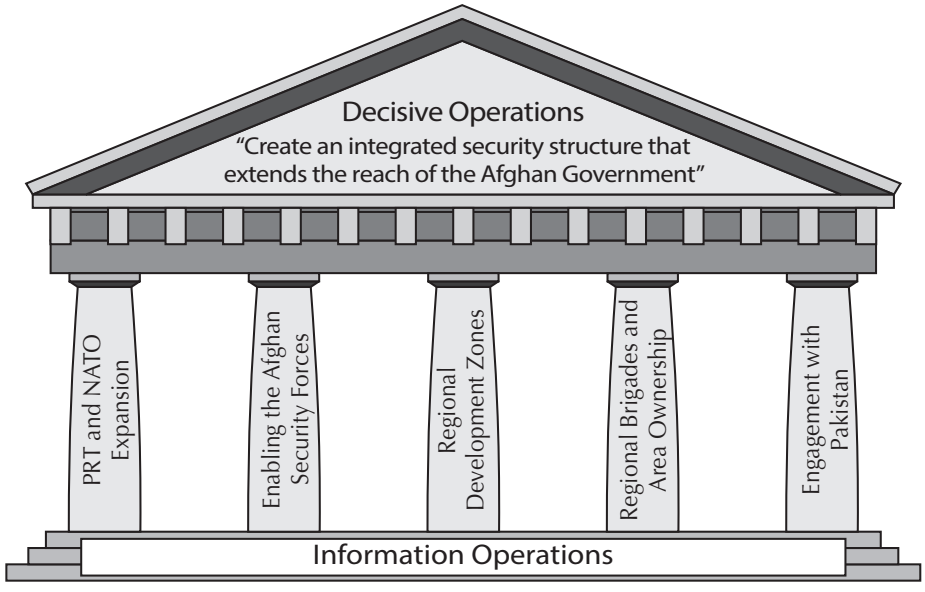


Figure 6.1. Barno's Campaign Model

and southeastern Afghanistan supported operations, the overall structure was too decentralized for the approach Barno wanted to pursue.[51]

Assigned areas supported other elements of Barno's counterinsurgency approach. The CFC-A commander conveyed his operational approach pictorially by showing a Parthenon-like structure with a base labeled "information operations," a pinnacle roof stating the overarching goal as "an integrated security structure that extends the reach of the Afghan Government," and five pillars (*Figure 6.1*).[52] He captured his desire for regional brigades and area-of-operations ownership by making it one of the building's pillars.[53] Reconstruction teams also fit his plan's assigned area of operations. Instead of answering to the civil-military operations task force, reconstruction team commanders (all lieutenant colonels or officers of equivalent military rank) would work for the brigade commander responsible for the areas in which they operated.[54] Barno hoped that such an arrangement would ensure that combat and civil affairs teams worked

51. Adrian T. Bogart III, *One Valley at a Time*, Joint Special Operations University Rpt 06-6 (Hurlburt Field, Fla: The Joint Special Operations University Press, 2006), pp. 39–40.

52. Presentation, CFC-A, 18 May 2004, sub: Campaign Plan, slide 15.

53. The other pillars were Provincial Reconstruction Team and NATO expansion, Regional Development Zones, the Afghan security apparatus, and engagement with Pakistan. OPORD 04–07, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Support to National Assembly Elections, p. 15, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Presentation, CFC-A, 18 May 2004, sub: Campaign Plan, slide 15.

54. For example, Barno attached the Gardez, Khost, Kandahar, and Sharan Provincial Reconstruction Teams to the TF Warrior brigade when he assigned it an area of operations in early 2004. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Brig Gen William B. Garrett III, frmr 1st Bde, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 5 Jun 2007, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



U.S. Army

General Austin escorts General Abizaid during his visit to Forward Operating Base Salerno in December 2003.

together on local levels. Subordinate commanders would be responsible for how their soldiers interacted with residents, reconstruction teams would have access to resources,and mission planners would better understand what was happening to whom and why. Under the concept of Regional Development Zones, the third pillar, resources would flow to one area commander and reconstruction team at a time. The same commanders who oversaw other aspects of a province's development would oversee its economic development as well.

It took time for Barno's operational framework to alter how units conducted missions. The 10th Mountain Division had been the tactical force in Afghanistan for only a month when Barno arrived. He had to exercise counterinsurgent operations through General Austin and Col. William B. Garrett's TF Warrior. Although the soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division had plenty of experience in Afghanistan, they had deployed to fight terrorists, not to persuade a rural people to accept centralized governance.

Theater responsibility was new to Austin, who had taken command in September 2003, less than a month after leaving Iraq. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, he had been the assistant division commander of the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) during the drive to Baghdad, but he did not have previous Afghanistan experience or much of an opportunity to study America's involvement there. Being thrust into a complex, unknown environment would have been challenging under any circumstances, but because Maj. Gen. John R. Vines left Afghanistan soon after Austin arrived, the latter's increase in responsibilities was both significant and abrupt. A promotable brigadier general serving in a grade one rank higher, Austin suddenly had theater as well as tactical responsibilities. The decision to send

a promotable one-star general speaks highly of the confidence that Army senior leaders had in Austin.

General Austin's experience influenced his outlook. In his view, Afghanistan was a tactical fight in which the mission was "to take away as much capability from the Taliban and al-Qaeda as possible."[55] That belief reflected the reality of the situation facing Austin, who had access to only a fraction of the resources that had been available to the 10th Mountain Division during its initial deployment. Even though Austin was the division commander, most of his soldiers were not deployed in support of Enduring Freedom. As a result, Austin always kept in mind what resources he had when determining tactical options and potential objectives. He had limited means to act, but he believed that Afghanistan's future could only begin when those using violence and intimidation to derail the Bonn Process were stopped.[56]

Although Austin answered to Barno, he continued to receive orders from CENTCOM even after CFC-A's establishment.[57] This dual alignment rearranged traditional relationships for tactics, operations, and strategy, establishing a new form that differed greatly from their usual hierarchical order. CENTCOM issued CJTF-180 (commanded by Austin) tactical guidance and CJTF-180 complied with it.[58] Barno, sent to Afghanistan to interact with Afghan and American diplomats, developed the campaign's operational approach and, with Khalilzad, its political objectives. Thus, policy was set in Kabul by CFC-A based on guidance from Washington, and tactics were sent from Tampa via CENTCOM. This unorthodox practice colored Barno's relationship with CJTF-180 as much as his lack of staff and long transition did. The arrangement worked, but only because the two commanders communicated with each other, not because their responsibilities were nested in a way that logically matched them with assets, experience, and proximity to the fight.[59]

Planning for a move north began in late October 2003 when CENTCOM asked CJTF-180 to support Special Forces operating against high-value targets in Kunar Province. These targets were enemy commanders, planners, and financiers protected by robust security detachments of up to 300 fighters. Austin complied by issuing warning orders notifying selected units at Bagram and Kandahar to prepare to commit aviation, fire support, and maneuver assets to Kunar on short notice in support of the Special Operations teams. At the same time, CJTF-180 also developed courses of action for conventional forces to conduct sensitive site exploitation of weapons caches, thus augmenting Special Operations efforts to do so or to free them up to pursue

55. Interv, Lt Col Robert Nye, U.S. Army War College, with Maj Gen Lloyd J. Austin III, frmr 10th Mtn Div and CJTF-180 Cdr, 16 May 2005, pp. 18–19, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Ibid., p. 7.

57. Ibid., p. 9.

58. Ibid., p. 7.

59. Interv, Colin J. Williams and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Zalmay Khalilzad, frmr U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 25 Mar 2015, pp. 13, 27–29, Hist Files, OEF Study Group.

the fight against enemy leadership cells.[60] Although Barno's early arrival and lack of staff made it difficult for him to shape the fight, the circumstances freed Austin and his headquarters to plan tactical missions, something at which they excelled.

In order for Barno's counterinsurgency approach to work in this nontraditional command and control relationship, he needed to be able to influence Afghans directly. Because of their convenience and availability, Provincial Reconstruction Teams soon became one of the most important elements in Barno's overall strategy. However, they were not supposed to be the only vehicle through which coalition forces exerted influence. Regional Development Zones, which Barno felt were just as important, were designed to bring the full weight of the international community's development resources to bear on designated areas of the country. If the zones worked as envisioned, resources would flow into one commander's area of operations at a time, creating "economic success stories" by synchronizing security, reconstruction projects, governance support, and the work of nongovernmental organizations.[61] Overwhelming resources and attention would make the targeted zone permanently inhospitable to insurgents, permitting the coalition to shift its focus to a new zone. By progressive steps, Barno hoped to build momentum for a more peaceful Afghanistan.

CFC-A's approach in 2003 differed from those of McNeill and Vines. General Barno rejected the omniscience and control inherent in Effects-Based Operations and addressed operational complexity through a combination of approaches. He became involved in new aspects of Afghanistan's security problem because he felt responsible for the entire intervention. To Barno, a successful counterinsurgency campaign required all actors to focus on extending the Kabul government to the Afghan countryside. Supported by General Abizaid and CENTCOM, Barno adopted a holistic approach to the theater that included both national and local economic and political concerns.[62] Realizing that the temporal phases of the original CENTCOM plan were no longer applicable in Afghanistan, Barno also promulgated the concept that units should be ready to execute a full spectrum of operations in any location throughout their deployment.[63]

Reconstruction teams received most of Barno and CFC-A's time and energy because they enabled military, civilian, international, and Afghan

---

60. Presentation, CJTF-180, 31 Oct 2003, sub: Sensitive Site Exploration, Opn Mountain Resolve, slides 2–5, 18, 22, 30–32, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

61. Memo, CFC-A, n.d., sub: Draft (First Cut) CFC Operational Directive, p. 4, Box 2, Barno Papers. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Col Bryan R. Gibby, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen (Ret.) David W. Barno, frmr CFC-A Cdr, 20 Jan 2016, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Before consulting with Jean Arnault of the United Nations, Barno had modeled his Regional Development Zone concept on tax-free zones within the United States. Ibid, p. 18.

62. The need for full-spectrum operations was the "big lesson" coming out of an Operation Iraqi Freedom leadership conference that Barno attended in June 2003. Jnl, Lt Gen David W. Barno, CG, U.S. Army Transportation Corps and Fort Jackson, Box 1, Barno Papers, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

63. Update, CFC-A, 25 Mar 2005, sub: CG Brief to Counterpart, notes to slide 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

interaction. No American had served in a similar organization since the Vietnam War. Between 1967 and 1973, the U.S. and South Vietnamese governments had made major military efforts (under the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program) to improve village life and in so doing gain the support of South Vietnam's rural population, but this program had been wound down as U.S. forces and civilian personnel withdrew from Southeast Asia. Even civil-military operations centers, the base upon which Provincial Reconstruction Teams were formed, had not been codified into Army doctrine until the February 2000 release of *Civil Affairs Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual 41–10). To Barno, these adaptable counterinsurgency organizations would help secure and stabilize southern and southeastern Afghanistan. However, by prioritizing those regions over less-volatile provinces, Barno set a precedent for future Provincial Reconstruction Team efforts. Teams in contested areas received the majority of available funding and personnel in order to counteract Taliban influence while building ties between the people and Kabul. Regions that supported the Afghan Transitional Authority received less support overall. Although perceptions of reconstruction inequality did not produce noticeable unrest, CFC-A's disproportionate focus reduced the incentive for Afghans in supposedly more stable areas to embrace the coalition or central government over the long term.

General Barno's First Three Months

Barno refined his operational approach during his first three months in theater. Because he was in Afghanistan to oversee but not replace CJTF-180, he used the time to analyze Enduring Freedom, understand its constraints, and plan his operational campaign. Barno did not implement his efforts suddenly. Instead, he sequenced them with previously planned operations and took time to react to unpredicted developments, several of which occurred soon after his arrival. His five-pillar framing of the conflict remained consistent throughout his tenure.

Barno's patience did not dampen his desire for quick victories. As he understood it, the end of the Bonn Process would end America's opportunity to shape and guide Afghanistan's national development.[64] Although al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden were no longer imminent threats, the Taliban showed signs of increasing activity on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This was evident in the enemy resistance shown to American troops on the border of Zabul and Uruzgan Provinces during Operation Mountain Viper in August and September 2003. With the Constitutional Loya Jirga and a presidential election remaining on schedule for December 2003 and late 2004 respectively, the Taliban's inability to regain a military presence in south and southeastern Afghanistan boded well for the continuing formation of a legitimate Afghan government.

Fortunately for Barno, some units already recognized the discrepancy between the war they were fighting and the insurgency they faced.

64. Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, p. 20.

According to Colonel Garrett, "the war in Afghanistan had evolved into a counterinsurgency by August 2003."[65] Maj. Dennis S. Sullivan, who served under Garrett as the operations officer for Lt. Col. Michael L. Howard's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, credited his unit with recognizing that it was addressing the wrong tactical problem and then adjusting its warfighting methodology halfway through the deployment.[66] According to Sullivan, Colonel Howard switched the battalion's focus from hunting terrorists to securing the local population.[67] As Garrett later reflected, "our challenge was not that the enemy was strong, but that the state was relatively weak."[68]

Other units did not operate in an environment that would help them extend the reach of the nascent central government in Kabul. Soon after Austin's arrival, CENTCOM ordered him to assess Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's HIG activity in Kunar and Nuristan Provinces.[69] Abizaid wanted CJTF-180 to be able to support Special Forces in the region in case they located concentrations of enemy fighters.[70] The underlying premise behind the operation was that by targeting and capturing HIG leadership, the United States would be able to interrogate them to gain knowledge that could lead to the capture of Osama bin Laden and other senior al-Qaeda figures.[71]

The resulting plan triggered Operation Mountain Resolve, a mission that CJTF-180 designed using intelligence gathered from Special Forces.[72] The mission began on 6 November 2003 when two reinforced companies of Colonel DiChairo's 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, air-assaulted into a landing zone on the outskirts of Mangalam village in Nuristan Province's Pech River Valley. Other troops followed to establish a fire-support base near the landing zone. Once their 105-mm. howitzers and 120-mm. mortars were in place, DiChairo's soldiers advanced northward to push Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Faqirullah, Haji Ghafour, Kashmir Khan, and Haji Sadiq into the arms of a waiting blocking force.[73] The CJSOTF, aided by three 10th Mountain Division infantry platoons, provided the force that would block the escape of

---

65. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Garrett, 5 Jun 2007, p. 2.

66. Interv, John McCool, CSI, with Lt Col Dennis S. Sullivan, frmr S–3, 1st Bn, 87th Inf, 26 Jun 2006, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

67. Ibid., pp. 3–5.

68. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Garrett, 5 Jun 2007, p. 13.

69. At the time, only Special Forces F detachments were operating in that region. See Cmd Rpt, Opn Enduring Freedom Rotation IV, Jul 2003–Mar 2004, p. 4, 130th MHD Collection, OEF Study Grp.

70. Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, p. 58.

71. Wesley Morgan, *Ten Years in Afghanistan's Pech Valley*, Special Rpt 382 (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Sep 2015), p. 4, https://www.usip.org/publications/2015/09/ten-years-afghanistans-pech-valley, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

72. Interv, Chandler Garcia with DiChairo, 27 Aug 2007, p. 10; Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, p. 59.

73. Sgt Greg Heath, "10th Mtn. Div. Shows Its Mettle in Operation Mountain Resolve," *The Mountaineer Online*, 26 Nov 2003, http://www.drum.army.mil/mountaineer/article.aspx?ID=3423 (page discontined), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; FRAGO, CJTF-180, 2 Nov 2003, sub: Opn MOUNTAIN RESOLVE, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; FRAGO XX to OPORD 03–01, CJTF-180, 2 Nov 2003, sub:

the HIG division leaders. Yet even though the combined Special Forces and infantry teams successfully occupied their designated blocking positions, the insurgents were able to use their intimate knowledge of the area to avoid capture. Rough terrain forced the advancing troops of 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, to move in single file, which not only slowed their advance but also decreased their chances of detecting the elusive enemy. Several suspicious individuals were detained, but the lightly equipped Afghans were able to stay one to two days ahead of DiChairo's troops. After determining that the enemy had reached sanctuary in Pakistan, the 10th Mountain Division soldiers were airlifted out of the valley.[74]

While planning to move forces into Nangarhar and Kunar Provinces, Barno found his campaign interrupted by a familiar culprit: warlords. He had arrived in Afghanistan in the midst of a spat between Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Nur that had the potential to engulf northern Afghanistan in civil war.[75] Fortunately, Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali quieted the dispute by traveling from the capital to Mazar-e Sharif in October 2003 with 400 Afghans and Americans in tow. Backed by such visible support, Jalali announced the arrival of an ANA kandak in the Balkh capital, merged militia commands, and published a schedule for warlords to turn in their heavy weapons.[76] More importantly, he fired the governor, deputy governor, and chief of police of Balkh Province, as well as Mazar-e Sharif's mayor and police chief.[77] For the rest of his command, Barno kept a contingency plan for responding to disputes between Dostum and Atta Nur. The plan spanned degrees of severity and Karzai's willingness to intervene, and included options ranging from face-to-face meetings to a strategy for extracting the reconstruction team from Mazar-e Sharif.[78]

Shutting down a reconstruction team was a significant threat to the well-being of the region. Even though many Afghans regarded the reconstruction teams as an important source of American financial support for their provinces, the teams were conduits for much more than aid money in the summer of 2003. Much like the civil affairs teams they had subsumed, the new organizations were meant to funnel money from nongovernmental and international organizations as well. At first, reconstruction teams did not find it difficult to locate civilian agencies willing to help residents in the war-torn country. According to a list kept by the Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Command, eighty agencies were willing to provide

---

Planning and Conducting Opn MOUNTAIN RESOLVE Phase IIIB – Continue to Attack, 3.E.1.A.1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

74. FRAGO XX to OPORD 03–01, CJTF-180, 2 Nov 2003, sub: Planning and Conducting Opn MOUNTAIN RESOLVE Phase IIIB – Continue to Attack, 3.B.3.A, 3.B.4.C.

75. Karzai's government had recognized both warlords, labeling Dostum as commander of the 8th Afghan Corps and Atta Nur as commander of the 7th Corps.

76. Rpt, CJCMOTF, Last Week of Oct 2003, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

77. Ibid.

78. Presentation, CJMOTF, n.d., sub: MeS Master Plan, slide 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

assistance in Afghanistan through the summer of 2003.[79] Providing security for these organizations was another matter. Since reconstruction teams could protect nongovernmental organizations only if they traveled in their military convoys, few civilian aid organizations wanted to operate in the more hazardous conditions outside Kabul for fear of being too closely associated with the military effort. However, without military protection, aid workers in Afghanistan were all the more vulnerable: in October 2003, for instance, all nongovernmental organizations suspended operations in five southeastern provinces following several attacks on aid workers who were not under the security umbrella of combat forces.[80] To ensure that military and civilian aid efforts could work in tandem and in comparative safety, Barno chose to establish his first Regional Development Zone in Kandahar, one of the more secure areas outside Kabul.[81]

Accelerating Success

Secretary Rumsfeld's office began paying greater attention to reconstruction and ANA formation after hundreds of Afghans in Kabul demonstrated against the continued presence of U.S. troops on 6 May 2003. The gathering included a large number of government workers demanding months of back pay from the cash-strapped Afghan government. The root of that issue appeared to be that warlords were refusing to turn over tens of millions of dollars in customs revenues.[82] Aware of the National Security Council's growing concerns over the training of the ANA and the distribution of aid before the presidential election, Rumsfeld and Marin Strmecki worked with Zalmay Khalilzad, then special assistant to President Bush, to enact Accelerating Success.[83]

Although the situation in Iraq required a significant amount of Rumsfeld's attention, he actively managed Accelerating Success in Afghanistan. As a result, he intervened more in the first half of Barno's command than he had during either McNeill's or Vines' commands. In a demand that proved onerous for Barno's small staff, Rumsfeld wanted weekly briefings focused almost entirely on kandak training, custom revenues, and the dates when U.S. forces could begin withdrawing from theater.[84] Given that Rumsfeld saw

---

79. Rpt, CJCMOTF, Last Week of Oct 2003, pp. 7–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

80. Rpt, CJCMOTF, Last Week of Nov 2003, p. 14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Although the UN did not name the affected provinces, the likely locations were Nimroz, Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Zabul; see "UN Officials Condemn Killing of Aid Workers in Afghanistan," UN News, 28 Sep 2003, https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=8388&Cr=&Crl=##WH4Snja7g70, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

81. Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, p. 14.

82. David Rohde and David E. Sanger, "How a 'Good War' in Afghanistan Went Bad," *New York Times*, 12 Aug 2007, https://www.nytimes/com/2007/08/12/world/asia/12afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Chris Kaul and Najib Murshed, "Afghan Government Workers Demand Months of Back Pay," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 May 2003, http://articles.latimes.com/2003/may/07/world/fg-afpay7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

83. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, p. 140.

84. Graham, *By His Own Rules*, p. 501.

Accelerating Success as a means of increasing the resources that America devoted to Enduring Freedom without incurring long-term commitments to Afghan society, he sought to monitor developments to ensure that the program met those expectations.

Even before he had been briefed on Accelerating Success, Barno chose an approach to Enduring Freedom that aligned with the goals of the program.[85] Having been nominated by General Abizaid, who was privy to Rumsfeld's policy intentions, Barno easily assumed oversight of the program when he arrived in theater. His own analysis prompted him to reach out to provinces and work closely with the American ambassador on initiatives that supported the objectives outlined in the program. Barno understood that competent Afghan security forces would obviate the need for future intervention. He also saw the ANA as the primary vehicle for extending the reach of the Kabul government.[86] In his view, a trained force would both defend the state and foster a national identity that he hoped would be professed even by those living in the outer provinces.[87]

Before Accelerating Success, Rumsfeld had wanted Afghanistan to field an army that it could maintain after the coalition departed. In line with the secretary's guidance, CENTCOM planners had envisioned a small, lightly armed force of not more than 50,000 soldiers.[88] Its original near-term mission was to secure Kabul during the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003.[89] Although Afghan officials wanted to deploy troops in other locations, the coalition expected the Taliban to contest the meeting. By setting up checkpoints leading into Kabul, the ANA could play a visible part in thwarting attempts to disrupt the forthcoming national convention.[90]

---

85. Barno first became aware of Accelerating Success on 29 October 2003 but was not fully briefed on the plan until he talked to Khalilzad on 27 November and Abizaid on 29 November. Jnl, Lt Gen David W. Barno, Afghanistan Operations, vol. 2, 26 Oct 2003–18 Jan 2004, 29 Nov 2003, pp. 8, 64, Box 1, Barno Papers, OEF Study Grp.

86. In the order he wrote for the presidential election, Barno tasked the Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan to prepare "ANA for sustained presence missions" so as to "extend the reach of the national government throughout Afghanistan." OPORD 04–07, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Support to National Assembly Elections, p. 30, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

87. Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, p. 22.

88. Attachment from Lt Col Michael S. Weaver to Col Jack G. Smith, Col John W. Bullard, and Michael D. Fitzgerald, Contractor-DPRA, 3 Aug 2004, sub: Extract on history of 70,000 Endstrength for ANA, pp. 2–3, to Msg, CENTCOM, 231306Z, August 2003, Sub: Concept of Operations for the Refinement of Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan (Afg), submitted in response to 242235Z Jul 03 CJCS PLANORD to CDRUSCENTCOM for the Refinement of Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. As agreed in the Bonn II Conference, 43,000 of the 70,000 soldiers would be ground combat troops. The remainder would be divided among support units, Afghan Ministry of Defense staff, a general staff, and a 3,000-man air element that would fly the president around the country. Rpt to U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Committee on International Relations, U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, But Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, Jun 2005), p. 6.

89. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Reese, 26 Jun 2007, p. 22.

90. Ibid.

Rumsfeld's focus on reconstruction and development led to the United States adopting a different approach to creating the ANA's force structure and managing its operational deployment. In keeping with the decision made at the Bonn II Conference a year previously, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed CENTCOM to form an army of 70,000 in December 2003.[91] The DoD supported this directive in January 2004 by approving the Office of Military Cooperation's five-year, $7 billion plan to develop the Afghan defense sector. The effort received a boost later in the year when the sector received $700 million of the $1.76 billion that Congress outlaid for Accelerating Success. This influx allowed them to increase training at the Kabul Military Training Center from two to three kandaks per rotation.[92] By July, the Military Cooperation headquarters was briefing Rumsfeld that it was increasing the rate to five kandaks.[93] Although the number eventually rose to six, space, personnel, and recruitment shortages returned it to five by September.[94]

On paper, the Office of Military Cooperation's efforts to increase ANA growth were successful. According to Barno's talking points for a 4 November 2003 visit by a delegation from the UN Security Council, coalition forces had fielded 5,000 ANA soldiers in eleven kandaks. Four kandaks would start special training in November to support the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December.[95] As more kandaks were fielded, CENTCOM broadened the training program to include command and control functions.[96] General Barno predicted that eighteen infantry and four to six support kandaks would participate in the National Assembly and provincial council elections, alleviating America's reliance on militia forces in the final step in the Bonn Process, expected to be held in late 2004.

As decided the previous December, the ANA existed to provide "security for Afghanistan's new central government and political process, replacing all other military forces in Afghanistan, and combating terrorists and other de-

---

91. Rpt to U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Committee on International Relations, *Afghanistan Security*, p. 6.

92. Memo, CFC-A, Jan 2004, sub: Key to ANA Acceleration Briefings, pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid. The Department of the Army gave Task Force Phoenix additional soldiers but then reduced its strength by replacing the 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, with the Oklahoma National Guard (45th Infantry Brigade). Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Mancino, the 45th Brigade's commander, remembered being jealous that Colonel Milley's 2d Brigade did not have to fight U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) for each additional soldier that arrived in theater. Interv, Steve Clay, CSI, with Brig Gen Thomas P. Mancino, frmr TF Phoenix Cdr, 12 Sep 2007, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

95. Memo, CFC-A, n.d., sub: Talking Points for UNSC Delegation, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

96. The program grew to include an Afghan defense ministry staff adviser and training program, an ANA training assistance group, a doctrine-and-training training assistance team, a Kabul Military Training Center training assistance team, and mobile training teams, among others. EO, CENTCOM, 8 Apr 2003, sub: The Establishment and Training of the Afghan National Army through Completion of Phase 1, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



MCS2 Jonathan D. Chandler, USN

The Kajaki hydroelectric plant, if properly refurbished and maintained, would provide much-needed electrical service to many Afghans.

structive elements in cooperation with coalition and peacekeeping forces."[97] By increasing resources, the Bush administration aimed not only to increase the number of kandaks being trained but also to facilitate the drawdown of American forces. "Creating the Afghan Defense Sector," the Office of Military Cooperation's pitch for acceleration, matched reductions in Enduring Freedom battalions to increases in graduated kandaks.[98] The presentation included two timelines: one that assumed an American battalion could leave Afghanistan for every two kandaks fielded, and a second that assumed it would take three new kandaks to replace a single American battalion.[99]

Maj. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry's Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan had staffed a centralized corps first for reasons that were sound from an American viewpoint, but were not without consequences. Recruitment transported young men from rural Afghanistan to the capital, separating them from warlord influence. When these soldiers completed their service, they returned home indoctrinated with a nationalist outlook. More importantly, Karzai worked out of Kabul, and his transitional authority was hosting the Constitutional Loya Jirga in Kabul; both needed protection provided by an indigenous force. Once Kabul's security requirements had been met, Accelerating Success would provide a solid foundation for extending the umbrella of security beyond the Afghan capital by creating regional corps.

97. Rpt to U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Committee on International Relations, *Afghanistan Security*, p. 6.

98. Memo, OMC-A, Jul 2004, sub: Creating the Afghan Defense Sector, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

99. Ibid.

Answerable directly to the Ministry of Defense, regional corps were to project national authority by their presence and ability to protect residents. Regional corps also reflected Barno's decision to make American and Afghan military units jointly responsible for critical areas of operations throughout the country, something McNeill and Vines could not accomplish because of the earlier decision to deploy the ANA only in and around Kabul. Just as American areas of operations coincided loosely with Afghanistan's tribal and ethnic divisions, easing the stress on commanders trying to understand local motivations and agendas, regionally aligned ANA boundaries generally coincided with coalition areas of operations. Aligning coalition and ANA footprints not only facilitated potential mentoring or partnership arrangements, but also aided the planning and execution of combined operations.

Despite the progress being made by connecting other areas of Afghanistan to the central government in Kabul through regional corps, Accelerating Success had an uneven impact on the ongoing development of the ANA. The challenges of fielding more kandaks in a shorter time frame undermined unit cohesion, threw ethnic balances out of proportion, and stressed the training headquarters. The leadership of kandaks that were fielded under compressed timelines were uniformly disappointing, which drove U.S. tactical commanders to interact with American advisers rather than the Afghan chain of command.[100] Finally, prioritizing infantry kandaks over support units made it more difficult to sustain ANA troops in outlying Afghan provinces without relying on coalition assistance.

Maj. Richard A. "Rick" Rabe, an adviser at the Kabul Military Training Center, agreed that the Office of Military Cooperation lacked command involvement during Accelerating Success.[101] The only instruction Rabe recalled receiving from higher headquarters during his tour came as a rejection. As part of Accelerating Success, Rabe had asked the Afghan officer in charge of training to devise a plan for pushing multiple kandaks through his facility. An American officer rejected the plan because it did not build force fast enough, leaving Rabe a bit baffled as to the purpose of the advising effort.[102] The teach-coach-mentor approach, which started with a structured, controlled teaching process and ended with a cursory advisory role, was the preferred method of training local forces. However, senior U.S. commanders had not spent enough time with Afghans, or even with U.S. forces interacting with Afghans, to fully understand the limitations of this approach in building the ANA.

Even though Accelerating Success also focused on reconstruction, the policy took little account of the limitations of the Afghan theater. Rumsfeld wanted the United States to launch one reconstruction project big enough to drape the Bush administration with worldwide acclaim. CJTF-180's civil affairs and engineer staffs had studied ideas for such a project, and when

100. Interv, Maj Conrad Harvey, CSI, with Maj Thomas Clinton Jr., frmr Embedded Training Team Leader, 1–3 ANA, 12 March 2007, pp. 4, 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

101. Interv, Charles Dezafia, CSI, with Maj Rick Rabe, frmr TF Phoenix Opns Ofcr, 18 May 2007, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

102. Ibid., p. 5.

Barno arrived in country they recommended rebuilding the Ring Road—the two-lane highway that connects most of Afghanistan's major cities and population centers. Barno's advocacy was not needed; the Bush administration had already identified road construction as a promising option. By the time Barno took command, President Bush had approved $80 million to rebuild the highway between Kandahar and Herat. Saudi Arabia and Japan had contributed $50 million each to the project. By April 2003, the Louis Berger Group, the firm coordinating the United States portion, reported that $180 million would not suffice to build even the shorter segment from Kabul to Kandahar to the U.S. government's specifications.[103]

Louis Berger's involvement in the road reconstruction would be a debacle. Although the company completed the Kabul to Kandahar road in December 2003, the actual construction costs well exceeded initial estimates. To make matters worse, outside experts described the final result as shoddy work.[104] Afghan authorities were not happy, having been left out of what they deemed an overpriced and inefficient project.[105] Despite cost overruns and upset local Afghans, the project nonetheless won praise from the National Security Council.[106] The U.S. Agency for International Development continued to rely on Louis Berger, and the company continued to disappoint. Awarded $736 million in 2003 to restore the Band-e Kajaki, a major hydroelectric power installation (dam) in Helmand Province, the engineering firm once again failed to meet construction milestones or budget estimates.[107]

In January and February 2004, under pressure from the DoD to "accelerate success," the U.S. Agency for International Development expanded its schools and clinics program. To avoid contracting delays, they initially granted the construction of 314 schools and 219 clinics as a sole-source government contract to the Louis Berger Group, increasing the contract already in place. After Congress raised concerns, the development

---

103. For civil-military operations involvement, see Position paper, "Major Reconstruction Project for Afghanistan," CCJ5-CMO, n.d., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

104. Ann Jones, "How U.S. Dollars Disappear in Afghanistan: Quickly and Thoroughly," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 Sep 2006, https://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/How-U-S-dollars-disappear-in-Afghanistan-2488522.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; for a detailed narrative, see Xavier A. Cronin, "The Asphalt Ribbon of Afghanistan: Rebuilding the Kabul-to-Kandahar Highway," Louis Berger Group, 2010, http://www.louisberger.com/sites/default/files/The_Asphalt_Ribbon_of_Afghanistan_webopt4.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

105. Marc Kaufman, "U.S. Role Shifts as Afghanistan Founders," *Washington Post*, 14 Apr 2003, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

106. Memo, Condoleezza Rice for Vice President Cheney, Sec Powell, Sec Snow, Sec Rumsfeld, Ch of Staff Andrew Card, Director of Central Intel Porter Goss, CJCS Gen Myers, 18 Jan 2005, sub: Accelerating Success in Afghanistan in 2004: An Assessment, pp. 1, 3, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/440/From%20the%20White%20House%20re%20Accelerating%20Success%20in%20Afghanistan%20in%202004%20an%20Assessment%2001-18-2005.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

107. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 317–18; David Voreacos, "Ex-Louis Berger Group CEO Pleads Guilty in USAID Fraud," Bloomberg, 12 Dec 2014, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2010-11-05/louis-berger-grop-charged-with-fraud-over-contracts-in-iraq-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

agency re-awarded 428 facilities to five other U.S. organizations, also as sole-source awards. Even with a reduced number of projects, Louis Berger still struggled to finish them. The international development agency had to push the completion schedule back to September 2004, and then again to the end of the year. By the beginning of October, the program was far behind schedule: only 81 schools and 12 clinics were completed; another 160 schools and 182 clinics were under construction, half of which would not be ready until after the new year; while another 73 schools and 27 clinics had yet to be started.[108] Even with the building of schools and clinics behind schedule, little thought had been given as to whether sufficient teachers and doctors would be available to staff the completed facilities. In retrospect, the initiative suffered not just from gross mismanagement and lack of resources, but also from ineffective interagency coordination. The initiative relied on generalized, Western perceptions of what Afghans needed, rather than on a tailored approach fed by local input.

Regardless, the new construction did little to help Afghan governance. Rushing the construction process in a country without a developed pool of teachers, directors, and bureaucrats wasted effort. If projects did not strengthen and extend Afghanistan's central government, then any goodwill they elicited would be temporary and used only to justify an American withdrawal. Similarly, the DoD's tendency to treat the ANA as an institution that existed primarily to relieve America of its operational responsibilities reduced security to a numbers problem, one that the United State chose to solve by emphasis, additional trainers, and a disregard for standards. The overriding importance given to reducing America's military presence, versus setting Afghanistan's security institutions on a stable footing, led the DoD to establish assistance metrics based on dollars spent rather than Afghan security needs. Ironically, the lack of enthusiasm that Secretary Rumsfeld displayed in January 2002 for investing in the reconstitution of Afghanistan's war-ravaged security infrastructure cost the United States far more money in the long run. The absence of adequate security not only helped the Taliban degrade and disrupt other nation-building programs, but also led to more American troops being deployed to redress that situation.

Barno may have grounded his plans in counterinsurgency principles, but they remained subject to Afghan and American politics. The Bush administration still wanted to reduce its commitment to Enduring Freedom to the point at which it could be maintained with minimal resources and attention. Accelerating Success was not an enduring program of investment and oversight but a sudden influx of resources that would stabilize Afghanistan within a few scant years. Rumsfeld sought outcomes that would justify transferring the operational mission to NATO, which had agreed on 16 April 2003 to assume command of ISAF. Obtaining quantifiable metrics developed with regard to ANA formation and reconstruction programs thus became Accelerating Success's leading effort, and the metrics generated in the form of kandaks trained and money spent were misleading. The administration also

108. Ltr, Patrick Fine, 10 Oct 2004, sub: Schools and Clinics Construction Program, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/documents/USAIDcorrespondence.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sfc. Sandra Watkins Keough, USA

Capt. Denise Wilson examines an Afghan child during a Combined Medical Assistance mission in the Mullayai Suri District of Afghanistan in July 2004.

paid less attention to more complex initiatives that did not lead to quick or easy-to-promote accomplishments, such as transitioning police development from German oversight and establishing unity between conventional and Special Forces.

Barno found himself reacting, as McNeill had, to Afghanistan's new government as well as stateside policy. Beyond his good relationship with Ambassador Khalilzad, Barno had no say in the government framed by the Afghan Constitution Commission and approved by the Constitutional Loya Jirga on 4 January 2004. The new balance of power reflected what the loya jirga delegates thought Afghanistan needed and not how Afghans had exercised power in the past.[109] Authority was centralized in a president who presided over a symbolic legislature, appointed provincial and district governors, and chose ministers whose reach extended only as far as their influence and personality carried them. Working within the political system, Barno adjusted his approach to account for realities he could not control or change.

For his part, Abizaid checked Barno's tendency to involve U.S. forces in efforts which other countries were leading. Ordering him "to relinquish border police training responsibilities" so Germany could retain "the lead for border police training functions with the ministry of interior, supported

109. The full history of the Constitutional Loya Jirga has yet to be written. A good contemporary account is International Crisis Group, "Afghanistan's Flawed Constitutional Process," Rpt. 56 (Kabul/Brussels, 12 Jun 2003). See also Thomas Ruttig, "Flash to the Past: Long Live Consensus – A Look Back at the 2003 Constitutional Loya Jirga," Afghanistan Analysts Network, 28 Jan 2014, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/flash-to-the-past-long-live-consensus-a-look-back-at-the-2003-constitutional-loya-jirga/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Spc. Jerry T. Combes, USA

Soldiers assigned to the 307th Engineer Battalion, 754th Explosive Ordnance Disposal, and the 2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, arrange cases of ammunition and various weapons in a designated area to be destroyed.

by the department of state," Abizaid chose international sensitivity over operational reality in what was proving to be a no-win situation for American military leadership.[110] The need for productive relationships with NATO grew after Barno's appointment as CFC-A commander, as ISAF assumed responsibility for Regional Command (RC) North in October 2004 and RC West in February 2005.

Barno recognized flaws in the coalition's efforts to develop effective police forces.[111] As an operational commander with little time in which to start registering successes, he knew realism would trump idealism in his campaign plan. Once he received orders to stop policing the border, Barno accepted that his authority was limited and concentrated on the efforts he could influence directly. As it was, the U.S. government had not yet set aside enough money to pay ANA salaries in fiscal year 2005.[112] Barno knew that it made little sense for Abizaid and Rumsfeld to ask Congress to support police development when Germany had agreed to absorb costs. He followed

110. FRAGO 07–234, CENTCOM, 5 Jan 2004, sub: Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan – Part 1 of 2, sec 3.D.1.J.

111. According to a paper he kept on his computer during his deployment, Barno thought that "the centerpiece of any provincial strategy is the establishment of a credible police force able to stand up to local factional groups." Discussion paper, Lt Gen David W. Barno, 14 Oct 2003, sub: Provincial Strategies, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

112. See Table 1: U.S. Support for the Afghan Army and Police, Fiscal Years 2002–2006, in Rpt to U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Committee on International Relations, *Afghanistan Security*, p. 9.

orders but proceeded to look for ways in which coalition forces could help the Germans without robbing them of their authority.[113]

Pressure to focus on the police eventually came from Rumsfeld himself. The defense secretary expressed his dissatisfaction with how the coalition was progressing on police issues in spring 2004, two-and-a-half years after the U.S. invasion.[114] Khalilzad, who was pushing Accelerating Success at the time, also believed Afghanistan needed an effective police force.[115] Although they forced Barno to abide by the international agreement made at the April 2002 donors meeting in Geneva, policy leaders were also among the first to realize that ignoring police development did not bode well for the United States.

Unlike police development, Provincial Reconstruction Teams received significant attention during Accelerating Success. An increase in funding allowed the DoD and the U.S. Agency for International Development to spend twice as much on provincial projects as they did on national projects by summer 2004.[116] Barno's enthusiasm for reconstruction teams surpassed even that of Rumsfeld and his advisers. Realigning civil affairs personnel, the commander established eleven American teams during his command, seven more than originally planned. Although these new formations did not always include representatives from other U.S. government agencies and the Afghan government, their presence in contested provinces put allies of the central government—if not the central government itself—where they could do the most good. This restructuring came at a price, however, as personnel slots required for the enhanced reconstruction team came out of Barno's own staff. It also created a political problem: because reconstruction teams produced wealth for communities, provincial governors considered it an insult if their province did not have one.[117]

Provincial Reconstruction Team commanders generally viewed governance as their most important mission. Lt. Col. Anthony J. Hunter, one of the first officers to command a team, thought that "if we lose districts out here, we lose that connection [with the Afghan people]. We are going to lose the country and it will remain unstable because that influence has to extend out [from Kabul]."[118] Barno, who based his campaign on the need

113. Discussion paper, Barno, 14 Oct 2003, sub: Provincial Strategies, p. 4.

114. Ltr, Sec Def Donald Rumsfeld to Gen Dick Myers, Paul Wolfowitz, and Doug Feith, 7 Apr 2004, sub: Afghan Security Responsibility, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/446/2004-04-07%20to%20Myers%20et%20al%20re%20Afghan%20Security%20Responsibility.pdf#search="Afghan Security Responsibilities," Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

115. In congressional testimony, Khalilzad stated, "[W]e need Afghan police forces. And I think I have an understanding, given [the] hopefully positive decision that I expect from Congress, that we will produce 16,000 to 18,000 police in the course of the next year." U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Panel II, Hearing on the Nomination of Zalmay Khalilzad to be Ambassador to Afghanistan, 108th Cong., 1st sess., 29 Oct 2003, p. 9.

116. Rpt to Congressional Committees, U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Afghanistan Reconstruction*, p. 13. The U.S. government spent $564 million on provincial-level projects and $283 million on national projects.

117. Interv, Maj Gen Jason K. Kamiya in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, pp. 237–38.

118. Interv, Lt Col Anthony J. Hunter in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 498.

to connect central and peripheral governments, could not have expressed the situation better. Agreeing, Lt. Col. Eugene M. Augustine, commander of the Lashkar Gah (Helmand Province) team from 2004 to 2005, thought that his team's greatest achievement was the establishment of a civil-military operations organization.[119]

Not all Accelerating Success projects were successes. Lt. Col. Robin L. Fontes, the Tarin Kot (Uruzgan Province) reconstruction team commander from July 2005 to May 2006, thought the U.S. Agency for International Development's cash-for-work program benefited communities but believed the agency's Alternative Livelihoods Program would not convince farmers to grow wheat instead of poppy (a far more profitable crop that fueled Afghanistan's illicit opium trade).[120] In her view, infrastructure and economic projects were easy for reconstruction teams to oversee, especially when money was plentiful, whereas governance and judicial reform projects were difficult because they lacked material solutions and personnel with the requisite skills.[121] Making matters more difficult, most reconstruction teams did not have a representative from the Afghan interior ministry to symbolize Afghan ownership.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams could not change social behavior. Two of their goals, increasing support for the national government and agricultural reform, would be beyond their capacity. Even though teams registered delegates for the Constitutional Loya Jirga, they could not change Afghan customs or discredit local strongmen.[122] Likewise, the team commander in Herat reported that his psychological and civil affairs teams had visited two villages in the province and reported that "a majority of the farmers do not want to grow any crops for the next harvest because they do not make enough profit. Even [for] their most profitable crops like rice, the fertilizer is still more expensive than the finished product."[123] Without the infrastructure or the financing to support long-term agricultural development across the entire country, Afghanistan's opium economy would continue to flourish in spite of the best efforts of counternarcotics programs.

Even as the reconstruction teams spent money and struggled to support governance, their third mission, promoting security, went unfulfilled. Early in team formation, Barno restricted missions to a fifteen-kilometer radius of the team's bases. Combat operations took precedence over civil affairs missions, sometimes shutting down all reconstruction team activity until troops had departed. Teams also found it difficult to address constabulary issues, especially after Barno removed police training teams from their formations in order to form RC West in 2004.[124]

---

119. Interv, Lt Col Eugene M. Augustine in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 451.

120. Interv, Lt Col Robin L. Fontes in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 474.

121. Ibid., p. 475.

122. For example, see Rpt, CJCMOTF to CFC-A, 26 Oct 2003, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

123. Ibid.

124. Barno pulled military police from units across Enduring Freedom to support the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, the base unit for Task Force Longhorn, his western response force.

Like other commands, CJSOTF-Afghanistan changed under Accelerating Success. As ground forces transitioned to counterinsurgency operations, operational detachments focused less on foreign internal defense and more on direct action. Reflecting Barno's worry that enemy forces in Pakistan would slip across the border and disrupt the presidential election, CJTF-76 (CJTF-180's replacement in theater as of June 2004) ordered the SOF task force to establish thirteen firebases along the border and move ODAs east from northern Afghanistan to occupy them. Ordered to demobilize the local security forces that guarded their bases and accompanied them on missions, SOF found themselves with few indigenous personnel to train. Although they still worked with the newly graduated kandaks, they did not interact with them closely enough to develop constructive relationships.[125]

Special operations in Afghanistan received public attention after friendly fire killed Spc. Patrick D. Tillman, a former professional football player who was a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment. Tillman's death on 22 April 2004 and his chain of command's subsequent delayed and misreporting of its cause brought negative attention to the Special Operations community, which revealed problems with how special operations were contributing to Enduring Freedom. In a campaign where information operations—the gloss placed on what was or was not accomplished—mattered as much as the events themselves, erroneous reports and an embellished citation for a Silver Star garnered the public's condemnation and weakened efforts to sell Enduring Freedom as a necessary conflict.[126] For his part, Barno understood the incident as a tragic mistake that, for all its domestic impact, did little to change the operational context of the overarching mission.[127]

Election Preparations

Kabul's inability to support local communities with resources, security, or justice magnified the problems of ineffective governance in Afghanistan. National politics got in the way of good governance, as Karzai often found it advantageous to appoint district and provincial governors who had never resided where they governed. Areas where the Taliban contested Karzai's authority to govern, by contrast, tended to have one common problem: poor security. Barno constantly preached that governance and security were connected: without one, the other was impossible.[128] He understood

---

Interv, Hunter in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 497.

125. Partin et al., *U.S. Special Operations Command History, 1987–2007*, pp. 112–14.

126. Inspector Gen, DoD, *Review of Matters Related to the Death of Corporal Patrick Tillman, U.S. Army*, Rpt IPO2007E001 (Arlington, Va., DoD Inspector Gen, 26 Mar 2007), p. 1, https://www.npr.org/documents/2007/mar/tillman/tillman_dod_ig.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also the report's attached memorandum for Acting Secretary of the Army and page 3 of the investigation.

127. Ltr, Lt Gen David W. Barno to Colin J. Williams, 25 May 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

128. On Barno and the interrelatedness of security and development, see Interv, Kamiya in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 221.

that this nexus could be either good or bad. To him, the outcome of the presidential election scheduled for fall 2004 would determine the extent to which Afghanistan could be both secure and governable. If an election free of corruption and interference rallied the country around a single leader, then the new Afghan government would have the authority to combat poor security, nongovernance, bad governance, and other impediments to self-sufficiency.

The upcoming presidential election influenced what districts and provinces Barno believed would benefit most from coalition presence. He did not expect CFC-A units to establish security throughout their entire areas of operations; subordinates could make their own determinations as to where to patrol, who to meet, and what villages to search.[129] With brigade and battalion commanders exercising tactical autonomy, Barno established a border control program that oversaw customs collection while honoring Abizaid's instruction not to interfere with Germany's direction of police development.[130] With the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan spearheading voter registration throughout the country, Karzai prompted Barno to operate in as many districts as possible. At the same time, Khalilzad continued to push CFC-A to expand the American footprint north into Pashtun areas in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces.[131]

The need for more indigenous troops to participate in election security forced Barno to apply a provincial focus to Afghanistan's complex tribal and ethnic mosaic. Early in his command, he planned to create a localized Afghan response force that would align the rural male population behind national policies.[132] Called the Afghan National Army Provisional Force, this formation, like attempts before and after it, was to provide a national structure to militias and inculcate a national identity in its recruited members. It was to stand as an interim force "raised, organized and commanded by in-country ODA teams and used to create conditions for enduring security."[133] Barno's goal was to have this force fielded, at least in part, by the presidential election.[134]

---

129. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Lt Col Steven J. Ford, frmr Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team Cdr, 14 Sep 2007, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Barno frequently "found a way around" barriers that segmented Afghan development. Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, p. 48.

130. Barno questioned America's involvement in securing Afghanistan's border, writing in one of his notebooks, "[W]hy are we on the border? T[Task]/P[Purpose]? Output? Should we shift to all AMF [Afghan Militia Forces] or ABP [Afghan Border Police]?" Jnl, Lt Gen David W. Barno, vol. 4, 25 Apr 2004–23 Jul 2004, 17 Jun 2004, p. 101, Box 1, Barno Papers, OEF Study Grp.

131. Interv, Williams and Roberts with Khalilzad, 25 Mar 2015, pp. 31–33.

132. Presentation, CFC-A, 18 May 2004, sub: Campaign Plan, slide 11.

133. Memo, CFC-A, n.d., sub: Draft (First Cut) CFC Operational Directive, p. 4, Box 2, Barno Papers, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

134. Jnl, Barno, Afghanistan Operations, vol. 2, 26 Oct 2003–18 Jan 2004, 3 Dec 2003, p. 85; Jnl, Lt Gen David W. Barno, 2004 Timeline, Frontispiece (n.d.), vol. 3, 19 Jan 2004–25 Apr 2004, Box 1, Barno Papers, OEF Study Grp.

Barno was not disputing Afghanistan's need for central governance by trying to recruit and mobilize local militaries. Instead, he was trying to ensure a successful presidential election, an event expected to strengthen the national government. Following Khalilzad's argument, Barno thought that both the election and the conflict would be won in the Pashtun countryside. He needed a way to connect this population to Karzai's largely non-Pashtun government. Like McNeill and Vines before him, Barno posted units in eastern and southeastern Afghanistan. Unlike his predecessors, he expected these units to do more than patrol, conduct raids, and oversee developmental projects.

Operation Secure Future, the first mission Barno and his staff planned, gave coalition units in the Pashtun east and south many methods by which to "set the conditions for future reconstruction and the election process."[135] In addition to promoting the ANA Provisional Force, the order for the operation directed the Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force to open Provincial Reconstruction Teams at Asadabad, Khost, and Ghazni in RC East.[136] In Kunar and Nangarhar provinces, possible locations for future teams, Barno expected civil-military detachments "to conduct regular bi-weekly operations . . . to include regular MEDCAPS [Medical Civic Action Programs] and VETCAPS [Veterinarian Civic Action Programs] in remote areas."[137] At the same time, Secure Future was to project a "sustained presence" in eastern, southeastern, and southern regions.[138] Following his commander's lead, General Austin directed maneuver units to support civil-military and Special Forces units during the operation.[139] Conducted in January and February 2004, Secure Future was the first chance for Barno's multifaceted counterinsurgency mentality to permeate through his land component.

Barno had further ideas for Operation Secure Future. In addition to establishing reconstruction teams and promoting security, he used the operation to launch a pilot Regional Development Zone program in and around Kandahar City.[140] As part of his comprehensive approach, Barno also

---

135. FRAGO XX to OPORD 03–01, CJTF-180, 6 Dec 2003, sub: Plan and Conduct Operation Secure Future, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. According to Barno, the order he wrote for Operation Secure Future directed that the main effort of military operations for 2004 would be to set the condition for a successful presidential election; Interv, Hughes and Mundey with Barno, 21 Nov 2006, p. 36.

136. FRAGO XX to OPORD 03–01, CJTF-180, 6 Dec 2003, sub: Plan and Conduct Operation Secure Future, p. 6.

137. Ibid.

138. Memo, CJTF-180, 16 Dec 2003, sub: Eastern UNAMA [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan] Region Sustained Presence Plan, Opn Mountain Resolve, pp. 2–6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Memo, CJTF-180, 18 Dec 2003, sub: Eastern UNAMA Region Sustained Presence Plan, Winter 2003–2004, Opn MOUNTAIN RESOLVE, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

139. Memo, CJTF-180, 16 Dec 2003, sub: Eastern UNAMA Region Sustained Presence Plan, Opn Mountain Resolve, pp. 2–6.

140. FRAGO XX to OPORD 03–01, CJTF-180, 6 Dec 2003, sub: Plan and Conduct Operation Secure Future, pp. 1, 2. Barno planned to initiate a second Regional Development Zone for Zabul and

wanted units to learn the "current or future locations of" named individuals, details that CJTF-180 was not staffed to track when it served as the ranking American headquarters in Afghanistan.[141] Coalition forces may have conducted fewer "sweep" and cordon-and-search missions under Barno, but they still engaged enemy targets when they had good intelligence. In addition to creating conditions for a Regional Development Zone around Kandahar City, coalition forces were to conduct area denial missions, preventing enemy fighters from moving freely in areas under coalition control in Jalalabad, Asadabad, and Kantiway-ye Ulya, while Special Forces led Afghan militia forces in unconventional warfare near Ghazni, Qalat, Daychopan, Tarin Kot, Deh Rawud, and Girishk.[142]

With so many concurrent efforts, Secure Future reflected the reality of full-spectrum operations in a counterinsurgency. Three months in planning, it also reflected Barno's comprehensive, long-term view of his mission. From his perspective, CFC-A was in Afghanistan "to establish enduring security, defeat terrorism and insurgency, and deter its re-emergence in the region by supporting the military, economic, political and social development of Afghanistan."[143] Barno sought to address Afghanistan's problems with activity that ranged the spectrum of military conflict and employed the breadth of available civilian expertise. By pressing simultaneously on multiple fronts, coalition forces would leave the enemy no room to operate.[144]

The arrival of a new headquarters that was prepared to conduct counterinsurgency sped Barno's shift to those methods. Although the 10th Mountain Division had adapted to Barno's operational approach, neither its commander nor its units had trained to fight a political-military campaign before departing New York in August 2003. In order for Barno to fight the conflict in the fashion he wanted to, he needed counterinsurgency practiced at the tactical as well as the operational level of war. Soldiers and commanders would have to learn how to operate within the diverse Afghan population, and beyond that, they would have to be convinced that this approach was a viable way to fight a war.

At the tactical level, this attitude would be adopted by soldiers from Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson's Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division, which deployed in May–June 2004. As the 25th Infantry Division headquarters replaced the 10th

---

Uruzgan Provinces after the presidential election. A third zone, covering Paktiya, Paktika, Khost, and Ghazni Provinces, would follow in January 2005. Bfg, Lt Gen David W. Barno, Cdr, CFC-A, 19 Jul 2004, sub: Campaign Plan, Winning the Afghan Counter-Insurgency Fight, p. 24, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

141. Included in Barno's priority information requirements were the locations of key enemy figures like Hariz Abdul Rahim, Mullah Omar, Mullah Boradar, Agha, Akhtar Mohammed Osmani, Bashir Noorzai, Mullah Obiadullah Akhund, Mullah Dadullah, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Jalaluddin Haqqani, Mansour, Yuldashev, Al Iraqi, Nek Mohammed Wazir, Elvis, Layth al Libi, and Gul Rahman. FRAGO XX to OPORD 03–01, CJTF-180, 6 Dec 2003, sub: Plan and Conduct Operation Secure Future, p. 7.

142. Concept Bfg, CJTF-180, n.d., sub: Operation Secure Future, pp. 3–11, 31, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

143. OPORD 04–07, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Support to National Assembly Elections, p. 6.

144. Concept Bfg, CJTF-180, n.d., sub: Operation Secure Future, p. 32.

Mountain Division as the commanding unit of the combined joint task force, the name also changed from CJTF-180 to CJTF-76. (The "180" designation traditionally had been given to joint task forces led by the Army's XVIII Airborne Corps, and the 25th Division does not traditionally fall under that corps. The choice of "76" called upon imagery from American history, specifically the democratic spirit of 1776.) On 6 May, TF Warrior transferred authority to the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, at Kandahar Airfield. With the additional forces already at Kandahar, 3d Brigade transformed into Combined Task Force Bronco under Col. Richard N. Pedersen. It initially included Lt. Col. Terry L. Sellers' 2d Battalion, 5th Infantry; Lt. Col. M. Scott McBride's 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry; Lt. Col. Clarence Neason Jr.'s 3d Battalion, 7th Field Artillery; Lt. Col. Robert G. Young's 325th Support Battalion; several ANA battalions; and four Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Containing more than 3,000 soldiers and headquartered at Kandahar Airfield, TF Bronco had RC South as its area of operations, encompassing Nimroz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgan, Paktiya, Khost, Paktika, and Daykundi Provinces (*Map 6.1*).

Responsibility for RC East originally fell to the 6th Marines. The area of operations included Bamyan, Parwan, Kapisa, Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Wardak, Logar, Nangarhar, and Ghazni Provinces. The 25th Infantry Division Artillery headquarters, commanded by Col. Gary H. Cheek, took over RC East in June 2004. It formed Combined Task Force Thunder, composed of Lt. Col. Walter E. Piatt's 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry; followed by the addition of Lt. Col. Blake C. Otner's 3d Battalion, 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division, in July; Lt. Col. Brian M. Drinkwine's 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry, in September; several ANA battalions; a military police platoon; eight Provincial Reconstruction Teams, including one from New Zealand; and Logistics Task Force 34. The primary mission for TF Thunder was to stem the growing stream of weapons and Taliban recruits flowing into northeastern Afghanistan from Pakistan. TF Thunder would be the first ad hoc nonmaneuver brigade to have control of its own battlespace in Enduring Freedom, demonstrating the flexibility of the divisional artillery headquarters.[145]

The newcomers understood Barno's guidance, expected to operate in the assigned areas of operations, and arrived with personnel who were certified to spend the funds from the Commander's Emergency Response Program. TF Bronco's deployment order reflected Barno's counterinsurgency focus.[146] Deviating from established precedent, Colonel Pedersen stated that he would measure success by "ever increasing" numbers of Afghans persuaded to support Karzai's government and reject the Taliban, a metric in accordance

145. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 334.

146. According to the order, TF Bronco would seek an end state in which "the central government's influence is extended through stabilization and implementation of good governmental practices, delivery of humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, and economic development." OPORD 04–01, CTF Bronco (3d Bde, 25th Div), 22 May 2004, sub: BRONCO STRIKE (OEF-5 Combat Operations), p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

with CFC-A's goals.[147] Having a tactical command prepared to fight a counterinsurgency helped Barno achieve the unity of effort he had sought to instill since arriving in theater.

Despite their training, it took the 25th Infantry Division time to become comfortable with conducting a counterinsurgency. Although the division did not assume responsibility for the entire country, the newcomers found themselves spread across a large expanse of terrain, with some battalions deployed in the rugged eastern region while the remainder served on the southern plains. In addition to very different types of terrain, unexpected ethnic, tribal, and political factors meant that U.S. forces needed to reconfigure some of their initial subordinate boundaries. When the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, first arrived, for example, it operated from Kandahar Airfield and was responsible for parts of three provinces.[148] After strong advocacy from Colonel McBride, CJTF-76 redrew his area of operations. Instead of having to establish relationships with three governors and learn the dynamics of three provinces, McBride could devote his energies to mastering a single province and building a strong relationship with one governor.[149]

Combined Task Force Bronco soon recognized that the central problem with promoting Afghan governance was the lack of an Afghan government to promote. One challenge that 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, faced in 2004 was that even its downsized area of operations, Zabul Province, had only enough officials and security personnel to staff four of eleven districts.[150] As one company-grade officer wrote after a mission, "the first lesson taken away from this operation was the need for provincial representation during an operation, whether it's the governor himself, his security chief, an NDS [National Directorate of Security] agent, or a combination of the three."[151] Although the ideal representative may not have existed, somebody was better than nobody.

Rumors of an impending Taliban spring offensive, designed to upset the scheduled Afghan elections, shifted Barno's attention from extending the Kabul government's reach to safeguarding the democratic election. With emphasis from Barno and Olson, election fervor soon permeated the ranks. Commanders and soldiers welcomed this focus not only because the election promised to invest the central government with legal status but also because it justified their deployments. As stated by 1st Lt. Robert S. Anders, a platoon leader with 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, in Paktika from spring 2004 to spring 2005, "The election itself impacted this counterinsurgency like

147. Ibid., p. 12.

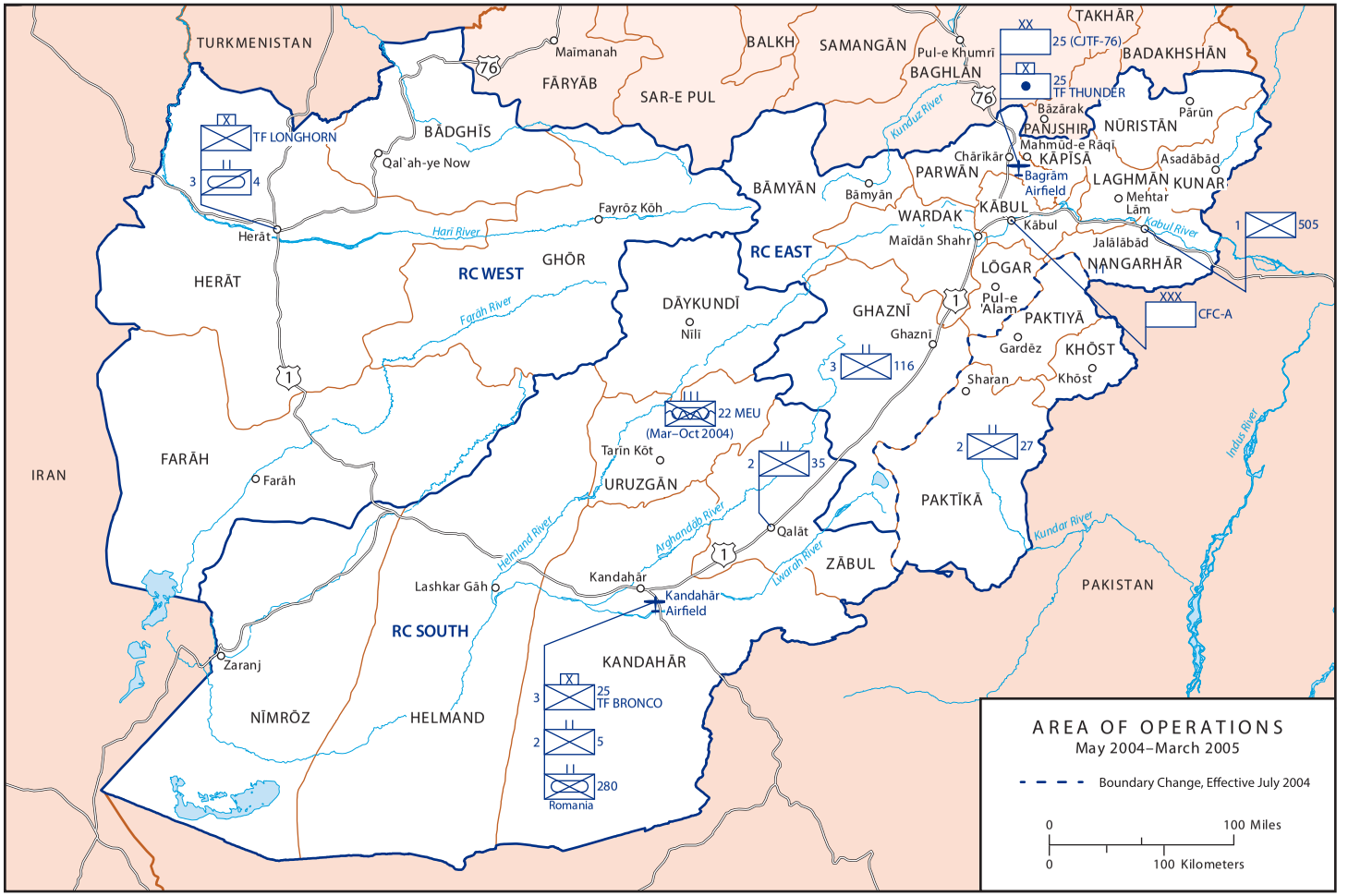
148. The 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry's original area of operations spanned Zabul, Uruzgan, and Kandahar Provinces. Chris Barlow, untitled (PEP, Inf Capts Career Course, 20 Jan 2005), pp. 2–3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

149. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

150. Ibid., p. 5.

151. Ibid., p. 7.

Map 6.1


TURKMENISTAN
Maïmanah
FĀRYĀB
BALKH
SAMANGĀN
Pul-e Khumrī
TAKHĀR
BADAKHSHĀN
BAGHLĀN
SAR-E PUL
BĀDGHĪS
Qal`ah-ye Now
TF LONGHORN
Kunduz River
Bāzārak
Pārūn
PANJSHIR
NŪRISTĀN
Mahmūd-e Rāqī
Chārikār
KĀPĪSĀ
Asadābād
PARWĀN
Bagrām Airfield
LAGHMĀN
KUNAR
Mehtar Lām
BĀMYĀN
Bāmyān
WARDAK
KĀBUL
Kābul
Kabul River
Fayrōz Kōh
Herāt
Harī River
Maïdān Shahr
Jalālābād
RC WEST
GHŌR
RC EAST
LŌGAR
NANGARHĀR
HERĀT
DĀYKUNDĪ
Nīlī
GHAZNĪ
Pul-e 'Alam
PAKTIYĀ
Farāh River
Ghazni
Gardēz
KHŌST
Sharan
Khōst
22 MEU
(Mar–Oct 2004)
Tarin Kōt
FARĀH
Farāh
IRAN
URUZGĀN
PAKTĪKĀ
Indus River
Helmand River
Arghandāb River
Qalāt
Kundar River
Lwarah River
ZĀBUL
Kandahār
Lashkar Gāh
Kandahār Airfield
PAKISTAN
RC SOUTH
KANDAHĀR
Zaranj
NĪMRŌZ
HELMAND
25 TF BRONCO
5
280
Romania
25 (CJTF-76)
25 TF THUNDER
505
CFC-A
116
35
27
AREA OF OPERATIONS
May 2004–March 2005
Boundary Change, Effective July 2004
0
100 Miles
0
100 Kilometers

a nuclear bomb would in a conventional war."[152] In addition to the efforts of CJTF-76, the Special Operations task force supported the election process by conducting Operation Ticonderoga in eastern, southeastern, and southern Afghanistan as well as a counterterrorist mission, code-named Operation Trenton, designed to preempt threats to the presidential election.[153]

CENTCOM considered the elections, which had to be rescheduled from July to October owing to security concerns and voter registration difficulties, so important that General Abizaid deployed his theater reserve, the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit, to Afghanistan amidst growing violence in Iraq.[154] Originally intended for a short stay, the 22d arrived at Kandahar Airfield in late March before travelling north to the predominantly Pashtun province of Uruzgan. Commanded by Col. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., its subordinate elements consisted of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, led by Lt. Col. Asad A. Khan; Medium Helicopter Squadron 266 (Reinforced) commanded by Lt. Col. Joel R. Powers; and the Service Support Group 22 led by Lt. Col. Benjamin R. Braden.[155]

By late May, the marines finished constructing a forward operating base capable of supporting fixed- and rotary-wing flight operations just outside Tarin Kot. Soon afterward, the marines began conducting company-sized forays against Taliban centers of resistance in Daychopan to the east and Chahar Chinah to the west of Tarin Kot that resulted in the killing or wounding of scores of enemy fighters.[156] The 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit's initial efforts were so effective that CJTF-76 placed the 2d Battalion, 5th Infantry, under McKenzie's control. Using the forward operating base as a launching pad, the combined force aggressively targeted suspected enemy concentrations during June and July only to discover the Taliban had departed.[157] Their absence allowed officials from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to register 44 percent of their goal for Uruzgan Province before the election, and also ensured voters were not intimidated when they went to the polls.[158]

---

152. Robert S. Anders, *Winning Paktika: Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Bloomington, Ill.: AuthorHouse, 2013), p. 319.

153. Bogart, *One Valley at a Time*, p. 62.

154. CJTF-76 Public Affairs Ofc, "Combined/Joint Task Force 76 Deployment Historical Book, 15 April 2004–15 Mar 2005," p. 247, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

155. Paul Westermeyer, "Mountain Storm: Counterinsurgency and the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (Hist Div Landpower Essay, Marine Corps University, n.d.), p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

156. Col Kenneth F. McKenzie, Maj Roberta L. Shea, and Maj Christopher Phelps, "Marines Deliver in Mountain Storm," *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2009: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps History Division, 2014), pp. 127–33.

157. Westermeyer, "Mountain Storm," pp. 8–9.

158. CJTF-76 Public Affairs Ofc, "Combined/Joint Task Force 76 Deployment Historical Book, 15 April 2004–15 Mar 2005," p. 247; Abizaid extended the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit for thirty days and considered a sixty-day extension. FRAGO 07–275, CENTCOM, 10 Jun 2004, sub: 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (SOC) Extension, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit's intervention, when combined with sustained preparations by CJTF-76 and SOF elements, enabled the Afghan government to hold a peaceful election with an unambiguous outcome on 9 October 2004. Barno estimated that his brigades, battalions, and reconstruction teams helped the Afghans register more than ten million voters.[159] On the day of voting, Enduring Freedom forces maintained an outer perimeter, letting Afghan security forces protect polling stations so as not to taint the process with overt outside influence.[160] The elections had high voter turnout and few if any disruptions, though there were claims of voter and electoral fraud as well as intimidation at the polls. In spite of these claims, Afghan voters chose Hamid Karzai as the clear winner of the 2004 presidential election. Many American commanders in Afghanistan claimed the election as their unit's most important accomplishment during their deployments.[161]

Although the election elicited both positive press and euphoria in the ranks, it had come at a cost.[162] Worried that coalition forces would be viewed as meddling, the DoD pressured the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan to produce enough kandaks to secure polling sites and counting houses, even though this increased the risk of forming units that would collapse over time through casualties and desertions.[163] Although the election was a milestone for the coalition forces, it could not contribute to security until the Afghan president had a functioning government and proper security forces with which to exercise sovereignty.[164]

The presidential election accentuated how the Enduring Freedom mission had evolved since CJTF-180 had arrived in theater over two years before. General McNeill initially tried to project security by lengthy air insertions in which units traveled from secure locations to areas where the enemy was thought to be active. They responded to whatever resistance they encountered, but stayed only as long as it took to achieve their immediate objectives. As he received more troops, McNeill expanded eastward, building

---

159. Bfg, CFC-A, 22 Oct 2004, sub: Afghanistan: COIN Campaign, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

160. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Col Walter M. Herd, frmr CJSOTF-A Cdr, 22 Jun 2007, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

161. For an example of pride in a unit's role in preparing for presidential elections, see Interv, Col Clarence Neason Jr., in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 368.

162. Barno viewed the election as a "knockout for democracy" that put the Taliban "on the ropes." Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, p. 54. According to 1st Lt. Robert Anders, "[A]fter all the celebrations and congratulations, the election slipped quickly into the past." Anders, *Winning Paktika*, p. 327.

163. Eikenberry, commenting about his predecessor's time as commander of Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan, believed that "there was an acceleration of ANA force generation in order to have more Afghan National Army" units protecting election sites in the fall of 2004. Interv, Donald P. Wright, CSI, with Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr CFC-A Cdr, 23 Feb 2012, p. 37, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

164. Interv, M Sgt Robert Frazier, CMH, with Lt Col David Volkman, CFC-A CJ–9 Opns Ofcr, 7 Jun 2005, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



USAID

During elections in Khost Province, an Afghan displays the purple ink on his finger, indicating that he has voted.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams and new bases. General Barno began his command believing that he could devote assets and attention to one area—greater Kandahar City was his first choice—and then, once secured, shift focus to another (preferably adjacent) area. After receiving a second maneuver brigade in April 2004, he altered this approach so as to exert influence in multiple areas at the same time. Adding to the operating bases and outposts McNeill and Vines had constructed, Barno grew Enduring Freedom so that, by the October 2004 election, coalition troops were a regular presence in many southern and eastern communities.

Despite the many changes, CFC-A's operational approach during this period still relied heavily on the collection of human intelligence. On Barno's watch, attempts to acquire actionable intelligence from detainees went beyond the approved field manual approaches. Interrogations began to involve sleep deprivation, stress positions, and other techniques similar to those selectively approved for specific detainees under highly controlled interrogation at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, and not approved for use on any detainees in Afghanistan. Despite employing these unorthodox and unauthorized techniques, the United States had not found an adequate process to obtain timely intelligence from detainees after two years of Enduring Freedom.[165]

Spurred by the sustained public outrage over revelations of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, Barno requested that CJTF-76 conduct a "top to bottom review" of detention operations in the months leading up

165. V Adm A. T. Church III, *Review of Department of Defense Detention Operations and Detainees Interrogation Techniques*, Ofc of the Sec Def, 7 Mar 2005, pp. 80, 196, https://humanrights.ucdavis.edu/resources/library/documents-and-reports/ChurchReport.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Stdy Grp.

to the elections. The findings of the inspecting officer, Brig. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., suggested that ignorance regarding theater detention operations had "created opportunities for detainee abuse and *the loss of intelligence value* throughout the detention and interrogation process [emphasis added]." Jacoby also found inconsistent standards, uneven leadership, and inadequate tactics for holding, processing, and interrogating detainees for their intelligence value.[166]

Two issues decreased the intelligence value of detention and interrogation, one a condition of the Afghan theater and one a consequence of inadequate training and unclear policies. ENDURING FREEDOM informal force caps drove decisions about facility construction that limited long-term detention centers to Bagram and Kandahar airfields. Moving detainees to these airfields required the use of scarce aircraft or lengthy road movements. Either method of transportation taxed available resources, increasing the chances of untrained or impatient coalition personnel treating enemy fighters improperly during their journey from point of capture to detention facility.[167] Moreover, the use of military police to "set favorable conditions for subsequent interviews"—in essence, to intimidate detainees—merited special criticism. It was not a doctrinal task for military police, and it increased the likelihood of misconduct and abuse.[168] Although Jacoby and other inspectors discovered no evidence of higher officials or military authorities sanctioning abuse, a breakdown in individual discipline, unit order, and theater leadership created conditions under which soldiers felt that they could break rules to obtain the intelligence they wanted from detainees. Jacoby's report was the best-case scenario; the worst case was that soldiers had deliberately abused detainees for personal amusement.[169]

With the presidential election complete and ENDURING FREEDOM avoiding public condemnation for detainee abuse, Barno and his staff shifted resources and attention toward the upcoming National Assembly and provincial council elections.[170] Preparing for elections required planning as intensive as any other operation. To this end, the Joint Staff in the Pentagon directed the services, via the joint manning documents, to provide a robust, consistent flow of individual augmentees to fill Barno's six organizations.[171] Personnel fills for CJTF-76 rose from 61 percent to 75 percent between March 2004 and March 2005.[172] The Office of Military Cooperation received more personnel

166. Ibid., pp. 76–77.

167. Ibid., pp. 179, 191.

168. Ibid., pp. 58–59.

169. Ibid., pp. 92, 93–94, 96.

170. OPORD 04–07, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Support to National Assembly Elections, sec. 1.B.1.A.

171. Joint manning documents had been created for CFC-A, CJTF-76, Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, CJSOTF-A, and the Joint Logistics Command. These manning documents specifically outline the number, grade, and skills of the personnel on the staff. CENTCOM, 24 Mar 2005, sub: JMD Update, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

172. Ibid., p. 22.

over the same interval as well, although its fill percentage decreased from 72 percent to 55 percent because it had added 154 billets to its authorized size.[173] The joint staff expanded Barno's headquarters the most, more than doubling it from 50 to 109 personnel.[174]

Barno's strengthened staff pursued several initiatives during this second round of election preparations. While CJTF-76 performed the same support missions that they had for the presidential election, the CJSOTF altered its approach to reflect the new legitimacy of the Afghan government. In particular, ODAs conducted partnered operations to disrupt Taliban networks in the south and to provide reconnaissance and shaping operations in RC East.[175] From July until the calendar year's end, Operation Newburgh established a strategic watch over the National Assembly and provincial council elections.[176] As elements of Special Operations Task Force 31 conducted reconnaissance and shaping operations in the south, they included Afghan security forces in the formation to legitimize national governance.[177] Locals provided detachments with the location of anticoalition militia sanctuaries, which resulted in additional missions and the further securing of the voting process.

Meanwhile, CFC-A sought new ways to connect Afghans with the central government. Having already maximized reconstruction team coverage with his available forces, General Barno turned his attention to the most physical of connections between capital and provinces: roads. The first major project consisted of a paved multilane highway from Kandahar City to Tarin Kot designated as National Highway 617, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The project appealed to CJTF-76 because it could provide U.S. forces with improved access to Taliban-controlled areas running from Zabul Province through northern Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Helmand Provinces. Given the escalating frequency of attacks on aid workers, construction could occur only if the U.S. military provided security. As a result, the development agency and CJTF-76 partnered in early 2004, with the former providing technical expertise, project funding, and contracted construction assistance and the latter contributing military engineers and security forces.[178]

Colonel Pedersen's brigade provided security while the 528th Engineer Battalion (Heavy) of Col. Nancy J. Wetherill's 109th Engineer Group (South

---

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid.

175. Michael E. Krivdo, "CJSOTF-A (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan): A Short History, 2002–2014" *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 12, no. 2 (2016): 12.

176. Ibid.

177. William G. Robertson, ed., *In Contact!: Case Studies from the Long War*, vol. 1 (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), p. 104.

178. Maj Nicolas O. Melin, "The Challenge of Access: Using Road Construction as a Tool in Counterinsurgency" (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and Staff College, 10 Jun 2011), pp. 111–12.



USAID

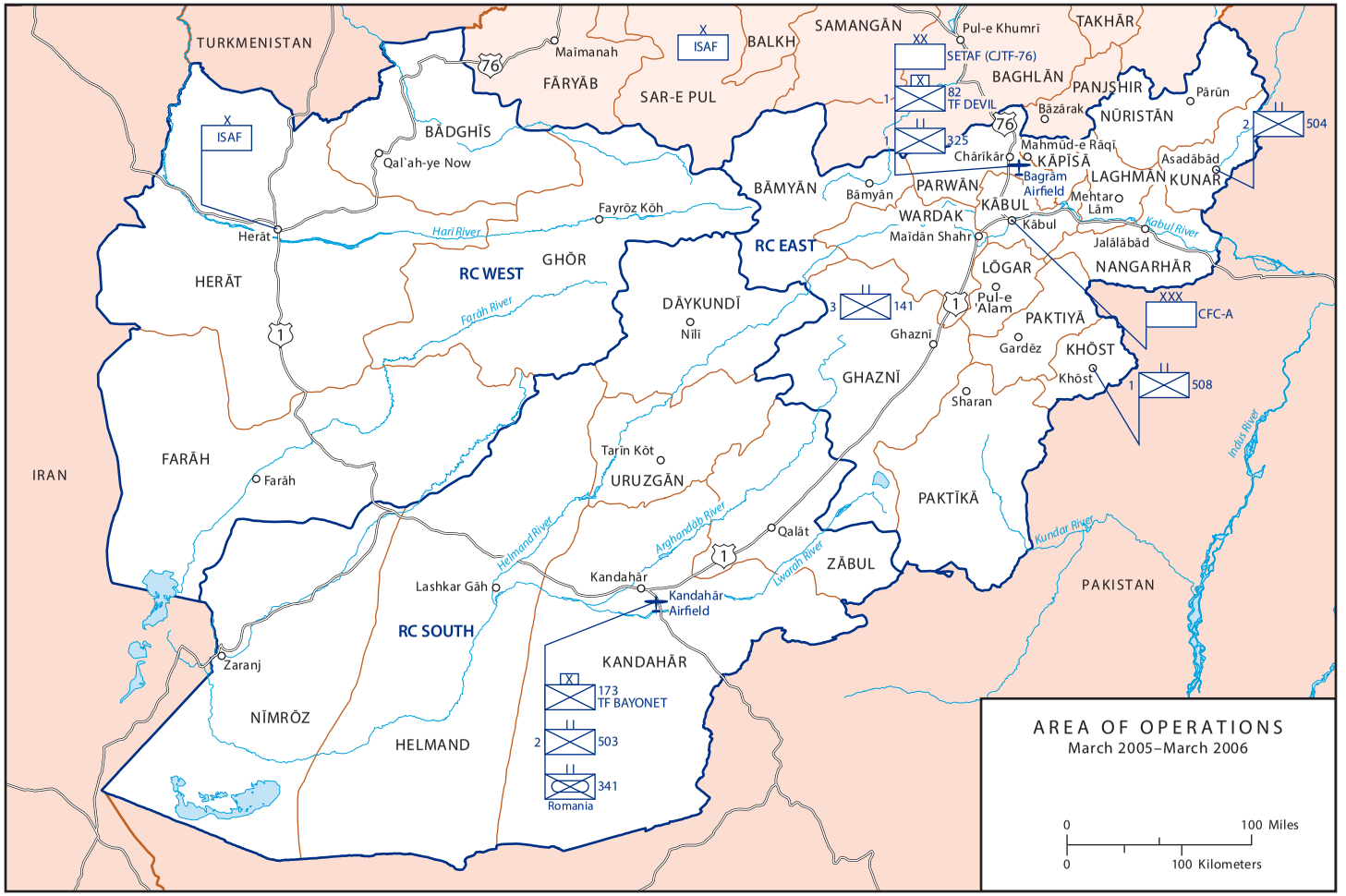
Local Afghan guards secure road construction in Paktiya Province. The Ring Road and many other road construction efforts were critical in linking the population to goods and services.

Dakota National Guard) built the road with commercial assets provided by the aid agency. Barno placed such high priority on the project that he and General Olson sent Pedersen reinforcements in the form of the 25th Infantry Division's 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry. Pedersen and Wetherill devised a three-phased plan that began with a forty-five-kilometer section from the northern suburbs of Kandahar City through Arghandab District to the village of Dilak in the Shah Wali Kot District. The second phase, which comprised the next twenty-three-and-a-half kilometers of the road, had a forbidding terrain and high probability of enemy attacks. Although the final fifty kilometers of the planned road lay between two known insurgent safe havens, the terrain north of Shah Wali Kot flattened considerably, making it easier to construct the road more quickly and securely. Both Wetherill and Pedersen acknowledged that the entire project would not be completed before the 109th Engineer Group's redeployment. As a result, the 528th Engineer Battalion would also build a forward operating base north of Kandahar City for the incoming engineers to use.[179]

Ambassador Khalilzad, General Olson, and prominent Afghans, including regional powerbrokers Gul Agha Sharzai and Ahmed Wali Karzai, attended the June 2004 highway ground-breaking ceremony. Construction proceeded without interruption throughout the summer, although the need for security limited daily progress to meters rather than kilometers. Progress slowed further after Barno unexpectedly redeployed Lt. Col. Michael J. McMahon's 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, to western Afghanistan in response to rising tensions in Herat. To maintain momentum, the aid agency contracted

179. Ibid., pp. 114–17.

Map 6.2


TURKMENISTAN
Maimanah
FĀRYĀB
BALKH
X
ISAF
SAMANGĀN
Pul-e Khumrī
TAKHĀR
XX
SETAF (CJTF-76)
BAGHLĀN
PANJSHIR
Pārūn
82
TF DEVIL
Bāzārak
NŪRISTĀN
SAR-E PUL
76
BĀDGHĪS
Qal`ah-ye Now
325
Chārīkār
Mahmūd-e Rāqī
KĀPĪSĀ
Asadābād
Bagrām
Airfield
LAGHMĀN
KUNAR
BĀMYĀN
Bāmyān
PARWĀN
Mehtarо
Lām
KĀBUL
Fayrōz Kōh
WARDAK
Kābul
Kabul River
Herāt
Hari River
Maīdān Shahr
Jalālābād
RC EAST
RC WEST
GHŌR
LŌGAR
NANGARHĀR
HERĀT
DĀYKUNDĪ
141
Pul-e 'Alam
XXX
CFC-A
Farāh River
Nīlī
Ghazni
PAKTIYĀ
Gardēz
KHŌST
GHAZNĪ
Khōst
508
Sharan
Tarīn Kōt
FARĀH
IRAN
Farāh
URUZGĀN
PAKTĪKĀ
Indus River
Helmand River
Arghandāb River
Qalāt
Kundar River
Lwarah River
ZĀBUL
Lashkar Gāh
Kandahār
PAKISTAN
Kandahār Airfield
RC SOUTH
KANDAHĀR
Zaranj
173
TF BAYONET
NĪMRŌZ
HELMAND
503
341
Romania
AREA OF OPERATIONS
March 2005–March 2006
0
100 Miles
0
100 Kilometers

security from Afghan militia forces. With this help, engineers were able to complete the first section of road and build the forward operating base just before the October 2004 election. In the months following the election, harsh weather began to impede construction, halting it completely by March 2005. Construction resumed in early May 2005 with one team of engineers working southward and another making its way northward through the mountainous Shah Wali Kot.[180]

Transitions in both units and operational priorities combined to divert energies from road building during this period (*Map 6.2*). Maj. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya's Southern European Task Force had taken over as CJTF-76 headquarters in March 2005. Col. Kevin C. Owens' 173d Airborne Brigade, consisting of Lt. Col. Mark R. Stammer's 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry; Lt. Col. Bertrand A. Ges' 3d Battalion, 319th Field Artillery (temporarily detached from the 82d Airborne); Capt. Dirk D. Ringgenberg's 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Surveillance); an ANA battalion with French advisers; the 341st Romanian Mechanized Battalion; and Lt. Col. Cynthia Fox's 173d Support Battalion made up half of the ground force for CJTF-76. Col. Patrick J. Donahue II's 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, consisting of Lt. Col. David P. Anders' 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry; Lt. Col. George T. "Tom" Donovan's 2d Battalion, 504th Infantry; Lt. Col. Timothy P. McGuire's 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry (temporarily detached from the 173d Airborne); Lt. Col. James E. Donnellan's 2d Battalion, 3d Marines; and Lt. Col. Orlando Salinas' 3d Battalion, 141st Infantry (Texas Army National Guard), formed the remainder of ground forces under General Kamiya's CJTF-76.[181]

Faced with intelligence that indicated increased insurgent pressure in eastern and northeastern Afghanistan, CJTF-76 focused on RC East rather than RC South following the handover from the 25th Infantry Division. Donahue's brigade, which was responsible for that region, received no fewer than five maneuver battalions from Kamiya. The new CJTF-76 commander also increased the number of Special Forces firebases and checkpoints on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border from twelve to seventeen. As the supporting effort, Colonel Owens' 173d Airborne Brigade had only one infantry battalion, one field artillery battalion, and detachments of Afghan and Romanian units to influence RC South.[182] Despite the reduced level of readily available support, Col. Matthew H. Russell's 18th Engineer Brigade, which replaced Wetherill's unit, received the mission of completing the final ninety kilometers of the road in the southern part of the country before the National Assembly and provincial council elections scheduled for 18 September 2005.[183]

---

180. Ibid., p. 121.

181. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, p. 336; Patrick J. Donahue and Michael Fenzel, "Combating a Modern Insurgency: Combined Task Force Devil in Afghanistan," *Military Review* 88, no. 2 (Mar-Apr 2008): 40. Colonel Ges' battalion task force came to resemble TF Thunder in miniature, consisting of his organic batteries; Company D, 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry; Company B, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry; and several ANA companies.

182. Interv, Angela McClain and Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Kevin C. Owens, frmr 173d Abn Bde Cdr, 9 and 10 Dec 2008, pp. 7–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

183. Melin, "The Challenge of Access," pp. 125–26.

The 18th Engineer Brigade resumed work that summer knowing that a firm deadline loomed in the near future. On 18 August, the southern and northern teams met each other, ensuring the military portion of the project would be completed before the scheduled due date. Although Americans had paved the southernmost and northern third of the route, insurgent activity prevented the 18th Engineer Brigade from using commercial assistance to perform the same task for the middle third. With virtually every American soldier in Afghanistan preparing for the elections, the final phase of the road-building effort would not be completed before the winter of 2005–2006.[184]

Despite minor setbacks, Barno left command believing that roads, elections, and an emphasis on counterinsurgency had improved conditions in Afghanistan. Although he saw Enduring Freedom as undergoing a "consolidation," this phase would end with the National Assembly and provincial council elections.[185] Violence against Afghans, Americans, and ISAF personnel was low. Barno had involved the coalition in all aspects of Afghan governance, as Abizaid had wanted and expected him to do.[186] However, some initiatives championed by Barno produced far different results than envisioned. For example, the central government still did not have enough influence to oversee or secure newly built roads, which led to local warlords and corrupt Afghan security force leaders illegally collecting tolls from drivers. In this instance, a development project backed by the Americans actually contributed to, rather than diminished, the spread of lawlessness within Afghanistan.

Measuring Success

Long-standing differences between the perceptions of Washington policymakers and the actual conditions in Afghanistan reappeared in early 2005. The National Security Council had always planned Accelerating Success to be a temporary effort. The program began to wane in late 2004, and was effectively complete by January 2005 when National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice declared that the effort had brought "transformative changes in governance, security, and reconstruction" to Afghanistan. Rice supported her assertion that Accelerating Success had completed its objectives by listing metrics: leaders persuaded, soldiers and police trained, weapons collected, dollars spent, and positive responses from polled Afghans. With such quantifiable achievements seeming to indicate clear progress, the Bush

184. Ibid., pp. 141–49.

185. The second phase, "transition," would change the Enduring Freedom mission from counterinsurgency to reintegrating warlords and disrupting drug networks. In the third phase, "recovery," forces loyal to the Afghan government would replace U.S. units as the primary provider of national security. Bfg, David Lamb et al., CFC-A, 3 Mar 2005, sub: Campaign Plan in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

186. Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, pp. 44, 55.

administration could justify shifting its focus from Afghanistan to other areas of national concern.[187]

In the absence of more traditional metrics showing military success—battlefield victories, terrain liberated, enemy forces eliminated—the administration had to rely on more nuanced evidence to show that the American effort was on track. Rice's statistics were meant to illustrate to the American public, the media, and others within the administration that progress was being made in rebuilding Afghanistan. However, they also created a false narrative by not providing a deeper assessment of the metrics. Highlighting dollars spent, teachers trained, reconstruction teams made operational, and markets opened did not tell the full story. Although accurate, data alone could be misleading. Money had been wasted, teachers were afraid to teach due to insurgent threats, reconstruction teams increased Afghan reliance on foreign aid as easily as they promoted its independence, and markets closed as spontaneously as they opened. Focusing only on metrics that showed progress supported the administration's narrative but it also clouded the view of what was actually happening in Afghanistan.

For the Army, measuring success at the operational level was just as difficult. General Barno's key contribution in Afghanistan was changing the lens through which the American-led coalition viewed the operational problem. In response to pressure from CENTCOM, Barno developed a campaign plan that deviated sharply from the counterterrorism focus of his predecessors. In setting a new purpose for coalition troops in Afghanistan, the CFC-A commander freed himself from doctrinal norms and adopted a broad concept of how power could be exercised, embracing state-building without using that loaded term. To track his campaign, Barno periodically updated a list of CFC-A accomplishments. Some claims made for good talking points: between July 2003 and March 2005, Provincial Reconstruction Teams increased in number from four to nineteen, and Afghan political leaders agreed on a moderate Islamic constitution.[188] Other improvements, such as transitioning from "warlords empowered" to "warlords diminished" were murky and hard to quantify.[189] Still, by the end of his command, Barno believed that CFC-A had achieved the goal of securing Afghanistan, even if the actual definition of "secure" proved elusive.[190]

Unfortunately, Barno's emphasis on CFC-A's purported accomplishments had the same problems as the administration's use of metrics. Moreover, as important as the shift in approach was, Barno was still constrained by the size of his forces. Without sufficient resources to fully implement the new campaign plan, CFC-A was limited in what it could achieve. Compounding

187. Memo, Rice for Cheney, Powell, Snow, Rumsfeld, Card, Goss, Myers, 18 Jan 2005, sub: Accelerating Success in Afghanistan in 2004: An Assessment, p. 1.

188. Bfg, CFC-A, 25 Mar 2005, sub: CG Final Version Brief to Counterpart, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. One more Provincial Reconstruction Team would be established at Methar Lam in Laghman Province in April, the last full month of Barno's command. Eleven of the sixteen teams were American-run; NATO countries fielded the other five.

189. Ibid.

190. Interv, Degen, Gibby, and Williams with Barno, 20 Jan 2016, p. 55.

this problem was Barno's belief that having the greatest numbers, most firepower, and deepest pockets made him responsible for the entire coalition effort. Even in areas where other organizations or headquarters led, CFC-A needed to support, coordinate, and sequence the activity on the ground.[191] He instructed staff members to adopt a "we own it all" mentality: he did not want them to ignore other organizations' problems because they did not have the U.S. Army's institutional capacity.[192] This thinking fit well with the Army's focus on full-spectrum operations—the idea that troops under the same commander may have to conduct offensive, defensive, stability, and security operations at the same time and in the same area of operations. Barno's full-spectrum mentality also led him to accept the vision espoused by his stateside command. After securing the National Assembly and provincial council elections—planned for April 2005 but conducted in September 2005—Barno anticipated shifting to a coalition focus on reconstruction, with reconstruction teams serving as the organizational structure through which it would occur.[193] As NATO's influence rose due to its leading role in staffing and operating the reconstruction teams, America's role would diminish accordingly.[194] At the same time, CFC-A would support Karzai's reconciliation with the Taliban and HIG—an idea that American politicians, diplomats, and generals had rejected, more or less consistently, ever since the September 11th attacks.[195]

As important as Barno's shift to a counterinsurgency approach was, it still relied upon the belief that coalition activity could persuade the Afghans as to their new government's legitimacy. Stressing the political nature of the conflict, Barno's approach required reconstruction teams to connect Kabul to the countryside.[196] However, the Afghan government's inability to generate a comparable effort undercut many of CFC-A's initiatives. A strong urban-to-rural connection was important for Afghanistan's future, but American troops alone could not build that connection. Afghan leaders had to convince residents that their central government, and not representatives from a foreign power, was acting in their best interests. Outsiders would find it difficult to convince the people to trust the new government, especially when that message had to be filtered through mullahs, mayors, district governors, provincial governors, and interim national leaders, all of whom had tribal and ethnic agendas as important to them as any attempt to reinforce a largely nonexistent national unity.[197] These complex and unseen motivations made loyalties in this environment hard for military leaders to ascertain.

---

191. Interv, Hughes and Mundey with Barno, 21 Nov 2006, p. 34.

192. Ibid., p. 47.

193. OPORD 04–07, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Support to National Assembly Elections, pp. 12, 14, 18, 29.

194. Ibid., p. 25.

195. Ibid., 3, 18, 30.

196. OPORD 04–01, CTF Bronco, 3d Bde, 25th Div, 22 May 2004, sub: BRONCO STRIKE (OEF-5 Combat Operations), p. 13.

197. Ibid., p. 21.

In fact, the interactions intended to ready Afghans for independence only increased their dependence on the coalition. Building national unity among a people with a history of partisan divisions would be a long and involved process. Barno's political-based counterinsurgency needed time and resources that neither Abizaid nor NATO could provide. Likewise the Taliban-led insurgency would not wait for the coalition or the Karzai government to improve Afghan security and stability. No matter what the reports, memos, and briefings said in Washington or Kabul, based upon the reality on the ground, the United States was no closer to disengaging from Afghanistan at the end of Barno's year and a half in command than it was when he arrived.

The U.S. Army Meeting Unanticipated Strategic Needs

As the Afghan theater continued to evolve, the U.S. Army at home needed to adapt to ensure continued support to demanding global missions beyond those of Enduring Freedom. The twenty-first-century Army faced a different set of demands than those anticipated by the Vietnam-era Abrams Doctrine, and the Army would have to rebalance its structure between the active and reserve components in order to respond to those demands. As early as 1 November 2001, Secretary Rumsfeld opined that any situation in which the Army could not perform a key mission without activating the reserves appeared particularly "unwise."[198] As part of transformation-oriented restructuring, Rumsfeld directed the return of capabilities from the reserves that the active component would need in order to perform critical battlefield functions rapidly. A series of subsequent studies by the Army led to an Active Component/Reserve Component Rebalancing briefing on 7 November 2003, out of which came the Chief of Staff of the Army Directive 7. This directive mandated the development of force structure options for a modular army and a revised active and reserve component mix, consistent with "transforming the Army into a campaign quality Army with a joint force and expeditionary mindset."[199]

Rebalancing the Force

Directive 7 led to an Army-wide message on 5 January 2004 directing force structure changes to bring the entire active Army to the highest readiness levels. The document also directed the identification of units and career fields that would be inactivated or downsized in order to fully fill the operating force. It would take considerable funding to provide enough resources to maintain the entire active Army at the highest levels of readiness, but by

198. Memo, Sec Def Donald Rumsfeld to Dov Zakheim and Steve Cambone, 1 Nov 2001, sub: Tasks—Reserve Vs. Active Duty, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

199. Msg, Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff for Opns and Plans, Force Management Directorate, Def Messaging Service Gen Service Msg, 5 Jan 2004, sub: CSA Initiative on ALO and AC/RC Balance, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

late 2003, when even rested and fit infantry battalions had become scarce, the Army's mission demands left little recourse.[200] From the standpoint of resourcing and training units, it was far easier to maintain organizations at peak readiness than to reconstitute understrength units that were not fully proficient even with all their required personnel and equipment.

The same message also proposed additional personnel for reserve component units considered "high demand" organizations, especially those responsible for the Army's support to other services and its obligations as an executive agent under Title 10, U.S. Code. Furthermore, it announced the creation of a trainees, transients, holdees, and students account for the reserve component, organized along the same lines as an existing active component account. This account forced reserve unit commanders to maintain nondeployable soldiers on their rolls until they could be formally transferred to the trainees, transients, holdees, and students account for reassignment, training, treatment, or separation.[201]

The scope and the pace of the changes that General Peter J. Schoomaker envisioned led to the first significant change in a loose collection of directives known as the The Army Plan, which would change the way the Army implemented its institutional strategy. On 20 February 2004, Schoomaker authorized the distribution of a new *Army Campaign Plan* that became Section IV (Execution) of The Army Plan, replacing Shinseki's *Army Transformation Campaign Plan.* The new document codified the institutional direction and guidance to the Army's headquarters and staff, its subordinate commands, direct reporting units, and field operating agencies.[202]

The *Army Campaign Plan* published in April 2004 described the Army's actions to address the realities of competing combat operations. It also represented the formal articulation of the assumptions necessary to drive the implementation of a campaign-quality Army. The most significant *Army Campaign Plan* assumption was that the Army's level of strategic commitment would continue at current pace but not necessarily in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that the Army would be able to use supplemental funding to build forces in support of new and ongoing contingency operations. It also assumed that any expansion of the force would have to be coordinated with changes directed by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, while still maintaining an all-volunteer force. Finally, and perhaps most telling, was the last assumption, which stated that "requirements for RC [reserve component] capabilities in support of global security operations will remain elevated for the foreseeable future," including both combat operations and homeland defense.[203]

---

200. Adams, *The Army After Next*, p. 182.

201. Msg, Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff for Opns and Plans, Force Management Directorate, Def Messaging Service Gen Service Msg, 5 Jan 2004, sub: CSA Initiative on ALO and AC/RC Balance.

202. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Planning Directive-Army Campaign Plan* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2004), p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

203. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2004), pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Modularity

The first sweeping change mandated by General Schoomaker's vision of a campaign-quality force with joint and expeditionary capabilities involved changing the fundamental structure of the forces deploying to combat. The demand for Army forces to support two combat zones within a larger theater of war had emphasized two trends. The first was the importance of brigades in building the force, and the second was the importance of headquarters to employ that combat power effectively. The dramatic reorganization of the Army's forces that became known as modularity would launch the formalized force-management process known as Army Force Generation.

By summer 2003, the staffing demands imposed by the rotational system laid bare the reality that the existing force of thirty-three active and thirty-six National Guard maneuver brigades did not provide enough time to rest and refit those units between successive deployments. A reorganization of the Army would create a larger number of similarly organized brigade combat teams that could sustain the demand on the force over time. On 2 September 2003, General Schoomaker directed both the active and reserve components to take the following steps, with TRADOC as the Army's lead: "Initiate a reset of the Army to a provisional redesign. Reorganize the 3 ID (M) [3d Infantry Division] and 101st AA [101st Airborne Division] into prototype organizations that achieve the near-term modularity needed for the BDE [brigade] and DIV [division] echelons."[204]

Force design and structure debates were not new to the Army. One notable assessment of a possible Army restructuring was Douglas A. Macgregor's *Breaking the Phalanx: A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century*, published in 1997. In his book, Macgregor makes a powerful argument for a more modular Army that is relevant to modern warfare. Macgregor's earlier work is similar to the Army's modular reorganization efforts under Schoomaker's command. Schoomaker's directive designated the prototype organizations as units of action (UAs), rather than as brigades and regiments. He provided further guidance by making clear his goal to "create modular, capabilities-based units of action . . . to enable rapid packaging and responsive, sustained employment. UAs must be as lethal as current brigade combat teams, be more deployable, and provide more combat forces within the current end strength of the Army."[205] The name change reflected a deliberate effort to avoid tying the new organizations to a particular echelon of command so as not to constrain how those units might be employed.

The Army leadership assembled a group of officers from TRADOC headquarters at Fort Monroe, Virginia, under Maj. Gen. Robert W. Mixon Jr., dubbed Task Force Modularity. The ad hoc study group had the mission

---

204. Presentation, HQ, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 11 Sep 2003, sub: TRADOC Mission Analysis: CSA Focus Areas v1.8, p. 18, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

205. Col Jeffrey R. Witsken, Maj Patrick L. Walden, and Peggy Fratzel, *Task Force Modularity Integrated Analysis Report: Analysis Underpinning Recommendations to the CSA, September 2003–March 2004* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: TRADOC Analysis Center, 31 Mar 2004), p. 4.

of formally developing structures to meet Schoomaker's guidance. Mixon drew on organizations across TRADOC for analytical support, as well as retired senior officers such as Lt. Gen. Leonard Donald Holder and Brig. Gen. Huba Wass de Czege, the principal authors of the Army's AirLand Battle doctrine in the 1980s, and Brig. Gen. Thomas R. Goedkoop, who commanded an armored brigade that was the test unit for the Army's Force XXI experiments in the 1990s.[206]

The task force concluded that the Army needed three types of modular brigade combat teams: heavy (armor and mechanized infantry), light (light infantry), and medium-weight Stryker Brigades. Task Force Modularity envisioned each as combined-arms organizations, with permanently organized infantry, armor, cavalry, field artillery, engineers, signal, military intelligence, and logistics capabilities. Schoomaker's units of action were also intended to be self-contained in order to operate independently of a division or corps headquarters if needed. While the aviation, engineer, field artillery, division support commands, and corps support groups were permanently organized around like battalions and separate companies, the modular brigade combat teams absorbed most of the subordinate elements belonging to separate battalions assigned to the division and separate brigades allocated to corps.[207]

One of the most significant changes proposed by Mixon was the presence of only two maneuver battalions in the heavy and light units of action, rather than the three battalions that had been part of the legacy brigade and Stryker brigade structures. The overriding consideration was one of cost. While simulations disclosed that a three-battalion unit of action was more capable than its two-battalion counterparts, the increased personnel bill to staff those units proved infeasible in light of Schoomaker's guidance to increase the number of brigade combat teams without adding to the overall Army end-strength. Even proposals to reduce the size of the battalions in order to create a third maneuver battalion violated the personnel caps that came with that structure. Furthermore, the two-battalion heavy and light unit of action designs included a small cavalry squadron for armed reconnaissance to partly offset the lack of a third battalion, although it was hardly optimal to employ cavalry in lieu of an infantry or armor battalion.[208]

The reorganization efforts mandated by Schoomaker's directive also involved flattening of the force's higher echelons, which shifted responsibilities to the transformed forces. The responsibilities that had been at divisions, corps, and theater armies before modularity were moved to so-called Units of Employment X and Y, which were designated as UEx and UEy respectively. The UEy was responsible for exercising administrative control over all Army forces in the combatant command area of responsibility, regardless of

206. Ibid., pp. 4–10.

207. Task Force Modularity, *Army Comprehensive Guide to Modularity (Version 1.0)* (Fort Monroe, Va.: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2004), pp. 1-12–1-15.

208. Info Paper, Task Force Modularity, 8 Jan 2005, sub: Analysis of the Heavy and Light Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) with Three versus Two Maneuver Battalions, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

geographic location or command relationship.[209] The lower echelon UEx was intended as the Army's primary headquarters for operational and tactical combined arms operations. It would direct the operations of its subordinate units of action and be capable of serving as a joint force land component command, or as a joint task force when augmented for that mission. Unlike the divisions and corps that it would replace, the UEx had no organic forces other than its headquarters.[210]

Aside from the brigade combat teams, Task Force Modularity settled on creating five types of support units of action by taking existing force structure from the corps and division level. These support units included the combat aviation brigade; fires brigade; combat support brigade (maneuver enhancement); reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition (later renamed the battlefield surveillance) brigade, and the sustainment brigade. Unlike their maneuver counterparts, most of these support units of action did not have fixed subordinate units, but instead had an organic headquarters and a pool of units assigned to the brigade. The pool of units did not necessarily deploy with the support unit of action they were organized under in garrison. The support units of action would be tailored to operational requirements before deployment, then would deploy in their task-organized state.[211]

The support units of action were built out of the formerly separate corps-level brigades and separate division-level battalions and squadrons. Similarly, the units of action received the missions that those separate brigades and battalions had previously accomplished. SOF were not affected, nor was the 3d Armored Cavalry—the last organization of its kind at the time.[212] The aviation and fires units of action were not dissimilar in functions from their predecessor aviation, corps field artillery, and division artillery brigades. Because the UEx took the place of the corps and division headquarters, any UEx could employ the combat aviation and fires units of action. Similarly, the sustainment units of action replaced the former division support commands and corps support groups, but were distributed approximately one per UEx.

The most extensive reorganization effort involved the creation of a combat support (maneuver enhancement) unit of action. Divisional and corps engineer brigades were inactivated, and their subordinate companies were placed in the maneuver UAs. Some of the personnel authorizations from the former engineer brigade headquarters were used to create the new organizations, which eventually were retitled as maneuver enhancement brigades. Rather than aligning along a particular branch, the maneuver enhancement brigade was oriented on the force protection function, which

209. Task Force Modularity, *Army Comprehensive Guide to Modularity (Version 1.0)*, p. 1-7.

210. Ibid., pp. 1-10–1-11.

211. Ibid., p. 1-16. The term "maneuver UA" refers to an infantry, heavy, or Stryker Unit of Action (UA) in this context.

212. The 11th Armored Cavalry was a unique organization at the National Training Center that converted to a modified heavy brigade, while the 2d Armored Cavalry (Light) was a 1990s-era experiment in lightening the force that ended with its conversion to a Stryker brigade combat team designated as the 2d Cavalry Regiment.

suggested task organization with air defense, engineer, military police, and chemical defense units.[213]

The initial future force transformation plan that emerged in 2005 from modular transformation involved the creation of up to ten additional active component maneuver units of action while increasing combat support and combat service support capabilities throughout the Army. Because the Army wanted to be able to rotate whole and like units regardless of component by fiscal year 2006, it envisioned that five Stryker and twenty-eight other maneuver units of action would have completed modular conversion, six of which would be new active component units. By the end of fiscal year 2009, seventy-seven active and reserve brigades were to have completed modular conversion, creating enough support units of action and other headquarters to support those maneuver units.[214]

The final component of modular conversion involved the permanent designation of the units themselves. Titles such as "Unit of Employment X," "Unit of Employment Y," and "Unit of Action" were useful in conceptualizing the roles and missions for the units, but had little resonance with the force itself. Among the proposed courses of action, one suggested designating the units of action as regiments, while another wanted to elevate the existing structural hierarchy by bestowing corps and divisional shoulder patches on divisions and units of action respectively. In the end, the new monikers for units' designations did not stick, and the Army retained brigades, divisions, and corps. The Army's senior leadership decided to reflag the UEy as theater armies, three-star UEx as corps, two-star UEx as divisions, and units of action as brigade combat teams, brigades, or separate regiments.[215] The decision recognized that corps still retained a requirement to command and control multiple divisions, as was the case with Multinational Corps–Iraq starting in May 2004. What was different was that the new modular divisions and corps were far more capable of acting as joint task forces, which reflected lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan.[216] The effort also would provide more combat brigades to better meet the demands of fighting in both theaters of war simultaneously.

Army Force Generation

General Schoomaker's vision of a campaign-quality force with joint and expeditionary capabilities led to his second major initiative and sparked significant changes to the Army Force Generation process by 2003–2004. This process, which involved the repetitive generation of trained and ready

213. Task Force Modularity, *Army Comprehensive Guide to Modularity (Version 1.0)*, p. 1-17.

214. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 2* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2005), pp. 4–5. The number of "ten active component UA" comes from the *Army Green Books*. The *Army Campaign Plan* postulates up to fifteen additional UAs.

215. U.S. Army Center of Military History, "Unit Designations in the Army Modular Force," 30 Sep 2005, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

216. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, 30 Sep 2005, "New Army Unit Designations in the Modular Army: Talking Points and Answers to Key Questions," Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

forces to meet overseas contingency requirements, soon indicated that it would stress the Army in unforeseen ways during a protracted war. As a result, Schoomaker realized that he had to change how the Army provided forces for operational employment.[217]

Before the decision to adopt the new force generation model, and based on the assumption that they would carry out their wartime missions in accordance with their force design, Army units conducted their predeployment training using a mission-essential task list derived from Mission Training Plans specific to their type of unit. This task list became the basis for all individual and collective training plans and their associated resources to train for the unit's wartime mission.[218] However, units deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan found that they had to conduct tasks far removed from the doctrinal missions in their authorization documents. The list of traditional, warfighting, mission-essential training became known as a core mission-essential task list, while the tasks peculiar to a given deployment fell under the domain of a theater mission-essential task list, which later became known as the directed mission-essential task list. This split was particularly pronounced for units such as field artillery or transportation units given "in lieu-of" missions that were far removed from their core missions. Units would train on only one mission-essential task list at a time, so a deploying unit that trained on its directed tasks did not train on its core tasks until after its deployment had ended.[219]

To meet its obligations under Title 10, U.S. Code, the Army functionally divided into what was referred to as the Operational Army and the Institutional Army. Although those terms were not well defined in 2001, they became far better defined by 2005 as the Army provided capabilities to the joint force. The recognition that those capabilities did not cleanly divide along operational and institutional lines led to a shift in terminology, and starting in 2005 the functional divisions became known as the Operating Force and the Generating Force. As the Army leadership saw it, without the Generating Force the Operating Force could not act, and without the Operating Force the Generating Force would not exist.[220]

The Operating Army, and later the Operating Force, consists of units organized, trained, and equipped to deploy and fight as part of the joint force and are mainly under the purview of the Army's FORSCOM. By law, the secretary of defense assigned these units to unified combatant commanders via the Joint Forces Command. The Army provides the largest portion of both conventional ground forces and SOF. The Institutional Army, and later

---

217. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 2*, p. 67.

218. The entire process was the subject of HQDA FM 22–100, *Training the Force* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 1988).

219. HQDA FM 7–0, *Training for Full Spectrum Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 2008), pp. 4–7.

220. HQDA FM 1, *The Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 2001), p. 27; HQDA FM 1, *The Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 2005), pp. 2-9–2-10; Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 2*, pp. 9–10; Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 5* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2007), pp. J-8, J-11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the Generating Force, provides the Army's functions mandated by federal law to organize, man, train, and equip the forces that were to be provided to combatant commanders. The Generating Force includes the recruiting functions, schools, and soldier training centers. It also includes the organic industrial base, made up of the Army's industrial facilities responsible for producing or maintaining equipment, ammunition, weapons, and other materiel for the Army. Essentially, the Generating Force is the mission of the U.S. Army's TRADOC.

Army Force Generation was a management process intended to focus all active and reserve conventional forces on the missions they could expect to conduct, while retaining the capability to increase the Army's combat power if needed for contingency operations. It explicitly sought to integrate force generation, transformation, force modernization, training, and resourcing in a synchronized process. Rather than focus on events to spur force generation, the process sought to manage the readiness of units for specified deployment timelines, with predictability as the goal.[221]

Units taking part in the force generation process passed through three different "pools" of forces: reset/retrain, ready, and available. Active Army units remained in each pool for one year as part of the three-year cycle, while reserve forces usually applied a five-year cycle. At the onset, FORSCOM, which was responsible for executing the Army's force-provider responsibilities, held a synchronization conference to balance known operational requirements, ongoing operations, war plan requirements, exercises, and transformation experiments. The units identified to fill each of those requirements were assigned to the reset/retrain pool to conduct specific pre-mission training. Units earmarked for ongoing operations were moved into the ready pool, where they organized and trained for their operational missions, then deployed to those operations as they moved into the available pool as part of a Deployment Expeditionary Force. All other forces not intended for immediate employment would train for their core missions as part of the ready pool. Some were earmarked for rapid deployment as part of a Contingency Expeditionary Force, while other units were part of a Ready Expeditionary Force made available for war plans, exercises, and experimentation. After completing their planned training, units would move into the available pool of forces for a year. Active-duty units that did not deploy, whether contingency or not, returned to the reset/retrain pool at the end of that third year (*Figure 6.2*).[222]

What made Army Force Generation more than just another force management construct was the scope of its intended synchronization of resources. Instead of traditionally limiting its oversight to training and equipment, the synchronization process sought to account for facilities, training areas, personnel, and equipment. Given that the DoD was resourcing all National Guard units to the highest readiness levels and implementing Army Force Generation at the same time, the new system was a useful approach to deter-

221. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 2*, pp. F-1–F-2.

222. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 4* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2006), pp. F-3–F-7.

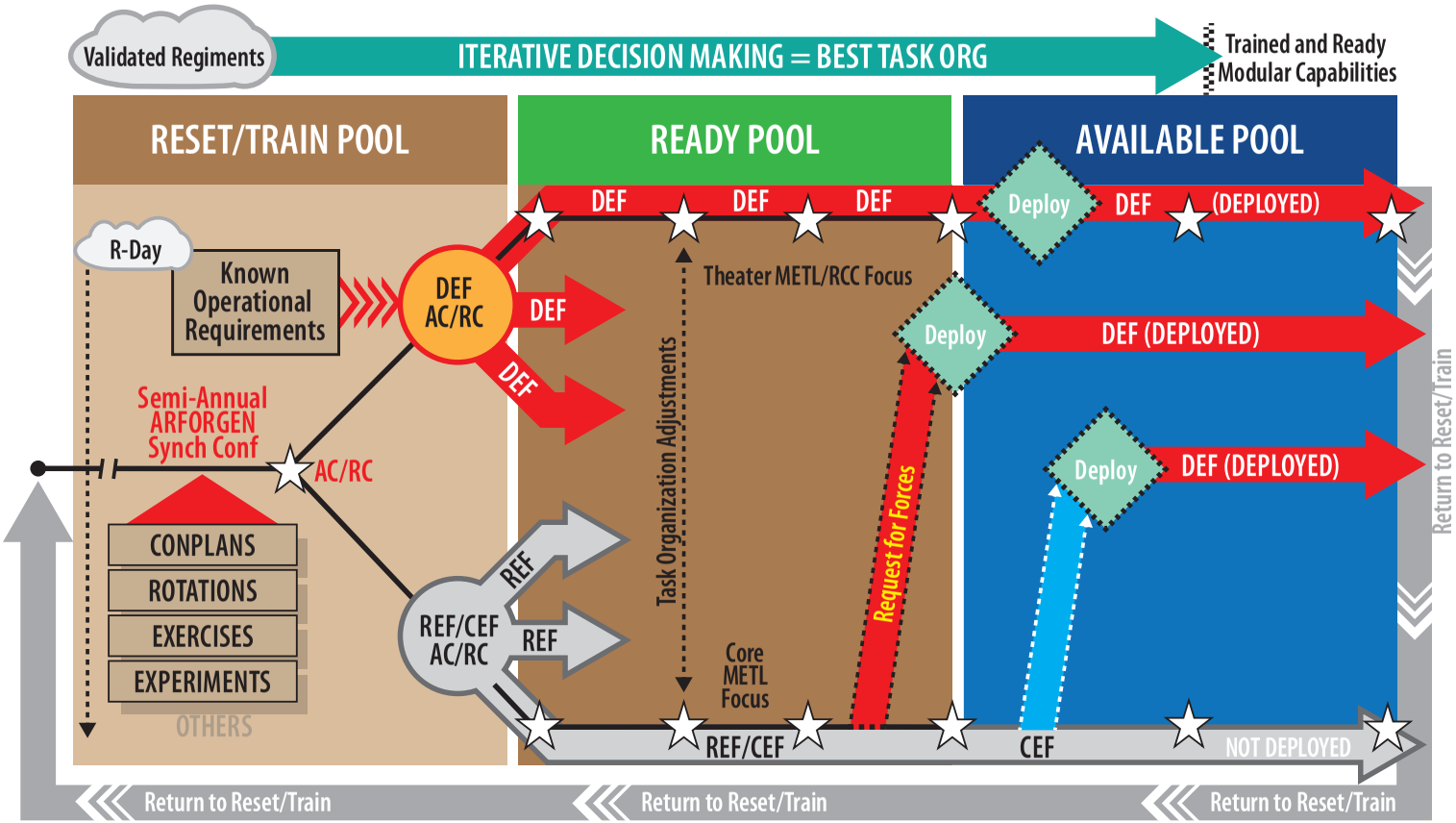


Figure 6.2. Army Force Generation Model

AC - Active Component
DEF - Deployment Expeditionary Force
R-Day - Reset Day

ARFORGEN - Army Force Generation
METL - Mission-Essential Task List
RC - Reserve Component

CEF - Contingency Expeditionary Force
RCC - Regional Combatant Command
REF - Ready Expeditionary Forces

mining which units would be resourced first. As part of the new force generation program, a major policy change allowed reserve component units to validate their own unit premobilization training beginning in 2007. To support that effort, the reserve component was authorized to build or improve training facilities outside of the designated active component training and mobilizations centers known as Power Projection Platforms. In 2008, the Army Reserve established two mobilization centers, called regional training centers, and the National Guard established eight of its own. Within a year of improving its facilities and receiving authorization to validate training ahead of time, the National Guard had reduced the time needed for validation by as much as forty-five days.[223]

The predictability and transparency of Army Force Generation not only eased the mobilization process for the reserve forces, but also reduced tensions between components competing for limited resources. Rather than focus on individual units, force generation grouped them based on their specific stage of predeployment preparation. All reserve units thus entered the cycle as a "donor" to provide personnel to units further along in the deployment process. As that unit's deployment date drew closer, it would be redesignated as a "fill" unit, eligible for personnel siphoned from other units just entering the deployment pipeline.[224]

Army Force Generation allotted up to five years of training and preparation time before reserve component units were mobilized. This allowed units to train individual and collective tasks as part of their predeployment training cycles. However, several factors chipped away at the effectiveness of this approach. During the first two years of the cycle, the unit acted as a donor for mobilizing units, and so many of those who were in training at the beginning of the cycle were not present at the end of the cycle and missed critical training. In addition, attrition within Guard and Reserve units remained a fairly consistent 17 to 22 percent, further degrading unit cohesion and training readiness. While comparable active component statistics differed only slightly, active component soldiers were transferred and retained in a separate holding account (training, transients, holdees, and students) when they left their units for school or change of duty station. This did not degrade active unit readiness, as the units received replacements for vacancies. Reserve soldiers remained assigned to their parent organization until transferred or separated from the service, which meant units could not fill a forecasted vacancy until the departing soldier was actually dropped from the roles.[225]

---

223. A RAND study found units deploying from 2008 to 2010 were able to mobilize 20 to 35 percent faster (depending on unit type) than similar units in 2003–2007; see Pint et al., *Active Component Responsibility in Reserve Component Pre- and Postmobilization Training.* On the National Guard's validation time, see Kathryn Roe Coker, *The Indispensable Force: The Post-Cold War Operational Army Reserve, 1990–2010* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: Office of Army Reserve History, 2013), pp. 378–82.

224. Ibid., pp. 380–84.

225. U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Reserve Forces: Army Needs to Reevaluate its Approach to Training and Mobilizing Reserve Component Forces*, GAO-09-720 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, 2009), p. 24.

The entire process was the responsibility of FORSCOM, which was the Army service component to U.S. Joint Forces Command, and therefore the Army's agent for providing forces. FORSCOM also oversaw units that were assigned to other unified combatant commands, such as units in Korea or Europe, as well as units across all three Army components.[226] To be fully effective, Army Force Generation relied on the ability to rotate units of like organization, in order to maximize economies of scale in training and resource management. The creation of those units was the focus of Schoomaker's other major initiative.

Army Force Generation's Impact on Training

Under Army Force Generation, the combat training centers began to focus specifically on predeployment mission preparation, rather than on leader development. Although units conducted individual and crew training at their home stations, the event that validated the brigade's collective tasks in its directed mission-essential task list was a mission rehearsal exercise at a combat training center.[227] However, the available training centers could not support predeployment mission preparation for both active component maneuver brigades as well as the growing number of National Guard brigades. As a result, some Guard brigades had to wait until either a training center became available or they received orders for an abbreviated rotation.[228] To accommodate the larger number of active and reserve component modular brigade combat teams, the DoD changed the policy to reserve space at the combat training centers only for Guard units assigned to control battlespace in Iraq or Afghanistan.[229] In addition, in 2006–2007 the Army began to develop an Exportable Combat Training Center Program to deliver instruction similar to that found at combat training centers.[230] Mission rehearsal exercises for units preparing to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan remained the norm until 2011.[231]

The limited time between combat rotations, especially during the period when returning brigades had only a year at their home station before preparing for their next deployment, deprived unit commanders of the opportunity and resources to train both core and directed mission-essential tasks. In light of an impending combat rotation to Iraq or Afghanistan, commanders chose to use their available time and resources to focus on deployment-related mission-essential tasks. Because of peak demand for units, when brigade

---

226. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 4*, p. F–10.

227. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Training Strategy: Strategic Training Guidance 2006* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2006), p. 8.

228. U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Reserve Forces*, p. 24.

229. Def Science Board Task Force, "Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism," Sep 2007, p. 22, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

230. U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Reserve Forces*, p. 26.

231. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, Directorate of Training, n.d., "CTC Rotation History FY02–FY16," Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

combat teams were rotating in and out of combat every other year, there was not enough time to complete all home-station training, which required adding those tasks to the mission rehearsal exercises held at a specialized training center. Even though units were still deemed to be trained before their deployment to combat, the decision to make up those shortfalls at a Combat Training Center came at the expense of related battalion- and brigade-level training. In most cases, units did not receive any additional training time after their mission-readiness exercise.[232] The strictly regimented time allotted for training steadily eroded the collective expertise in core, mission-essential warfighting tasks.

The Guard Surge

In late 2004, the DoD published a new directive addressing the reserve's activation, mobilization, and demobilization. Although the document recommended specific roles and mission for the reserves and the use of whole reserve units rather than as individual fillers, and also suggested that reserve mobilizations should be the same length as their active component counterparts, it fell short of mandating these changes. It also neglected to address systemic equipment and medical readiness challenges.[233] In addition, the new directive did not account for the potential impact of Army Force Generation or modularity on the reserve components. Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, then chief of the National Guard Bureau, recalled that "to get to the point where it could implement the Army Force Generation and reset some of the active force to put it in a predictable rotation schedule, [General Schoomaker] asked the Guard to assume the bulk of the combat load in Iraq during 2005."[234] Personnel practices that continued to meet near-term overseas needs at the cost of deteriorating long-term readiness, when coupled with a growing number of unit deployments to Iraq, soon stretched the Army National Guard nearly to the breaking point.

Two incidents intensified issues related to the readiness of the National Guard and Reserve. The first, documented in the *New York Times* by Eric Schmitt on 9 December 2004, outlined the friction that arose when Rumsfeld visited a group of Guard units preparing for onward movement into Iraq. Many of the soldiers felt they were not outfitted with the best available equipment before going into combat. When they aired their concerns with the secretary during a question-and-answer session, Rumsfeld said, with some degree of frustration, "You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time." This did little to

---

232. Memo, OEF Study Grp, n.d., sub: Discussion with Mr. Jim Stratton and Mr. Frank Pannocchia, HQDA G–37 Collective Training Division, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

233. DoD Dir 1235.10, "Activation, Mobilization and Demobilization of the Ready Reserve," 23 Sep 2004, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

234. Bob Haskell, "The Guard Surge in Iraq," *The National Guard* (Mar 2014): 22–27, http://nationalguardmagazine.com/display_article.php?id=1667895&view=202623, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Dave Marck Jr., USA

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld speaks to assembled troops at Bagram on 27 April 2002.

assuage the consternation of the Guard units, but it did much to inflame public opinion at home.[235]

The plight of the Army National Guard came under further scrutiny in late August 2005 when Louisiana officials discovered only 5,700 of their state's national guardsmen were available to respond to a potential natural disaster. As Hurricane Katrina threatened New Orleans, approximately 3,700 Louisiana National Guard personnel were serving in Iraq. In addition, the hundreds of military vehicles that had been shipped with the Guard to Iraq, or had remained behind in theater during previous deployments and were never replaced at their home station, meant that Louisiana had fewer than 200 vehicles for the Guard's emergency response and was critically short on communications equipment and satellite phones.[236] As requests for additional responders reached across the country, it became clear that the Army National Guard was stretched thin. Although 45,000 guardsmen were dispatched to Louisiana within eleven days of Katrina making landfall, the state needed an additional 20,000 active component troops to respond to the natural disaster. The Guard's on-hand equipment status, now at a decade-low 34 percent nationwide, also drew both public and congressional concern.[237]

---

235. Eric Schmitt, "Troops' Queries Leave Rumsfeld on the Defensive," *New York Times*, 9 Dec 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/09/world/middleeast/troops-queries-leave-rumsfeld-on-the-defensive.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

236. Scott Shane and Thom Shanker, "When Storm Hit, National Guard Was Deluged," *New York Times*, 28 Sep 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/28/us/nationalspecial/when-storm-hit-guard-was-deluged-too.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

237. Def Science Board Task Force, "Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism," p. 18.

The situation in Louisiana drew attention to the long-overlooked fact that more than half of the Army National Guard's 280,000 deployable personnel were involved in operational deployments.[238] This situation, informally referred to as the "Guard Surge," reflected the combined impact of three things: the Guard's central role in responding to Hurricane Katrina; an unprecedented number of overseas rotations, which allowed active component units to undergo modular transformation; and the higher operational tempo in Iraq. "The Guard Surge" brought to light the Army's unanticipated reliance on the National Guard and the Guard's depleted resources, as well as the degree to which National Guard units within the United States were being degraded by efforts to accommodate overseas combat operations. The belated recognition of the cumulative impact of these developments led to frantic legislative efforts to further codify how often and for what kinds of missions the reserves could be mobilized, and how much of the Army National Guard needed to remain in a state at any given time.[239]

Senator David B. Vitter (R-La.) led the legislative transformation by inserting language into the 2006 National Defense Appropriation Bill to study the Army's use of the Guard and Reserve personnel and units.[240] At the time of the study, standard tour length for a Guard or Reserve unit was sixteen to eighteen months, which included training time and leave. Two Army National Guard brigade combat teams had been mobilized for twenty-one months in order to train with new equipment as part of their transformation. Four brigade combat teams were slated for their second unit deployments, a first in the Global War on Terrorism. Approximately 55 percent of Army Guard and Reserve and 35 percent of active component units had not been previously mobilized for a CENTCOM deployment. Many of these units were not the types needed for the war. The pool of deployable units desired for the Global War on Terrorism was rapidly shrinking because of the short time period between their previous deployments.[241]

---

238. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Gen Clyde E. Vaughn, Director, Army National Guard, 20 Mar 2009, p. 14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

239. Haskell, "The Guard Surge in Iraq," pp. 23–27.

240. Def Science Board Task Force, "Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism," p. 4.

241. Ibid.

Chapter Seven

Afghan and ISAF Expansion as an Operational Approach

By mid-2005, almost four years into the war in Afghanistan, a pool of experienced senior leaders was available to return there. Lt. Gen. David W. Barno's chosen replacement, newly promoted Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, had departed Afghanistan in September 2003 after a tour as the commander of the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan. General Eikenberry arrived in Kabul in May 2005 and assumed command of CFC-A.[1] Instead of turning over command to another American officer at the end of his new assignment, Eikenberry anticipated that he would disband CFC-A headquarters and transfer his political-military responsibilities to the senior ISAF commander.[2] ISAF, which had been run by NATO since August 2003, had assumed responsibility for RC North in October 2004 and was scheduled to assume the other regional commands in the future.

General John P. Abizaid wanted ISAF's expansion to signal the beginning of the end of American combat operations.[3] The CENTCOM commander told Eikenberry that preparing for NATO transition would be his primary mission, and that "internationalizing the fight there was what would be needed over a long term."[4] Along with Afghan security forces capable of defeating armed opposition, NATO leadership would enable the United States to withdraw from counterinsurgency and stability operations. It was Eikenberry's job to turn this possibility into a reality.

Eikenberry received written instructions from CENTCOM in Modification 2 to Fragmentary Order 07–234, "Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan." This order differed from the January 2004 version General Barno had received in two significant ways. First, it conveyed none of the earlier document's pessimism. Second, it officially supported the counternarcotics initiative championed by the United Kingdom and a number of other European coalition members.[5] General Abizaid sanctioned the program, even though

1. Interv, Donald P. Wright, CSI, with Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr CFC-A Cdr, 23 Feb 2012, p. 20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. Ibid.

3. Interv, Col Bryan R. Gibby, Brian F. Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John P. Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 21–25, 61–62, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, pp. 3–4; Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Gen (Ret.) John P. Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Jan 2007, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Christopher L. Elliott, *High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 130–131.

he saw it as a distraction, because he wanted NATO to assume control of the theater and therefore needed to factor in British domestic policy in order to secure the participation of the alliance's second-largest troop provider.[6] Whereas Abizaid's planners omitted the narcotics eradication effort in the January 2004 order, they devoted a full five pages to the topic in May 2005.

Central Command's Fragmentary Order 07–234 indicated that America's involvement in Afghanistan would be both limited and lengthy. The document directed the CFC-A commander to stop training border police in customs collection, turning that responsibility over to Germany in full.[7] It also instructed him to "determine [an] organizational structure of CFC-A to meet mission requirements" and "arrange for sufficient housing for U.S. personnel with the post-OEF security footprint in mind," both clear indications that American involvement in Afghanistan would be reduced.[8] Yet the order also broadened the scope of U.S. participation, providing security and helicopters to a counternarcotics effort that heretofore had been Britain's responsibility, stating that the "anticipated length of Phase IV operations" was "undetermined," and remaining silent on the Army's growing role in training police forces.[9] Abizaid thought that increasing influence in some areas while reducing it in others would shape a lasting investment in Afghanistan that would require only a small brigade to sustain.[10] Although his thinking reflected U.S. policy at the time, it did little to help Eikenberry realize termination criteria. In addition, Abizaid's viewpoint discounted the possibility that the Taliban might make an unexpected bid to resume power in Afghanistan at some point in the future.

General Eikenberry faced a deadline. The National Assembly and provincial council elections, now scheduled for September 2005, would complete the Bonn Process and signify Afghanistan's emergence as a sovereign state. In just a few months, Eikenberry had to ensure that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) he had helped build could counter any threats the Taliban and its associated groups posed to Karzai's government.[11] In anticipation of transferring responsibility to ISAF, Eikenberry began to

---

6. Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 65–70; Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr CFC-A Cdr and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 1 Feb 2016, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. FRAGO 07–234, CENTCOM, modification 2, 27 May 2005, sub: Phase IV Operations in Afghanistan, 3.D.1.J, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 17–19; Concept Plan, CFC-A, 31 Jul 2005, sub: Long War Concept Plan, slides 11–12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11. When he took command, Eikenberry expected to go from two maneuver brigades conducting operations and one training the ANA to one maneuver brigade conducting operations and one training the ANA by no later than the end of the year. Planning Order, CENTCOM, 17 Mar 2005, sub: Posturing for the Long War, 3.C.2.A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



47th MHD

General Eikenberry and Ambassador Khalilzad address the press in June 2005.

reduce the number of critical tasks that CFC-A needed to perform as the transition process gained momentum.[12]

Political Setting as of May 2005

American strategy for Afghanistan had changed little in the wake of Karzai's election. The Bush administration continued to seek a moderate and democratic Afghan government capable of securing its territory.[13] It looked forward to Afghanistan's upcoming national and provincial elections but remained uncertain about how to terminate military involvement. Concerned that the United States did not have a clear postelection strategy, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld asked Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers in early 2005 to plan the next twelve to eighteen months of Enduring Freedom.[14] He reissued his request a week later, stating that it was "critically important that we, very promptly, have a plan for the

12. Col. Mark R. "Tank" Forman, Eikenberry's chief plans officer, recalled that CENTCOM wanted to reduce American forces in Afghanistan from 12,000 in late March 2005 to 3,800 in late summer 2006. A further reduction to 2,000 would occur later. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Mark Forman, frmr CFC-A CJ–5, 3 and 5 Mar 2009, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. As expressed nine months later, the strategic end state for U.S. forces in Afghanistan was "a moderate, stable and representative" country, "capable of deterring foreign adversaries with the support of limited but credible international capabilities." Concept Plan, CFC-A, 31 Jul 2005, sub: Long War Concept Plan, 1.B.1.B.4.

14. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Myers, 24 Jan 2005, sub: Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

rest of this year in Afghanistan. If we announce it and it is a good plan, it can have a positive effect in Iraq."[15]

Rumsfeld spent much of 2005 pushing the United States to support security-sector reform and imploring NATO to increase its military involvement. He understood that withdrawing American forces was contingent upon Afghan security capabilities.[16] Nonetheless, he viewed current troop expenditures as unsustainable with violence mounting in Iraq.[17] In April 2004, he had proposed that CENTCOM assume the police training mission, noting that progress "just isn't happening fast enough there."[18] In February 2005, he made the case to Condoleezza Rice, now the secretary of state, that the condition of the Afghan police was a serious problem, and in March 2005 he complained to Stephen J. Hadley, now the national security advisor, that his agreement with former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to have the DoD take responsibility for the mission had "unraveled" yet again.[19] Exasperated, he suggested submitting a decision memo to the president to settle the issue permanently. This final push seemed to work: in April 2005, an interagency decision shifted responsibility for the U.S.-funded police-training program from the U.S. Department of State to the DoD.[20]

Meanwhile, NATO had slowly increased its involvement in Afghanistan over the past two-and-a-half years. In the wake of the crisis within the alliance over the invasion of Iraq, the North Atlantic Council began calling for a NATO role in Afghanistan.[21] Germany and the Netherlands had led ISAF in late

---

15. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Myers, 31 Jan 2005, sub: Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Rumsfeld wrote to National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley in March 2005: "[I]t is our forces that are and will continue to be tied down there until the Afghans can provide their own security," and it was "costing the US taxpayers a fortune as long as the US, instead of the Afghans, continue[d] to provide for Afghan security." Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Stephen J. Hadley, 4 Mar 2005, sub: Afghan National Police, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/449/2005-03-04%20To%20Stephen%20Hadley%20re%20Afghan%20National%20Police.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

17. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, p. 245. Indicative of Rumsfeld's cost-cutting concerns is a memo from the DoD comptroller comparing the cost of recruiting, training, equipping, and deploying one U.S. soldier to Iraq or Afghanistan, compared with the cost of training one Afghan or Iraqi soldier. Memo, Under Sec Tina W. Jonas for Sec Rumsfeld and Deputy Sec Wolfowitz, 15 Feb 2005, sub: Cost for a Soldier, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Myers, Deputy Sec Wolfowitz, and Under Sec Feith, 7 Apr 2004, sub: Afghan Security Responsibility, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/446/2004-04-07%20to%20Myers%20et%20al%20re%207Afghan%20Security%20Responsibility.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Sec Rice, 23 Feb 2005, sub: Afghan National Police, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/445/2005-02-23%20To%20Condoleezza%20Rice%20re%20Afghan%20National%20Police.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Inspectors Gen of the U.S. Department of State and DoD, *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*, Nov 2006, p. 8, https://oig.state.gov/system/files/76103.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Philip Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at War: America, Europe and the Crisis over Iraq* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004); Elizabeth Pond, *Friendly Fire: The Near-Death of the*

2002, and in April 2003 the council agreed to take command of it altogether.[22] A month after NATO formally took command in August, the UN Security Council expanded ISAF's mandate to the rest of Afghanistan.[23] Both domestic and alliance politics drove NATO participation. For members that opposed the invasion of Iraq but wanted to maintain the alliance, Afghanistan offered an opportunity to support the Bush administration without losing support at home. German chancellor Gerhard F. Schröder, whose government had campaigned on its opposition to the Bush administration's war plans in a tight election race in September 2002, led this attempt to save NATO from strategic and political irrelevance.[24] With a strong push from German leaders, NATO developed a plan to expand counterclockwise out of Kabul: first north, then west, south, and east.[25] NATO announced this expansion of responsibilities, which included reconstruction team leadership, at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004. In the view of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, nothing less than the alliance's credibility was on the line.[26] Unfortunately for the alliance, attempts to stabilize Afghanistan would soon collide with a reconstruction mission that did not seem to be improving life in the rural provinces and an enemy that could retreat safely to Pakistan sanctuaries whenever pressed.

Rumsfeld wanted NATO to assume combat as well as reconstruction roles in Afghanistan. At a February 2005 meeting in Nice, France, NATO defense ministers discussed merging NATO ISAF and Enduring Freedom into a single command. The desire to combine peacekeeping and counterterrorism reflected growing U.S. confidence that NATO could handle security in

---

Transatlantic Alliance (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2003); Terry Terriff, "Fear and Loathing in NATO: The Atlantic Alliance After the Crisis over Iraq," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 5, no. 3 (Sep 2004): 419–46; Michael Gordon, "Threats and Responses: Afghan Security; NATO Chief Says Alliance Needs Role in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 21 Feb 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/21/world/threats-responses-afghan-security-nato-chief-says-alliance-needs-role.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. NATO Press Release, "Same Name, Same Banner, Same Mission as NATO Enhances ISAF Role," 4 Apr 2003, https://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/04-april/e0416a.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. UN Security Council, Resolution 1510, S/RES/1510, 13 Oct 2003, https://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/mandate/unscr/resolution_1510.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The UN Security Council would continue to reauthorize the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission yearly through the end of 2014.

24. Sten Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan: The Liberal Disconnect* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 95–97.

25. Ibid., pp. 97–98; Lt Col Steve Beckman, "From Assumption to Expansion: Planning and Executing NATO's First Year in Afghanistan at the Strategic Level" (Strategy research project, U.S. Army War College, 18 Mar 2005), https://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA431768, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (Speech, National Defense University, 29 Jan 2004), https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040129a.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Afghanistan.[27] France and Germany responded that NATO was neither equipped nor designed to conduct counterterrorism operations and sought assurances from the United States that it would not hand the mission to NATO. Assurances received, the NATO secretary general asked for the plan to proceed "as soon as it was feasible," perhaps in early 2006.[28]

Rumsfeld seemed intent on starting to withdraw U.S. forces with or without NATO support. Despite limited progress in the security sector and NATO's uneven commitment to Afghanistan, the Pentagon considered decreasing its approximately 17,500 in-country troops by as much as 4,000 in September 2005.[29] Karzai may have sensed wavering American commitment the previous May when he insisted that the United States and Afghanistan agree to a strategic partnership of indefinite duration.[30] The joint declaration was more of a symbolic gesture than a substantive commitment.[31] The United States had long promised to stay in Afghanistan until the mission was complete. Nonetheless, as violence mounted in Iraq, the Bush administration saw that the mission in Afghanistan as shrinking rather than growing.

Enemy Situation as of May 2005

Unbeknownst to CFC-A and NATO, the Taliban was on the verge of a dramatic comeback. It had rebuilt support in areas where the coalition forces were not present. Zabul Province was largely lost to government control in 2003, Uruzgan and Kandahar Provinces hosted sizable insurgent strongholds, and Kandahar City itself was practically under siege. Helmand Province was likewise teetering. By 2005, Helmand led the world in opium production, the financial engine of the Taliban's resurgence. The movement did not control the drug trade; nonetheless, it profited from compulsory contributions known as *ushr* (a 10 percent tithe, paid in kind) which it collected in exchange for secure transit through territories it controlled.[32] By 2005, the Taliban was

27. Judy Dempsey, "NATO, US to Merge Afghan Missions," *Boston Globe*, 11 Feb 2005, http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2005/02/11/nato_us_to_merge_afghan_missions/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Ibid.

29. Eric Schmitt and David S. Cloud, "U.S. May Start Pulling Out of Afghanistan Next Spring," *New York Times*, 14 Sep 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/14/international/asia/14afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Richard Norton-Taylor, "Allies Rule Out Bigger Afghan Role," *Guardian*, 14 Sep 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/sep/15/politics.afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. White House Press Release, Ofc of the Press Sec, 23 May 2005, sub: Joint Declaration of the United States–Afghanistan Strategic Partnership, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/pr/2005/46628.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. Ronald E. Neumann, *The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009), pp. 89–90.

32. Gretchen S. Peters, "The Taliban and the Opium Trade," in *Decoding the New Taliban*, pp. 7–11.

dominant in the province's northern districts and threatened the capital of Lashkar Gah.[33]

The Taliban succeeded during this time by exploiting Afghanistan's tribal disputes and marginalized communities.[34] Operators in cadre cells connected locally raised guerrillas and dedicated fighters who had trained in Pakistan.[35] Once they secured a foothold in one area, Taliban authority spread north to other rural parts of Ghazni, Paktika, Khost, Paktiya, and Farah Provinces. Taliban courts and shadow administrations undermined the nascent Afghan government's authority as effectively as any IED or mortar attack. Residents' fear of the Taliban turned first to sympathy and then to support as the Karzai government failed to check the Taliban's momentum.[36]

Organizationally, the Quetta Shura Taliban recognized four military zones: Kabul, East, Southeast, and South. Each zone had a largely independent commander. As the most experienced militant and a leader with ties to al-Qaeda's training and financial base in Pakistan, Jalaluddin Haqqani served as overall commander.[37] Many Haqqani-linked fighters demonstrated tactical and leadership acumen, prompting one American veteran to call them the insurgents' "version of an NCO [noncommissioned officer] corps."[38] Each zone had "front" commanders who exploited local relationships. To recruit members and capitalize on local grievances, these commanders styled themselves as mujahideen rather than Taliban—a claim meant to contrast their program of respect, security, and sharia authority to Kabul's chaotic government.[39]

By May 2005, Mullah Dadullah Akhund, nicknamed "Lang" or "Lame" for a wartime injury that had cost him a leg, had consolidated power in Afghanistan's southern provinces. His network was vast, encompassing more than a hundred subordinate commanders and a growing contingent of suicide bombers and IED factories. Some reports suggested that he commanded as many as 800 Taliban fighters in Zabul, Nimroz, Helmand, Kandahar, and Uruzgan Provinces. These provinces were permissive enough to allow the Taliban to shelter in mosques by day and emerge "to persuade, bribe, or terrorize farmers into helping them kill U.S. troops" at night. Without a robust coalition or ISAF presence, Zabul and the other four southern provinces remained Taliban country.[40]

---

33. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, p. 45; Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, pp. 5, 61; Fergusson, *Taliban*, p. 172.

34. Fergusson, *Taliban*, p. 341.

35. Kilcullen, "Taliban and Counter-Insurgency in Kunar," p. 239.

36. Christoph Reuter and Borhan Younus, "The Return of the Taliban in Andar District," in *Decoding the New Taliban*, pp. 110–11.

37. Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, pp. 90–91.

38. John R. Bruning and Sean Parnell, *Outlaw Platoon: Heroes, Renegades, Infidels, and the Brotherhood of War in Afghanistan* (New York: William Morrow, 2012), p. 139.

39. Nathan, "Reading the Taliban," pp. 35–36, 48.

40. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, p. 47; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 252–53.

Pakistan's purposely limited commitment to combating extremism saved the Taliban from strategic irrelevance. The Pakistan sanctuaries allowed the Taliban to regroup, recruit, and plan without interdiction or arrest. As U.S. government officials in Kabul noted, "Taliban leaders operate with relative impunity in some Pakistani cities, and may still enjoy support from the lower echelons of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence."[41] In this traditional support base, Pakistan's madrassas had a nearly limitless supply of willing recruits. Pakistan appeared unable or unwilling to suppress Taliban-sponsored extremism.[42] Throughout 2005, as it adopted increasingly lethal tactics including suicide bombing, use of IEDs, and assassination campaigns, the Taliban demonstrated resiliency and military competence.

Posturing for a Long War

General Eikenberry arrived in Afghanistan with instructions to transfer operational responsibilities to NATO and strengthen the ANSF, and he set about transforming "the size and shape of U.S. force posture" in anticipation of handing the mission over to ISAF.[43] Pursuing a reductionist agenda, he eliminated many projects begun or expanded by General Barno. In a telling example, Eikenberry prohibited Special Forces operational detachments from hiring local forces for any purpose other than securing outposts.[44] The Americans could no longer use Afghan militia forces, and Afghan security forces could only do what their name implied: provide security. Security became General Eikenberry's overriding concern: any mission, operation, or effort not designed to achieve security for Afghans would be cancelled or suspended.[45] Although Eikenberry understood that Afghans were engaged in a political contest over opposing visions of their future, he did not define his campaign as a counterinsurgency. In fact, he felt that Afghanistan's lack of a preexisting government made counterinsurgency a misguided endeavor.[46] In contrast to his predecessor, General Eikenberry believed that holistic involvement in Afghanistan would protract, not curtail, conflict.

---

41. Info Paper, U.S. Department of State, 9 Dec 2005, sub: Counterterrorism Activities (Neo-Taliban), p. 4, NSA GWU, https://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB325/doc14.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Zalmay Khalilzad, whose ambassadorship lasted into the first few months of Eikenberry's command, saw Pakistan as the single reason why U.S. efforts were not more successful. Interv, Maj Colin J. Williams and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Zalmay Khalilzad, frmr U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 25 Mar 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Concept Plan, CFC-A, 31 Jul 2005, sub: Long War Concept Plan, slides 4–5.

44. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col George T. Donovan Jr., frmr Cdr, 2d Bn, 504th Inf, 21 Jan 2009, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Colonel Donovan approved of Eikenberry's decision, which the general made when he learned that American forces were allowing Afghan militias to collect tolls for road improvements.

45. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, pp. 27–28.

46. Ibid., p. 33. See also Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan: The Other Side of COIN," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2013): 61.

U.S. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1–02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, presents key definitions, meanings, and implications for specific tactical tasks in military doctrine. The definitions for the following tasks are relevant in the context of the U.S. approach to counterinsurgency described in this chapter:

NEUTRALIZE	A tactical mission task that results in rendering enemy personnel or materiel incapable of interfering with a particular operation.
DEFEAT	A tactical mission task that occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. The defeated force's commander is unwilling or unable to pursue his adopted course of action, thereby yielding to the friendly commander's will, and can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use.
INTERDICT	A tactical mission task where the commander prevents, disrupts, or delays the enemy's use of an area or route.
CLEAR	A tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area.

For more information, see the glossary of military terminology in Appendix A.

Source: HQDA, ADP 1–02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, Aug 2018.

Figure 7.1. Note on U.S. Military Tactical Terminology

To avoid a constant cycle of broadly focused operations, Eikenberry limited what coalition forces did and where they did it (*Figure 7.1*). His intent was to restrict coalition activities to populated areas in which they could exert a positive influence, although he admitted that it was not always easy to determine where these areas were.[47] Soon after assuming command, Eikenberry believed he had identified the delineating factor: roads. Like Barno, he believed that a functioning road network was the closest thing the Army had to a developmental panacea. Unlike his predecessor, Eikenberry also thought that roads would set geographical limits on American military action. He had a number of reasons for initially wanting to prevent activity from extending beyond these lines of communications: his tactical headquarters had been designed more for stability operations than for combat, he was not sure if NATO would be ready to assume RC South from American control, and he was not yet ready to inform Abizaid what America's role under ISAF should be. By following DoD and CENTCOM guidance, he reversed his predecessor's expansive vision of American involvement. Responding to a query from Rumsfeld, Eikenberry briefed Abizaid on a plan to reduce the

47. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 60.

forty-three bases, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and other sites housing American troops to twenty-seven by June 2006.[48]

As ordered, Eikenberry also stopped Americans from helping the Afghans collect customs revenue. Under Barno's tenure, CFC-A had created a program that taught Afghans how to collect taxes by watching Americans do it.[49] The effort helped fund the Afghan state and, according to deputy CFC-A commander British Maj. Gen. Peter Gilchrist, it made the new national government more effective.[50] Disagreeing, Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann believed that Barno's desire to satisfy Rumsfeld's intentions had created a poorly-run system that removed Afghans from a critical governmental function.[51] With his ambassador's support, Eikenberry stopped American involvement in Afghan customs activity, intending to replace assistance with a training program run by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Unfortunately, the Department of Homeland Security could not deploy experts fast enough or in the numbers needed for the arrangement to work.[52]

Even though Eikenberry was following CENTCOM's instructions to reduce America's involvement in Afghanistan, his approach upset leaders who embraced counterinsurgency.[53] He was not motivated by a desire to distinguish himself from his predecessor, but the new CFC-A commander had instructions to reduce, extend, and redirect coalition efforts. Adapting the long-war concept initially conceived by Barno and his staff, Eikenberry informed Abizaid that America's participation in the Afghan fight would consist of a brigade headquarters for RC East; two infantry battalions; seven reconstruction teams; aviation support; a reduced-strength Special Forces battalion; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets by the end of Eikenberry's command: totaling approximately 3,500 troops by early summer 2005.[54] To him, "it was important to economize and think in terms of handing over essential CFC-A command and control capabilities to NATO in a timely manner according to agreed plans."[55] It made no sense to enlarge a headquarters that would disband at the end of his tour.

General Eikenberry's unwillingness to commit U.S. troops to a sustained counterinsurgency effort did not prevent him from paying attention to

48. A further contraction would bring America's base count to thirteen by the time ISAF took operational responsibility for Afghanistan. Bfg, Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, Cdr, CFC-A, to Gen John P. Abizaid, Cdr, CENTCOM, 31 Aug 2005, sub: Afghanistan Force Protection, slides 1, 3–6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. Neumann, *The Other War*, p. 47n10.

50. Interv, Maj Gen Peter Gilchrist (UK) in Koontz, ed., *Enduring Voices*, pp. 114–15.

51. Neumann, *The Other War*, p. 47.

52. Ibid., pp. 47n10, 222–23.

53. Interv, Col David W. Lamm in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, pp. 146–47.

54. Concept Plan, CFC-A, 31 Jul 2005, sub: Long War Concept Plan, slides 11–12.

55. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 21.

development.[56] He was especially interested in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the Embedded Training Teams designed to mentor Afghan security forces that would remain behind after combat troops departed. In the six weeks before the September elections, the CFC-A commander traveled out of Kabul eight times. These trips typically included meeting a provincial governor, walking in the provincial capital, visiting the province's reconstruction team, and questioning training-team members.[57] They painted Eikenberry a picture of the country's readiness for sovereignty on the eve of the final step in the Bonn Process. Eikenberry became concerned by some of what he heard. Meeting Capt. Dirk D. Ringgenberg, commander of the 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Surveillance), Eikenberry learned that the Taliban operated with impunity in areas that reconstruction team soldiers could not traverse. In their initial meeting, Ringgenberg took out a map, identified enemy concentrations, and related an engagement that occurred on 3 May 2005—two days before Eikenberry took command—in which Ringgenberg's troops killed seventy-six Taliban in northern Zabul Province.[58] Presented with clear evidence that enemy forces were massing in a key region, Eikenberry held off from recommending troop withdrawals until after the elections. The elections' security—and their results—would signal the degree and direction of future American intervention in Afghanistan.

Reconstruction team personnel, financing, and logistics were still a significant investment when Eikenberry took command, but he did not believe that they should be a long-term feature of the campaign. Although they were slated to remain even after the combat troops departed, they would reduce in number, activity, and scope under ISAF control. The United States had 1,014 personnel stationed with 13 teams: 996 service members, 17 federal employees, and 1 team member who worked for Britain's Department for International Development.[59] Army logistics also supported teams run by NATO allies, which added long-range staffing, transport, and container-space demands on American forces in theater.

Transferring reconstruction teams to NATO ISAF control was part of Eikenberry's attempt to divest CFC-A of long-term operational

---

56. Eikenberry questioned the effectiveness of developing a country before it was ready to receive and absorb developmental efforts. Ibid., p. 21; Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan," pp. 59–74.

57. Eikenberry's eight trips were to Khost (5–6 August 2005), Herat (8 August 2005), Zabul (12–13 August 2005), Mazar-e Sharif in Balkh Province (15 August 2005), Farah and Helmand (26–27 August 2005), Kapisa (29 August 2005), Ghazni (2–3 September 2005), and Mehtar Lam (Laghman) (16 September 2005). Mtg Notes, Lt Gen Eikenberry, Cdr, CFC-A, 2 Aug–19 Sep 2005 inclusive, folder 20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. VTC, Lt Col John Stark, Brian F. Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Maj (Ret.) Dirk D. Ringgenberg, frmr Cdr, 74th Inf Detachment (Long Range Surveillance), 24 May 2016; Correspondence, Dirk D. Ringgenberg to E. J. Degen, Director, OEF Study Grp, 31 Dec 2019, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

59. Ltr, Donald Rumsfeld to Bill Luti, 15 Apr 2004, sub: PRTs in Afghanistan, https://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/950/2005-04-20%20To%20Doug%20Feith%20re%20PRTs%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

responsibilities. His other attempts occurred during meetings early in his tenure as commander. When not traveling to Pakistan or through Afghanistan in the month and a half before the September elections, Eikenberry held seventeen key-leader meetings in Kabul. Eight of these meetings were with Afghan ministers, eight were talks with ambassadors, and one pertained to elections.[60] Eikenberry clearly understood his political responsibilities. By consulting ambassadors, he was shaping America's transfer of responsibilities to NATO, his primary mission upon assuming command. His secondary mission, readying Afghan security forces for the American withdrawal, was an endeavor about which he had great enthusiasm and strong opinions.

Developing Afghan Government Security Forces

When General Eikenberry returned in May 2005, he increased the attention given to training Afghan security forces. In spite of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs and other efforts to promote national governance, U.S. forces had been relying on local Afghan forces, including the United Front, ever since the invasion. Rumsfeld had directed Special Forces to start training an ANA in May 2002, a month before General McNeill's XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters arrived in country. Aided by ISAF, this moderate investment produced moderate results by January 2003, when the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan (then headed by Eikenberry) assumed responsibility for the ANA mission. Although Accelerating Success had increased the resources and expectations for the Afghan army, security force development competed with the many other efforts Barno viewed as important to conducting a counterinsurgency.

It had been at least a generation since the U.S. Army embarked on a military training project of comparable scale or duration. Although the United States had been investing considerable effort in arming and training foreign militaries since World War II, the U.S. military's experience in the Vietnam conflict had made it far less willing to undertake the challenge of reshaping entire armies in order to maintain the balance of power in key regions. From 1975 onward, American involvement with foreign militaries outside NATO had been confined to special advisory missions conducting training and interacting with the State Department. Growing the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan meant taking an organization designed to be small and subjecting its officers to the confusion that comes from straddling the divide between two federal departments and a number of allied efforts.[61]

Under these conditions, the Army had difficulty finding someone to command an enlarged military cooperation organization. When Eikenberry,

60. Mtg Notes, Lt Gen Eikenberry, Cdr, CFC-A, 2 Aug–19 Sep 2005 inclusive, folder 20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

61. The DoD also established a similar organization in Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein. Although the initial approach to security cooperation in Iraq mirrored previous efforts in Afghanistan, the emergence of a violent insurgency in April 2004 led to far more resources and funding for the post-Saddam Iraqi Army.

for example, left the organization in September 2003, two months elapsed before his replacement arrived. His successor, Air Force Maj. Gen. Craig P. Weston, considered himself an opportunity hire.[62] An acquisition officer by profession, Weston's expertise in addressing equipment shortages reflected existing views about his assignment rather than a growing awareness of the logistical, doctrinal, and legislative changes needed to realign Afghan security force assistance with projected operational needs.

New Expectations for the Afghan National Army

In February 2005, Barno briefed Rumsfeld on security force assistance in Afghanistan, to explain how growing the ANA would facilitate an American withdrawal from Afghanistan.[63] Based on the expected production of Afghan security forces, Barno informed Rumsfeld that U.S. forces in country could be reduced from 16,300 to 16,000 by July 2005; 11,500 by July 2006; 10,000 by July 2007; and 5,300 by December 2008. This final total included 1,300 service members providing aviation support to the Afghan government; 1,000 serving in reconstruction teams; 900 in base support roles; 800 providing combat service support; 600 for a headquarters; 400 assigned to combat and combat support missions; and 300 dedicated trainers. As reflected by predicted sustainment costs, this proposed "end state" configuration would remain fixed for at least the next four years, from fiscal years 2009 through 2012. Combat units would leave first, followed by Special Forces and support units.[64] Depending on conditions, this second withdrawal would occur before, during, or after the coalition transferred reconstruction teams to the Afghan government—a process that likely would be completed by December 2008, when CFC-A expected the Afghan government to have built sufficient capacity in the provinces.[65] Barno predicated his original plan on two assumptions. One was that the threat would "remain at current levels."[66] Time would prove otherwise. The second was that one training team–supported ANA brigade equated to one U.S. battalion.[67] The latter point's validity rested on Barno assuming the threat would not increase. In reality, although an ANA brigade theoretically possessed more soldiers and individual weapons than an American battalion, it did not have dedicated access to the combat multipliers available to U.S. troops. These included close air support, helicopter gunships, aeromedevac, responsive logistics, up-armored vehicles, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Although training teams accompanying Afghan troops could call for this support, its availability

62. Interv, unknown with Maj Gen Craig P. Weston, Cdr, OMC-A, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

63. Bfg, CFC-A, prepared 4 Feb 2005, delivered 8 Feb 2005, sub: Afghanistan Security Update to the SECDEF, slide 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

64. Ibid., slide 10.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., slide 9.

67. Ibid.



Sr. Amn. Bethann Hunt, USAF

ANA trainees practice marching at the Kabul Military Training Center.

depended on the competing needs of American units and the priority that U.S. commanders accorded to ANA operations.

Eikenberry was less optimistic about the ANA than his predecessor. Concerned that the training effort had accelerated too quickly, he believed that U.S. forces "had to balance quantity with quality."[68] As the leader of the training effort from 2002 to 2003, he had pushed for higher levels of readiness training, thinking that a "standards based army" was the most effective way for "the fourth poorest country in the world" to provide security.[69] The mentality that Eikenberry tried to impart on the ANA did not survive his departure in 2003. With no commander in place when Rumsfeld pushed Accelerating Success through the National Security Council in fall 2003, leaders in Afghanistan responded by turning their training focus to quantity, not quality.

Accelerating kandak production generated unforeseen consequences. For one, it left no time or space to train replacements. Desertions and casualties had thinned the ranks of the first kandaks, and less than a year after graduation they desperately needed more soldiers.[70] More importantly, increasing the graduation rate from four to five kandaks increased the need for embedded trainers "from about 410 to nearly 700."[71] By July 2005, fewer

68. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 38.

69. Interv, Lisa Beckenbaugh, CSI, with Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr OMC-A Cdr, 27 Nov 2006, p. 29, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

70. Ltr, Brig Gen Mitch Perryman to Colin J. Williams, 7 Oct 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

71. Rpt to U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Committee on International Relations, U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army*

than 60 percent of Afghan units had training teams.[72] Subsequent Army and Marine Corps efforts to fill training staff positions improved but did not resolve the problem. By December 2005, TF Phoenix's Embedded Training Teams were only 80 percent staffed.[73]

Eikenberry tried to blend competing needs for quality and quantity. Soon after he returned to Afghanistan, he asked the CFC-A inspector general to devise a "management decision model" to assess the capabilities of kandaks, brigades, corps, and defense ministry organizations before they participated in combat operations.[74] He also formed a study group to help the ANA General Staff, TF Phoenix, and CJTF-76 determine how to improve ANA readiness. This group's "Afghan National Army Study Phase 1 Report" called for training to replace fielding as the focus of future development but did not map a way for Eikenberry to achieve his desired outcome.[75]

By the summer of 2005, managing training teams had become the overriding mission of TF Phoenix.[76] When Brig. Gen. John M. Perryman arrived in Afghanistan with his 53d Infantry Brigade (Florida Army National Guard), Army units no longer ran the basic training course. Instead, TF Phoenix assigned training teams to kandaks a few weeks before graduation so they could get to know the unit they advised.[77]

Transitioning the Embedded Training Team mission to NATO ISAF proved more difficult than transferring Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Although troop-contributing nations fielded advisory organizations called Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams, national caveats—restrictions put on military forces by their national leadership—almost always prevented

---

and Police Have Made Progress, But Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Ofc, Jun 2005), p. 17.

72. Rpt, CFC-A, Ofc of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan, TF Phoenix, CJTF-76, and Inspector Gen, Department of the ANA General Staff, 14 Jul 2005, sub: Afghan National Army Study Phase 1 Executive Summary, p. 30, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

73. Brig Gen (Ret.) John M. Perryman, CSA OEF Study Grp – Survey Questions, n.d., p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; TF Phoenix, 20 Dec 2005, sub: Overview Brief, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

74. Memo for Inspector Gen, DoD, 26 Jun 2005, Rpt IE2005A004, Appendix A – CFC-A CG Request Ltr in Inspections and Evaluations Directorate, Ofc of Inspector Gen, DoD, Kabul, Afghanistan, 7 Jul 2005, sub: Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan Management Decision Model, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

75. Rpt, CFC-A, Ofc of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan, TF Phoenix, CJTF-76, and Inspector Gen Department of the ANA Gen Staff, 14 Jul 2005, sub: Afghan National Army Study Phase 1 Executive Summary, pp. 2–3.

76. Although Brig. Gen. John M. "Mitch" Perryman retained a Training Assistance Group in his command, it became clear to him that "while the KMTC [Kabul Military Training Center] force generation mission remained a key task, the main effort for the task force has shifted from KMTC to the Embedded Trainer (ET) team forward deployed with ANA operational forces." Perryman, CSA OEF Study Grp – Survey Questions, p. 3.

77. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

them from accompanying Afghans on combat missions.[78] These restrictions would have been less of a concern if the ANA was not facing an active enemy. With Taliban activity rising in almost every regional command, however, the U.S. Army had to send additional teams to help its NATO allies in advising ANA formations.

The adviser deficiency convinced Eikenberry that combat units needed to partner with ANA forces.[79] Experience in Iraq had shown that it was possible to conduct tactical operations using a mix of American and indigenous units. Brigades from the 10th Mountain Division arriving during Eikenberry's command understood that they had deployed not only to conduct "full spectrum military operations" but also to "allow the government of Afghanistan to emplace a security infrastructure."[80] Partnering was one approach to accomplishing this goal.

The Southern European Task Force also arrived prepared to work with Afghans. Maj. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya directed his subordinate units to conduct partnered operations as often as possible.[81] During CJTF-76's first four months in Afghanistan, its mission tasks included "establish ANA presence," "familiarize the ANA with the AO [area of operations] and reassure the populace," and "bolster ANP [Afghan National Police]."[82] By August 2005, CFC-A assessed the ANA's twenty infantry kandaks as capable of operating "side-by-side" with American forces.[83]

Eikenberry realized that unilateral coalition operations could stifle effective Afghan governance. Nonpartnered operations risked making the Americans appear as either an occupying power or the ultimate source of political authority and national security. As late as June 2005, four-and-a-half years after the American-led intervention began, Col. Patrick J. Donahue II's brigade encountered Afghans who still did not understand U.S. soldiers were conducting operations near their villages to ensure the Taliban did not harm them or their families.[84] If Afghans did not believe that American or NATO personnel were conduits of Afghan authority, then the Enduring Freedom mission was not achieving its central purpose. With a shortage of Embedded Training Teams, unit association remained a visible and viable way for Eikenberry to support the Karzai government, even though it was a

78. Interv, Jim Bird, CSI, with Maj Gen Richard B. Moorhead, frmr 76th Inf Bde Cdr, 5 Sep 2007, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

79. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 40.

80. Deployment Order 05–05, 10 May 2005, sub: 10th MTN DIV DEPORD ISO OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM 05-07, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

81. Examples: Daily Sitrep 163–05, CJTF-76, 13 Jun 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.; Daily Sitrep 171–05, CJTF-76, 21 Jun 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

82. Daily Sitrep 216–05, CJTF-76, 5 Aug 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Daily Sitrep 266–05, CJTF-76, 16 Aug 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Daily Sitrep 251–05, CJTF-76, 9 Sep 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

83. Memo, CFC-A, 29 Aug 2005, sub: Afghan National Security Forces Update, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

84. Daily Sitrep 100–05, CJTF-76, 10 Jun 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

troop-intensive answer to Afghanistan's security problem that hindered his reductionist approach.

Increased Focus on the Afghan National Police

Although ANA training suffered from insufficient resources, it was not the greatest security force challenge facing CFC-A. The United States placed a lower priority on police development because the Germans had lead-nation responsibility. Eikenberry accepted a large part of the blame for the imbalanced focus placed on each type of security force in the past. As commander of the military cooperation headquarters, he had taken great care when choosing senior ANA leaders, a laborious political exercise designed to ensure that the many factions vying for influence and power in Karzai's government would accept the Afghan commanders.[85] Eikenberry regretted not being as involved in selecting leaders for the Afghan National Police (ANP), and regarded it as a missed opportunity.[86]

There were other reasons why American soldiers did not fully emphasize training and equipping police units before Eikenberry arrived at CFC-A. U.S. laws dictated that the State Department, not the DoD, was responsible for funding the ANP's training. Shifting responsibility between agencies required new legislation or a presidential directive. UN money earmarked to develop an Afghan constabulary, known as the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan and relied upon by American commanders, had not been sufficiently allocated. To correct this deficiency, U.S. military would cover the shortfalls in its outlay for Accelerating Success. According to the action plan, expenditures would cover salaries, training, and equipment.

Afghan domestic politics, in addition to U.S. legal roadblocks and funding scarcity, hindered efforts to form a national police force. Warlords, graft, confusion over responsibilities, porous borders, and a developing insurgency made it difficult to maintain law and order. It should have been easier to create a centrally run constabulary than to form a national army, but the process had become so convoluted that the problem became hard to define and solve.

Coalition forces used multiple national approaches to develop the ANP. Although the Germans were responsible for developing the Afghan police, both Germany and the United States provided training, with each nation employing fundamentally different methodologies. As one study summarized, the German approach was "cautious and rational, building on what already existed and extending outwards," while the American approach was "bold and sweeping, attempting to tackle a number of pressing problems all at the same time."[87] Both methods had merits, but neither provided a

85. Interv, Beckenbaugh with Eikenberry, 27 Nov 2006, p. 24.

86. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 50.

87. Tonita Murray, "Police-Building in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Civil Security Reform," *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 1 (Jan 2007): 108–26.

comprehensive vision for linking the police force to a government-backed rule-of-law system.

Organizationally, the Afghan government divided ANP activity into two ministries. The Counter-Narcotics Police totaled approximately 2,250 personnel who worked with international partners to interdict and eradicate production and trafficking. They answered to the Minister of Counter-Narcotics. The majority of the ANP operated under the Ministry of Interior. The largest force under the Ministry of Interior was the Afghan Uniformed Police, with a targeted goal of 31,000 personnel. The second largest was the Afghan Border Police, with a total strength of just under 8,000 personnel at the end of 2005. To enable both of these forces to focus on their primary missions, the ministry had two smaller policing units: the Afghan Highway Police (roughly 3,400 members) to secure major highways, and the Standby Police (at just over 4,000 members) to serve as a rapid-reaction force that could be deployed as needed anywhere in the country.[88]

The Ministry of Interior, however, was unable to exert effective control over the various organizations. The Afghan Police Law, issued in late September 2005, stipulated that "police shall perform their duties under the leadership of the Minister of Interior in the capital, and under the guidance of the governors and district chiefs in the provinces and districts respectively."[89] Dividing oversight made sense, considering that the border and highway police responsibilities transcended district or provincial security; nonetheless, it required a functioning interior ministry to execute the plan. Given that the ministry did not have administrators throughout the country, control of the border and highway police was marginal at best. Both organizations struggled to maintain even basic competency.

By the time he assumed command of CFC-A, Eikenberry had developed a nuanced understanding of how police could help establish and maintain order in Afghan society. He believed police could affect loyalties through their connections to the populace and their embodiment of a law-based judiciary system.[90] His observation, reflecting the prevailing American perspective at the time, was that "a coherent police program didn't really begin until 2006."[91] That viewpoint, however, ignores the fact that the United States, as the acknowledged coalition leader in Afghanistan, did not exercise oversight of police training before Eikenberry's arrival.[92]

---

88. Andrew Wilder, "Cops or Robbers?: The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police," Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit Info Paper Series (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Jul 2007), pp. 11–13.

89. Government of Afghanistan, 2005 Afghan Police Law, Article 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

90. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, pp. 46–47.

91. Ibid., p. 49; Bfg, CFC-A, 8 Feb 2005, sub: Afghanistan Security Update to the SECDEF, slide 7.

92. For insight into the German perspective, see Gale A. Mattox, "Germany: The Legacy of War in Afghanistan," in Gale A. Mattox and Stephen M. Greiner, eds., *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2015), pp. 96–97.

As reports of poor standards, rampant corruption, and routine equipment shortages reached the Pentagon, Secretary Rumsfeld angled to have the DoD assume greater control over the training mission. When the DoD finally received this authority during Bush's second presidential administration, the task fell to the Office of Military Cooperation. On 12 July 2005, they began the new and expanded mission by changing the organization's name to the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan, now under Air Force Maj. Gen. John T. Brennan.[93] Next, Congress substantiated the expanded mission on a trial basis in the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act and permanently in the 2006 version of the act.[94]

Although these policy decisions gave the security assistance organization a clear mandate, they did not accurately reflect the situation on the ground, nor did they result in more American trainers. Germany maintained its position as lead nation owing to its control over the National Police Academy.[95] Training for rank-and-file patrolmen continued at the Central Training Center in Kabul and seven regional training centers, which now theoretically belonged to the Office of Security Cooperation. The State Department, reluctant to depart from established procedures, also maintained a role in police development.[96] In essence, the new headquarters assumed responsibility for the police

93. The rationale behind the DoD's decision to send Brennan to Afghanistan, given the priority placed on building the ANA, is unclear. An exceptionally qualified F–15 fighter pilot with considerable time in command at all levels, as well as a congressional liaison, he lacked experience in security assistance matters or even as a ground liaison officer working with Army units. Brennan became the CIA's associate director of military affairs following his tour in Afghanistan before retiring in 2008. See also Lt Col Frederick Rice, "Afghanistan Unit Takes on New Mission, Name," DoD News Service, 13 Jul 2005, https://www.archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=16650, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War*, pp. 301–02; Fact sheet, Ofc of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan, 21 Sep 2005, sub: Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan Fact Sheet, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

94. Given the Bush administration's original stance on nation building, this legislation is another example of significant changes to national policy within a relatively short period. Implementing such major policy shifts with little or no notice indicates a lack of long-range planning and makes it more difficult to sustain the momentum of an ongoing military campaign. See *National Defense Authorization Act of 2005*, PL 108–375 (28 Oct 2004), sec. 1208, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-108publ375/pdf/PLAW-108publ375.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; *National Defense Authorization Act of 2006*, PL 109–163 (6 Jan 2006) sec. 1206, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-109publ163/pdf/PLAW-109publ163.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

95. For more information on this specific program, see Markus Feilke, "German Experiences in Police Building in Afghanistan," Proceedings of the GRIPS State-Building Workshop, Jan 2010, https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.604.6222&rep=rep1&type=pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

96. As CENTCOM chief of staff Maj. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III commented in October 2006, "Department of State retains lead responsibility for the police program. [Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan] directs (and has operational responsibility for) the police training and equipment program, [the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] manages the contract, and [the] US Ambassador is responsible for policy guidance." Memo, Maj Gen Lloyd J. Austin for Inspector Gen, DoD, 24 Oct 2006, sub: DOS/DOD Interagency Afghan National Police Assessment, reprinted in Appendix

training program, but neither made policy nor oversaw the government contractor, DynCorp International, that staffed and ran the training centers. This disconnection would have detrimental effects for years to come.

The lack of oversight and authority on the contract diluted the Office of Security Cooperation's control and limited its reach. However, the DoD needed the contractors to fulfill the mission: the Office of Security Cooperation did not have enough personnel to run the central and regional training centers on its own, especially considering that it was already responsible for training the ANA. As the main contractor for training police, DynCorp was providing several hundred trainers and mentors under its contract with the State Department, and would continue to be the largest contingent of police trainers in Afghanistan, despite the widespread belief that "the contract['s] management was a nightmare."[97] The main problem with DynCorp's contract was that it included police training in Iraq and Jordan as well as in Afghanistan. Having multiple customers dispersed across three nations weakened the organization's influence over the agreement, with the result that the company was more beholden to those who controlled disbursement payments in Washington than the State Department's representatives in Kabul. As Ambassador Neumann noted, "Our contractual arrangements were distant, rigid, bureaucratic, and terribly ill suited [*sic*] to fighting a war," because, "a contractor, even the best, is hired to carry out a contract, not to tell the government that the contract's objectives may themselves be wrong, inadequate, or unresponsive to changed circumstances."[98]

Although contracting civilian support in this instance came with challenges and shortcomings, the importance of contractor support in Afghanistan cannot be overstated. The U.S. Army's Title 10 responsibilities for the entire theater of operations in Afghanistan were vast and included major functions such as the intelligence apparatus, logistical support, communications architecture, and medical care. It took inordinate amounts of staffing, money, time, and equipment to provide these services to all U.S. elements, and in many cases to coalition entities. This vast mission to sustain multiple theaters of war could not have been accomplished without contractor support.

By the September 2005 elections in Afghanistan, various agencies had attempted to reform recruitment, training, and payment for the Afghan police. Despite good intentions, little progress was made. With the effort's outcome riding on contractors who worked for a subordinate agency of the State Department and had goals different from those of U.S. and German military trainers (who themselves did not always pursue complementary approaches), problems continued to fester.[99] As Eikenberry looked to give

---

J, Inspectors Gen of the U.S. Department of State and DoD, *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*, Nov 2006, p. 95.

97. Neumann, *The Other War*, pp. 119–20.

98. Ibid.

99. An interagency Inspector General report released by the State and Defense Departments in November 2006 illustrated the depths of this confusion. During its visits, the assessment team found that neither the embassy nor the military had a copy of the contract or the relevant

police training the same attention he had given previously to the Afghan army, he struggled to get ahead of the numerous challenges.

The End of the Bonn Process

General Eikenberry could not control the events that diverted his attention from transferring operational responsibilities to ISAF. He had not been consulted in the Army's decision to replace the 25th Infantry Division with General Kamiya's Southern European Task Force. The latter, which was originally designed to serve as one component of a larger NATO headquarters, had far fewer capabilities than its predecessor. Among other things, Kamiya's headquarters lacked an organic intelligence section and had difficulty analyzing enemy actions in a timely fashion.[100] Its March 2005 deployment to Afghanistan marked the first time the two-star headquarters, hailing from Vicenza, Italy, assumed a combat mission since its inception in 1955. Its previous deployments were to oversee humanitarian assistance missions in Africa in 1997. Assigning a headquarters that was not designed for sustained campaigning frustrated Eikenberry's efforts to pursue an approach that still included combat.

Taliban activity also made the transition between the 25th Infantry Division and the Southern European Task Force difficult. The enemy intensified operations in spring 2005 for reasons which ran the gamut from the onset of the fighting season—that is, warmer weather—to increased political and military strength. Colonel Donahue, who observed this increase in enemy aggressiveness, thought that the Taliban had become active in an attempt to discredit the forthcoming Afghan national elections.[101] Eikenberry's decision to eschew counterinsurgency practices also may have increased the likelihood of enemy contact. Coalition patrols had initiated most of the engagements with the Taliban in the last few months of the Bonn Process.[102] In keeping with his roads-as-a-barrier thinking, Eikenberry measured every attempt to push troops into areas that coalition forces had never entered by weighing the risks and the rewards.[103] Regardless, the Southern European Task Force, an instrument designed for stability operations, soon found itself engaged in

---

modifications, and DynCorp's representatives in Afghanistan did not have copies of the contract's most recent modifications. In effect, all three parties were operating under a contract to which they did not have clear and ready access. Inspectors Gen of the U.S. Department of State and DoD, I*nteragency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*, Nov 2006, p. 35.

100. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 70.

101. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Brig Gen Patrick J. Donahue II, frmr 1st Bde Combat Team, 82d Abn Cdr, 16 Mar 2009, pp. 9–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

102. Col. Kevin C. Owens estimated that 90 percent of his unit's engagements "were on our terms and [due to] our initiative," including a June 2005 meeting engagement in Mya Neshin District (Kandahar Province) in which the task force killed about forty-five Taliban. Interv, Angela McClain and Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Kevin C. Owens, frmr 173d Abn Bde Cdr, 9 and 10 Dec 2008, pp. 17, 21, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Angela McClain and Ross Steele, CSI, with Maj Greg S. Harkins, frmr 2d Bn, 503d Inf Opns Ofcr, 22 Dec 2008, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

103. Interv, Stark, Neumann, and Williams with Ringgenberg, 24 May 2016.



Spc. Patrick Tharpe, USA

A CH–47 Chinook lands on an airstrip near the town of Khost, Afghanistan, to refuel and prepare to transport soldiers to outlying areas to conduct cordon-and-search missions.

missions even more aggressive in nature than the ones its predecessors had been conducting.

Although Eikenberry simultaneously struggled to influence the units he received and to stem enemy activity, he exerted far less control over special operations in Afghanistan. In the three-and-a-half years since Col. John P. Mulholland's TF Dagger initiated Operation Enduring Freedom, the authority exercised by the senior American commander in Afghanistan over these troops had vacillated between directing operations and coordinating them. By the time Eikenberry arrived for his second tour in country, CFC-A had authority over CJSOTF-Afghanistan but not the counterterrorist forces reporting directly to CENTCOM.[104] Eikenberry believed that all special operations should be coordinated and synchronized with his campaign. In addition to eliminating the use of Afghan militia forces, he wanted to restrain night raids, viewing them as a "train wreck" that would interfere with his planned drawdown schedule.[105] His frustration was essentially a command and control issue, but it was one that he lacked the authority to resolve unilaterally.

Operations over which Eikenberry did not exercise strict control occasionally caused problems as well. Missions conducted to prepare historically hostile provinces for the September elections remained subject to the limitations of rotary-wing aircraft and the aggression of a hard-to-reach enemy. Both factors were present in June 2005 when Operation Red

104. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 14.

105. Ibid., p. 15.

Wings resulted in the greatest number of casualties in a single incident since Operation Anaconda. The mission started when the 160th SOAR carried out a night insertion of a SEAL reconnaissance team into RC East on behalf of Lt. Col. James E. Donnellan's 2d Battalion, 3d Marines. Donnellan's unit patrolled an area to the west of Asadabad, the capital of Kunar Province. Its mission was to disrupt enemy activity so as to prevent resistance to the national and provincial elections in September.[106] The SEALS were to collect real-time intelligence for the marines who, in turn, were seeking to pinpoint the whereabouts of a strongman who was attempting to ally himself with the Taliban. Unfortunately, local Afghans compromised these special operators, who soon found themselves under heavy assault. An unsuccessful attempt to extract the team led to the loss of all but one SEAL on the ground and resulted in the deaths of sixteen more personnel when enemy fire downed an CH–47 Chinook carrying a Special Operations quick-reaction force.[107] Rugged terrain, a reliance on rotary-wing assets, and a tragic chance encounter had combined to turn a high-risk mission of medium importance into a tragedy. The incident reinforced Eikenberry's intent to approve only missions whose potential benefit outweighed their incurred risk. The CFC-A commander wanted intelligence, not its absence, to drive operations.

Events taking place outside Afghanistan also had a significant impact on how Eikenberry conducted operations. On 29 July 2005, Uzbekistan informed the United States that it would no longer allow the American military to use Karshi Khanabad Air Base.[108] At the time, CENTCOM maintained twelve C–130 aircraft at the airfield and relied on fuel pipelined onto the base to sustain air operations in Afghanistan.[109] In accordance with subsequent CENTCOM guidance, Eikenberry divided Karshi Khanabad's functions between Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan and Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. Manas Air Base easily absorbed the mission of entering and exiting personnel from theater. Bagram Air Base, however, needed new facilities before it could host the additional aircraft and fuel.[110] Since fuel could not be transported via pipeline to Bagram, engineers had to build the storage capacity for 5.6 million gallons of fuel.[111] For someone trying to limit

106. Ed Darack, "Operation Red Wings," *Marine Corps Gazette* (Jan 2011): 91–92.

107. Lt. Michael Patrick Murphy was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery in Operation Red Wings. In 2014, a feature-length movie of this incident, entitled *Lone Survivor*, was released. The film focused on the experiences of Navy SEAL Hospital Corpsman First Class Marcus Luttrell, portrayed by actor Mark Wahlberg.

108. OPORD 05–01, CFC-A, 4 Sep 2005, sub: K2 Relocation, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The decision resulted from strained relations between the U.S. and Uzbek governments following an incident in May 2005 when Uzbek security forces fired on a crowd of protesters in Andijon, Uzbekistan, killing nearly 200 people. In addition to closing the U.S. air base, Uzbekistan's government shifted away from its previous focus on interacting with Western nations by strengthening ties with Russia and China.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid., paras. 1, 4, 3.A.1, 3.A.2.

111. Ibid., paras. 1–2, 3.A.2., p. 8.



1st Lt. Patricia Sinnett, USA

An AH–64 from Company B, 2d Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, refuels at Asadabad during a mission to pick up Afghan presidential election ballots at remote locations in October 2004. ANA soldiers provide security in an old Soviet tank in the background.

American involvement in Afghanistan, Eikenberry was not helped by having to convert Bagram into a projection platform.

If Eikenberry could not control decisions made by Uzbekistan, Special Forces, the enemy, or allies, he could at least direct how General Kamiya's combat units supported the upcoming elections. Although U.S. troops in Afghanistan sought to create "a stable and secure state willing to contribute in a continued partnership with the U.S.-led coalition in the global war on terror," Eikenberry placed more emphasis on their efforts to pave the way for Afghan elections than his predecessors had.[112] Successfully run elections may not have automatically triggered a reduction in the number of American troops in Afghanistan, but they at least were a concrete step toward "a stable and secure state." Botched or disputed elections might delay or disrupt the Bonn Process, which in turn might necessitate a more robust or lengthier American commitment.

Eikenberry's election focus reinforced Barno's efforts to involve local Afghans in national politics. Unlike the presidential election, however, the September elections would decide who sat in parliament and on provincial councils: each voter would have to select politicians to fill many different seats. This election would not only complete the last step in the constitutional process outlined almost four years ago at Bonn, but also populate government bodies designed to connect people with national governance. Like Barno before him, Eikenberry wanted the election to serve as a referendum on national authority.

112. OPORD 04–07, CFC-A, 7 Nov 2004, sub: Support to National Assembly Elections, para. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

An estimated 7,000 polling stations and thirty-four regional counting centers attested to Karzai's desire to reach all of Afghanistan; however, not all of these places could be observed by UN personnel or protected by coalition forces.[113] Eikenberry's command supported the election when and where it could. In addition to providing outer-cordon security, American soldiers helped register voters, and U.S. helicopters flew ballots to counting stations. Even though the election itself was Afghan-run, the U.S. military remained invested in the result. America's exit from theater was predicated on the elections being a transformative event in the lives of Afghans.

The Taliban opposed the September 2005 National Assembly and provincial council elections with more vigor than it had the October 2004 presidential election. Before the elections, Lt. Col. Orlando Salinas' 3d Battalion, 141st Infantry, whose soldiers were divided among several reconstruction teams, identified that election workers were registering children as voters in Andar District, Ghazni Province. When questioned, one registration coordinator admitted that the Taliban had pressured him into allowing this disruption to occur.[114] More importantly, CJTF-76 recorded thirty-two major attacks the day before the election and forty-one on election day, significant increases over the daily average of twelve.[115] Although most attacks were IED strikes or indirect fire incidents—modest responses, given the lucrative targets presented by people funneling into election sites and standing in lines to vote—they indicated the enemy's willingness to slow governmental progress.

As it turned out, the resistance to the September 2005 elections was more a prelude to future aggression than a serious attempt to oppose Karzai's legitimacy. The enemy's measured response was partly attributable to coalition troops making it difficult to attack polling stations, a temporary condition created by an influx of resources and months of preparation.[116] At the same time, with an estimated 1,700 to 3,500 enemy fighters and a historical willingness to engage Westerners, the Taliban was not deterred

113. Ibid., para 3.E.1.

114. Daily Sitrep 199–05, CJTF-76, 19 Jul 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

115. Daily Sitrep 261–05, CJTF-76 19 Sep 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Colonel Donahue, who commanded TF Devil during the elections, recalled twenty-six attacks on election day; Interv, Clay with Donahue, 16 Mar 2009, p. 14. According to the chief of current operations for the 1st Brigade, "[E]lections made for a rough week. We stopped putting information in the computer because we couldn't put our contacts in the computer fast enough. We started setting up white boards so we could track all the incidents." Interv, Laurence Lessard, CSI, with Capt Keller J. Durkin, frmr 1st Bde Combat Team, 82d Abn Opns Ch, 3 Mar 2008, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

116. For example, the Taliban in Sangin and other districts in northern Helmand Province were attacked preemptively in order to prevent them from being active on election day. Interv, Stark, Neumann, and Williams with Ringgenberg, 24 May 2016. The 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry, which CENTCOM deployed to Afghanistan to support the elections, spent its short deployment targeting known Taliban cells in Wardak and Logar Provinces. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col David P. Anders, Cdr, 1st Bn, 325th Inf, 14 Jan 2009, pp. 7, 9–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

by American firepower.[117] However, the Taliban was waging a protracted war, and if the elections held any significance, it was because they offered an opportunity to show Afghanistan's elected leaders as corrupt or feckless. Attacking hard targets such as polling sites was not worth the effort if the same effect could be achieved at far less cost through information operations.[118]

Time favored Mullah Mohammed Omar and the Taliban. The transition from American to ISAF lead in supporting the Afghan government and the continued development of ANSF were painstaking endeavors that required time and resources. Meanwhile, the unstable political climate in Afghanistan and sanctuary in western Pakistan favored the Taliban's efforts to rebuild its strength and influence. With the United States increasingly focused on operations in Iraq and NATO expanding its geographic responsibilities to include regions sympathetic to the Taliban regime, the stage was effectively set for its reemergence as a significant obstacle to the Karzai government and the intended trajectory of Operation Enduring Freedom.

117. Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 142. However many soldiers the Taliban had, the number appears sufficient to have disrupted the elections more robustly.

118. Colonel Donahue disagreed, suggesting the Taliban did oppose the elections to its fullest extent. In his view, the fundamentalist organization had been embarrassed by its defeat in the presidential election and "made a concentrated effort to try to disrupt" the September election so as to avoid a similar failure. Interv, Clay with Donahue, 16 Mar 2009, p. 9.

Conclusion



The factors that constrained U.S. operations in Afghanistan between May 2002 and September 2005—a lack of resources, poor situational awareness in Washington, D.C., and a distracted senior headquarters in Tampa—all stemmed from insufficient interest among U.S. policymakers. With the Taliban seemingly neutralized and the Bonn Process underway, the Bush administration shifted its attention and resources from Afghanistan to other rogue states that might aid Osama bin Laden and his global terrorism network. Additionally, U.S. policymakers were reluctant to commit to a deeper relationship with the Afghan people. Some cabinet members were concerned that Afghans would view Americans as occupiers like they had the Soviets. Others feared incurring large and expensive peacekeeping obligations similar to recent operations in the Balkans, which had required a multiyear commitment of U.S. forces and resources. As a result, the administration's policy on post-Taliban Afghanistan vacillated for months until Accelerating Success lent belated—and inadequate—clarity to the relationship between America's strategic goals and the war-torn country of Afghanistan.

Forward Deployed in Afghanistan

A greater U.S. commitment to Afghanistan took a back seat to the Bush administration's next goal in the Global War on Terrorism, which was Iraq. CENTCOM deployed another three-star headquarters—built around the XVIII Airborne Corps—that did not have the capabilities and capacity of Lt. Gen. Paul T. Mikolashek's CFLCC, and pulled Mikolashek's headquarters out of Afghanistan in anticipation of subsequent efforts against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Lacking the ability to develop greater insight into turbulent post-Taliban Afghanistan, General Tommy R. Franks issued CJTF-180 orders based on two assumptions. First, he believed it was essential to maintain a minimal footprint in Afghanistan, despite mounting evidence that Afghans did not understand the U.S. mission and objectives but also did not believe that the Americans harbored territorial ambitions like the Soviets. Second, General Franks and the Bush administration overestimated how much assistance the United States could expect from local allies once the Taliban had been ousted from power. As Operation Iraqi Freedom loomed, Franks sought to free more resources for the pending invasion by converting CJTF-180 from a corps to a division headquarters. This reduction further limited what American commanders could accomplish and whom they could influence. As the Afghan state struggled to assert itself during this formative period, warlords took advantage of the sparse U.S. presence by fomenting violence, hindering reconstruction efforts that did not directly benefit their

own interests, and actively working to prevent the young government in Kabul from gaining more power.

When General John P. Abizaid replaced Franks, he sought to address the situation in Afghanistan while remaining attentive to the administration's desire to limit America's long-term commitment to the country. With another war to oversee, the new CENTCOM commander influenced Operation Enduring Freedom most directly by whom he chose to lead the American effort. To fix what he believed were inadequate responses to evolving operational conditions, General Abizaid switched the emphasis of conventional forces from counterterrorism to counterinsurgency. Like Franks with Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, however, Abizaid allowed the campaign plans devised by Lt. Gen. David W. Barno and Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry to substitute for ambiguous U.S. policy in Afghanistan.

Generals Barno and Eikenberry enjoyed almost as much operational freedom in Afghanistan as had General McNeill and Maj. Gen. John R. Vines. Although Barno had to implement an administration-written plan in Accelerating Success, its primary author, Zalmay M. Khalilzad, accompanied him to Kabul as U.S. ambassador. As an outcome of the friendship between Barno and Khalilzad, American strategy was formulated in theater and not in Washington. General Barno created more reconstruction teams than ordered, established areas of operations for battalions and brigades, melded his version of Regional Development Zones with a similar plan from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and navigated around instructions to leave police development to Germany. However, despite receiving more resources than his predecessors, Barno still lacked sufficient staff and funding. As a result, American efforts during this period produced isolated islands of progress within a country that remained largely untouched by his initiatives.

General Eikenberry could not link together those islands of progress because he had received instructions to reduce American involvement in political and developmental affairs. However, Eikenberry did not hesitate to address unfavorable situations that threatened the development of Afghan democracy, as witnessed by the fact that he expanded American participation in police training and, upon orders from Abizaid, supported Britain's counternarcotics campaign. He also recognized the growing competency of the Taliban opposition and ISAF's unwillingness to directly confront this threat. The perceived need to militarily respond to emerging threats made him doubt the propriety of withdrawing resources from Afghanistan to battle the unexpectedly virulent insurgency that sprang up in Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003.

Although theater commanders in Afghanistan sometimes made decisions with the larger conflict in mind, they directed their experience, energies, and imagination toward the problems at hand. Franks and Abizaid oftentimes allowed their responses to these problems to become the United States' effective strategy for the conflict, not because they intentionally abdicated their campaign planning responsibilities but because they trusted their subordinates and needed time to plan future operations in the Global War on Terrorism. While laudable in retrospect, the relationship that developed

between CENTCOM leaders and their subordinates in Afghanistan demonstrates both the U.S. military's abhorrence of a policy vacuum and the administration's abiding belief that it did not have to invest significant resources in a conflict it felt it had already won.

For all of these reasons, a series of unexpected developments—including Afghanistan's weak central government and the Taliban's resurgence—drove the war after Operation Anaconda, rather than a coherent plan. Ironically, many of the developments that alarmed American policymakers might have been avoided if the administration had adopted a more deliberate approach to both seeking out the next battlefield and consolidating the dramatic gains that the United States had made in its victory over the Taliban. Capping three-and-a-half years in which Franks and Abizaid gave their commanders the latitude to exert tremendous influence on America's involvement to Afghanistan, the National Assembly and provincial council elections on 18 September 2005 signified the beginning of an even more tumultuous phase of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Back in the United States

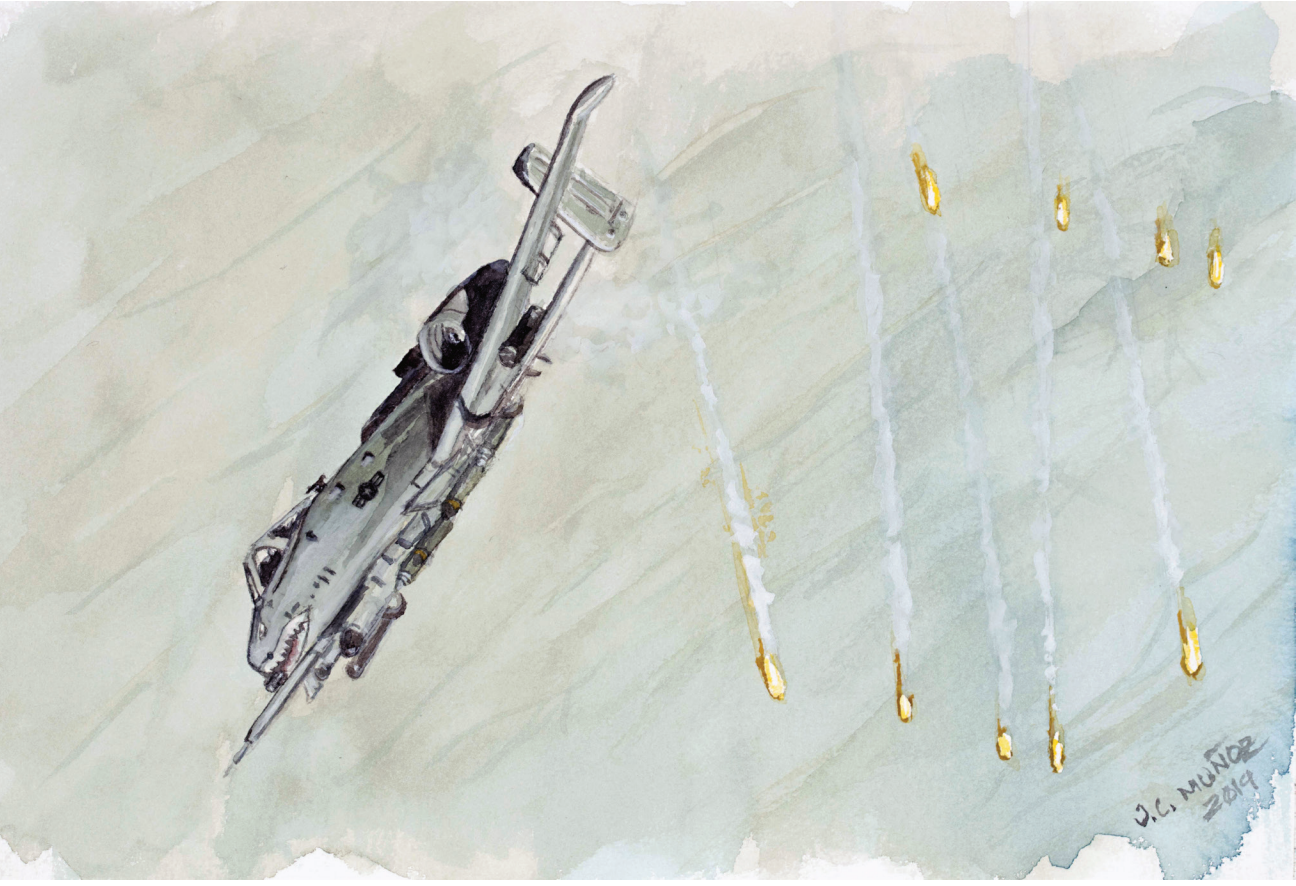
The demands of two active theaters, Afghanistan and Iraq, tested the Army's institutional agility in numerous ways. The biggest challenges were manpower and time. The Army's adjustments to the force structure and readiness models were critical to providing the constant stream of trained and ready forces to meet the requirements. These efforts provided some immediate relief, but the prolonged conflicts would present myriad challenges to the institutional Army in the future.

The DoD's pursuit of transformation in the years before the September 11th attacks generated the need for change of a far different variety than envisioned within the Army. One reason for these changes stemmed from the fact that the Rapid Decisive Operations approach was unable to bring an end to the conflicts the United States had initiated in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both cases, defeated nation-state regimes supporting global terrorism adopted asymmetrical warfighting methods that nullified American advantages. As the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts displayed few signs of concluding on terms favorable to the United States and its allies, the U.S. Army transformed itself into an organization capable of accommodating multiple campaigns of indefinite duration. Whenever the Army lacked the authority to make necessary changes, it enlisted the help of appropriate legislative or corporate bodies to achieve its desired outcomes.

The unforeseen course of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns was not the only factor driving internal adaptation and change. The Army's decision to adopt a brigade-based rotation system, when coupled with the DoD's reluctance to divert funding and resources from its pursuit of transformation-oriented initiatives, promised scant relief to soldiers shouldering the overwhelming share of fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. That situation sparked sweeping force structure changes within the Army, leading to the creation of modular combat, combat support, and combat service support organizations under modular headquarters organizations.

The Army, however, incurred some strategic risk when implementing modularity. The redesigned organizations were far better suited to battle irregular opponents, as compared to peer competitors—such as Russia and China—who were still waging a conventional fight. Modularity, coupled with the Army's deployment and readiness models, all but ensured that most of a brigade's experienced leadership rotate out upon redeployment to its home station. The Army would have to regenerate the organization for the next deployment. In the years to follow, many of the modularity initiatives would be reversed, giving the impression that modularity was itself a method to deal with the immediate issues as opposed to long-term warfighting challenges. Modularity sacrificed much of the capability and capacity of the divisions' and corps' warfighting teams.

Neither the transformation of doctrine nor force structure could account fully for the stresses endured by the Army through the early years of the Global War on Terrorism. The root cause stemmed from the sustained demand on ground forces, which had to defeat irregular opponents in two significantly different operational environments. The sheer difficulty of achieving near-simultaneous victory in both conflicts eventually would lead the Army to use techniques in Afghanistan that it had used successfully in Iraq. It combined this population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine with a surge of forces to the ongoing campaign in Afghanistan. The consequences of this counterinsurgency effort and the effectiveness of the surge will be examined in depth in the second volume of *Modern War in an Ancient Land.*


J.C. MUÑOZ
2019

Bibliographical Note



Documents and Publications

The sources for this account by the Chief of Staff of the Army's Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group were campaign plans, daily update briefings, and monthly and weekly reports compiled or composed before, during, and immediately after many of the events described in this account. They were collected in Afghanistan, from CENTCOM files at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, and from archival sources available at the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort McNair, D.C. Those caches of electronic documents—virtually all of which remain classified—were created by the headquarters overseeing the operations discussed in this narrative. These include CJTFs Mountain, 76, 82, 101, and 180; RC East, RC South, and RC Southwest; TF Phoenix; Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan and Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan; CFC-A; CSTC–A; and USFOR–A. Operational records from upper-echelon headquarters outside of Afghanistan, such as CENTCOM at MacDill Air Force Base; CFLCC at Camp Doha, Kuwait; and Southern European Task Force at Vicenza, Italy, also were useful sources of information.

Much of the documentation required to write about events happening after 2006 was generated by NATO ISAF and its subordinate commands. However, these records are classified by both U.S. and NATO sources. As a result, few of the NATO records were used because of the lengthy procedures required to declassify NATO material. Even more restrictive measures are in place in regards to the release of information on Special Operations activities after the March 2002 timeframe. However, there are a few online avenues for researchers to access formerly classified materials, including George Washington University's National Security Archive and the CENTCOM Freedom of Information Act Web page. The U.S. material provides strategic-level planning, diplomatic, and policy-making documents generated by the Departments of Defense and State, while material found on the latter site is devoted to declassified reports and investigations covering critical events involving U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Useful unclassified accounts of Operation Enduring Freedom and the events leading up to that conflict include retired Brig. Gen. John S. Brown's *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989–2005* as well as two books by the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute: *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom, October 2001–September 2005* and *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan*. The material in *Weapon of Choice* is amplified by the United States Special Operations Command's unclassified *United States Special Operations Command History*

1987–2007. In addition to these unclassified published accounts, primary source materials used to examine the conflict's impact on the Army as an institution were collected from various staff sections of the Headquarters, Department of the Army; the National Guard Bureau; Office of the Chief of Army Reserve; U.S. Army TRADOC at Fort Eustis, Virginia; U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A number of memoirs dealing with events leading up to the events of 11 September 2001 and the American reaction to the terrorist attacks were consulted. While these accounts often provided a detailed, first-hand perspective of decisions made by senior policymakers and commanders, in some cases they presented differing interpretations of events that required deconfliction by the Study Group. Useful accounts of events leading up to the attacks and the U.S. response include CIA director George J. Tenet's *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General H. Hugh Shelton's *Without Hesitation: The Odyssey of an American Warrior*, CENTCOM commander General Tommy R. Franks' *American Soldier*, DoD policymaker Douglas J. Feith's *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism*, and former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld's *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*. For the post-2002 timeframe, the Study Group utilized Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers' *Eyes on the Horizon: Serving on the Front Lines of National Security*, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates' *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, as well as autobiographies of ISAF commanders, including General Sir David J. Richards' *Taking Command* and General Stanley A. McChrystal's *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*.

In addition to the recollections of senior officials and military officers, American and British soldiers have written a number of eyewitness accounts that convey a human perspective often invisible to operational and strategic-level participants. These include Robert S. Anders' *Winning Paktika: Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, Doug Beattie's *Task Force Helmand: A Soldier's Story of Life, Death and Combat on the Afghan Front Line*, Jimmy Blackmon's *Pale Horse: Hunting Terrorists and Commanding Heroes with the 101st Airborne Division*, Ronald Fry's *Hammerhead Six: How Green Berets Waged an Unconventional War Against the Taliban to Win in Afghanistan's Deadly Pech Valley*, Carter Malkasian's incomparable *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier*, Dakota Meyer's *Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War*, Sean Parnell's *Outlaw Platoon: Heroes, Renegades, Infidels, and the Brotherhood of War in Afghanistan*, Clinton Romesha's *Red Platoon: A True Story of American Valor*, and Stuart Tootal's *Danger Close: Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*.

Oral History Interviews and Manuscript Sources

The OEF Study Group's efforts to interview various notables for the project proved very productive due to the tremendous cooperation it received from virtually everyone contacted. While the roster of prominent civilian

officials and military officers—both American and allied—who agreed to be interviewed is too lengthy to list in its entirety, the Study Group gratefully acknowledges President George W. Bush, Vice President Richard B. "Dick" Cheney, Secretaries of Defense Robert M. Gates, Leon E. Panetta, and Charles T. "Chuck" Hagel; CENTCOM commanders Tommy R. Franks, John P. Abizaid, David H. Petraeus, and Lloyd J. Austin III; Ambassadors Ronald E. Neumann, Zalmay Khalilzad, Karl W. Eikenberry, William B. Wood, and Robert P. J. Finn; ISAF commanders Dan K. McNeill, David D. McKiernan, and Stanley A. McChrystal; RC East commanders James J. Schlosser and Curtis M. Scaparrotti; RC South commanders British General Sir Nicholas P. Carter and Dutch Lt. Gen. Mart De Kruif; senior Marine commanders Lt. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson and Lt. Gen. Richard P. Mills; and *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward, who provided key insights into the Obama White House. Many other individuals not listed here kindly consented to being interviewed and for that courtesy the Study Group is profoundly grateful.

The authors also made use of unpublished first-person accounts written to satisfy academic requirements in U.S. Army professional development courses. Most prominent were Personal Experience Papers by students attending the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Georgia's Maneuver Center of Excellence. Several hundred of these accounts have been declassified and posted on Army Knowledge Online and the Fort Benning Donovan Research Library Web site. Similar narratives utilized by the Study Group included those authored by senior noncommissioned officers attending the U.S. Army Sergeant Majors Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, available online via the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College's Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library digital collection. That same collection contains Afghanistan-related interviews conducted by Combat Studies Institute historians for the Operational Leadership Experience series.

Recognizing the need to capture information on key events soon after they occurred, the U.S. Army deployed a number of Military History Detachments to Afghanistan during the opening phase of Operation Enduring Freedom. Maj. Richard M. Brown's 130th Military History Detachment and Maj. John Warsinke's 47th Military History Detachment conducted valuable interviews between March and July 2002. Following the 2001–2002 timeframe, however, most Military History Detachments were deployed to Iraq, and few U.S. Army historians served in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2010. After discovering large gaps in the available Military History Detachment collections, the OEF Study Group conducted a targeted collection effort by compiling multiple terabytes of electronic records from Maj. Gen. John M. Murray's 3d Infantry Division headquarters at Bagram and General John F. Campbell's ISAF headquarters in Kabul.

Secondary Sources

Commercially produced accounts augmented or filled gaps in our primary sources. Although the Study Group drew on information from many publications, several are worth singling out. For a useful general overview,

both Peter Tomsen's *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* and Thomas J. Barfield's *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* proved informative. Valuable accounts that shed additional light on extremist influences in the Middle East and Central Asia included not only Barfield and Tomsen, but also Peter Bergen's *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al-Qaeda's Leader*, Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall's *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, and Seth G. Jones' *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qa'ida since 9/11.*

A selection of useful books on U.S. and ISAF conventional units includes Patrick Bishop's *3 Para*, Stephen Grey's *Into the Viper's Nest: Task Force 1 Fury and the Battle of Musa Qala*, Toby Harnden's *Dead Men Risen: The Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, Col. Bernd Horn's *No Lack of Courage: Operation Medusa, Afghanistan*, Jake Tapper's *The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor*, Gregg Zoroya's *The Chosen Few: A Company of Paratroopers and Its Heroic Struggle to Survive in the Mountains of Afghanistan*, Col. Nathan S. Lowrey's *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan 2001–2002: From the Sea*, and compiler David W. Kummer's *U.S. Marine Corps in Afghanistan, 2001–2009: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* and its companion volume by Paul W. Westermeyer with Christopher Blaker entitled *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2010–2014: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography.*

There are a similar, if not greater, number of detailed and well-written accounts dealing with special operations in Afghanistan, notable among which are Eric Blehm's *The Only Thing Worth Dying For: How Eleven Green Berets Fought for a New Afghanistan*, Rusty Bradley and Kevin Maurer's *Lions of Kandahar: The Story of a Fight Against All Odds*, Daniel R. Green's *In the Warlords' Shadow: Special Operations Forces, the Afghans, and Their Fight Against the Taliban*, Linda Robinson's exceptional *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare*, and Mitch Weiss and Kevin Maurer's *No Way Out: A Story of Valor in the Mountains of Afghanistan* by.

The OEF Study Group also relied on published accounts of nation building and coalition warfare, both of which are central to the Afghanistan conflict. A few of the books consulted for reference on these topics include James F. Dobbins' *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan*; Ahmed Rashid's *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*; and *Coalition Challenge in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance,* edited by Gale A. Mattox and Stephen M. Grenier.

Think tank papers and government reports frequently contain facts unavailable elsewhere. First and foremost among sources covering the period from October 2008 onward were Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction reports submitted quarterly to Congress. Among private institutions, the Santa Monica, California–based RAND Corporation has produced a number of useful studies of Afghanistan, including Terrence K. Kelley, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker's *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts*, Seth G. Jones and Arturo Muñoz's *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defense Forces*, and C. Christine Fair's *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and*

India. Many articles and publications by RAND's competitors—the majority of which are located in Washington, D.C.—not only enlightened OEF Study Group members but also provided valuable insights to senior commanders in Afghanistan. Sources for these pieces include the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Institute for the Study of War, the Brookings Institution, the Center for a New American Security, and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. The last named institution also hosts Bill Roggio's informative *Long War Journal* Web site.

Newspapers often can provide historians with perspectives and facts found nowhere else. Useful media sources on events in Afghanistan for the OEF Study Group included the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*; the British newspapers the *Guardian* and the *Independent*; the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, and Agence France-Presse. When consulting these sources, the OEF Study Group members normally compared multiple accounts from various publications before settling on an accepted version of events in order to compensate for inadvertent errors introduced by journalists writing under tight deadlines. This precaution, however, did not have to be used as frequently when consulting pieces by reporters on extended assignment in the region.

Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group Biographies



Col. (Ret.) Edmund J. "EJ" Degen, a career field artillery officer, currently serves as the director of the Chief of Staff, Army's Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group. He has commanded artillery units at all levels through brigade, and served as the V Corps (U.S.) chief of plans for the Iraq invasion at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, chief of future operations for U.S. Forces Korea, and chief of staff for Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 in Afghanistan. Colonel Degen was a fellow on the CSA's inaugural Strategic Studies Group and served as the Senior Fellow the following year. He has multiple combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Colonel Degen has an MMAS (Master of Military Art and Science) from the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies and an MS in Strategic and Operational Planning from the Joint Advanced Warfighting School. He is the coauthor of *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005), along with numerous journal articles.

Col. Adrian A. Donahoe, a Special Forces officer, enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in 1987. He was commissioned and entered active-duty service in 1993 after graduating from the University of South Dakota. He completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1999 and has served in various command and staff positions within Special Operations and the conventional Army. He is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and multiple Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines deployments. Colonel Donahoe holds an MS from the Naval Postgraduate School and an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies. He is the former director of Special Operations Leadership Development and Education at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the director of the Commander's Action Group for NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force–Afghanistan.

Col. Bryan R. Gibby is the chief of the Military History Division in the Department of History, United States Military Academy, West Point. A 1993 West Point graduate, he was awarded master's and doctoral degrees in history from Ohio State University. Colonel Gibby is a career military intelligence officer and has served in command and staff assignments from tactical to strategic levels. His most recent operational experience was as Commander, 707th Military Intelligence Battalion, providing SIGINT (signals intelligence) support to the CENTCOM areas of responsibility. He twice deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a brigade (2007–2008) and

division (2005–2006) intelligence officer. Following service in Iraq, Colonel Gibby joined Allied Force Command, Madrid, where he served as the chief of intelligence assessments for CJTF Unified Protector in 2011. He is the author of *The Will to Win: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1946–1953*.

Dr. Brian F. Neumann is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He earned his BA in history from the University of Southern California in 1998 and his MA and PhD in history from Texas A&M University in 2001 and 2006, respectively. His academic field is twentieth-century U.S. military history with a focus on World War I. After teaching for four years, he joined CMH in 2010 and began working in the Contemporary Studies Branch, Histories Division, with a focus on Operation Enduring Freedom. He cowrote and edited the center's campaign brochure on Operation Enduring Freedom 2002–2005. After working with the CSA's OEF Study Group for two years, Dr. Neumann became the editor of the "U.S. Army Campaigns of World War One" commemorative pamphlet series in November 2016. He also serves as a member of the CMH World War I Commemoration Committee and as the Center's World War I subject matter expert.

Col. Francis J. H. Park is a historian in the Joint History and Research Office of the Joint Staff. Prior to his current assignment, he was the chief of the Strategy Development Division in the Joint Staff J-5. After commissioning in 1994, he served in command and staff duties primarily in armored cavalry and light airborne cavalry assignments. Designated an Army strategist in 2004, he has served at division, corps, army service component command, and joint task force levels, as well as in the Army Staff and Joint Staff. His service in Operation Enduring Freedom spans 2008–2009 as principal campaign planner for CJTF 101 and RC East, and 2013–2014 as deputy director, Commander's Action Group, ISAF. His other combat experience includes Operations Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve. Colonel Park holds a BA in history from the Johns Hopkins University; an MA in international relations from St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas; an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies; and a PhD in history from the University of Kansas.

Mr. Mark J. Reardon is a senior civilian historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Before joining the Center in 2006, he served as a regular officer in parachute, reconnaissance, and armor units during a twenty-seven-year career in the Army, and retired as a lieutenant colonel. Mr. Reardon, who recently completed a manuscript for the Center on training the post–Saddam Iraqi Army, has also published four books on World War II and Korea, a history of the initial Stryker Brigade deployment to Iraq, several detailed studies of small-unit actions in Iraq, and three studies on U.S. military innovation in World War II.

Dr. Gregory G. Roberts is a desk officer in the State Department's Office of Afghanistan Affairs. As a Presidential Management Fellow (2014–2016), he served as a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the

Combat Studies Institute, and as a special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Chairman's Action Group. Prior to entering federal service, Dr. Roberts worked as a research associate in national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. In 2013, he earned a PhD in history from Yale University, where his research focused on policing in medieval Italy. He earned an MA and an MPhil in history from Yale in 2010, and a BA in history and a BA in French from Vanderbilt University in 2007. Dr. Roberts has published on OEF in the *SAIS Review of International Affairs* and has a chapter in the forthcoming volume *Makers of Modern Landpower: Post-9/11 Perspectives* (University Press of Kentucky).

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Matthew B. Smith is a graduate of Norwich University where he was commissioned field artillery officer in 1999. His initial assignment was with the 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, in Idar-Oberstein, Germany. As a battery commander, he deployed with his unit to Iraq and assumed the mission for all surface-to-surface guided MLRS (multiple launch rocket system) fires throughout Multinational Corps–Iraq. Colonel Smith was then assigned as a Fires Observer Trainer with the Mission Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Upon graduating the Command and General Staff College, he reported to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, in Fort Drum, New York. He deployed to Paktika Province, Afghanistan, in January 2013 and conducted security force assistance with the ANA. Colonel Smith holds an MS in management and business from Webster University.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) John R. Stark retired in 2017 as an armor lieutenant colonel after twenty-five years of service. He graduated as a distinguished cadet from West Point in 1991 and earned an MA (2000) and a PhD (2003) in European history from Ohio State University. He has taught history at West Point and Princeton. While in the Army, he served in Iraq in 2006–2007 as operations officer for the 1st Battalion, 37th Armor "Bandits," in Sinjar and Ramadi and in Afghanistan in 2011–2012 for NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission in Kandahar and Kabul. He was an Observer-Controller-Trainer at the Joint Military Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, where the Grizzly team trained forces for Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo in 2007–2008. He served at NATO headquarters in 2013–2014 as a liaison officer for Allied Command Transformation, Capabilities Engineering and Innovation. He continues his service to the nation as a diplomat at the Department of State.

Maj. Miranda M. Summers-Lowe is a curator of modern military history at Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and an officer in the District of Columbia National Guard. She enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2002 and served as a supply sergeant in Iraq in 2005 before commissioning through Officer Candidate School in 2009. Other assignments include state public affairs officer, command historian, and intelligence officer in the District of Columbia National Guard. She most recently served as the deputy director of public affairs for CJTF-Horn of Africa in Djibouti and as a public affairs adviser in the Office of the Director, Army National

Guard. She was selected as an Army Congressional Fellow and a nonresident fellow of the Modern War Institute at West Point in 2019. Her work has been published in *Military Review*, War on the Rocks, and the *New York Times*. She has a BA in history from the College of William and Mary and a master's in public humanities from Brown University.

Col. Victor H. Sundquist, an intelligence officer, enlisted with the 7th Infantry Division in 1988. He was commissioned in the Intelligence Branch from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1995 and transitioned to the Army Strategist Functional Branch in 2014. He holds a MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies and an MS in counterterrorism theory from Henley-Putnam University. He is a 2016 graduate of the Army's Senior Service War College, where he served as a Fellow at Georgetown University in the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy under the School of Foreign Service. During his twenty-eight years in the Army, he has served in various intelligence and strategist positions at all levels of command, including assignments in CENTCOM's J–2 staff; the J–2X at ISAF headquarters; the 1st Cavalry Division G–2; the State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra, Iraq; deputy director for the Headquarters, Department of the Army's War Plans Division; and most recently as the J–53 plans chief at U.S. Southern Command. He has multiple operational and combat tours, including Operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn.

Dr. Colin Jay Williams is the command historian for the Defense Logistics Agency. A retired Army officer, he taught military history at the United States Military Academy and has combat experience in both Afghanistan and Iraq. He received a PhD in military history from the University of Alabama and has been published in *Key to the Northern Country: The Hudson River Valley in the American Revolution* (SUNY Press, 2013) and *New York History* (vol. 99, no. 1).

Appendix

U.S. Military Terminology and Definitions



The following terms and definitions, drawn from official Army publications and used in the text of this book, are provided here for the reader's ease of reference.

Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 3–24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency,* 21 April 2009 (selected text)

A *clear-hold-build* operation is a full spectrum operation that combines offense (finding and eliminating the insurgent), defense (protecting the local populace) and stability (rebuilding the infrastructure, increasing the legitimacy of the local government, and bringing the rule of law to the area) operations. Each phase—clear, hold, and build—combines offensive, defensive, and stability operations in varying degrees. In the *clear* phase, offensive operations usually dominate; in the *hold* phase, defensive operations are emphasized; and in the *build* phase, stability operations are preeminent. It is usually a relatively long-term operation and requires the commitment of a large number of forces. Clear-hold-build operations are often preceded by shaping operations to set the proper conditions.

Shape – A shaping operation is an operation at any echelon that creates and preserves conditions for the success of the decisive operation.

Clear – Clear is a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area (FM 3–90). The force does this by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of insurgent combatants and leaders. This task is most effectively initiated by a clear-in-zone or cordon-and-search operation, as well as patrolling, ambushes, and targeted raids.

Hold – After clearing the area of guerrillas, the counterinsurgent force must then assign sufficient troops to the cleared area to prevent their return, to defeat any remnants, and to secure the population. This is the hold task. Ideally, Host Nation security forces execute this part of the clear-hold-build operation. Success or failure depends on effectively and continuously securing the populace and on reestablishing a Host Nation local government. Although offensive and stability operations continue, this phase uses defensive operations to secure the population.

Build – The build phase of clear-hold-build operations consists of carrying out programs designed to remove the root causes that led to the insurgency, improve the lives of the inhabitants, and strengthen the Host Nation's ability to provide effective governance. Stability operations predominate in this phase, with many important activities being conducted by nonmilitary agencies. During this phase, the Host Nation security forces should have primary responsibility for security. Progress in building support for the Host Nation government requires protecting the local populace. People who do not believe they are secure from insurgent intimidation, coercion, and reprisals will not risk overtly supporting counterinsurgent efforts.

Army Doctrine Publication 1–02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, 14 August 2018 (selected text)

aeromedical evacuation – (DOD) The movement of patients under medical supervision to and between medical treatment facilities by air transportation. Also called AE. (JP 4–02)

air assault – (DOD) The movement of friendly assault forces by rotary-wing aircraft to engage and destroy enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. (JP 3–18)

airborne assault – (DOD) The use of airborne forces to parachute into an objective area to attack and eliminate armed resistance and secure designated objectives. (JP 3–18)

airdrop – (DOD) The unloading of personnel or materiel from aircraft in flight. (JP 3–17) See ATP 4–48.

air-ground operations – The simultaneous or synchronized employment of ground forces with aviation maneuver and fires to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. Also called AGO. (FM 3–04)

air movements – (Army) Operations involving the use of utility and cargo rotary-wing assets for other than air assaults. (FM 3–90–2)

all-source intelligence – (DOD) 1. Intelligence products and/or organizations and activities that incorporate all sources of information, most frequently including human intelligence, imagery intelligence, measurement and signature intelligence, signals intelligence, and open-source data in the production of finished intelligence. (FM 3–24)

ambush – An attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy. (FM 3–90–1)

antiterrorism – (DOD) Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include rapid containment by local military and civilian forces. Also called AT. (JP 3–07.2)

area of influence – (DOD) A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander's command or control. (JP 3–0)

area of interest – (DOD) That area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory. This area also includes areas occupied by enemy forces who could jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission. Also called AOI. (JP 3–0)

area of operations – (DOD) An operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and maritime forces that should be large enough to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. Also called AO. (JP 3–0)

area of responsibility – (DOD) The geographical area associated with a combatant command within which a geographic combatant commander has authority to plan and conduct operations. Also called AOR. (JP 1)

ARFOR (Army Forces) – The Army component and senior Army headquarters of all Army forces assigned or attached to a combatant command, subordinate joint force command, joint functional command, or multinational command. (FM 3–94)

Army doctrine – Fundamental principles, with supporting tactics, techniques, procedures, and terms and symbols, used for the conduct of operations and which the operating force, and elements of the institutional Army that directly support operations, guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. (ADP 1–01)

Army personnel recovery – The military efforts taken to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel. (FM 3–50)

Army special operations forces – (DOD) Those Active and Reserve Component Army forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. (JP 3–05)

assign – (DOD) 1. To place units or personnel in an organization where such placement is relatively permanent, and/or where such organization controls and administers the units or personnel for the primary function, or greater portion of the functions, of the unit or personnel. (JP 3–0)

attach – (DOD) 1. The placement of units or personnel in an organization where such placement is relatively temporary. (JP 3–0)

attack – An offensive task that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both. (ADRP 3–90)

base camp – An evolving military facility that supports that military operations of a deployed unit and provides the necessary support and services for sustained operations. (ATP 3–37.10)

battalion – A unit consisting of two or more company-, battery-, or troop-size units and a headquarters. (ADRP 3–90)

battalion task force – A maneuver battalion-size unit consisting of a battalion headquarters, at least one assigned company-size element, and at least one attached company-size element from another maneuver or support unit (functional and multifunctional). (ADRP 3–90)

battery – A company-size unit in a fires or air defense artillery battalion. (ADRP 3–90)

biometrics – (DOD) The process of recognizing an individual based on measurable anatomical, physiological, and behavioral characteristics. (JP 2–0)

block – A tactical mission task that denies the enemy access to an area or prevents his advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach. Block is also an obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent the attacking force from passing through an engagement area. (FM 3–90–1)

brigade – A unit consisting of two or more battalions and a headquarters company or detachment. (ADRP 3–90)

cache – (DOD) A source of subsistence and supplies, typically containing items such as food, water, medical items, and/or communications equipment, packaged to prevent damage from exposure and hidden in isolated locations by such methods as burial, concealment, and/or submersion, to support isolated personnel. (JP 3–50)

campaign plan – (DOD) A joint operation plan for a series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic or operational objectives within a given time and space. (JP 5–0)

canalize – (Army) A tactical mission task in which the commander restricts enemy movement to a narrow zone by exploiting terrain coupled with the use of obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver. (FM 3–90–1)

capacity building – The process of creating an environment that fosters host-nation institutional development, community participation, human resources development, and strengthening of managerial systems. (FM 3–07)

casualty – (DOD) Any person who is lost to the organization by having been declared dead, duty status – whereabouts unknown, missing, ill, or injured. (JP 4–02)

casualty evacuation – (DOD) The unregulated movement of casualties that can include movement both to and between medical treatment facilities. Also called CASEVAC. (JP 4–02)

center of gravity – (DOD) The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. Also called COG. (JP 5–0)

civil affairs – (DOD) Designated Active and Reserve Component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs operations and to support civil-military operations. Also called CA. (JP 3–57)

clear – A tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area. (FM 3–90–1)

close air support – (DOD) Air action by fixed and rotary wing aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Also called CAS. (JP 3–0)

close combat – Warfare carried out on land in a direct-fire fight, supported by direct and indirect fires, and other assets. (ADRP 3–0)

coalition – (DOD) An arrangement between two or more nations for common action. (JP 5–0)

collateral damage – (DOD) Unintentional or incidental injury or damage to persons or objects that would not be lawful military targets in the circumstances ruling at the time. (JP 3–60)

combatant command – (DOD) A unified or specified command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also called CCMD. (JP 1)

combined arms – The synchronized and simultaneous application of arms to achieve an effect greater than if each arm was used separately or sequentially. (ADRP 3–0)

command and control – (DOD) The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Also called C2. (JP 1)

commander's intent – (DOD) A clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting

commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned. (JP 3–0)

command relationships – (DOD) The interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the operational authority exercised by commanders in the chain of command; defined further as combatant command (command authority), operational control, tactical control, or support. (JP 1)

company – A company is a unit consisting of two or more platoons, usually of the same type, with a headquarters and a limited capacity for self-support. (ADRP 3–90)

concept plan – (DOD) In the context of joint operation planning level 3 planning detail, an operation plan in an abbreviated format that may require considerable expansion or alteration to convert it into a complete operation plan or operation order. Also called CONPLAN. (JP 5–0)

contain – A tactical mission task that requires the commander to stop, hold, or surround enemy forces or to cause them to center their activity on a given front and prevent them from withdrawing any part of their forces for use elsewhere. (FM 3–90–1)

conventional forces – (DOD) 1. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons; 2. Those forces other than designated special operations forces. Also called CF. (JP 3–05)

convoy – (DOD) 2. A group of vehicles organized for the purpose of control and orderly movement with or without escort protection that moves over the same route at the same time and under one commander. (JP 3–02.1)

cordon and search – A technique of conducting a movement to contact that involves isolating a target area and searching suspect locations within that target area to capture or destroy possible enemy forces and contraband. (FM 3–90–1)

core competency – An essential and enduring capability that a branch or an organization provides to Army operations. (ADP 1–01)

counterattack – Attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force, for such specific purposes as regaining ground lost, or cutting off or destroying enemy advance units, and with the general objective of denying to the enemy the attainment of the enemy's purpose in attacking. In sustained defensive operations, it is undertaken to restore the battle position and is directed at limited objectives. (ADP 1–02)

counterinsurgency – (DOD) Comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes. Also called COIN. (JP 3–24)

countermeasures – (DOD) That form of military science that, by the employment of devices and/or techniques, has as its objective the impairment of the operational effectiveness of enemy activity. (JP 3–13.1)

counterterrorism – (DOD) Activities and operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their organizations and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals. Also called CT. (JP 3–26)

debarkation – (DOD) The unloading of troops, equipment, or supplies from a ship or aircraft. (JP 3–02.1)

decisive action – (Army) The continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks. (ADRP 3–0)

decisive point – (DOD) A geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success. (JP 5–0)

defeat – A tactical mission task that occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. The defeated force's commander is unwilling or unable to pursue his adopted course of action, thereby yielding to the friendly commander's will, and can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use. (FM 3–90–1)

delay – To slow the time of arrival of enemy forces or capabilities or alter the ability of the enemy or adversary to project forces or capabilities. (FM 3–09)

demobilization – (DOD) The process of transitioning a conflict or wartime military establishment and defense-based civilian economy to a peacetime configuration while maintaining national security and economic vitality. (JP 4–05)

demonstration – (DOD) 2. In military deception, a show of force in an area where a decision is not sought that is made to deceive an adversary. It is similar to a feint but no actual contact with the adversary is intended. (JP 3–13.4)

denial operations – Actions to hinder or deny the enemy the use of space, personnel, supplies, or facilities. (FM 3–90–1)

deny – A task to hinder or prevent the enemy from using terrain, space, personnel, supplies, or facilities. (ATP 3–21.20)

deployment – (DOD) The rotation of forces into and out of an operational area. (JP 3–35)

destroy – A tactical mission task that physically renders an enemy force combat-ineffective until it is reconstituted. Alternatively, to destroy a combat system is to damage it so badly that it cannot perform any function or be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt. (FM 3–90–1)

detainee – (DOD) Any person captured, detained, or otherwise under the control of Department of Defense personnel. (JP 3–63)

deterrence – (DOD) The prevention of action by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction and/or belief that the cost of action outweighs the perceived benefits. (JP 3–0)

direct action – (DOD) Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. (JP 3–05)

direct fire – (DOD) Fire delivered on a target using the target itself as a point of aim for either the weapon or the director. (JP 3–09.3)

disarmament – (Army) The collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons of former combatants, belligerents, and the local populace. (FM 3–07)

disrupt – 1. A tactical mission task in which a commander integrates direct and indirect fires, terrain, and obstacles to upset an enemy's formation or tempo, interrupt his timetable, or cause enemy forces to commit prematurely or attack in piecemeal fashion. 2. An obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to cause the enemy to break up his formation and tempo, interrupt his timetable, commit breaching assets prematurely, and attack in a piecemeal effort. (FM 3–90–1)

division – An Army echelon of command above brigade and below corps. It is a tactical headquarters which employs a combination of brigade combat teams, multifunctional brigades, and functional brigades in land operations. (ADRP 3–90)

embarkation – (DOD) The process of putting personnel and/or vehicles and their associated stores and equipment into ships and/or aircraft. (JP 3–02.1)

end state – (DOD) The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives. (JP 3–0)

enemy combatant – (DOD) In general, a person engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners during an armed conflict. Also called EC. (DODD 2310.01E)

fix – A tactical mission task where a commander prevents the enemy from moving any part of his force from a specific location for a specific period. Fix is also an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker's movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area. (FM 3–90–1)

force projection – (DOD) The ability to project the military instrument of national power from the United States or another theater, in response to requirements for military operations. (JP 3–0)

force tailoring – The process of determining the right mix of forces and the sequence of their deployment in support of a joint force commander. (ADRP 3–0)

foreign internal defense – (DOD) Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. Also called FID. (JP 3–22)

foreign military sales – (DOD) That portion of United States security assistance authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended. This assistance differs from the Military Assistance Program and the International Military Education and Training Program in that the recipient provides reimbursement for defense articles and services transferred. Also called FMS. (JP 4–08)

fragmentary order – (DOD) An abbreviated form of an operation order issued as needed after an operation order to change or modify that order or to execute a branch or sequel to that order. Also called FRAGORD. (JP 5–0) See FM 6–0.

fratricide – The unintentional killing or wounding of friendly or neutral personnel by friendly firepower. (ADRP 3–37)

governance – (DOD) The state's ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society, including the representative participatory decision-making processes typically guaranteed under inclusive, constitutional authority. (JP 3–24)

human intelligence – (Army) The collection by a trained human intelligence collector of foreign information from people and multimedia to identify

elements, intentions, composition, strength, dispositions, tactics, equipment, and capabilities. Also called HUMINT. (FM 2–22.3)

imagery intelligence – (DOD) The technical, geographic, and intelligence information derived through the interpretation or analysis of imagery and collateral materials. Also called IMINT. (JP 2–03)

improvised explosive device – (DOD) A weapon that is fabricated or emplaced in an unconventional manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals designed to kill, destroy, incapacitate, harass, deny mobility, or distract. Also called IED. (JP 3–15.1)

indigenous populations and institutions – (DOD) The societal framework of an operational environment including citizens, legal and illegal immigrants, dislocated civilians, and governmental, tribal, ethnic, religious, commercial, and private organizations and entities. Also called IPI. (JP 3–57)

infiltration – (Army) A form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires. (FM 3–90–1)

information operations – (DOD) The integrated employment, during military operations, of information related capabilities in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own. Also called IO. (JP 3–13)

institutional training domain – The Army's institutional training and education system, which primarily includes training base centers and schools that provide initial training and subsequent professional military education for Soldiers, military leaders, and Army Civilians. (ADP 7–0)

instruments of national power – (DOD) All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational and military. (JP 1) See ATP 3–57.60

insurgency – (DOD) The organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself. (JP 3–24)

intelligence – (DOD) 1. The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations. (ADRP 2–0)

interagency – (DOD) Of or pertaining to United States Government agencies and departments, including the Department of Defense. (JP 3–08)

interdict – A tactical mission task where the commander prevents, disrupts, or delays the enemy's use of an area or route. (FM 3–90–1)

intermodal operations – The process of using multimodal capabilities (air, sea, highway, rail) and conveyances (truck, barge, containers, pallets) to move troops, supplies and equipment through expeditionary entry points and the network of specialized transportation nodes to sustain land forces. (ATP 4–13)

intertheater airlift – (DOD) The common-user airlift linking theaters to the continental United States and to other theaters as well as the airlift within the continental United States. (JP 3–17)

in-transit visibility – (DOD) The ability to track the identity, status, and location of Department of Defense units, and non-unit cargo (excluding bulk petroleum, oils, and lubricants) and passengers; patients, and personal property from origin to consignee or destination across the range of military operations. (JP 4–01.2)

intratheater airlift – (DOD) Airlift conducted within a theater with assets assigned to a geographic combatant commander or attached to a subordinate joint force commander. (JP 3–17)

isolate – A tactical mission task that requires a unit to seal off—both physically and psychologically—an enemy from sources of support, deny the enemy freedom of movement, and prevent the isolated enemy force from having contact with other enemy forces. (FM 3–90–1)

joint – (DOD) Connotes activities, operations, organizations, etc., in which elements of two or more Military Departments participate. (JP 1)

joint force – (DOD) A general term applied to a force composed of significant elements, assigned or attached, of two or more Military Departments operating under a single joint force commander. (JP 3–0)

joint force air component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking air forces; planning and coordinating air operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFACC. (JP 3–0)

joint force commander – (DOD) A general term applied to a combatant commander, subunified commander, or joint task force commander authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a joint force. Also called JFC. See also joint force. (JP 1)

joint force land component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking land forces; planning and coordinating land operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFLCC. (JP 3–0)

joint force maritime component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking maritime forces and assets; planning and coordinating maritime operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFMCC. (JP 3–0)

joint force special operations component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking special operations forces and assets; planning and coordinating special operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFSOCC. (JP 3–0)

joint task force – (DOD) A joint force that is constituted and so designated by the Secretary of Defense, a combatant commander, subunified commander, or an existing joint task force commander. Also called JTF. (JP 1)

law of war – (DOD) That part of international law that regulates the conduct of armed hostilities. Also called the law of armed conflict. (JP 1–04)

levels of warfare – A framework for defining and clarifying the relationship among national objectives, the operational approach, and tactical tasks. (ADP 1–01)

line of communications – (DOD) A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called LOC. (JP 2–01.3)

main effort – A designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. (ADRP 3–0)

main supply route – (DOD) The route or routes designated within an operational area upon which the bulk of traffic flows in support of military operations. Also called MSR. (JP 4–01.5)

mission – (DOD) 1. The task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore. (JP 3–0)

mission creep – Tangential efforts to assist in areas of concern unrelated to assigned duties that cripple efficient mission accomplishment. (FM 3–16)

mission-essential task list – A tailored group of mission-essential tasks. Also called METL. (FM 7–0)

mobilization – (DOD) 1. The process of assembling and organizing national resources to support national objectives in time of war or other emergencies. See also industrial mobilization. 2. The process by which the Armed Forces or part of them are brought to a state of readiness for war or other national emergency. Which includes activating all or part of the Reserve Component as well as assembling and organizing personnel, supplies, and materiel. Also called MOB. (JP 4–05)

movement to contact – (Army) An offensive task designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact. (ADRP 3–90)

multimodal –The movement of cargo and personnel using two or more transportation methods (air, highway, rail, sea) from point of origin to destination. (ATP 4–13)

multinational operations – (DOD) A collective term to describe military actions conducted by forces of two or more nations, usually undertaken within the structure of a coalition or alliance. (JP 3–16)

neutralize – (DOD) 1. As pertains to military operations, to render ineffective or unusable. 2. To render enemy personnel or materiel incapable of interfering with a particular operation. 3. To render safe mines, bombs, missiles, and booby traps. 4. To make harmless anything contaminated with a chemical agent. (JP 3–0)

objective – 1. The clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every operation is directed. (JP 5–0) See ADRP 5–0, ATP 3–06.20. 2. The specific target of the action taken which is essential to the commander's plan. See ATP 3–06.20. 3. (Army) A location on the ground used to orient operations, phase operations, facilitate changes of direction, and provide for unity of effort. (ADRP 3–90)

operation – (DOD) 1. A sequence of tactical actions with a common purpose or unifying theme. (JP 1) See FM 3–0, FM 3–09, ATP 3–09.42. A military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission. (JP 3–0)

operational art – (DOD) The cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means. (JP 3–0)

operational control – (DOD) The authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Also called OPCON. (JP 1)

operation order – (DOD) A directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the purpose of effecting the coordinated execution of an operation. Also called OPORD. (JP 5–0)

organic – (DOD) Assigned to and forming an essential part of military organization. Organic parts of a unit are those listed in its table of organization for the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps, and are assigned to the administrative organizations of the operating forces for the Navy. (JP 1)

patrol – A detachment sent out by a larger unit to conduct a specific mission that operates semi-independently and return to the main body upon completion of mission. (ATP 3–21.8)

peace enforcement – (DOD) Application of military force, or threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order. (JP 3–07.3)

peacekeeping – (DOD) Military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an agreement (cease fire, truce, or other such agreement) and support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement. (JP 3–07.3)

platoon – A subdivision of a company or troop consisting of two or more squads or sections. (ADRP 3–90)

port of debarkation – (DOD) The geographic point at which cargo or personnel are discharged. Also called POD. (JP 4–0)

port of embarkation – (DOD) The geographic point in a routing scheme from which cargo or personnel depart. Also called POE. See also port of debarkation. (JP 4–01.2)

propaganda – (DOD) Any form of adversary communication, especially of a biased or misleading nature, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly. (JP 3–13.2)

raid – (DOD) An operation to temporarily seize an area in order to secure information, confuse an adversary, capture personnel or equipment, or to destroy a capability culminating with a planned withdrawal. (JP 3–0)

Rangers – (DOD) Rapidly deployable airborne light infantry organized and trained to conduct highly complex joint direct action operations in coordination with or in support of other special operations units of all Services. (JP 3–05)

redeployment – (DOD) The transfer or rotation of forces and materiel to support another joint force commander's operational requirements, or to return personnel, equipment, and materiel to the home and/or demobilization stations for reintegration and/or outprocessing. (JP 3–35)

reintegration – The process through which former combatants, belligerents, and displaced civilians receive amnesty, reenter civil society, gain sustainable employment, and become contributing members of the local populace. (ADRP 3–07)

relief in place – (DOD) An operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit and the responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. (JP 3–07.3)

reserve – (Army) That portion of a body of troops which is withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement, in order to be available for a decisive movement. (ADRP 3–90)

rule of law – A principle under which all persons, institutions, and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, and that are consistent with international human rights principles. (FM 3–07)

rules of engagement – (DOD) Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. Also called ROE. (JP 1–04)

secure – A tactical mission task that involves preventing a unit, facility, or geographical location from being damaged or destroyed as a result of enemy action. (FM 3–90–1)

seize – (DOD) To employ combat forces to occupy physically and to control a designated area. (JP 3–18) See ATP 3–06.20. (Army) A tactical mission task that involves taking possession of a designated area using overwhelming force. (FM 3–90–1)

sensitive-site assessment – Determination of whether threats or hazards associated with a sensitive site warrant exploitation. Also called SSA. (ATP 3–11.23)

sequel – (DOD) The subsequent major operation or phase based on the possible outcomes (success, stalemate, or defeat) of the current major operation or phase. (JP 5–0)

Service component command – (DOD) A command consisting of the Service component commander and all those Service forces, such as individuals, units, detachments, organizations, and installations under that command, including the support forces that have been assigned to a combatant command or further assigned to a subordinate unified command or joint task force. (JP 1)

shadow government – Governmental elements and activities performed by the irregular organization that will eventually take the place of the existing government. Members of the shadow government can be in any element of the irregular organization (underground, auxiliary, or guerrilla force). (ATP 3–05.1)

shaping operation – An operation that establishes conditions for the decisive operation through effects on the enemy, other actors, and the terrain. (ADRP 3–0)

signals intelligence – (DOD) 1. A category of intelligence comprising either individually or in combination all communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and foreign instrumentation signals intelligence, however transmitted. (JP 2–0)

special forces – (DOD) United States Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities. Also called SF. (JP 3–05)

special operations forces – (DOD) Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Service designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF. (JP 3–05)

special operations task force – A temporary or semipermanent grouping of Army special operations forces units under one commander and formed to carry out a specific operation or a continuing mission. Also called SOTF. (ADRP 3–05)

squad – A small military unit typically containing two or more fire teams. (ADRP 3–90)

stability operations – (DOD) An overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental

services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. (JP 3–0)

staging – (DOD) Assembling, holding, and organizing arriving personnel, equipment, and sustaining materiel in preparation for onward movement. See also staging area. (JP 3–35)

standard operating procedure – (DOD) A set of instructions covering those features of operations which lend themselves to a definite or standardized procedure without loss of effectiveness. The procedure is applicable unless ordered otherwise. Also called SOP. (JP 3–31)

status-of-forces agreement – (DOD) A bilateral or multilateral agreement that defines the legal position of a visiting military force deployed in the territory of a friendly state. Also called SOFA. (JP 3–16)

strong point – A heavily fortified battle position tied to a natural or reinforcing obstacle to create an anchor for the defense or to deny the enemy decisive or key terrain. (ADRP 3–90)

supporting effort – A designated subordinate unit with a mission that supports the success of the main effort. (ADRP 3–0)

suppress – A tactical mission task that results in temporary degradation of the performance of a force or weapons system below the level needed to accomplish the mission. (FM 3–90–1)

surveillance – (DOD) The systematic observation of aerospace, surface or subsurface areas, places, persons, or things by visual, aural, electronic, photographic, or other means. (JP 3–0)

tactical control – (DOD) The authority over forces that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Also called TACON. (JP 1)

tactical level of war – (DOD) The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. (JP 3–0)

task organization – (Army) A temporary grouping of forces designed to accomplish a particular mission. (ADRP 5–0)

task-organizing – (DOD) An organization that assigns to responsible commanders the means with which to accomplish their assigned tasks in any planned action. (JP 3–33) See FM 3–98. (Army) The act of designing an operating force, support staff, or sustainment package of specific size and composition to meet a unique task or mission. (ADRP 3–0)

terrorism – (DOD) The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are usually political. (JP 3–07.2)

theater – (DOD) The geographical area for which a commander of a geographic combatant command has been assigned responsibility. (JP 1)

theater distribution system – (DOD) A distribution system comprised of four independent and mutually supported networks within theater to meet the geographic combatant commander's requirements: the physical network; the financial network; the information network; and the communications network. (JP 4–01)

theater of operations – (DOD) An operational area defined by the geographic combatant commander for the conduct or support of specific military operations. Also called TO. (JP 3–0)

throughput – (DOD) 1. In transportation, the average quantity of cargo and passengers that can pass through a port on a daily basis from arrival at the port to loading onto a ship or plane, or from the discharge from a ship or plane to the exit (clearance) from the port complex. (JP 4–01.5)

training objective – A statement that describes the desired outcome of a training activity in the unit. (ADRP 7–0)

troop – A company-size unit in a cavalry organization. (ADRP 3–90)

unit – (DOD) Any military element whose structure is prescribed by competent authority, such as a table of organization and equipment; specifically, part of an organization. (JP 3–33)

unity of command – (DOD) The operation of all forces under a single responsible commander who has the requisite authority to direct and employ those forces in pursuit of a common purpose. (JP 3–0)

unity of effort – (DOD) Coordination, and cooperation toward common objectives, even if the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization, which is the product of successful unified action. (JP 1)

unmanned aircraft – (DOD) An aircraft that does not carry a human operator and is capable of flight with or without human remote control. Also called UA. (JP 3–30)

vehicle-borne improvised explosive device – (DOD) A device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner on a vehicle incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy,

incapacitate, harass, or distract. Otherwise known as a car bomb. Also called VBIED. (JP 3–10)

warfighting function – A group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes), united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives. (ADRP 3–0)

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Key Terms

Text Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ARCENT	U.S. Army Central Command
CBU	cluster bomb unit
CENTCOM	U.S Central Command
CFACC	Combined Forces Air Component Command
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CIA	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMH	U.S. Army Center of Military History
CSA	Chief of Staff, Army
DoD	Department of Defense
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
HIG	Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin
HMMWV	High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
IED	improvised explosive device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munition
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
medevac	medical evacuation
MLRS	multiple launch rocket system
MMAS	Master of Military Art and Science
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
RC	Regional Command
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SIGINT	signals intelligence
SOAR	Special Operations Aviation Regiment
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TF	Task Force
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
UA	units of action
UEx	Units of Employment X
UEy	Units of Employment Y
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States

Foreign Terms

al-Qaeda	the foundation or the base [*organization name*]
Amir al-Mahmunen	Commander of the Faithful
bayat	an oath of personal allegiance

burqa	head-to-toe covering
fatwa	a deliberate call to arms for believers
jihad	struggle, in the sense of a holy war waged on behalf of Islam
kandak	Afghan battalion-sized unit
loya jirga	grand assembly, akin to a national convention
madrassa	religious educational institution
melmastiia	the obligation to offer protection to guests
mujahideen	those who are struggling or striving for a praiseworthy aim
pashtunwali	the ancient Pashtun code of conduct that includes a strong tradition of hospitality
Qala-i-Jangi	house of war [*place name*]
sharia	Islamic religious law
shura	a local consultative council or assembly
talib	individual member of the Taliban
Taliban	students of Islam [*organization name*]
ushr	a 10 percent tithe, paid in kind
wadi	dry riverbed

Selected U.S. Military Staff Designations

C–3	Combined (Coalition) operations
CCJ5-CMO	Combined (Coalition) joint planning–civil-military operations
CCJ5-ANA	Combined (Coalition) joint planning–Afghan National Army
CJ–3	Combined (Coalition) joint operations
CJ–35	Combined (Coalition) joint future operations
G–3/5/7	Army operations, plans, and training
J–2	Joint staff intelligence
J–3	Joint staff operations
J–5	Joint staff planning
J–9	Joint staff civil-military cooperation
S–2	battalion or brigade intelligence
S–3	battalion or brigade operations

Map Symbols and note terms

Map Symbols

Function

Armor	
Brigade Special Troops Battalion	
Cavalry (Armored)	
Cavalry (Motorized)	
Cavalry (Motorized, Mountain)	
Cavalry (Air Assault, Motorized)	
Cavalry (Rotary Wing, Air)	
Commando	
Field Artillery	
Field Artillery (Air Assault)	
Infantry	
Infantry (Airborne)	
Infantry (Air Assault)	
Infantry (Air Assault with Organic Lift)	
Infantry (Headquarters or Headquarters Element)	
Infantry (Mechanized, Amphibious)	
Infantry (Mechanized, Armored)	
Infantry (Mountain)	
Infantry (Wheeled, Armored)	
Infantry (Wheeled, Armored with Gun System)	
Maneuver Enhancement	
Military Police	

Reconnaissance (Battlefield Surveillance)	
Reconnaissance (Wheeled, Armored)	
Reconnaissance (Wheeled, Armored with Gun System)	
Special Forces	
Rifle/Automatic Weapon (Enemy)	
Light Machine Gun (Enemy)	
Mortar (Enemy)	
Attack by Fire Position	
Support by Fire Position	
Mortar, 60mm or less	
Mortar, greater then 60mm but less than 107mm	
Antitank missle launcher	

Size

Team	⌀
Squad	.
Section	..
Platoon or Detachment	...
Company, Battery, Troop	I
Battalion or Squadron	II
Regiment or Group	III
Brigade	X
Division	XX
Corps	XXX
Task Force	

Example

3d Battalion, 103d Armor



3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry



2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry



4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery



Polish Air Assault Infantry



22d Marine Expeditionary Unit



Company A, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry



504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade



Special Forces ODA 586



3d Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army



Enemy Infantry Platoon



Country Flag

Australia



Denmark



France



Georgia



Germany



Italy



Poland



Romania



Spain



Turkey



United Kingdom



United States

Note terms

ANA	Afghan National Army
ARCENT	U.S. Army Central Command
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CIA	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CINCCENT	Commander in Chief, CENTCOM
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMH	U.S. Army Center of Military History
DoD	Department of Defense
EO	Executive Order
FM	Field Manual
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
GO	General Orders
Grp	Group
Hist Files	Historians Files
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MHD	Military History Detachment
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSA GWU	National Security Archive, George Washington University
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OEF Study Grp	Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group
OMC-A	Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan
OPORD	Operation Order
PEP	Personal experience paper
RC	Regional Command
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SEP	Student experience paper
SF	Special Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TF	Task Force
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
UN	United Nations

Index

A–10 Thunderbolt II, 159, 163
Abdul Ahad Karzai. *See* Karzai, Abdul Ahad.
Abdul Ghani Baradar, Mullah. *See* Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani.
Abdul Rahim, Hariz. *See* Rahim, Hariz Abdul.
Abdul Rashid Dostum. *See* Dostum, Abdul Rashid.
Abdul Zahir. *See* Zahir, Abdul.
Abdullah Abdullah, 116, 19
Abdullah Azzam. *See* Azzam, Abdullah.
Abdullah, Zia, 148
Abdul-Qahir Usmani. *See* Usmani, Abdul-Qahir.
Abdul-Razzaq Nafiz. *See* Nafiz, Abdul-Razzaq.
Abdur Razzaq, Mullah. *See* Razzaq, Mullah Abdur.
Abizaid, General John P., 258–59, 272, 274, 277, 283–84, 288, 294, 302, 305, 319–20, 327–28, 346–47
Abrams Doctrine, 18–19, 305
Abrams, General Creighton W., 18–19
Abu Ghraib prison, 296
AC–130 gunships, 81–82, 151–53, 159, 161, 194
  40-mm. shells, 82
  105-mm. shells, 82
Accelerating Success, 260–62, 276–80, 282, 285–87, 302, 332, 335, 346
Aeromedevac. *See* Medevac.
Afghan Interim Authority, 116, 118, 128, 135–36, 138, 140, 178, 186, 194, 197, 199–200, 224–25, 227, 229
Afghan National Army (ANA), 140, 173–75, 178, 184, 193–94, 197, 221, 223, 229–33, 251, 261, 275, 277–78, 280, 282, 284, 288–89, 291, 301, 332–34, 338
  central corps, 174, 231, 232, 261
  General Staff, 333
  kandaks, 230, 231–32, 275–76, 278–80, 287, 295, 332–34
  provisional force, 288–89
  regional corps, 174, 230, 279–80
  Study Phase 1 Report, 333
Afghan National Police (ANP), 334–36
Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), 320, 326, 344
Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, 196
Agha (nom de guerre), 290
Agha Sharzai, Gul. *See* Sharzai, Gul Agha.
AH–1T Sea Cobra gunships, 112, 163–64, 168
AH–64 Apache gunships, 17, 143, 153–54, 156, 164, 246
Ahad Karzai, Abdul. *See* Karzai, Abdul Ahad.
Ahmad al-Jaber Air Base, 159
Ahmad Jalali, Ali. *See* Jalali, Ali Ahmad.
Ahmad Shad Massoud. *See* Massoud, Ahmad Shah.
Ahmed Rashid. *See* Rashid, Ahmed.
Ahmed Wali Karzai. *See* Karzai, Ahmed Wali.
Ahmed, Lt. Gen. Mahmud, 42–43, 45–46
Aideed, Mohammed Farah, 15
Air Force, U.S., 14, 55–56, 66, 72, 74–76, 79–81, 86, 95, 100–101, 105, 109–10, 142, 146, 153, 158–59, 161, 167, 182–83, 214, 221, 258, 331, 337

Air Force units
2d Bombardment Wing, 40th Expeditionary Bombardment Wing, 71
5th Bombardment Wing, 40th Expeditionary Bombardment Wing, 71
34th Bombardment Squadron, 28th Expeditionary Bombardment Squadron, 71
37th Bombardment Squadron, 28th Expeditionary Bombardment Squadron, 71
74th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, 159
Ninth Air Force, 55
Airborne units. *See also* Infantry Battalions.
1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 245, 250, 301, 343
2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, 284
3d Battalion, 505th Infantry, 82d Airborne Division, 220
3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 214, 236, 243, 250
3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 70–71, 77, 142, 148, 155–56, 214
65th Military Police Company (Airborne), 133
507th Support Battalion, XVIII Airborne Corps, 77
82d Airborne Division, 22, 24, 66, 126, 129, 208, 214, 220, 236, 243, 245, 249–50, 301, 343
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 22, 66, 70–71, 77, 142, 148, 157–59, 165, 167, 208, 214, 218, 236, 301, 307
173d Airborne Brigade, 301
XVIII Airborne Corps, 22, 66, 77, 94, 104, 176–78, 180, 186, 200, 212–14, 248, 257, 291, 330, 345
Aircraft, fixed-wing, 17, 83, 93, 99, 221, 294. *See also* A–10 Thunderbolt; AC–130 gunships; B–1 Lancer bombers; B–2 Stealth bombers; B–52 bombers; C–17 Globemasters; C–130s; E–3A Sentry (Airborne Warning and Control System); F/A–18 fighters; F–14 fighters; F–16 fighters; MC–130 Combat Talons; MiG fighters; Predator drones; Unmanned aerial vehicles.
Aircraft, rotary-wing, 81, 93, 99, 130, 143, 163, 176, 221–22, 242, 294, 340–41. *See also* Helicopters.
AK47, 214
Akhtar Mohammed Osmani. *See* Osmani, Akhtar Mohammed.
Akhund, Mullah Dadullah, 266, 325
Akhund, Mullah Obiadullah, 290
Akhundzada, Sher Mohammed, 135, 199–200, 262
Al Iraqi, 290
al Libi, Layth, 290
Alaska, 28
Albania, 17, 26
Ali (Afghan general), 250
Ali Ahmad Jalali. *See* Jalali, Ali Ahmad.
Ali, Hazarat, 119–20, 122
Alikozai, Mullah Naquib, 114, 118
al-Qaeda, 33–35, 37–38, 40, 42, 45–47, 53, 56–58, 62–63, 65–66, 79–81, 104, 107, 113–15, 117, 120–23, 125–28, 132–36, 139, 142, 144–45, 150, 152, 155, 162, 169–70, 177, 181, 183, 185–86, 200–205, 207, 209–12, 214, 219–20, 247, 254, 263, 271, 273–74, 325. *See also* bin Laden, Osama; Taliban.
beginnings, 8–12
flight from Afghanistan, 202, 204–05, 210, 220
sanctuaries, 2, 37, 40, 47, 119, 183, 186, 247
September 11th attacks, 33, 35, 46, 48, 69, 73, 133, 192, 202, 238, 242, 304, 347
tactical alliance, 201

training camps, 57, 80, 119, 132, 142, 201–02
al-Zawahiri, Ayman, 9–10, 290
Amerine, Capt. Jason L., 100–101, 113, 117–18
Anders, 1st Lt. Robert S., 292
Anders, Lt. Col. David P., 301
Andijon, 341
Annan, Kofi A., 97
Antonov transport plane, 113
Apaches. *See* AH–64 Apache gunships.
ARCENT. *See* U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT).
ARFORGEN. *See* Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN).
Arghandab District, 299
Arghandab River, 4, 117
Arif Sarwari, Mohammed. *See* Sarwari, Mohammed Arif.
Armitage, Richard L., 42–43, 45, 106
Armitage-Ahmed agreement, 106
Armored units, 6, 22, 28–29, 80, 86, 107, 110, 143, 308. *See also* Cavalry units.
1st Armored Division, V Corps, 16
2d Armored Cavalry (Light), 309
3d Armored Cavalry, 22, 236, 309
11th Armored Cavalry, 309
49th Armored Division, 236
155th Armored Brigade, VII Corps, 19
Army Directive 7, 305
Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN), 307, 310, 312, 314–16
Army Transformation Campaign Plan, 306
Arnault, Jean, 267
Artillery, 1, 5, 6, 17, 80, 96, 113, 153, 155, 163–64, 183, 204–05, 229
Artillery units, 28, 308–09, 311
1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery, 214
3d Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, 75, 251
3d Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 291
3d Battalion, 62d Air Defense Artillery, 75
3d Battalion, 319th Field Artillery, 245, 301
3d Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 142
25th Infantry Division Artillery, 291
Ashcroft, John D., 38
Aspland, Capt. Patrick C., 142, 159
Atta Nur. *See* Nur, Ustad Mohammed Atta.
Augustine, Lt. Col. Eugene M., 286
Austin, Maj. Gen. Lloyd J. III, 266, 270–72, 274, 289
Australian Special Air Service, 146–47, 154, 158, 164
Aviation units
1st Battalion, 160th Aviation (SOAR), 83
2d Battalion, 159th Aviation, 168
2d Battalion, 160th Aviation (SOAR), 76, 84
2d Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, 342
3d Battalion, 101st Aviation, 156, 164
3d Battalion, 160th Aviation (SOAR), 67, 77
7th Battalion, 101st Aviation, 143
58th Aviation, 143
101st Aviation, 143, 156, 164
159th Aviation, 168
160th Aviation (SOAR), 66–67, 75–77, 83–84, 88, 118, 242, 340
211th Aviation Regiment, 342
Ayman al-Zawahiri. *See* al-Zawahiri, Ayman.
Azzam, Abdullah, 8, 9

B–1 Lancer bombers, 71–72, 80
B–2 Stealth bombers, 72, 79–80
B–52 bombers, 71–72, 80, 118, 157, 160, 164, 174
Badruddin Haqqani. *See* Haqqani, Badruddin.
Bagby, Brig. Gen. Byron S., 249
Bagram, 85, 88, 96–97, 99, 102, 104, 121, 126, 130–34, 143–45, 148,

Bagram—*Continued*
150–52, 156, 159–61, 164, 167, 169, 176–79, 183–84, 208, 210–11, 217, 221, 225–26, 271, 297, 341
Air Base, 85, 212, 217, 341
Air Support Operations Cell/ Center, 156, 159, 162
capture of, 97
holding facility, and abuses committed at the facility, 132
Balkh Province, 226, 275, 329. *See also* Mazar-e Sharif.
Balkh River Valley, 89
Baltazar, Capt. Franklin F., 153–54
Bamyan Province, 7, 87–89, 96, 226, 291
Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani, 266
Bariullah Khan. *See* Khan, Bariullah.
Barksdale Air Force Base, 71
Barno, Lt. Gen. David W., 257–59, 266–73, 275–78, 280–92, 295–99, 302–05, 319, 327–28, 342, 346
Base Closure and Realignment Commission, 306
Base realignment and closure. *See* Base Closure and Realignment Commission.
Bashar, Hajji, 114
Bashir Noorzai. *See* Noorzai, Bashir.
Bayat, 5
Bentley, Lt. Col. Christopher F., 145, 251
Bergdahl, Sgt. Beaudry R., 111
Bergen, Peter, 12
Berntsen, Gary, 79, 88, 100–101, 104, 119–23
bin Laden, Osama, xvii, 8–11, 25, 34–35, 42–43, 45–46, 102, 119–20, 122–23, 125–27, 129, 136, 183, 201–02, 214, 273–74. *See also* al-Qaeda.
Bismillah Khan Mohammadi. *See* Mohammadi, Bismillah Khan.
Black, J. Cofer, 51
Black Hawks, 34, 75–76, 82–84, 143, 153, 156–57. *See also* Helicopters; HH–60 Black Hawks; MH–60 Black Hawks; UH–60 Black Hawks.
Blair, Tony C., 47
Blum, Lt. Gen. H. Steven, 316
Bolduc, M. Sgt. Armand J., 88, 96
Bolduc, Maj. Donald C., 114
Bolten, Joshua B., 38
Bombs, 1, 6, 11, 14, 17–18, 25, 57, 71–72, 79–82, 84, 88, 92, 96, 98, 113–14, 118, 120, 123, 125, 152–53, 163, 164, 167, 182, 185, 194, 202, 204–05, 263, 294, 325–26. *See also* B–1 Lancer bombers; B–2 Stealth bombers; B–52 bombers; CBU–87 (cluster bomb unit); Mk–82 (500-pound) bomb.
suicide bombers, 25, 205, 263, 325–26
Bonn Conference, 115, 118, 128, 139, 178, 219
Bonn Agreement, 115, 135
Resolution 1386, 135
Bonn II Conference, 277–78
Bonn Process, 116, 184, 195, 197–98, 201, 233, 271, 273, 278, 320, 329, 339, 342
Bosnia and Herzegovina, 16, 54, 70, 138, 192, 262
Boston, 35
Bowers, Lt. Col. Max, 89, 109
BRAC. *See* Base Closure and Realignment Commission.
Braden, Lt. Col. Benjamin R., 294
Brahimi, Lakhdar, 97–99, 267
Brennan, Maj. Gen. John T., 337
Brezhnev, Leonid I., 1
Brigade 055, 8, 58
Brigade combat teams, 24, 70, 142, 236, 250, 307, 308–10, 315, 318. *See also* Interim brigade combat teams; Stryker brigade combat teams.
Bright Star, 56, 67, 73, 77, 94
Brooking, Steve, 180
Brown, Lt. Gen. Bryan D., 67
Brownlee, Romie L., 235
Burnside, Maj. James S., 175
Bush, George H. W., 13

Bush, George W., 24–26, 33, 35, 37–38, 40–41, 44–46, 48–54, 56–57, 60–61, 64, 97, 105–06, 111, 127, 134–35, 139, 172, 184, 186, 191, 193–96, 198–99, 203, 205, 207, 210–11, 237, 249, 255, 262, 267, 279–82, 302, 323–24, 337
Bush administration, 12, 24, 33, 38, 41, 44–50, 52–54, 60, 97, 106, 111, 127, 134–35, 141, 184, 186, 191, 193–96, 199, 203, 205, 207–08, 211, 237, 249, 254–55, 262, 279–82, 302, 323–24, 337, 345
Bush Doctrine, 41, 45, 48
Butler, Capt. Kevin J., 157

C–17 Globemasters, 75–76, 142, 176, 183
C–130s, 75, 106, 341
Calland, R. Adm. Albert J., 67, 79, 88, 93
Cambone, Stephen A., 26
Camp David, 38, 51, 53
Camp Doha, Kuwait, 69, 73, 94, 169, 178, 208
Campbell, Col. John F., 67, 76, 95, 142, 164, 208, 245, 250
Cannons, 155, 163. *See also* Howitzers.
76-mm., 155
122-mm. artillery, 163
Card, Andrew H., 38
Carter, Col. Nicholas P., 225, 249
Cavalry units, 28, 308–09
1st Cavalry Division, 19, 22
2d Armored Cavalry (Light), 309
2d Cavalry Regiment, 309
3d Armored Cavalry, 22, 236, 309
3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 286, 299
11th Armored Cavalry, 309
CBU–87 (cluster bomb unit), 163
Cebrowski, V. Adm. Arthur K., 27
CENTCOM. *See* U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 33–34, 45–46, 51, 55, 57–62, 66, 74–75, 79–80, 82–84, 86, 88–89, 95, 100–101, 104, 108–11, 114, 119–20, 124–25, 132–33, 136, 142, 146, 186, 196, 198, 209, 254
CFACC. *See* Combined Forces Air Component Command (CFACC).
CFC-A. *See* Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A).
CFLCC. *See* Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC).
CH–47 Chinooks, 75, 82–83, 85, 143, 152–55, 159–61, 168–69, 182–83, 341
CH–53 Sea Stallions, 112, 163, 168
Chamberlin, Wendy J., 42, 44, 46
Chapman, Sfc. Nathan R., 136
Chapman, Tech. Sgt. John A., 161–62
Cheek, Col. Gary H., 291
Cheney, Richard B., 56
Chinese Embassy bombing, 17
Chinooks. *See* CH–47 Chinooks; MH–47 Chinooks.
Chirac, Jacques R., 175
Chrétien, Joseph Jacques, 47
Chu, David S. C., 237
CIA. *See* Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
Civil Affairs Task Forces, 222
Civil affairs teams, 93, 219, 222–25, 269, 275, 286
Civil Affairs units, 104
96th Civil Affairs Battalion, 67, 93, 137, 171, 222
352d Civil Affairs Command, 171, 174
360th Civil Affairs Brigade, 223
401st Civil Affairs Battalion, 222
489th Civil Affairs Battalion, 171, 173, 222
Clark, General Wesley K., 17–18
Clarke, Richard A., 38
Clarke, Lt. Col. Richard D., 245
Clarke, Victoria, 181
Clinton, William J., 11, 14–17, 21, 24–25, 54
Clinton administration, 15, 21, 24, 69, 137, 180

Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC), 70, 94, 103–04, 111, 131–34, 140–42, 144–45, 150, 172–73, 177–78, 184, 209, 222
Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force, 139, 141, 171–74
Cody, Maj. Gen. Richard A., 70
Combined Forces Air Component Command (CFACC), 145, 150, 159
Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A), 258, 266, 269, 271–73, 284, 288, 290, 292, 296, 298, 303–04, 320–21, 328–29, 333–36, 340–41
Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force, 222, 224, 226, 229, 289
Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), 67–68, 98, 102, 104, 221, 274, 287, 298, 340. *See also* Special Operations Command.
  Afghanistan, 171, 221, 287, 297, 340
  North, 67
  South, 98, 102, 104. *See also* Task Force K-BAR.
Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), 50, 145, 147–48, 150–51, 153, 155, 157, 159, 163–64, 170, 178–82, 184, 193–94, 208–09, 212, 214–16, 217–22, 224–25, 227, 229–31, 245–50, 253–54, 258, 266, 271, 274, 280, 287, 290–92, 294–98, 301, 333–34, 343
  CJTF-76, 200, 287, 291–92, 294–98, 301, 333–34, 343
  CJTF-180, 176, 178–80, 184, 193–94, 207–09, 212, 214–16, 217–22, 224–27, 229–31, 245–50, 253–54, 258, 266, 271, 273–74, 280, 287, 290–91, 295, 345
  CJTF-Afghanistan, 145
  CJTF-MOUNTAIN, 145, 147–48, 150–51, 153, 155, 157, 159, 163–65, 171, 181–82, 184, 208
Combined Task Forces
  BRONCO, 291–92
  THUNDER, 291, 301
Constitutional Loya Jirga. *See* Loya Jirga, Constitutional.
Cooper, Robert, 116
Corkran, Lt. Col. Ronald E., 95, 148, 156, 159–60, 165, 182
Cornell, Capt. Christopher, 159
Corps, I, 248–49
Corps, III, 22, 248–49
Corps, V, 16, 248
Corps, VII, 19
Corps, XVIII Airborne. *See* Airborne units.
Crane, Conrad C., 19
Crombie, Capt. Roger A., 75, 154–55, 157, 163, 167
Crumpton, Henry A., 79, 88, 123
Cunningham, Sr. Amn. Jason D., 162

Dadullah Akhund, Mullah. *See* Akhund, Mullah Dadullah.
Dailey, Maj. Gen. Dell L., 56, 66, 158
Daykundi Province, 291
de Hoop Scheffer, Jaap, 323
Defense Department. *See* Department of Defense (DoD).
DeLong, Lt. Gen. Michael P., 134
Department of Defense (DoD), 45, 47–49, 61, 86, 105–06, 140, 174, 186, 193, 211–12, 227, 230, 232–34, 237, 242, 260–62, 266, 278, 281–82, 285, 295, 312, 316, 322, 327, 335, 337–38, 347
Diaz, CWO2 David W., 84–85, 88, 95
Dilak, 299
DiChairo, Lt. Col. Joseph, 251, 253, 274–75
Dilawar, 211
Dobbins, James F., 97, 114–16
Donahue, Col. Patrick J. II, 301, 334, 339
Donnellan, Lt. Col. James E., 301, 341
Donovan, Lt. Col. George T., 301
Dorman, Lt. Col. Edward F. III, 95, 99,

132
Dostum (nom de guerre). *See* Dostum, Abdul Rashid.
Dostum, Abdul Rashid, 84–89, 92–93, 96, 98, 106–11, 123, 133, 262, 275
Douad Khan. *See* Khan, Douad.
Drinkwine, Lt. Col. Brian M., 291
Drones. *See* Predator drones; Unmanned aerial vehicles.
Duke, Capt. Micah R., 142

E–3A Sentry (Airborne Warning and Control System), 182
Edmunds, Spec. John J., 83
Effects-based operations, 214–16, 217, 220, 272
Eighth Army, 28
Eikenberry, Lt. Gen. Karl W., 230–31, 233, 279, 319–21, 326–30, 332–36, 338–43, 346
Elvis (nom de guerre), 290
Embedded Training Teams, 232, 329, 333–34
Emergency Loya Jirga. *See* Loya Jirga, Emergency.
Engineer Arif. *See* Sarwari, Mohammed Arif.
Engineer units
  18th Engineer Brigade, 301–02
  92d Engineer Battalion, 95
  307th Engineer Battalion, 245
  326th Engineer Battalion, 142
  528th Engineer Battalion (Heavy), 109th Engineer Group (South Dakota National Guard), 298–99
England, Gordon R., 243
European Union, 48, 139
Executive Order 13223. *See* Posse Comitatus Act of 1878.
Exum, Lt. Andrew, 170

F/A–18 fighters, 80, 92, 110, 118
F–14 fighters, 80
F–16 fighters, 182
Fahim, Mohammed Qasim, 51, 74, 84–85, 87, 88–89, 96, 98, 104, 139–40, 261
  as defense minister, 139–40, 141, 194, 261
  as United Front general, 74, 84–85, 87, 88–89, 96, 98, 104
Faqirullah, 274
Farah Aideed, Mohammed. *See* Aideed, Mohammed Farah.
Farah Province, 325, 329
Faryab Province, 226
Fastabend, Brig. Gen. David A., 235
FATA. *See* Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan).
Fatwa, 10–11
Fazil Mazloom. *See* Mazloom, Fazil.
Fazl, Mullah Mohammed, 6, 107, 111
Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan), 120, 125, 184, 202, 263
Feith, Douglas J., 49, 196, 228
Fetterman, Lt. Col. Patrick L., 165
Field Artillery. *See* Artillery units.
Finance Battalion, 307th, 245
Flynn, Lt. Col. Charles A., 245–46
Fontes, Lt. Col. Robin L., 286
Foreign units
  3d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, 143, 168, 182–83
  26th Romanian Mechanized Battalion, 214
  151st Romanian Mechanized Battalion, 251
  341st Romanian Mechanized Battalion, 301
  Royal Marine 45th Commando, 181, 208
Forman, Col. Mark R., 321
FORSCOM. *See* U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM).
Forts
  Benning, 19, 75, 352
  Bragg, 66, 177, 208, 214, 220, 248–49, 254
  Campbell, 67, 76, 95, 142, 164, 208, 245, 250
  Drum, 70, 168
  Gordon, 134

Forts—*Continued*
Hood, 19
Irwin, 23, 144
Lee, 64
Lewis, 24, 67
McPherson, 28, 68, 94, 137, 178
Monroe, 235, 307
Myer, 64
Polk, 23
Riley, 19
Stewart, 19
Forward Operating Bases, 72, 74–75, 93–94, 99, 104, 131–32, 245, 268, 294, 299, 301
53, 107
GARDEZ, 245
JALALABAD, 245
KHOST, 245
ORGUN-E, 245
RHINO, 93, 103–04, 126, 130–32
SALERNO, 250
SHKIN, 253
Forward Support Battalion, 626th, 142
Fox, Lt. Col. Cynthia, 301
Fox, Lt. Col. David G., 67, 94, 100, 113–14, 117, 118
Franks, General Tommy R., 34, 38, 53, 55–60, 62–63, 66, 68, 73, 79, 81, 83–84, 88–89, 93–94, 96, 98–99, 104, 119, 123–26, 130–32, 134, 136–38, 140–41, 175, 176–78, 207–09, 213, 229, 254, 257, 346–47
Future Combat System, 192

Garrett, Col. William B. III, 245, 251, 270, 274
Gentile, Gian, 19
Gerard, Lt. Col. David T., 214
Ges, Lt. Col. Bertrand A., 301
Ghafour, Haji, 274
Ghamsharik Zaman, Haji. *See* Zaman, Haji Ghamsharik.
Ghani Baradar, Mullah Abdul. *See* Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani.
Ghani, Ashraf, 116, 197, 266
Ghazni Province, 264, 289–91, 325, 329, 343
Andar District, 343
Ghilzai clan, 136
Ghor Province, 51
Ghulomov, Kodir, 56
Gilchrist, Maj. Gen. Peter, 328
Glenn, John H. Jr., 1
Glenn, Lt. Col. Harry C. III, 251
Global War on Terrorism, 34, 37, 40, 54, 57, 65–66, 129, 135, 186, 191–93, 198, 201, 318, 346, 348
Goedkoop, Brig. Gen. Thomas R., 308
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 1
Gore, Albert A., 24, 25
Gray, Lt. Col. David, 145
Green Berets, 86, 88, 146, 208, 241
Grenier, Robert L., 58
Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, 134, 210, 296
Gul Agha Sharzai. *See* Sharzai, Gul Agha.
Gul Rahman. *See* Rahman, Gul.
Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. *See* Hekmatyar, Gulbuddin.

Haas, Lt. Col. Christopher K., 67, 88, 167
Haass, Richard N., 54
Habibullah, Mullah, 211
Hadley, Stephen J., 322
Hagenbeck, Maj. Gen. Franklin L., 70, 131, 144–47, 150–51, 154, 157–60, 163–64, 165, 168, 169, 170, 181, 199, 208, 213, 243
Haji Ghafour. *See* Ghafour, Haji.
Haji Ghamsharik Zaman. *See* Zaman, Haji Ghamsharik.
Haji Sadiq. *See* Sadiq, Haji.
Haji Umar. *See* Umar, Haji.
Haji Zahir. *See* Zahir, Haji.
Hajji Bashar. *See* Bashar, Hajji.
Hamdi, Yaser Esam, 110
Hamid Karzai. *See* Karzai, Hamid.
Hand grenades, 83, 108, 214
Haqqani Network, 135, 200, 263–64, 325. *See also* Haqqani, Badruddin; Haqqani, Jalaluddin; Haqqani, Sirajuddin.

Haqqani, Badruddin, 263. *See also* Haqqani Network.
Haqqani, Jalaluddin, 135–36, 201, 263–64, 290, 325. *See also* Haqqani Network.
Haqqani, Sirajuddin, 263. *See also* Haqqani Network.
Hardy, Lt. Col. Charles K., 214
Hariz Abdul Rahim. *See* Rahim, Hariz Abdul.
Harrell, Brig. Gen. Gary L., 131, 133, 146
Harriman, CWO2 Stanley L., 150, 152
Harward, Capt. Robert S., 102, 143–44, 158, 176, 181
Haynes, William J. II, 38
Hazara, 58, 89, 96, 148, 233
Hazarat Ali. *See* Ali, Hazarat.
Hekmatyar, Gulbuddin, 3–6, 200–201, 263–64, 274. *See also* Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).
Helicopters, 74–76, 80–84, 88–89, 101–02, 105, 114, 125, 143, 146–48, 151–57, 159–61, 163–64, 168–69, 181–82, 201, 205, 217, 221–22, 229, 236, 246, 294, 320, 343. *See also* AH–1T Sea Cobra gunships; AH–64 Apache gunships; CH–47 Chinooks; CH–53 Sea Stallions; Chinooks; HH–60 Black Hawks; MH–6 Little Bird; MH–47 Chinooks; MH–53 Pave Lows; MH–60 Black Hawks; Mi–8s; UH–1N Twin Hueys; UH–60 Black Hawks.
Helmand Province, 135, 178, 199, 246, 262, 265, 268, 281, 286, 291, 298, 325. *See also* Lashkar Gah; Sangin.
Helmly, Lt. Gen. James R., 239
Herat Province, 80–81, 96, 104, 262, 281, 286, 299
Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), 3, 200, 262, 264, 274–75, 304. *See also* Hekmatyar, Gulbuddin.
HH–60 Black Hawks, 76. *See also* Black Hawks.
HIG. *See* Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).
High-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV), 95, 152, 159, 242
Hindu Kush, 67, 100, 224
HMMWVs. *See* High-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV).
Holbrooke, Richard C., 16
Holder, Lt. Gen. Leonard D., 308
Holland, General Charles R., 66–67
Howard, Lt. Col. Michael L., 251, 253, 274
Howitzers, 155, 163, 192, 274. *See also* Cannons.
  105-mm., 274
  122-mm., 155
  155-mm. self-propelled, 192
Huber, Brig. Gen. Keith M., 70
Huggins, Col. James L., 214, 217, 245
Hunter, Lt. Col. Anthony J., 285
Hussein, Saddam. *See* Saddam Hussein.

I Corps. *See* Corps, I.
III Corps. *See* Corps, III.
Improvised explosive device (IED), 214, 263, 325–26, 343
Infantry Battalions. *See also* Airborne units.
  1st Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry, 257
  1st, 87th Infantry, 70, 75, 109, 131, 133, 148, 154, 159, 163, 167, 251, 253, 274
  1st, 187th Infantry, 85, 95, 142, 148, 158, 159, 163, 165, 167, 182
  1st, 325th Infantry, 301, 343
  1st, 501st Infantry, 251
  1st, 504th Infantry, 214
  1st, 505th Infantry, 214, 291
  1st, 508th Infantry, 301
  2d, 5th Infantry, 291, 294
  2d, 22d Infantry, 70, 251, 253, 274–75
  2d, 27th Infantry, 291–92
  2d, 35th Infantry, 291–92
  2d, 87th Infantry, 70, 251

Infantry Battalions—*Continued*
2d, 153d Infantry (Arkansas Army National Guard), 71
2d, 187th Infantry, 70, 142, 148, 153, 157
2d, 503d Infantry, 301
2d, 504th Infantry, 245–46, 301
2d, 505th Infantry, 245, 250
3d, 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division, 291
3d, 141st Infantry, 301, 343
3d, 187th Infantry, 142, 165
3d, 504th Infantry, 245, 250
3d, 505th Infantry, 214, 250
4th, 31st Infantry, 163, 168
Infantry Brigades
3d, 25th Infantry Division, 291
45th, 238, 278
48th (Mechanized), 19
53d (Florida Army National Guard), 333
256th (Mechanized), VII Corps, 19
Infantry Divisions
1st (Mechanized), 19
2d, 22
3d (Mechanized), 22, 66, 270, 307
24th (Mechanized), 19
25th, 221, 290–92, 299, 301, 339
28th (Pennsylvania National Guard), 192
29th, 291
Infantry units
1st, 25
5th, 291, 294
22d, 70, 251, 253, 274–75
27th, 291–92
31st, 163, 168
35th, 291–92
74th, Detachment (Long Range Surveillance), 329
75th, 257
87th, 70, 75, 110, 131, 133, 148, 154, 159, 163, 167, 251, 253, 274
116th, 291
141st (Texas Army National Guard), 301, 343
153d, 71
187th, 70, 95, 142, 148, 153, 157, 159, 163, 165, 182
325th, 301, 343
501st, 251
503d, 301
504th, 214, 245–46, 250, 301
505th, 214, 220, 245, 250, 284, 291, 294
508th, 301
Interim brigade combat teams, 24
Interim Fast Attack Vehicles, 112
International Committee of the Red Cross, 173
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), 128, 139, 141, 176, 178–80, 184, 199, 221, 253, 282, 284, 302, 319–20, 322–23, 325, 327, 329, 333, 344, 346
Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan), 42, 202, 209, 264, 326
Iran, 40, 42, 49, 97, 114, 139, 264
Iraq, 38, 40, 48–49, 69, 127–28, 132, 182, 184, 186, 193, 198–99, 207–08, 234–40, 242, 248, 262, 270, 276, 294, 296, 306, 310–11, 315–18, 322–24, 334, 338, 344, 346–48
ISAF. *See* International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).
Islamabad, 41–43, 45, 58, 106, 119, 125, 203, 205
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, 57, 92
Ismail Khan. *See* Khan, Ismail.
Ismail, Jamal, 9
Israel, 10, 49
Italy, 28, 94, 175, 197, 339

Jacobabad, 44, 74, 82, 95, 101
Jacoby, Brig. Gen. Charles H. Jr., 297
Jaegerkorpset, 147
Jalalabad, 63, 80, 98, 119–22, 202, 245, 250, 290
Jalali, Ali Ahmad, 228, 275
Jalaluddin Haqqani. *See* Haqqani, Jalaluddin.
Jazirat Masirah, 75, 102, 131
Jamal Ismail. *See* Ismail, Jamal.
Japan, 33, 49, 53, 73, 139, 175, 197, 281

Jegerkommando, 147
Jihad, 202, 205, 263, 265
Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), 110
Joint Forces Command, 68, 72, 76, 176, 311, 315
Joint Task Forces, 309–10
  2 (Canada), 147
  EMPIRE SHIELD, 65
Jones, Brig. Gen. Michael D., 146
Jordan, 67, 94, 338

Kabul, 34, 58, 60–61, 63, 67, 74, 80, 88–89, 96–99, 102, 114–16, 135, 138, 140–41, 174–76, 179–80, 184, 186, 193–95, 197–99, 202–04, 209, 221, 223, 225–27, 229–34, 261, 265, 271–74, 276–81, 285, 291–92, 304–05, 323, 325–26, 329–30, 337–38, 346
Kabul Military Academy, 174–75
Kamel Khan Zadran. *See* Zadran, Kamel Khan.
Kamiya, Maj. Gen. Jason K., 301, 334, 342
Kandahar, 46, 80–83, 96, 98, 101–02, 104, 113–14, 118, 126, 131–34, 136, 142–43, 178, 182–83, 202, 210, 217, 221, 236, 246, 264–65, 267–68, 271, 276, 281, 289–92, 294, 296–99, 325
  Airfield, 143, 217, 291–292, 294
  fall of, 6, 134, 236
  International Airport, 117–18, 126, 131–32, 142
  shrine, 5
Kandahar Province
  Ada Ghar, 246
  Arghandab District, 299
  Maywand, 4
  Panjwa'i District, 4
  Shah Wali Kot District, 117, 299, 301
  Spin Boldak, 113, 246, 264–65
Kandaks, 275–76, 332
Kantiway-ye Ulya, 290
Kapisa Province, 291, 329
Karachi, 263
Karim Khalili. *See* Khalili, Karim.
Karimov, Islam A., 55, 75
Karshi Khanabad Air Base, 57, 75–76, 80, 84, 89, 95, 101, 104, 109, 131, 133, 145, 341
Karzai, Abdul Ahad, 100
Karzai, Ahmed Wali, 299
Karzai, Hamid, 100–101, 112, 113–14, 116–18, 135–36, 139, 178–79, 194–96, 199–200, 203, 225–28, 254–55, 261–62, 265, 268, 275, 279, 287–89, 291, 295, 304–05, 320–21, 324–25, 334–35, 342–44
  2004 Afghan presidential elections, 287–88, 295, 321
  2005 Afghan elections, 342–44
  and the Afghan National Police, 335–39
  as chairman of the Afghan Interim/Transitional Authority, 116, 118, 135, 139, 179, 194–96, 199–200, 225, 227, 228, 254–55, 261–62, 265, 275, 279, 289, 291
  as president, 231, 304–05, 320, 324–25, 334
  as tribal leader, 100–101, 113–14, 115, 117
Kashmir, 44, 202–03
Kashmir Khan. *See* Khan, Kashmir.
Kazakhstan, 70
Keane, General John M., 94, 178
Kenya, 57, 70
Kern, Brig. Gen. John H., 174–75, 222–23
Khalili, Karim, 51, 87, 89, 104
Khalilzad, Zalmay M., 114, 139, 267–68, 271, 283, 285, 288–89, 299, 346
Khalis, Younis, 98
Khan Mohammadi, Bismillah. *See* Mohammadi, Bismillah Khan.
Khan Zadran, Kamel. *See* Zadran, Kamel Khan.
Khan Zadran, Pacha. *See* Zadran, Pacha Khan.
Khan Zadran, Zakim. *See* Zadran, Zakim Khan.

Khan, Bariullah, 88, 96
Khan, Douad, 96
Khan, Ismail, 6, 51, 87, 96, 104, 228, 262
Khan, Kashmir, 274
Khan, Lt. Col. Asad A., 294
Khoshkeyer, 148, 153
Khost Province, 136, 148, 172, 181, 200, 220–21, 245, 250, 263–64, 289, 291, 325. *See also* Forward Operating Bases, Provincial Reconstruction Teams.
Kommando Spezialkräfte, 147
Kosovo, 50, 54, 131, 178, 192, 236, 262
Kotal-e Tonal-e Salang, 97
Kozelka, Capt. Glenn E., 163, 169
Kraft, Capt. Nelson G., 154–55, 157, 163
Kratzer, Brig. Gen. David E., 137–41, 173–75
Kunar Province, 100, 200, 264, 268, 271, 274–75, 288–89, 291, 341
  Asadabad, 100, 289–90, 341
Kunduz Province, 63, 92, 96, 98, 104–07, 109, 111, 132–33, 202, 209
Kuth, Capt. Robert B., 163
Kuwait, 67, 69, 73, 94, 139, 159, 163–64, 169, 177, 192, 208, 237
Kyrgyzstan, 341

LaCamera, Lt. Col. Paul J., 70, 76, 148, 154–55, 157, 163–64, 167
Laghman Province, 200, 264, 268, 291
  Mehtar Lam, 329
Lakhdar Brahimi. *See* Brahimi, Lakhdar.
Lashkar Gah, 286, 325
Lane, Brig. Gen. Richard, 181, 183, 281
Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, 335
Layth al Libi. *See* al Libi, Layth.
Lehnert, Brig. Gen. Michael R., 134
Lehrer, Jim, 130
Lerario, Lt. Col. Michael P., 245
Lindh, John Walker, 110
Lodin, Zia, 148, 150, 152–54, 168
Logar Province, 200, 264, 291
Logistical Task Force 530, 95, 99, 132
Logistics Task Force 34, 291
Louis Berger Group, 281
Loya Jirga, 116, 179, 283
  Constitutional, 261, 273, 277–79, 283, 286
  Emergency, 178–79, 181, 183, 195, 199
Loya-Paktia region, 264
Lugar, Richard, 267
Luti, William J., 114
Luttrell, HM1 Marcus (Navy SEAL), 341

M–203 grenade launcher (grenadier), 155
M–249 machine gun, 170
M1A1 Abrams tank, 17
M270 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, 17
M2A3 Bradley fighting vehicles, 17
MacDill Air Force Base, 66, 79
Macgregor, Douglas A., 307
Machine guns, 151–52, 155, 169
  0.50 caliber, 159
  12.7-mm. antiaircraft, 155
  M–249, 169
Madrassa, 5, 11, 326
Manas Air Base, 341
Mansour (nom de guerre), 290
Marine Corps, U.S., 55, 73–74, 77, 93–94, 98, 101, 103–04, 113, 118, 132, 134, 164, 181, 183, 208, 258, 291, 294–95, 301, 333, 341
Marine Corps units
  1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 93
  1st Battalion, 6th Marines, 294
  1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 93
  2d Battalion, 3d Marines, 301, 341
  2d Marine Division, 23
  3d Battalion, 6th Marines, 93
  6th Marines, 93, 291, 294
  13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 163
  15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 73–74, 77, 93–94

22d Marine Expeditionary Unit, 294–95
26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 73, 77, 93–94, 132
Medium Helicopter Squadron 165, 169
Medium Helicopter Squadron 266 (Reinforced), 294
Martinez, 1st Lt. Hector S., 64
Maryoka, 1st Lt. Bradley J., 109
Marzak, 144, 148
Massoud, Ahmad Shah, 2–3, 6–7, 51, 116, 194
Mattis, Brig. Gen. James N., 93, 103, 132, 142
Maughan, Col. George P., 223–26
Mayre, Lt. Col. James M., 143, 153
Maywand, 4
Mazar-e Sharif, 63, 80, 88–89, 92–94, 96, 104, 107, 109, 132, 275
Mazloom, Fazil, 92
MC–130 Combat Talons, 81–83, 102
McBride, Lt. Col. M. Scott, 291–92
McChrystal, Brig. Gen. Stanley A., 216
McColl, Maj. Gen. John C., 141, 176, 179, 184
McDonnell, Lt. Col. Kevin M., 175
McGuire, Lt. Col. Timothy P., 301
McHale, Capt. Matthew M., 148, 150
McKenzie, Col. Kenneth F. Jr., 294
McMahon, Lt. Col. Michael J., 299
McNeill, Lt. Gen. Dan K., 176–79, 184, 186, 194, 199, 207–10, 212–16, 217, 219–21, 224–27, 229, 232, 245, 248–50, 254–55, 257, 272, 276, 280, 283, 289, 295–96, 330, 346
Medevac, 143, 331
Medical Company, 50th, 143
Melmastiia, 46
MH–6 Little Bird, 102
MH–47 Chinooks, 75, 82–84, 88, 161–62, 169, 341
MH–53 Pave Lows, 83
MH–60 Black Hawks, 75, 82–84. *See also* Black Hawks.
Mi–8s, 80
MiG fighters, 80
Mikolashek, Lt. Gen. Paul T., 68–69, 77, 94, 102–04, 111, 126, 140–41, 144, 150, 172–74, 176, 178, 184, 213, 222, 345
Milawa Valley, 120–22
Military Intelligence units
110th Military Intelligence Battalion, 76
202d Military Intelligence Battalion, 134, 212
311th Military Intelligence Battalion, 142
513th Military Intelligence Brigade, 134, 178
Military Police units, 143, 209, 212, 286, 291, 297, 310
65th Military Police Company (Airborne). *See* Airborne units.
519th Military Police Battalion, 143
Military Technical Agreement, 141
Milley, Col. Mark A., 232–33, 278
Milošević, Slobodan, 17–18
Minot Air Force Base, 71
Mixon, Brig. Gen. Benjamin R., 225
Mixon, Maj. Gen. Robert W. Jr., 307–08
Mk–82 (500-pound) bomb, 80, 157, 163, 182
Modular brigade combat teams. *See* Modularity.
Modularity, 307–09, 316, 348
Mogadishu, 34
Mohammadi, Bismillah Khan, 85, 96–97
Mohammed Akhundzada, Sher. *See* Akhundzada, Sher Mohammed.
Mohammed Arif Sarwari. *See* Sarwari, Mohammed Arif.
Mohammed Atta. *See* Nur, Ustad Mohammed Atta.
Mohammed Farah Aideed. *See* Aideed, Mohammed Farah.
Mohammed Fazl, Mullah. *See* Fazl, Mullah Mohammed.
Mohammed Mohaqiq. *See* Mohaqiq, Mohammed.
Mohammed Najibullah. *See* Najibullah, Mohammed.

Mohammed Omar, Mullah. *See* Omar, Mullah Mohammed.
Mohammed Osmani, Akhtar. *See* Osmani, Akhtar Mohammed.
Mohammed Qasim Fahim. *See* Fahim, Mohammed Qasim.
Mohammed, Sufi, 92
Mohammed Wazir, Nek. *See* Wazir, Nek Mohammed.
Mohammed Zahir Shah. *See* Shah, Mohammed Zahir.
Mohaqiq, Mohammed, 89, 92–93
Moore, V. Adm. Charles W., 93, 103–04
Mortars, 86, 121, 150, 154–55, 159, 164, 169, 274
  82-mm., 150, 155
  120-mm., 154–55, 274
Morón Air Base, 71
Mountain Division, 10th, 25, 66, 70–71, 75, 110, 131, 144–46, 154–57, 163–65, 169, 181, 208, 221, 236, 245, 253, 266, 270–71, 274–75, 290–91, 334. *See also* Artillery units; Infantry Battalions; Infantry Brigades; Infantry Divisions; Infantry units; Military Intelligence units.
Mountain Division, 10th, units
  1st Brigade, 23, 70, 245
  2d Brigade, 70, 77, 168, 214, 232–33, 278
Mountain Home Air Force Base, 71
Mubarak, Hosni, 10
Mueller, Robert S. III, 38
Mufi Nizamuddin Shamzai. *See* Shamzai, Mufi Nizamuddin.
Muhammad, Prophet, 5, 8, 44
Mujahideen, 98, 106, 119, 122, 181, 202, 230, 254, 325
Mulholland, Col. John P., 67–68, 76, 88, 94–95, 99–102, 104, 109, 113, 118, 120–21, 131, 144–45, 171, 208, 340
Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. *See* Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani.
Mullah Abdur Razzaq. *See* Razzaq, Mullah Abdur.
Mullah Dadullah Akhund. *See* Akhund, Mullah Dadullah.
Mullah Habibullah. *See* Habibullah, Mullah.
Mullah Mohammed Fazl. *See* Fazl, Mullah Mohammed.
Mullah Mohammed Omar. *See* Omar, Mullah Mohammed.
Mullah Naquib Alikozai. *See* Alikozai, Mullah Naquib.
Mullah Obiadullah Akhund. *See* Akhund, Mullah Obiadullah.
Murphy, Lt. Michael Patrick, 341
Musharraf, Pervez, 42–44, 57, 105–06, 184, 202–03, 207
Myers, General Richard B., 56, 105, 145, 178

Nafiz, Abdul-Razzaq, 92
Najibullah Sadiqi. *See* Sadiqi, Najibullah.
Najibullah, Mohammed, 2–3, 9
Namangani, Juma, 92
Nangarhar Province, 119, 125, 250, 275, 288–89, 291
  Jalalabad, 63, 80, 98, 119–22, 202, 245, 250, 290
Naquib Alikozai, Mullah. *See* Alikozai, Mullah Naquib.
National Guard. *See* U.S. Army National Guard.
National Highway 617, 298
National Security Council, Afghanistan, 195
National Security Council, U.S., 51, 54, 60–62, 97, 261, 281, 302, 332
NATO. *See* North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
NATURAL FIRE (joint exercise), 67
Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, 67
Naval Expeditionary Task Force 58. *See* Task Force 58.
Naval Special Warfare Command, 66
Navy, U.S., 26–27, 33, 43, 55, 65–67, 73–74, 79–80, 92–93, 101–02, 109, 134, 146–47, 158, 161–62, 176, 210, 258, 296, 341
Navy units
  Fifth Fleet, 55

SEAL Team 2, 147
SEAL Team 3, 147, 181
SEAL Team 8, 147
SEAL Team Mako–21, 160
SEAL Team Mako–30, 160–62
SEAL Team Mako–31, 151–52, 153, 156, 158
Naylor, 89
Neason, Lt. Col. Clarence Jr., 291
Nek Mohammed Wazir. *See* Wazir, Nek Mohammed.
Neumann, Ronald E., 328, 338
New Orleans, 317
New York City, 64, 66
New Zealand Special Air Service, 136, 147
Newman, Capt. Dean S., 89, 92
Newman, CWO3 James P., 96
Nikeh Valley, 169
Nimroz Province, 276, 291, 325
Ninth Air Force, 55
Nizamuddin Shamzai, Mufi. *See* Shamzai, Mufi Nizamuddin.
Nom de guerre
Agha. *See* Agha (nom de guerre).
Dostum. *See* Dostum, Abdul Rashid.
Elvis. *See* Elvis (nom de guerre).
Mansour. *See* Mansour (nom de guerre).
Noorzai, Bashir, 290
Norfolk, 64, 68, 73, 76, 176
Norfolk Naval Base, 73
North Africa, 10
North Arabian Sea, 79
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 48–50, 221, 253, 282, 284, 304–05, 319–20, 322–24, 327–30, 333–34, 344
North Korea, 127
North Waziristan, 263
Northeast Asia, 22
Northwest Frontier Province, 264
Nur, Ustad Mohammed Atta, 89, 92–93, 95, 104, 275
Nuri, Nurullah, 92
Nuristan Province, 200, 264, 268, 274, 291
Mangalam, 274
Nurullah Nuri. *See* Nuri, Nurullah
Nutsch, Capt. Mark D., 85–86
Nutter, Col. Cassel J., 137, 141

Obiadullah Akhund, Mullah. *See* Akhund, Mullah Obiadullah.
Objectives
BADGER, 81
GECKO, 81–82
GINGER, 164
REMINGTON, 148, 150, 164
RHINO, 81–83, 102, 112–13
ODAs. *See* Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams.
Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan, 140–41, 174–75, 223, 229–30, 232–33, 278–80, 295, 297, 330, 337
O'Hara, Capt. Patrick, 96
Olson, Maj. Gen. Eric T., 290, 292, 299
Oman, 81, 83, 102, 131, 158, 160
Omar, Mullah Mohammed, 4–7, 10, 41–42, 45–46, 58, 80–82, 114, 202–03, 211, 263–64, 266, 344
Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams, 84, 88, 95–96, 98-100, 102, 104, 148, 150, 212, 218–19, 229, 253, 287, 298, 326
ODA 312, 250
ODA 314, 218
ODA 342, 253
ODA 344, 253
ODA 372, 148, 167
ODA 381, 148
ODA 534, 89, 109
ODA 542, 148
ODA 553, 89, 94
ODA 554, 96
ODA 555, 84–85, 94, 96
ODA 571, 148
ODA 572, 121–22, 148
ODA 574, 100–101, 117
ODA 583, 100–101, 113, 118
ODA 585, 88
ODA 586, 96
ODA 594, 95, 143, 148
ODA 595, 84–86, 92, 109

Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams—*Continued*
ODA 986, 218
Operational Detachment Charlie teams
51, 88
53, 89, 107, 109
Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams, 333
Operations, U.S.
ALAMO SWEEP, 219, 245
ANACONDA, 34, 146–47, 150–53, 156, 159, 170, 200–201, 208, 213–14, 340, 347
CHAMPION STRIKE, 214, 220, 245
DESERT SHIELD, 13
DESERT STORM, 214, 237–38
ENDURING FREEDOM, 57, 67, 69, 83, 136, 178, 183, 192, 194, 196, 203, 205, 211, 217, 225–26, 228–29, 233–34, 239, 248–50, 253, 255, 258, 271, 277, 279, 282, 287, 291, 295–97, 302, 323, 334, 340, 344, 346–47
ENDURING FREEDOM–Afghanistan, 50, 57
ENDURING FREEDOM–Horn of Africa, 57, 70
ENDURING FREEDOM–Philippines, 57, 242
ESSENTIAL HARVEST, 26
HARPOON, 168–69
INFINITE JUSTICE, 57
INFINITE REACH, 57
INFINITE RESOLVE, 57
IRAQI FREEDOM, 57, 198, 234, 239, 270
MONGOOSE, 246
MOUNTAIN LION, 180–84, 213–14, 219–20, 245
MOUNTAIN RESOLVE, 274
MOUNTAIN SWEEP, 218–20
MOUNTAIN VIPER, 253, 273
NEWBURGH, 298
NOBLE EAGLE, 65
POLAR HARPOON, 169
PTARMIGAN, 182
RED WINGS, 340
RESTORE HOPE, 14
SECURE FUTURE, 289–90
SNIPE, 183
TICONDEROGA, 294
TORI II, 183
TRENTON, 294
UNIFIED RESOLVE, 250
VIPER, 246, 250, 253, 273
WARRIOR SWEEP, 250
Osama bin Laden. *See* bin Laden, Osama.
Osmani, Akhtar Mohammed, 266, 290
Otner, Lt. Col. Blake C., 291
Owens, Col. Kevin C., 301, 339

Pacha Khan Zadran. *See* Zadran, Pacha Khan.
Pachir wa Agam, 122
Panjwa'i District, 4
Pakistan, 34, 41–45, 47, 55, 57, 59, 61, 70, 72, 74, 77, 82–83, 92, 95, 97–98, 100, 105, 114, 120, 123, 125, 127, 131, 138–39, 142, 147–48, 163–64, 183–84, 186–87, 198, 202–04, 207, 209–10, 214, 220, 230, 245–46, 250, 253, 255, 263–66, 273, 275, 287, 291, 301, 323, 325–26, 330, 344
Federally Administered Tribal Areas, 120, 125, 184, 202, 263
Islamabad, 41–43, 45, 58, 106, 119, 125, 203, 205
Jacobabad, 44, 74, 82, 95, 101
Karachi, 263
Miran Shah, 263
North Waziristan, 263
Northwest Frontier Province, 264
Pasni, 74
Peshawar, 114, 264
Quetta, 100, 201–02, 263–64
Quetta Shura Taliban, 325
South Waziristan, 204–05
Tirah Valley, 204
Paktika Province, 200, 214, 253, 263, 291–92, 325
Sharan, 269
Paktiya Province, 135, 196, 200, 218, 226, 250, 263, 291, 325
Gardez, 150, 152, 160–61, 196, 218,

226–27, 245, 262
Jaji, 8
Zurmat District, 218
Palestine, 49
Parker, Col. Wayland E., 141
Parwan Province, 291
Paschal, Lt. Col. David G., 251
Pashtun, 42, 45–46, 58, 61, 63, 83–84, 98, 100–102, 114, 119–20, 132, 135–36, 148, 179, 186, 194–95, 199–200, 203–05, 229, 233, 260, 265, 288–89, 294
Pashtunwali, 46
Pasni, 74
Patriquin, Capt. Travis L., 155
Pedersen, Col. Richard N., 291, 298–99
Pennsylvania, 35
Perryman, Brig. Gen. John M., 333
Persian Gulf, 74
Peshawar, 114, 264
Petawek, 117
Phelan, Col. Mark V., 171, 175
Philippines, 57, 242
Piatt, Lt. Col. Walter E., 291
Pirozzi, Lt. Col. Thomas L., 142
Positions
AMY, 148, 154, 159
BETTY, 148, 154
CINDY, 148, 154
DIANE, 148, 154, 163
EVE, 103, 148, 157, 163, 329
FORD, 148
GINGER, 148, 156, 158, 163–64
HEATHER, 148
JEEP, 148
OLDSMOBILE, 148
Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, 65
Executive Order 13223, 64
Title 10, U.S. Code, 64–65, 178, 306, 311, 338
Title 32, U.S. Code, 65
Powell, General Colin L., 13, 38, 40, 43, 47–49, 58, 97, 139–40, 322
Powers, Lt. Col. Joel R., 294
Predator drones, 82, 95, 157, 161, 204–05. *See also* Unmanned aerial vehicles.
Presidential Decision Directive 25, 15–16
Pressler Amendment, 1–2
Preysler, Lt. Col. Charles A., 70, 142, 148, 154, 157, 159–61, 163
Prince Sultan Air Base, 71–73, 150
Project Standard Bearer, 20
Prophet Muhammad. *See* Muhammad, Prophet.
Provincial council elections, 278, 297–98, 301–02, 304, 320, 343, 347
Provincial Reconstruction Teams, 193, 225–27, 255, 261, 268–70, 272–73, 275–76, 285–86, 289, 291, 295–96, 298, 303–04, 323, 328–29, 333, 343, 346
Psychological Operations Group, 4th, 67
Puerto Rico, 28, 64
Putin, Vladimir, 47

Qala-i-Jangi, 92, 107–12, 132–33, 209
prison uprising, 107–11, 132–33
Qanooni, Yunus, 114, 141, 194
Qasim Fahim, Mohammed. *See* Fahim, Mohammed Qasim.
Qatar, 98
Quander, Capt. Mark C., 142
Quartermaster units
54th Quartermaster Company, 64
311th Quartermaster Company (Mortuary Affairs), 64
Quetta, 100, 201–02, 263–64, 325
Quetta Shura Taliban, 325. *See also* Taliban.

Rabe, Maj. Richard A., 280
Rahim, Hariz Abdul, 290
Rahman, Gul, 290
Ramstein Air Base, 69
Ranger Regiment, 75th, 66–67, 75, 81-82, 242, 287
2d Battalion, 67
3d Battalion, 75, 81–82
Rapid Decisive Operations, 234, 236, 347
Rashid Dostum, Abdul. *See* Dostum, Abdul Rashid.
Rashid, Ahmed, 6, 105

Razzaq, Mullah Abdur, 266
Rear Area Operations Center, 122d. *See* Support units, 122d Support Detachment (Rear Tactical Operations Center).
Reconstruction teams. *See* Provincial Reconstruction Teams.
Regional Commands (RCs), 319, 334
East, 289, 291, 298, 301, 328, 341
North, 284, 319
South, 216, 291, 301, 327
West, 284, 286
Regional Development Zones, 267, 270, 272, 276, 289–90, 346
Renuart, Maj. Gen. Victor G. Jr., Renuart 55–56, 71
Reserves, the. *See* U.S. Army Reserve.
Rice, Condoleezza, 24, 38, 260, 302–03, 322
Rice, Lt. Col. Ronald, 214
Richardson, Lt. Col. James M., 164
Ring Road, the, 96, 281
Ringgenberg, Capt. Dirk D., 301, 329
Riyadh, 71
Roberts Ridge, 162, 170. *See also* Takur Ghar.
Roberts, PO1 Neil C., 161–62
Robinson, Mary, 132
Rocket launchers, 6, 17, 214
Rocket-propelled grenades, 160
Rockets, 6, 17, 113, 169, 183
Rodebaugh, Capt. William T. III, 76
Rohrabacher, Dana, 59
Rosengard, Lt. Col. Mark D., 145, 171, 174, 176
Rumsfeld, Donald H., 14, 26–27, 38–40, 43, 49–53, 56–57, 59–60, 80, 84, 105–06, 111, 129–30, 134, 140, 178–79, 192, 195–98, 210, 233, 243, 249, 254, 257–58, 262, 276–78, 280, 282, 284–85, 316, 322–24, 327–28, 332, 336
Russell, Col. Matthew H., 301
Russell, Lt. Col. Steven D., 173, 175
Russia, 3, 12, 36, 47, 55, 76, 97, 114, 116, 341, 348. *See also* Soviet Union.
Ryan, Capt. William A., 156
SA–3 Goa radar-guided surface-to-air missiles, 6
SA–7 Grail man-portable surface-to-air missiles, 6
Saddam Hussein, 10, 13, 38, 132, 191, 193, 198, 237, 249, 330, 345–46
Sadiq, Haji, 274
Sadiqi, Najibullah, 176
Safed Kotal, 89
Salinas, Lt. Col. Orlando, 301, 343
Sami ul-Haq. *See* ul-Haq, Sami.
Samangan Province, 88
Sangin, 343
Sarajevo, 16
Sarwari, Mohammed Arif, 88
Saudi Arabia, 49, 71, 73, 139, 263, 281
Schmitt, Eric, 316
Schoomaker, General Peter J., 234–35, 239, 306–08, 310–11, 315–16
Schröder, Gerhard F., 323
Schroen, Gary C., 74, 80, 84–85, 88
Schweitzer, Lt. Col. Martin P., 214
Scortino, S. Sgt. Michael A., 110
Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) units. *See* Navy units.
SEAL units. *See* Navy units.
Self, Capt. Nathan E., 161–62
Sellers, Lt. Col. Terry L., 291
September 11th, 33, 35, 46, 48, 69, 73, 133, 192, 202, 238, 242, 304, 347. *See also* al-Qaeda.
attacks 35, 69, 73, 192, 202, 238, 242, 304, 347
Serbia, 17
Service Support Group 22, 294
Shah Massoud, Ahmad. *See* Massoud, Ahmad Shah
Shah, Mohammed Zahir, 61, 100, 114, 195
Shah Wali Kot, 117, 297–99, 301
Shah, Zahir. *See* Shah, Mohammed Zahir.
Shahbaz Air Force Base, 74, 95
Shahi Kot Valley, 34, 144–45, 147–48, 150–53, 155, 159, 161, 163–67, 170, 181–82, 185, 209, 250
Whale, the, 144, 150, 153, 164–65,

167–69
Shamsi, 44, 75
Shamzai, Mufi Nizamuddin, 46
Sharia, 265, 325
Sharzai, Gul Agha, 99–102, 111, 113, 117–19, 299
Shah Wali Kot, 117, 299, 301
Shediyaki Ghar, 181
Shelton, General H. Hugh, 25–27, 38, 51, 53, 56, 58, 79
Sher Khan Khel, 144, 148
Sher Mohammed Akhundzada. *See* Akhundzada, Sher Mohammed.
Shibirghan, 79
  prison, 107, 133, 209
Shindand, 79
Shinseki, General Erik K., 21, 23, 24, 29, 69, 71, 178, 234, 306
Shura, 119–20, 124, 264, 325. *See also* Quetta Shura Taliban; United Front.
  meaning of, 3
  Eastern Shura (United Front), 119–20, 124
Shomali Plain, 96
Signal units
  11th Signal Brigade, 178
  50th Signal Battalion, 245
  54th Signal Battalion, 69–70
  112th Signal Battalion, 67
  335th Signal Command (Theater), 69–70
Sinai, 21, 25, 70–71, 192
Sirajuddin Haqqani. *See* Haqqani, Sirajuddin.
Slabinski, SCPO Britt K., 162
Smith, Capt. Hank E., 100–01, 113, 117–18
SOAR, 160th. *See* Aviation units.
SOCOM. *See* Special Operations Command.
SOF. *See* Special Operations Forces (SOF).
Solana, Javier, 18
Somalia, 40, 54, 127
Soriano, M. Sgt. Jorge O., 76
South Korea, 28
South Waziristan, 204–05
Southern European Task Force, 301, 334, 339
Southeast Asia, 273
Southwest Asia, 70
Soviet-Afghan War, 121, 131, 181
Soviet Union, 1–4, 6, 8–10, 12–13, 22, 24, 33, 36, 52–53, 55, 57, 63, 75, 80, 86, 114, 173, 198, 202, 254, 262–64, 345. *See also* Russia.
Spann, Johnny Michael, 108, 110
Special Forces Battalions
  1st, 3d Special Forces Group, 175–76
  1st, 5th Special Forces Group, 67, 88, 102
  2d, 3d Special Forces Group, 171
  2d, 5th Special Forces Group, 67, 77, 94, 100, 118
  3d, 3d Special Forces Group, 102, 171
  3d, 5th Special Forces Group, 89, 109
Special Forces Groups
  1st, 136, 240
  3d, 102, 144, 147–48, 171, 175–76, 208, 240
  5th, 67–68, 76–77, 80, 88–89, 94, 102, 109, 118, 136, 148, 165, 171, 242
  10th, 171
  19th, 171, 219
  20th, 171
Special Operations Aviation Regiment, 160th. *See* Aviation units.
Special Operations Command units, 55, 59, 66–68, 73, 76, 102, 123, 126, 240, 242–43
  1st Special Forces Command, 67, 102, 136, 144, 171, 208, 242
  75th Ranger Regiment. *See* Ranger Regiment, 75th, units.
  160th Aviation Regiment (Special Operations). *See* Aviation units.
Special Operations Forces (SOF), 1, 51–53, 56–57, 63, 66, 68, 86, 88, 102, 104, 126, 155, 240, 242–43, 245–46, 287, 295, 309, 311

Spin Boldak, 113, 246, 264–65
Stammer, Lt. Col. Mark R., 301
Stevens, Capt. Jonathan A., 168–70
Stogran, Lt. Col. Patrick B., 143, 168–69, 182–83
Stonesifer, Pfc. Kristofer T., 83
Stout, Lt. Col. Michael E., 225–27
Strmecki, Marin J., 260, 276
Stryker brigade combat teams, 192, 308–10
Strykers, 24, 192, 308, 310
Stufflebeem, R. Adm. John D., 181
Sudan, 40, 49
Sufi Mohammed. *See* Mohammed, Sufi.
Sufism, 135
Sullivan, General Gordon R., 13, 21
Sullivan, Maj. Dennis S., 274
Supply and Service Battalion, 530th, 95
Support Battalions
  173d, 301
  307th, 245
  325th, 291
  507th, XVIII Airborne Corps. *See* Airborne units.
  528th (Special Operations), 67, 75–76, 95, 102
  626th Forward. *See* Forward Support Battalion, 626th.
Support units
  21st Support Command (Theater), 69–70
  122d Support Detachment (Rear Tactical Operations Center), 137
  377th Support Command (Theater), 69–70, 137, 174
Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 28
Surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), 80, 82, 113, 181. *See also* SA–3 Goa radar-guided surface-to-air missiles; SA–7 Grail man-portable surface-to-air missiles.
Syria, 38, 40
T–55 tanks, 110
Tajikistan, 55, 88, 97, 106
Takhar Province, 96
  Taluqan, 63, 88, 96
Takur Ghar, 144, 158, 160–64, 170. *See also* Roberts Ridge; Shahi Kot.
Takhtah Pul Kelay, 101–02, 111, 113
Taliban, 34, 38, 41–47, 51–53, 57–58, 60–63, 66–67, 74, 79–86, 88–89, 92, 96–102, 104, 106–07, 111, 113–15, 117–18, 120, 125–26, 128–29, 132–36, 139–41, 164, 172–73, 175, 177–78, 181, 183–84, 186–87, 193–95, 197, 199–205, 207, 209–12, 214, 217, 219–20, 229–30, 246–47, 253–55, 261–66, 271, 273, 277, 282, 291–92, 294, 298, 304–05, 320, 325–26, 329, 334, 339, 341, 343–44, 346–47. *See also* al-Qaeda.
  Afghanistan post-rule, 61, 63, 67, 97–99, 113–15, 126, 128, 134–35, 139, 172, 175, 184, 186–87, 207, 343–45
  defeat of, 183, 186, 191, 199–200, 202, 207, 262, 298
  defined, 2
  and Hamid Karzai, 100, 195, 304
  and Haqqani Network, 135–36, 263
  history of, 2–8
  missions against, 62–63, 74, 79–83, 85–86, 92, 96–97, 101–02, 106–07, 113–14, 117–18, 151–54, 164, 171, 180–81, 194, 209, 246–47, 253–54, 264–65, 294, 329
  and opium production, 197, 200
  and other extremist groups, 263–65
  Pakistani, 92, 106, 203–05, 220, 255, 263, 326, 344
  and Pashtuns, 45, 87, 98, 99, 132, 195, 203, 264
  prisoners, 133–34, 184, 210–11, 246
  resurgence, 201, 229–30, 261, 265, 273, 305, 324–25, 334, 343–44, 347
  ruling in Afghanistan, 10–11, 34, 45–46, 52
  strategy against, 41–43, 46–47, 50–51, 53, 57–62, 66, 84, 87–89, 100, 104–05, 111, 120, 129, 130,

136, 200–201, 209, 217–19, 247, 254, 266, 271–73, 291–92, 320, 334
threat from, 38
in Uzbekistan, 57
Tanzania, 57
Tarin Kot, 101–02, 114, 286, 290, 294, 298
Tarnak Farms, 113
Task Forces (TFs), U.S.
58, 93, 103–04, 112, 131–32, 142
64, 147
ANVIL, 148
BOWIE, 131
COMMANDO, 168
DAGGER, 76, 80, 93–95, 98–99, 102–04, 109–10, 117–18, 120–21, 144, 146, 150, 154–55, 186, 208–09, 340
DEVIL, 245–46, 250–51, 343
HAMMER, 151, 153
HAWK, 17–18
JACANA, 181–83
K-BAR, 102, 147, 164. *See also* CJSOTF South.
LONGHORN, 286
Modularity, 307–309
PANTHER, 214, 217–19, 245
PHOENIX, 232, 238, 278, 333
SWORD, 66, 74–75, 81–82, 102, 118, 122–23, 126, 131, 145–46, 151, 156, 158, 160–61
TALON, 143, 153, 168
WARRIOR, 106, 245, 250–51, 253, 270, 291
Teams
ALPHA, 84–85, 89, 217, 241
DELTA, 89
ECHO, 100–101, 108
FOXTROT, 100–101
INDIA, 42, 44, 96, 114, 139, 151, 158, 202–03
JAWBREAKER (CIA), 79, 122
JULIET, 120–21, 151, 158
ODA teams. *See* Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams.
SEAL teams. *See* Navy units.
Tenet, George J., 38, 49, 51, 57–59
Tewksbury, Lt. Col. Dennis D., 245
Third Army, 69–70, 77, 94, 178. *See also* U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT).
Thomas, Capt. Glenn R., 95, 148, 152
Tiangi, the, 89, 92
Tillman, Spec. Patrick D., 287
Tink, Lt. Col. Rowan J., 113, 147
Tokyo Conference, 139
Tomahawk missiles, 18, 79
Tora Bora, 34, 120–23, 125–26, 131, 144, 146, 181, 183, 202, 209
Total Force Policy, 239
Townsend, Lt. Col. Stephen J., 168–69
TRADOC. *See* U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).
Training and Doctrine Command. *See* U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).
Transportation Battalion, 7th, 58th Maintenance Company, 95
Trebon, Brig. Gen. Gregory I., 158
Turkey, 102, 179–80
Turkmenistan, 55, 97
Tyson, David, 108–09

UAV. *See* Unmanned aerial vehicles.
UH–1N Twin Hueys, 112
UH–60 Black Hawks, 143, 153. *See also* Black Hawks.
ul-Haq, Sami, 11
Umar, Haji, 205
United Arab Emirates, 7, 42, 81
United Front, 51, 53, 58, 60–61, 63, 74, 83–88, 92–93, 96–100, 103–04, 106–07, 110–11, 114, 116, 119, 125, 131, 133, 141, 178–79, 186, 194, 198–99, 202–03, 209, 228
United National and Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan. *See* United Front.
United Nations, 7, 10, 14–15, 33–34, 48–49, 70, 97–99, 108, 114–15, 128–29, 132, 134–35, 138, 179, 195, 221, 223–24, 267, 272, 276,

United Nations—*Continued*
288, 294, 335, 346
Security Council, 7, 40, 99, 115–16, 278, 323
Security Council Resolution 1378, 99
Security Council Resolution 1386, 135
Units of action, 307–10
Unmanned aerial vehicles, 157, 192, 249. *See also* Predator drones.
Urgun region, 148
Uruzgan Province, 101, 178, 194, 246, 253, 265–66, 268, 273, 286, 291, 294, 298, 325
Tarin Kot, 101–02, 114, 286, 290, 294, 298
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), 137, 207, 225–26, 260, 281, 285–86, 298
U.S. Air Force. *See* Air Force, U.S.
U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), 55, 67–70, 77, 93–94, 137, 178, 320
U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command, 240, 241, 243, 286
U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), 28, 67–68, 72, 76, 102, 118, 136, 144, 176, 208, 243, 258, 278, 311–12, 315
U.S. Army National Guard, 64–65, 71, 191–92, 230, 237–40, 301, 307, 312, 314, 316–18, 333
U.S. Army Pacific, 55, 73
U.S. Army Reserve, 64–65, 69–70, 86, 104, 137, 148, 168, 171, 174, 184, 192, 222, 225, 232, 237–39, 243, 294, 306–07, 310, 312, 314, 316, 318
U.S. Army Special Operations Command. *See* Special Operations Command.
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), 145, 235, 307–08, 312
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), 34, 38–40, 46, 53, 55–60, 62–63, 65–67, 69, 73, 76–77, 79, 81, 83–84, 88, 92–94, 96–99, 101, 104, 114, 123–29, 131, 134, 136–38, 140–41, 145–46, 152, 164, 170, 172, 175, 177–79, 185–86, 191–94, 198, 207–09, 212, 214, 217, 220, 222, 224–25, 229–32, 236–37, 240, 248–49, 254–55, 257–58, 260–62, 271–72, 274, 277–78, 294, 303, 318–20, 322, 327–28, 340–41, 346–47
Afghan elections and, 221, 292, 342
Afghan National Army and, 140, 175, 178, 193–94, 229–32, 261, 277–78
Afghanistan war plans and, 38, 127
initial response to September 11th attacks, 24, 34, 38–40, 46, 53, 55–60, 62–63, 65–67, 69
International Security Assistance Force and, 128, 141, 178–79, 319–20, 322, 327, 346
Iraq war plans and, 38, 40, 57, 69, 127–28, 186, 193, 198, 207–08, 236–37, 240, 248, 262, 294, 318, 322, 346–47
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. *See* Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
U.S. Civil Affairs Teams. *See* Civil affairs teams.
U.S. Embassies, 11, 140, 261, 338
bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, 11, 57
Islamabad, 4
Kabul, 258
U.S. Marine Corps. *See* Marine Corps, U.S.; Marine Corps units.
U.S. Marine Forces Central Command, 55
U.S. Marine Forces Pacific. *See* U.S. Marine Forces Central Command.
U.S. Navy. *See* Navy, U.S.; Navy units.
U.S. Special Operations Command. *See* Special Operations Command.

USAID. *See* U.S. Agency for International Development.
Ushr, 324
Usmani, Abdul-Qahir, 92
USS *Bataan*, 73
USS *Carl Vinson*, 73, 80
USS *Cole*, 25
USS *Enterprise*, 73, 80
USS *Kitty Hawk*, 73, 75, 81–82
USS *Peleliu*, 112
USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, 73, 101
Ustad Mohammed Atta Nur. *See* Nur, Ustad Mohammed Atta.
Uzbekistan, 55, 57, 60, 63, 72–73, 75–76, 80, 92–94, 97, 131, 170, 224, 341–42

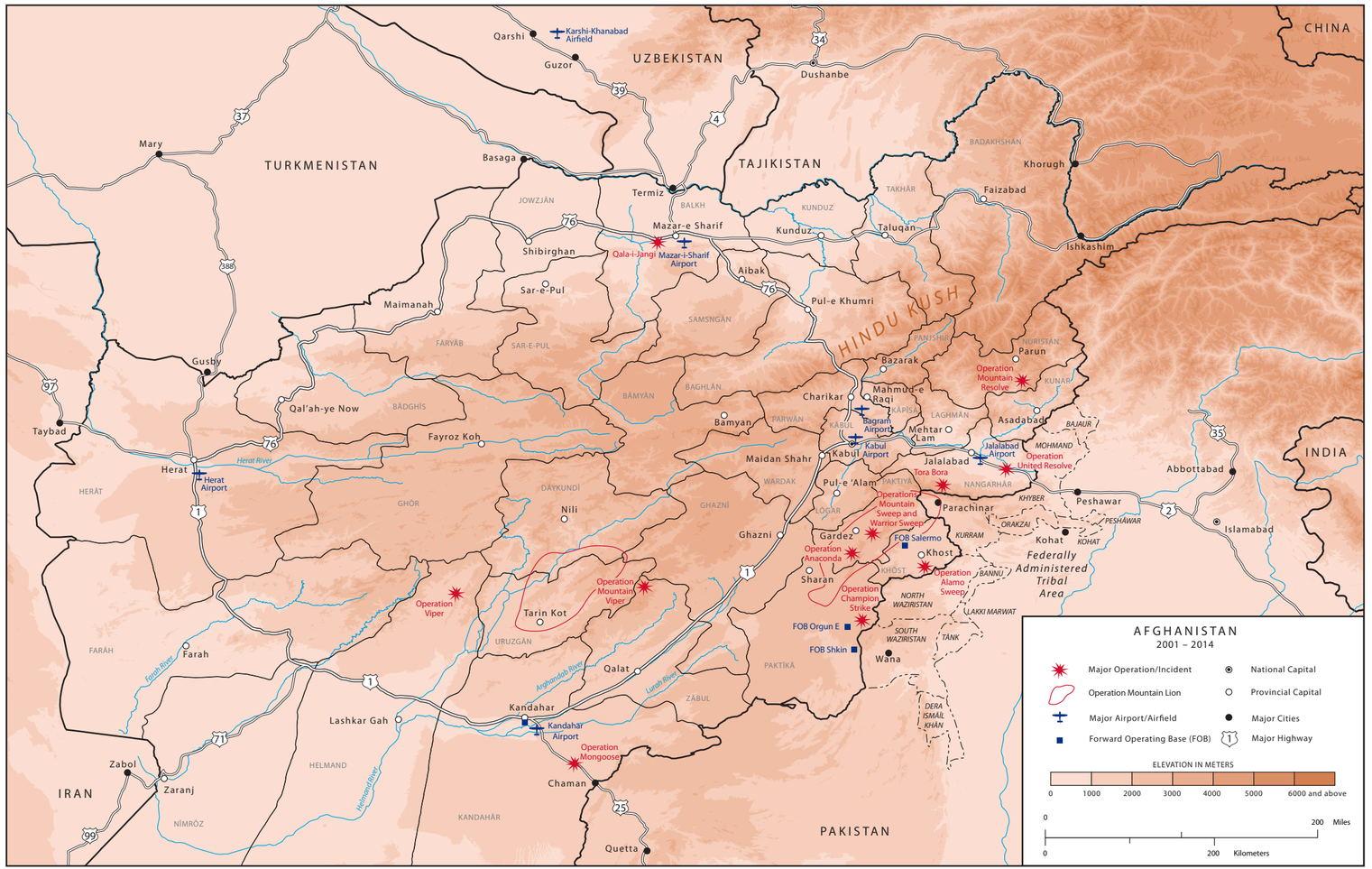
V Corps. *See* Corps, V.
VII Corps. *See* Corps, VII.
Vicenza, 94, 339
Vietnam War, 162, 239, 273, 330
Vines, Maj. Gen. John R., 219, 243, 245, 248–50, 253–55, 270, 272, 276, 280, 289, 296, 346
Virgin Islands, 28
Virginia Military Institute, 180, 196
Vitter, David B., 318

Wahhabi, 7
Waldhauser, Col. Thomas D., 73
Wali Karzai, Ahmed. *See* Karzai, Ahmed Wali.
Wardak Province, 264, 291, 343
Warman, Lt. Col. Paul K., 143
Washington, D.C., 42, 44, 55, 60–61, 67, 106, 111, 129, 139, 195, 230, 271, 302, 305, 338, 346
Wass de Czege, Brig. Gen. Huba, 308
Wazir, Nek Mohammed, 205, 290
Weapons of mass destruction, 38, 45, 66, 81, 127, 132
Weimer, Col. Michael B., 140, 174
West Point, 28, 258
Weston, Maj. Gen. Craig P., 331
Wetherill, Col. Nancy J., 298–99, 301
Whale, the. *See* Shahi Kot.
Whiteman Air Force Base, 72, 80
Wiercinski, Col. Francis J., 70, 95, 142–43, 148, 153, 156–57, 159–60, 164–65, 167, 169, 214
Wilkerson, Col. Kevin V., 168–69, 214
Wille, Lt. Col. Paul J., 253
Wolfowitz, Paul D., 26–27, 37–39, 53

XVIII Airborne Corps. *See* Airborne units.

Yemen, 10, 25, 40, 127, 201, 210
Young, Lt. Col. Robert G., 291
Younis Khalis. *See* Khalis, Younis.
Yuldashev, Tohir Abduhalilovich, 204, 290
Yunus Qanooni. *See* Qanooni, Yunus.

Zabul Province, 178, 253, 265, 273, 291–92, 298, 325, 329
  Qalat, 290
Zadran, Kamel Khan, 148
Zadran, Pacha Khan, 135–36, 195, 262
Zadran, Zakim Khan, 136, 148
Zahir Shah, Mohammed. *See* Shah, Mohammed Zahir.
Zahir, Abdul, 119
Zahir, Haji, 120
Zakim Khan Zadran. *See* Zadran, Zakim Khan.
Zaman, Haji Ghamsharik, 119, 123
Zhaware Kelay, 181–82
Zia Abdullah. *See* Abdullah, Zia.
Zia Lodin. *See* Lodin, Zia.
Zorlu, Maj. Gen. Hilmi Akin, 179–80


AFGHANISTAN
2001 – 2014
Major Operation/Incident
Operation Mountain Lion
Major Airport/Airfield
Forward Operating Base (FOB)
National Capital
Provincial Capital
Major Cities
Major Highway
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
1000
2000
3000
4000
5000
6000 and above
200 Miles
200 Kilometers
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
CHINA
IRAN
PAKISTAN
INDIA
HINDU KUSH
Federally Administered Tribal Area
Qarshi
Karshi-Khanabad Airfield
Guzor
Dushanbe
Mary
Basaga
Termiz
Khorugh
Faizabad
Ishkashim
Mazar-e Sharif
Qala-i-Jangi
Mazar-i-Sharif Airport
Kunduz
Taluqan
Shibirghan
Aibak
Sar-e-Pul
Maimanah
Pul-e Khumri
Gushy
Bazarak
Parun
Operation Mountain Resolve
Charikar
Mahmud-e Raqi
Bagram Airport
Asadabad
Taybad
Qal'ah-ye Now
Fayroz Koh
Bamyan
Mehtar Lam
Herat
Herat River
Herat Airport
Maidan Shahr
Kabul
Kabul Airport
Jalalabad
Jalalabad Airport
Operation United Resolve
Abbottabad
Tora Bora
Operation Mountain Sweep and Warrior Sweep
Pul-e 'Alam
Parachinar
Peshawar
Nili
Ghazni
Gardez
FOB Salermo
Kohat
Islamabad
Operation Anaconda
Khost
Operation Alamo Sweep
Sharan
Operation Champion Strike
Operation Viper
Operation Mountain Viper
Tarin Kot
FOB Orgun E
FOB Shkin
Wana
Farah
Qalat
Kandahar
Kandahar Airport
Lashkar Gah
Operation Mongoose
Zabol
Zaranj
Chaman
Quetta
Helmand River
Arghandab River
Lurah River
Sistan River
BADAKHSHAN
TAKHAR
KUNDUZ
BALKH
JOWZJAN
SAMSNGAN
FARYAB
SAR-E-PUL
BAGHLAN
BAMYAN
PANJSHIR
NURISTAN
KUNAR
BADGHIS
HERAT
GHOR
DAYKUNDI
GHAZNI
WARDAK
LOGAR
KAPISA
PARWAN
KABUL
LAGHMAN
NANGARHAR
BAJAUR
MOHMAND
KHYBER
ORAKZAI
PESHAWAR
KOHAT
KURRAM
KHOST
BANNU
NORTH WAZIRISTAN
SOUTH WAZIRISTAN
TANK
LAKKI MARWAT
DERA ISMAIL KHAN
PAKTIKA
ZABUL
URUZGAN
FARAH
HELMAND
KANDAHAR
NIMROZ





OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM STUDY GROUP

PIN 208377–000



MODERN WAR IN AN ANCIENT LAND

THE UNITED STATES ARMY IN AFGHANISTAN, 2001–2014

VOLUME II

EDMUND J. "E. J." DEGEN
MARK J. REARDON
FOREWORD BY GENERAL JAMES C. MCCONVILLE,
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY

Modern War in an Ancient Land


AFGHANISTAN
PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES
0
200 Miles
0
200 Kilometers
UZBEKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
JOWZJĀN
BALKH
KUNDUZ
TAKHĀR
BADAKHSHĀN
PANJSHIR
PARWĀN
FĀRYĀB
SAMANGĀN
BAGHLĀN
SAR-E PUL
NŪRISTĀN
BĀDGHĪS
KUNAR
KĀPĪSĀ
BĀMYĀN
WARDAK
LAGHMĀN
NANGARHĀR
INDIA
HERĀT
GHŌR
LŌGAR
KĀBUL
DĀYKUNDĪ
GHAZNĪ
PAKTIYĀ
KHŌST
FARĀH
URUZGĀN
PAKTĪKĀ
ZĀBUL
PAKISTAN
IRAN
HELMAND
NĪMRŌZ
KANDAHĀR
0
500 Miles
0
500 Kilometers

Modern War in an Ancient Land

The United States Army in Afghanistan 2001–2014

Volume II

by

Edmund J. "E. J." Degen

Mark J. Reardon



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
UNITED STATES ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 2021

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Degen, E. J., 1961- editor. | Reardon, Mark J., 1957 October 22- editor. | Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group, author. | United States. Department of the Army. Office of the Chief of Staff, issuing body.

Title: Modern war in an ancient land : the United States Army in Afghanistan, 2001-2014 / prepared by the Chief of Staff of the Army Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Study Group ; Edmund J. "EJ" Degen, study director and editor ; Mark J. Reardon, senior historian and editor.

Other titles: United States Army in Afghanistan, 2001-2014 | CMH pub ; 59-1-1. Description: Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2020. | Series: CMH pub ; 59-1-1 | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "Modern War in an Ancient Land: The United States Army in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, 2001-2014 examines the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001 and the thirteen-plus years of conflict that followed. Whether sent to Afghanistan to counter terrorists, defeat an insurgency, develop institutions, or support a democracy, Army commanders operated under the assumption that by securing Afghans and their fledgling national government, the U.S. military was protecting America and the Western way of life. For more than a decade, Army formations deployed to Afghanistan to forge a country that would remain unified, at peace with its neighbors, and inhospitable to terrorists who expressed their hatred of the American homeland though violence. Modern War in an Ancient Land is the result of historical thinking by the Army's senior leadership"--Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019013967

Subjects: LCSH: Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001- | Effects-based operations (Military science)--United States--History--21st century. | United States. Army--Stability operations--History--21st century. | Afghanistan--History--2001-

Classification: LCC DS371.412 .M63 2020 | DDC 958.10474--dc23 | SUDOC D 101.2:AF 3/4

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019013967

CMH Pub 59–1
First Printing

Prepared by the Chief of Staff of the Army
Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group

Col. (USA Ret.) Edmund J. "E. J." Degen
Study Director and Editor

Lt. Col. (USA Ret.) Mark J. Reardon
Senior Historian and Editor

Study Group Research and Writing Team
Col. Adrian A. Donahoe
Col. Bryan R. Gibby
Dr. Brian F. Neumann
Col. Francis J. H. Park
Dr. Gregory G. Roberts
Lt. Col. (USA Ret.) Matthew B. Smith
Lt. Col. (USA Ret.) John R. Stark
Maj. Miranda M. Summers-Lowe
Col. Victor H. Sundquist
Dr. Colin J. Williams

Foreword by
General James C. McConville, CSA

... to Those Who Served

Contents

Chapter *Page*

Foreword xv
Preface xix

SECTION 1: AN ECONOMY OF FORCE

Introduction 3

1. The Challenges of Protracted War 7
Revamping Doctrine 7
Stresses on the Force 13
The Near-Term Impact of the Iraq Surge on the Army 21
An Army Out of Balance 28

2. A War in Transition 35
Implementing the NATO Operational Approach 35
The Afghanistan Compact 39
The Situation in Fall 2005 41
Reforming the ANP Training Mission 45
Civil-Military Operations 51
A Renewed Enemy 53
The Return of 10th Mountain Division 62
Operation Mountain Lion (April–June 2006) 72

3. The Conflict Intensifies 75
NATO ISAF in RC South 76
The Arrival of NATO Forces 78
Competing Approaches to Police Training 106
Recalibrating Reconstruction 109
Operations Mountain Fury and Mountain Eagle (July 2006–February 2007) 111
Reassessing the Situation 117

4. Holding the Line 121
Strategic Drift 122
A New American Team 123
Steady-State Operations 127
Improving Afghan Security Capabilities 139
Growing and Mentoring the Afghan National Army 141

Chapter *Page*

Expanding Development 145
An Interagency Approach 146

5. Campaign at the Crossroads 149
Continuing Issues with Pakistan 149
2008 Force Rotations 162
The Ongoing Fight in RC-South 170
McKiernan Takes Command. 176
Troop to Task Overmatch 179

Conclusion 181

SECTION 2: THE SURGE IN AFGHANISTAN

Introduction 187
An Uncertain Way Forward 190
National Strategy: New Goals, New Resources 191
Counterinsurgency Redux 198
The Resilient Threat, 2009. 200

6. McKiernan's War Ends 205
Unity of Effort 205
Significant Operations in RC East, Early 2009 211
McKiernan Chooses Helmand 219

7. McChrystal's War 229
McChrystal's Assessment and Opening Moves 229
A Disconnect between Ends, Ways, and Means 235
McChrystal's Changes in the Command Structure 237
RC South Becomes the Main Effort 240
Unexpected Developments in RC East 253
The Afghan Presidential Election: August–November 2009 262

8. Exit McChrystal, Enter Petraeus 267
The Results of the Strategy Review 267
Operation MOSHTARAK 272
General McChrystal's Exit. 290
Operation MOSHTARAK Phase III and Operation HAMKARI 294

9. Preparing the Afghans to Take Over the Fight 309
The Pivotal Role of the NATO Training Mission, 2009–2011 . . . 309
Special Operations and Local Security Forces 316
Efforts in Development and Governance, 2009–2011 322
Special Operations Command and Control 327
Special Operations Continues to Evolve, 2010–2011 332
Taking on the Northern Insurgency 334

Chapter *Page*

The Death of Osama Bin Laden 336

Conclusion 337

SECTION 3: END OF CAMPAIGNS

Introduction 343
Policy and Strategy Considerations 347
Transition in a Complex Operating Environment 349
The Evolving Threat 350
The Decline of Drone Attacks 354

10. Afghans into the Lead 357
INTEQAL: The Transition Process 357
The First Step: Retiring Provincial Reconstruction Teams 358
The Strategic Partnership Agreement 360
Adapting Tactical Forces for Transition 362
The Goal of a Self-Sufficient ANSF 366
Unexpected Developments 368
The Insider Threat: More Green-on-Blue Attacks 370
Operation NAWEED 372

11. Drawdown 377
Scoping the Surge Recovery 378
Geography and the Initial Disposition of the Force 380
Air Transport and Multimodal Operations 384
Competition for Limited Assets 384
Planning the Retrograde 386
The CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element 388
Trouble on the Border 391
Accelerating the Surge Recovery 392
Securing the Retrograde 397
ISAF Infrastructure Comes Under Attack 398

12. Transitioning from Counterinsurgency to Security Force Assistance 405
The ANSF and the Culmination of INTEQAL 405
The Unified Implementation Plan 409
Layered Security and the Maturation of the ANSF 414
Balancing Priorities: Security Force Assistance versus Retrograde 416
Operation DRUMBEAT: Cutting the Force in Half by 2014 419
The Retrograde Gains Momentum 422
Functionally Based Security Force Assistance 424

Chapter *Page*

13. Enduring Freedom Becomes Resolute Support 429
A Campaign in Transition 429
Competing Demands in the 2014 Fighting Season 430
From Regional Commands to Train, Advise, and Assist Commands 435
Consolidating the Task Organization 440
The Right People 443
Special Operations at the End of the Campaign 446
Obtaining Closure 449

14. The U.S. Army Beyond Enduring Freedom 453
Roles, Missions, Strategy, and Doctrine 454
Budgetary Pressures and Institutional Strategy 455
Reducing the Force 457
Readiness for an Army after Enduring Freedom 459
The Reserve Component after Fifteen Years of War 462
Retrospect and a View to the Future 464

Conclusion: Modern War in an Ancient Land: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001–2014 469
An Imperfect Strategic Crystal Ball 469
Sustaining the Initial Victories 470
The Strategic Equation Is Altered Again 473
The Economy of Force Campaign Receives More Resources 475
Retrograde and Transition 479
The Campaign in Retrospect 482
Upon Reflection 484

Bibliographical Notes 491
Documents and Publications 491
Oral History Interviews and Manuscript Sources 492
Secondary Sources 493

Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group Biographies 497

Appendix: U.S. Military Terminology and Definitions 501

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Key Terms 521

Map Symbols and Note Terms 525

Index 529

Number *Page*

MAPS

Afghanistan Provincial Boundaries . . . . . *Frontispiece*
2.1. Force Laydown, Post-2005 Afghan Elections, November 2005. . 42
2.2. The Insurgency, 2006–2008. 56
2.3. Pech River Valley, Area of Operation Mountain Lion, 2006 . . . 70
3.1. Operation Mountain Thrust, May–July 2006. 82
3.2. Operation Medusa, Phase I, 2–4 September 2006 96
3.3. Operation Medusa, Phase II, 5–10 September 2006 99
3.4. Operation Medusa, Phase III, 11–17 September 2006 102
3.5. Operation Mountain Fury, July–August 2006 112
4.1. Task Force Cincinnatus Area of Operations, 19 January 2007 131
4.2. Operation Plan 07–02, February–June 2007 133
4.3. Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar, and Laghman Provinces, Area of Operations, May 2007–June 2008 136
5.1. Operation Pamir Hamkari, October 2007–March 2008 156
5.2. Battle of Wanat 169
5.3. National Commands, CJTF-101 178
S2.1. Helmand and Kandahar, Taliban-Controlled Areas. 192
6.1. CJTF-101, Regional Command East, February 2009 214
6.2. Regional Command East, Transfer of Authority, March–December 2009. 217
6.3. Regional Command South, September 2009 221
7.1. Operations Panchai Palang and Khanjar, Regional Command South, June–July 2009 245
7.2. Attack on COP Keating, 3 October 2009 258
7.3. Regional Command East, Transfer of Authority, June 2009–November 2010 265
8.1. Operation Moshtarak Phase I, Area of Operations, January 2010 275
8.2. Operation Moshtarak Phase II, Regional Command South, February–March 2010. 279
8.3. Regional Commands South and Southwest, July 2010 284
8.4. Operation Hamkari, Phase II, 15 August–12 September 2010. 298
8.5. Operation Hamkari, Phase IIIA–IIIB, 13 September–6 December 2010 303
9.1. Regional Command East, Transfer of Authority, November 2009–December 2011. 324
9.2 Regional Commands South and Southwest, July 2011 325
S3.1. Afghanistan Transition, 2011–2014. 348
11.1. Northern Distribution Network, 2001–2014. 382
11.2. Force Laydown, 26 December 2011 389
11.3. Force Laydown, 20 September 2012 396
12.1. Force Laydown, 13 June 2013 407
13.1. Force Laydown, 24 January 2014 433

13.2. Force Laydown, 4 December 2014 438

FIGURES

1.1. Iterative Nature of Design 11
1.2. Efforts to Bring the Army into Balance by 2011 30
7.1. Note on U.S. Military Tactical Terminology 250
8.1. Anaconda Strategy in Afghanistan 293
9.1. Evolution of Special Operations Command and Control 328

PHOTOGRAPHS

General Peter J. Schoomaker Talking to Reporters at the Pentagon 13
Michigan Army National Guard Soldiers Returning from Afghanistan 14
Maj. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli Speaking about Soldiers' Mental Health 18
Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates 22
Maj. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya and Uruzgan Provincial Governor Haji Jan Mohammed 41
Instructing New Recruits at Kabul Military Training Center 49
Road Construction in Afghanistan 53
Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley 63
Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Lt. Gen. David J. Richards 77
Romanian Troops Operating in RC South 83
Canadian Troops in Operation MEDUSA 100
Romanian Troops Performing Clearance Operations 107
10th Mountain Division Soldiers on Night Patrol in Nuristan Province 117
Col. John W. "Mick" Nicholson and Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez 125
U.S. Troops Preparing for a Women's Shura 132
173d Airborne Brigade Soldiers in RC East 138
Soldiers Moving through Poppy Fields in Southern Afghanistan 146
Sgt. Jonathan Guidry of the 173d Airborne Brigade in RC East 155
Airborne Soldiers Preparing Equipment 160
Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser and Admiral Michael G. Mullen 164
CWO Sammy Rodriguez Working on a Damaged Vehicle 166
British Royal Air Force Personnel on Patrol at the Kandahar Airfield 172
General David D. McKiernan and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates at Kabul 175
MQ–9 Reaper at the Kandahar Airfield 201

Page

26th Infantry Regiment Soldiers on Patrol in Kunar Province 215
RC East Soldiers Awaiting Pick-up from a CH–47 Chinook Helicopter 218
Army Helicopters Airlift Marines into Helmand Province 223
General Stanley A. McChrystal and German General Egon Ramms 231
Lt. Gen. David M. Rodriguez 238
British Soldiers Heading to Helmand Province 243
A Stryker Combat Vehicle Operates in RC South. 252
32d Infantry Regiment Soldiers Firing at Enemy Combatants in RC East 261
Afghan and Coalition Units Preparing for Operation MOSHTARAK 280
Maj. Gen. Richard P. Mills and Admiral Michael G. Mullen 283
General Stanley A. McChrystal Talking to Soldiers about Counterinsurgency 289
Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus with Maj. Gen. Nicholas P. "Nick" Carter 292
A Soldier on Patrol in RC South 300
Vice Admiral Robert S. Harward with an Afghan Official. 305
Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell with Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry 311
ANA Recruits Training at Camp Julien 315
The ANA 3d Commando Kandak in a Village-Clearing Operation in Kandahar 321
ANA and U.S. Soldiers in Combined Operations against the Taliban 333
An Afghan Commando Assisting Young Girls at an Orphanage in Gardez 360
General Martin E. Dempsey with Lt. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger in Kabul 367
General John R. Allen at a Memorial Ceremony in Helmand Province 374
Army Vehicles Being Transported by a C–17 Globemaster 385
Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp Visits Army Field Support Battalion Kandahar. 386
Maj. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti with ANA Officers in Kabul 388
Containers of Excess Equipment at Kandahar Airfield 394
Field Artillery Firing on Suspected Enemy Movements in Zabul Province 399
An AH–64 Apache Deploying Flares against Possible Enemy Fire. 403
General Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber, and Air Force Brig. Gen. Balan R. Ayyar. 406
Lt. Gen. James L. Terry with General Joseph F. Dunford Jr.. 411

Page

A CH–47 Chinook Operating as Part of the Retrograde in Paktiya Province 418
Vehicles at Bagram's Camp Warrior Awaiting Transport to the United States 422
ANA Soldiers in a Firefight with Insurgents in Ghazni Province 435
12th Infantry Regiment and ANP Soldiers on a Joint Patrol in Kandahar Province 437
ANA Soldiers on a Joint Patrol in Farah Province 447
General Hans-Lothar Domröse and General John F. Campbell 451
Conclusion. Soldier in the Arghandab River Valley 488

ARTWORK

"Follow Me!" xviii
Mounting the Observation Post 2
Engaging the People 186
Give 'Em the Gun 342
Comms Across the Valley 490

Note on the Images

The majority of the photographs contained in these volumes were taken by U.S. Department of Defense service members and selected specifically to portray Afghanistan from the perspective of those who served. The authors appreciate the following individuals and agencies for their photographs: U.S. Agency for International Development (page 53), Cpl. Lou Penny, Canadian Forces (page 100), Jeffrey Scholsser (page 164), LCpl. Bryan Nygaard, British Army (page 243), S. Sgt Mark Jones, British Army (page 280), and International Security Assistance Force Public Affairs Office (pages 172, 289, and 451).

M. Sgt. Juan C. Munoz, the 2015–2019 Army Artist in Residence, painted the artwork in these volumes, and based his pieces on photographs taken in Afghanistan by military personnel. The U.S. Army would like to thank Sergeant Munoz for his evocative work and its valuable contribution to the long history of soldiers expressing themselves through their art.

FOREWORD



As we learned in volume one of *Modern War in an Ancient Land*, initiatives to provide security in Afghanistan struggled because of a lack of resources. After the end of the initial military campaign, the strategic end state for Afghanistan remained ill-defined, and the means to achieve the goal of creating a stable, friendly nation with a functioning government were not immediately forthcoming. American commanders and their subordinates in Afghanistan constantly sought innovative solutions to make up for shortfalls in troops and equipment. However, from 2003, the National Command Authorities prioritized the Iraq conflict—and for those who served in Afghanistan, operating with insufficient means would become the norm rather than the exception.

The worldwide demand for ground forces to fight the Global War on Terrorism highlighted dormant issues within all components of the U.S. Army. Although the Army that existed on 11 September 2001 was prepared to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars, Cold War–era thought permeated its existing force structure, training, and equipment design. The initiative known as modularity redesigned the basic combat formation around the maneuver brigade. By pushing assets normally allocated to higher echelons down to brigade levels, the Army was able to increase the number of combat brigades available for worldwide employment and realign brigade capabilities with the dispersed nature of both Iraqi and Afghan battlefields.

Equipping issues also came to the forefront. The Abrams main battle tank and the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle were optimal for large-scale combat operations, but they did not transition easily to the counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. To provide soldiers with needed mobility and protection in these challenging environments, the Department of Defense accelerated the development of new wheeled combat vehicles such as Strykers and Ground Combat Vehicles. Myriad other programs also sought to ensure American soldiers had all of the equipment and resources they would need to locate, engage, and defeat their enemies.

As it waged two simultaneous conflicts that demanded lengthy commitments from its forces, the Army made significant changes in the way it trained and prepared soldiers for deployment to active theaters of operation. It instituted a predeployment readiness and training model known as Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) to replace Cold War–era readiness and deployment practices. The ARFORGEN model provided better predictability for units, soldiers, and families during this period of sustained conflict by designating predictable timelines. It also made the best use of resources dedicated to preparing soldiers and units for combat by synchronizing the allocation of personnel, equipment, and training.

All three components of the Army—Active, Guard, and Reserve—were in high demand for extended periods. To more equitably share operational burdens, senior leaders introduced the "Grow the Army" initiative, which increased the size of the force. Another major program involved an investment in individual readiness, especially for National Guard and Reserve forces. Recognizing the unparalleled demands on these forces, the Army strove to give them proper healthcare, coupled with training opportunities to ensure continued support for their mission. Those programs, along with ARFORGEN, were critical to ensuring the soldiers and families had time to rest and rebuild their strength.

Even as the Army recategorized its thinking at home to better support the war, the conflict in Afghanistan intensified as the enemy used sanctuaries in Pakistan to regenerate combat power. This volume shows the evolution of the international coalition during this period, as our allies dedicated more forces and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force assumes overall responsibility for the campaign. Later, as the war in Iraq wound down, the war in Afghanistan began to receive the resources it needed—not merely to keep the enemy in check but also to build capacity within the country in order for the Afghan people to take the lead in providing their own security and stability. As this point of transition to Afghan-led security approached, U.S. and coalition forces rapidly and dramatically reduced their presence in theater and returned to their home stations.

Nevertheless, the transition of responsibilities to host-nation security forces has not signaled the end of American efforts in Afghanistan. Leaders at all echelons must continue to build upon their experiences and prepare for the next challenge. As stated in the The Army Vision, the Army as a whole must prepare to deploy, fight, and win decisively against an adversary, anytime and anywhere, in a joint, multidomain, high-intensity conflict, while simultaneously deterring others and maintaining its ability to conduct irregular warfare. For our Army, this means high-quality soldiers. We must equip our formations with the latest technology and maximize these organizations to take advantage of our skills in combined arms warfare. Leaders throughout the Army must become expert trainers, prepared to reach the highest levels of readiness in an era of reduced resources. The Army's training and educational institutions must provide dynamic learning environments. Most importantly, Army leaders must never relinquish the agility and innovation they have gained in the past two decades of the Global War on Terrorism.

These two volumes are the first of many efforts our Army will generate to ensure we learn all we can from Operation Enduring Freedom. History has always been a cornerstone of our education process, and that will remain true for the foreseeable future. The insights and dialogue generated by reading and reflecting on these histories will prove invaluable in the next war. I trust that not just our military readers, but also our civilian counterparts and leaders, can gain value from studying these efforts.

Washington, D.C.

GENERAL JAMES C. MCCONVILLE
40th Chief of Staff of the Army, 2019–


J.C. MUÑOZ
2019

Preface



Following the fall 2005 elections in Afghanistan, the key question driving the United States' approach to Operation Enduring Freedom was how to reduce forces without sacrificing the security gains made since 2001. After more than a year of searching, a potential answer emerged in April 2003 when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed to broaden the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mandate it assumed from the United Nations (UN). Taking leadership of Regional Command (RC) North in October 2004, NATO planned to expand in a counterclockwise direction until it could provide security and developmental assistance to all of Afghanistan. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld understood the importance of the NATO decision, believing that America would "continue to be tied down . . . [in Afghanistan] until the Afghans can provide their own security," a situation that was "costing the US taxpayers a fortune."[1] Greater European participation would allow deployed American military forces to protect the U.S. homeland by focusing on counterterrorist missions rather than less essential tasks such as nation building.

With the Global War on Terrorism nearing its fifth year, the United States still devoted a scant 3.9 percent of its gross domestic product to national defense, with only 1.1 percent going to the Army. Subtracting the emergency supplemental allocations passed by Congress to address unforeseen issues affecting combat operations, the Army received only slightly more than one-third of a percent of the U.S. government's annual budget.[2] As a result of the budget disparity, the Army's ability to undertake missions other than Iraq and Afghanistan continued to degrade as equipment not needed for immediate warfighting requirements was neither maintained nor upgraded. The lack of funding also took other discrete forms, such as declining opportunities for nondeploying units to maintain proficiency and inadequate recruiting incentives.

Readers will note that many problems and challenges captured in the first volume of *Modern War in an Ancient Land* persist during the subsequent stages of the conflict in Afghanistan as detailed in this volume. Although the struggle for resources became less urgent for a time following the defeat of the Iraqi insurgency, that issue returned in 2011 as U.S. commanders in theater prepared to transition security responsibilities to their Afghan counterparts. This volume discusses the

1. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Stephen J. Hadley, 4 Mar 2005, sub: Afghan National Police, Historians Files, Chief of Staff of the Army Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group (hereinafter Hist Files, OEF Study Grp).

2. Valerie Lynn Baldwin, "The Cost of the Army," in *ARMY Magazine, 2006–07 Green Book* (Washington, D.C.: Association of the U.S. Army, Oct 2006), p. 46.

path taken by Operation Enduring Freedom beginning with ISAF's expansion through the change of mission on 31 December 2014. The first section examines how ISAF adjusted to the evolving campaign in the aftermath of the Taliban's return to the fight. The second section examines the Obama administration's decision, made possible only after the defeat of the Iraqi insurgency, to change the course of the campaign by resourcing a surge in Afghanistan. The concluding section captures the downsizing story and the transition of the Enduring Freedom mission—a period of great complexity.

SECTION I

AN ECONOMY OF FORCE


J.C. MUÑOZ 2019

Section I

Introduction



In October 2005, the Army had 270,000 soldiers—27 percent of its 1,032,587 officers, warrant officers, cadets, and enlisted soldiers—deployed or forward stationed in 120 countries. The total force of more than 1 million troops included 492,728 active component soldiers, 206,682 Army Reserve members, and 333,177 National Guard personnel. Those figures reflected a decrease over the previous year of 5,888 active component soldiers, 14,126 Army Reserve members, and 9,741 National Guard personnel.[1] Across the entire Army, every component had failed to achieve its retention goals. The Army's willingness to accept more recruits with waivers and minimum skill qualification test scores also resulted in the number of high school graduates in uniform dropping from 92 to 87 percent.[2]

The personnel crisis improved marginally in 2006 after recruiting programs received more funding to support their efforts. Active component retention and recruiting goals were met, while the National Guard and Army Reserve recruiting targets were not. The drop in qualitative levels continued as the number of service members who had high school diplomas fell to 81 percent. At the end of the fiscal year, the active component numbered 502,790, while the National Guard and Army Reserve totals were 346,288 and 189,975 respectively. The totals reflected an active component gain of 10,062, as well as 13,111 more national guardsmen in uniform, while Army Reserve end strength dropped by 16,707.[3] The latter stemmed in part from widespread dissatisfaction with the Department of Defense's (DoD) ad hoc approach to employing reservists during the early phases of the Iraq conflict.

During this period, the Army continued its efforts to reach a goal of 70 modular combat brigades and 211 modular support brigades. Those totals were a 46 percent increase in comparison with the premodular force. Nineteen brigade combat teams had converted by the end of 2005, with another eighteen in the process of modularizing by mid-2006.[4] In

1. Brian F. Neumann, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2005* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2013), p. 13.

2. Recruiting shortfalls totaled 6,627 for the active component, 12,783 for the National Guard, and 4,626 for the Army Reserve. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

3. Mark D. Sherry, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2006* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2013), pp. 9–10.

4. Francis J. Harvey, "Building for the Future While Serving our Nation," in *ARMY Magazine, 2006–07 Green Book*, p. 15.

addition to implementing widespread force structure changes, the Army placed considerable priority on meeting near-term tactical and operational battlefield challenges. It enhanced both the M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle and the M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank to make them more survivable in urban environments. The growing threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) led to accelerated fielding of up-armored M1114 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs), which would be replaced by a totally new design, the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle, in 2007.[5] Unmanned aerial vehicles also received a higher priority as the Army distributed more RQ–5A Hunter and RQ–7A Shadows to divisions and brigades. Most of the new equipment went to Iraq rather than being deployed to Afghanistan.

A quick comparison of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) with its counterpart in Afghanistan reveals why the latter was a lower priority. In January 2006, more than 98,000 soldiers were serving in Iraq with another 14,000 supporting them from Kuwait. The U.S. Army contribution to the U.S.-led Multi-National Force–Iraq consisted of fourteen brigade combat teams, innumerable support elements, two division headquarters, and one corps headquarters. In comparison, Afghanistan required three brigade combat teams with support units and one division headquarters totaling 16,000 soldiers. During fiscal year 2006, Army units in Iraq suffered 440 killed in action, 92 other deaths, and 3,610 wounded in action. Despite the Taliban resurgence, comparable figures for Afghanistan were 54 killed in action, 21 other deaths, and 292 wounded in action.[6] Steadily rising sectarian violence and U.S. military casualties in Iraq, coupled with the Bush administration's determination to hand over Afghanistan to the NATO-led ISAF, ensured Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) remained an economy of force effort for the foreseeable future.

In light of the tremendous pressure being exerted on the Army, it is unsurprising that the American approach in Afghanistan from late 2005 through 2008 centered on making the transition to NATO, and eventually the Kabul government, a reality. This process would take time and resources, the two things that the administration of President George W. Bush wanted to avoid committing. It also required that NATO meet Afghanistan's security and governmental needs, a condition that member nations accepted as a natural outcome of the long-term military commitments experienced in the

5. The U.S. Marine Corps, not the Army, can be credited with development of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle after the Pentagon determined that up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) were vulnerable to new types of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Department of Defense (DoD) ultimately procured 27,740 MRAP vehicles before ending production on 1 October 2012. Michael E. Bulkley and Gregory C. Davis, "The Study of the Rapid Acquisition Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicle Program and its Impact on the Warfighter" (Paper, Naval Postgraduate Sch, Jun 2013), https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/34636/13Jun_Bulkley_Davis.pdf?sequence=1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. Sherry, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2006*, pp. 22–24.

Balkans.[7] The difficult change from U.S. to ISAF leadership needed a secure environment in order to be successful. Unfortunately for the United States and NATO, Afghanistan's dynamic environment and the Taliban's rejuvenation in late 2005 blunted the progress that Enduring Freedom had brought to the country. When America transferred Regional Command (RC) South and RC East to NATO in 2006, the handovers did not go unopposed as the Taliban and its allies launched sequential offensives against incoming NATO forces. Although unsuccessful, the attacks revealed that NATO was unprepared for the renewed violence. As a result, America halted its drawdown as NATO members reevaluated what type of assistance they were prepared to provide. When Enduring Freedom continued to deteriorate in early 2007, the Bush administration committed additional forces to Afghanistan and increased its support for the Kabul government.

America's concurrent war in Iraq provided the background for this deteriorating situation. In February 2006, the bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra', Iraq, triggered a sectarian civil war that, combined with the persistent anticoalition insurgency, convinced President Bush that he needed to send a surge of forces there. With the balance of the U.S. Army's available personnel participating in, recovering from, or preparing for OIF, policymakers confined the United States to an economy of force mission in Afghanistan in 2007–2008. Although violence in Afghanistan escalated, security problems did not reach levels comparable to the events that forced the Bush administration to completely refashion its warfighting strategy in Iraq.

Consequently, the next two years passed in Afghanistan without significant changes to America's operational approach. Both the U.S. military and the other NATO member nations failed to deploy sufficient forces to meet ISAF objectives, and the Afghan war deteriorated to the point that the United States, its international coalition, and the Afghan government faced the possibility of stalemate or defeat by early 2009.

This section chronicles the three-and-a-half years between the 2005 Afghan national and provincial elections, which marked the end of the original Bonn Process agreed upon in December 2001, and the start of President Barack H. Obama's administration in early 2009. The initial chapter captures the challenges the Army faced while supporting two major combat theaters simultaneously. The second chapter introduces the strategic

7. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) viewed the Afghanistan mission as a means of expanding the alliance's role beyond the confines of Europe and making it a more proactive force for the extension of liberal democracy around the globe; Sten Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan: The Liberal Disconnect* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 25–40, 87–89. A crucial element of this shift was redesigning the Cold War practices for political consultation and military planning "to accommodate operations that [did] not involve collective defense commitments." See Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "Road to Riga: The Enduring Influence of Operations in NATO's Transformation," 2006, *NATO Review*, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/road_riga/operations_influence_transformation/EN/index.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. NATO joining the war in Afghanistan also helped to repair the near-catastrophic rift that had emerged within the alliance over the U.S. invasion of Iraq; see Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 114–18.

situation in Afghanistan following the September 2005 National Assembly and provincial council elections, while analyzing the emerging threat posed by a revived Taliban and other anticoalition groups. It concludes by examining how American forces prepared for the arrival of NATO forces in 2006 and the joint Army and Marine Corps efforts to update counterinsurgency doctrine. The third chapter details how the enemy contested control of RC South—which led to an ISAF counteroffensive to regain the initiative—before ending with a discussion of how U.S. troops refocused on RC East during this period.

The fourth chapter begins in 2007 with a new ISAF commander, General Dan K. McNeill, implementing a strategy to smother the insurgency while managing the disparate elements of the NATO coalition. The final chapter details how his successor, General David D. McKiernan, arrived in the summer of 2008 to find a coalition divided by various command chains and lacking a cohesive strategy. Each chapter examines American and ISAF efforts to create Afghan security institutions and rebuild national and local infrastructure.

Chapter One

The Challenges of Protracted War



As Task Force Spartan (3d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division) spread forces out among the Afghan population in 2005, the Army and Marine Corps were thoroughly reviewing the doctrine that was being used in the wars. The unanticipated trajectory of the Global War on Terrorism placed increasing stress on the Army as the simultaneous conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq showed few signs of abating, and both conventional and Special Operations Forces (SOF) felt the detrimental effects. The Army initially sought to address this problem by restructuring brigade combat teams and siphoning personnel from nondeployable institutional organizations, namely the Generating Force. The DoD reinforced the Army's indirect approach to constant combat deployments by creating more indigenous security forces and convincing coalition partners to assume more responsibilities. Although NATO ultimately agreed to expand its mandate while indigenous security forces grew steadily in size and capability, the organizational and operational pressures exerted on the Army lingered long past the January 2007 decision to surge troops into Iraq. When the decision was made to grow the Army force structure, great thought and care had to be put into that effort to ensure there would be no long-lasting negative effects on the mission, the overall quality of the force, and families. Besides the challenges, the manner in which the Army was prosecuting the campaign was under scrutiny at the same time. A full examination of the doctrine that guided campaigns was beginning in earnest at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Revamping Doctrine

The Army initiated Operation Enduring Freedom with doctrine reflecting the experiences of Operation Desert Storm, recent peace enforcement operations, and the defense transformation efforts of the 1990s. *Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–0), the Army's capstone publication published on 14 June 2001, described the Army's newly adopted doctrinal approach as "full spectrum operations," which combined offense, defense, stability, and support operations. It indicated that training to the highest readiness levels required for combat operations would enable units to win in less-demanding stability and support missions. This approach sought to reconcile two conflicting demands. Although the Army had an overarching need for a strategically agile heavy force, capable of waging decisive combined arms operations against a conventional regional aggressor, U.S. soldiers also had to be prepared for other types of operations against less-

conventional opponents. Humanitarian and peacekeeping missions such as those in Somalia and the Balkans, and regional interventions to protect U.S. interests like those in Grenada and Panama, had presented unanticipated challenges to commanders in the field and at home, and the Army wanted to prepare its soldiers for the volatile environment inherent in these types of contingency operations. However, the painful memory of the Vietnam conflict—in which the U.S. military had fought both a conventional opponent and an insurgency and found it difficult to eradicate either—also had left a lasting impression on senior Army leaders. Because the Army leadership was determined never to repeat the experiences of Vietnam, the new field manual dedicated only a single page to counterinsurgency operations. Rather than provide soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq with guidance that might help them understand the combat environment, the 2001 edition of Field Manual 3–0 left a doctrinal void.

With Field Manual 3–0 lacking necessary insight, commanders turned to *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflicts* (Department of the Army Field Manual 100–20), first published in 1990. Although it was still in the final stages of revision, Field Manual 100–20 would become a temporary source of information until it was superseded by *Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–07) in 2003. Field Manual 3–07 discussed counterinsurgency and foreign internal defense operations as they related to stability and support operations within full spectrum operations articulated in the 2001 *Operations* manual.[1] However, troops deploying to Afghanistan had little to no opportunity to train for stability and support operations because the Joint Readiness Training Center only offered a one-week "low intensity conflict" scenario for light forces. Units such as the 1st Cavalry Division, which had some experience with peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, deployed to Iraq in early 2004 optimized for stability and support operations only to discover a full-fledged insurgency in progress.

In response to the urgent need for more detailed counterinsurgency doctrine following the spring 2004 uprising in Iraq, Lt. Col. Jan S. Horvath of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth borrowed heavily from French experiences in the Algerian War from 1954 through 1962 to produce an interim document, released to the force in October 2004 as Field Manual–Interim 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations.* The manual provided more detail than Field Manual 3–07 had on how to conduct such operations, but Colonel Horvath still faced the unenviable task of sifting out applicable lessons from what could be characterized as a French defeat in Algeria to produce a publication designed to temporarily fill the doctrinal void.[2] This

1. Austin Long, *Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence: The U.S. Military and Counterinsurgency Doctrine, 1960–1970 and 2003–2006*, RAND Counterinsurgency Study Paper 6 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2008), pp. 20–21; Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 3–07*, Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2003), pp. 3-3–3-8.

2. Long, *Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence*, pp. 21–22; Conrad C. Crane, *Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2016), pp. 58–59.

interim manual was rolled out to little fanfare, but its replacement would be far more influential.

In February 2006, Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, who had assumed command of the Combined Arms Center five months earlier, hosted a conference of experts on irregular warfare and counterinsurgency drawn from the military, the intelligence community, the Department of State, academia, and elsewhere. The conference solicited input and backing for a new doctrinal publication, *Counterinsurgency* (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–24).[3] Work on the manual, which included input from the U.S. Marine Corps, had started five months earlier with the arrival of Dr. Conrad C. Crane, a West Point classmate of General Petraeus, who was on loan to Leavenworth from the Military History Institute at the U.S. Army War College in Carlyle, Pennsylvania. Although the first draft reflected a variety of inspirations, its intellectual underpinnings drew heavily from Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson, British commanders whose experiences facing insurgencies in Kenya, Malaya, and Northern Ireland provided a strategic counterpoint to related works by N. Lenin, Mao Zedong, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Ché Guevara. Crane's other sources included material from Dr. Steven K. Metz of the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, and most significantly, two articles citing Iraq lessons learned from Petraeus, who had commanded the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and the Multinational Security Transition Command–Iraq, and Maj. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, who had commanded the 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad.[4]

Work on the counterinsurgency manual also led to the publication of another important update, *Stability Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–07), during this period. The revision of Field Manual 3–07 began in late 2006, following a discussion between Petraeus and Lt. Col. Steven M. Leonard, a former planner with the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq, who had become chief of operational-level doctrine at the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate at Fort Leavenworth. After noting that Field Manual 3–24 did not cover all of the potential missions a unit might conduct during counterinsurgency operations, Petraeus told Colonel Leonard to ask the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development for help in updating the Army's guide to stability and support operations. Leonard also received significant assistance from the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at Carlisle Barracks.[5]

---

3. Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), pp. 24–26.

4. Maj Gen Peter W. Chiarelli and Maj Patrick R. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (Aug 2005): 4–17; Lt Gen David H. Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," *Military Review* 86, no. 1 (Feb 2006): 2–12; Steven Metz and Raymond A. Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2004); Crane, *Cassandra in Oz,* pp. 46–53.

5. Ltr, Steven M. Leonard to Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, 25 Sep 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The resulting manual included some distinctly nonmilitary sources of guidance. At its highest level, *Stability Operations* drew on the 2006 *National Security Strategy*, but more practically, it borrowed from National Security Presidential Directive 44 and DoD Directive 3000.05. Both of the latter documents, first unveiled in 2005, gave authoritative guidance on the conduct of stability operations, with the State Department designated as the lead federal agency for such operations.[6] Other influential sources for Field Manual 3–24 were the U.S. Agency for International Development's 2005 *Fragile States Strategy* and the United States Institute of Peace's *Fragile States Framework*, as well as *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks* from the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability at the State Department, which directly linked military operations to a broader whole-of-government approach.[7] Much like its *Counterinsurgency* predecessor, the *Stability Operations* manual also was released by a separate civilian publisher, the University of Michigan Press, with a foreword from Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michèle A. Flournoy and an introduction by Flournoy's director of stability operations capabilities, Dr. Janine A. Davidson.[8]

The publication of updated operations, counterinsurgency, and stability operations doctrine showed that the Army could adapt to the immediate needs of two combat theaters, even though it also illustrated the operational limitations of technology-based transformation. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, air- and space-based systems played a central role in defeating the Taliban forces led by Mullah Mohammed Omar and Saddam Hussein's Iraqi armed forces. In each instance, however, airpower and space-based assets backed by world-class command, control, communications, and intelligence systems could not defeat opponents who subsequently adopted new methods that negated U.S. technological advantages. The Army and Marine Corps ultimately countered these new threats only by adopting new doctrine that enabled ground forces to fill the operational warfighting shortfalls created when asymmetrical enemy countermeasures relegated air- and space-based systems to a distinctly secondary role.

The two doctrinal manuals outlined above would have much greater influence on future doctrine, most significantly in the concepts of Design and Mission Command. The December 2006 version of Field Manual 3–24 addresses the initial concept of Design:

> It is important to understand the distinction between design and planning. . . . While both activities seek to formulate ways to bring about preferable futures, they are cognitively different. Planning applies established procedures to solve a largely understood problem within an accepted framework. Design inquires into the nature of a problem to conceive a framework for solving that problem. In general, planning is

6. National Security Presidential Dir 44, 7 Dec 2005, sub: Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Lt Col Steven M. Leonard, "U.S. Army Field Manual 3–07, Stability Operations: Forging a Comprehensive Approach," 2 Oct 2008, pp. 4–8.

8. Ltr, Leonard to Park, 25 Sep 2015.

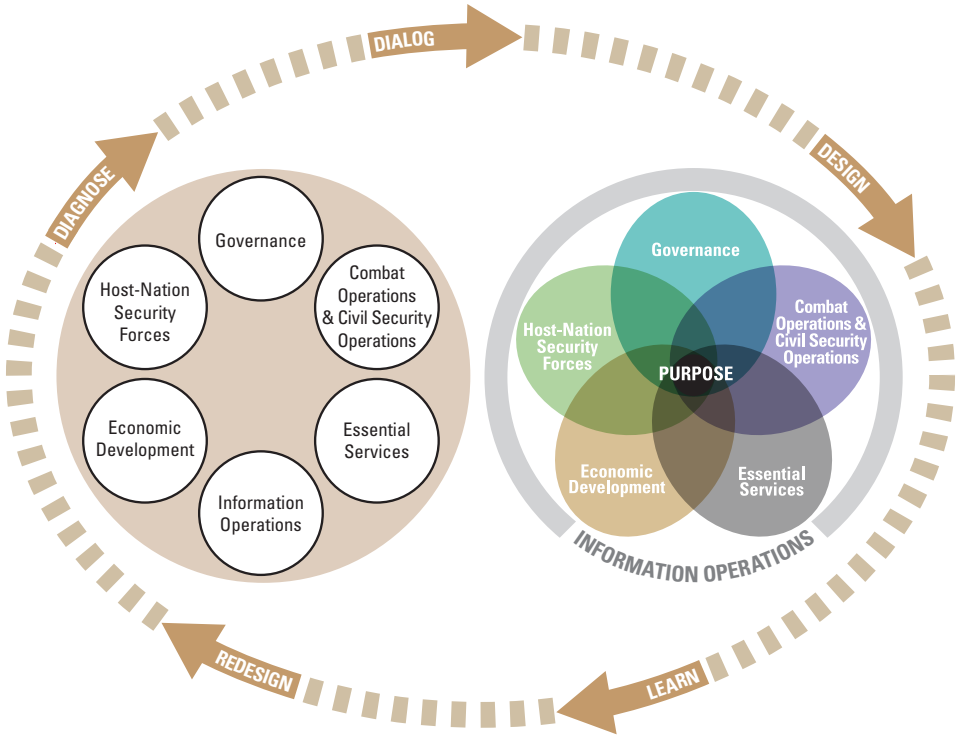


Figure 1.1. Iterative Nature of Design

> problem solving, while design is problem setting. Where planning focuses on generating a plan—a series of executable actions—design focuses on learning about the nature of an unfamiliar problem.[9]

Figure 4-2 from the 2006 Field Manual 3–24 also shows the iterative nature of Design (*Figure 1.1*). A number of artifacts from the counterinsurgency manual, such as lines of operation, lines of effort, and the importance of dialogue, were included in the final design concept. Design, therefore, included much of the understanding and visualizing in what was then called Battle Command. It viewed these actions by the commander as conceptual and separate from planning. In the interim period, before *The Operations Process* (Department of the Army Field Manual 5–0) was published in 2010, planning consisted of a conceptual component (Design) performed by commanders and the detailed planning (Military Decision Making Process and Joint Operation Planning Process) subsequently conducted by the staff:

> 4–1. For every operation, commanders develop personal, detailed understanding of the situation and operational environment. They then visualize a desired end state and craft a broad concept for shaping the current conditions toward that end state. Finally, they describe their visualization

9. HQDA FM 3–24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), ch. 4, para. 3, p. 4–2.

> through the commander's intent, planning guidance, and concept of operations, setting formal planning processes in motion. Thus, planning is an adaptive process that ebbs and flows with the situation; as understanding of the situation evolves, planners develop branches and sequels to account for such evolution. Planning is a continuous activity, constantly adapting as the conditions of the operational environment are shaped by activities, both natural and human. Since planning is an ongoing process, the resultant plan is an interim product of deliberate thought, based on knowledge and understanding at a specific point in time and space. The truest measure of a good plan is not whether execution occurs as planned, but whether the plan fosters flexibility, initiative, and adaptability in the face of unforeseen events.
>
> 4–2. Planning consists of two separate, but closely related aspects: a conceptual component, represented by the less tangible aspects of visualization, and a detailed component, which introduces specificity to the plan through a deliberate process. During planning these activities overlap; there is no clear delineation between either. As commanders conceptualize the operation, their vision informs the staff to add detail to the plan.[10]

In comparison, the 2010 edition of Field Manual 5–0, paragraph 3–2, nearly mirrors the opening sentence of paragraph 4–2 above:

> 3–2. Planning consists of two separate, but closely related components: a conceptual component and a detailed component. The conceptual component is represented by the cognitive application of design. The detailed component translates broad concepts into a complete and practical plan. During planning, these components overlap with no clear delineation between them. As commanders conceptualize the operation, their vision guides the staff through design and into detailed planning. Design is continuous throughout planning and evolves with increased understanding throughout the operations process. Design underpins the exercise of battle command, guiding the iterative and often cyclic application of understanding, visualizing, and describing. As these iterations occur, the design concept—the tangible link to detailed planning—is forged.[11]

The introduction of the concepts of Design, Operational Design, and the Army Design Methodology was a major change to the way the Army approached campaign planning. The inclusion of lines of effort and lines of operations, coupled with a new operational approach, reshaped how the Army defined problems and solved them. This conceptual framework had a tremendous impact on the conduct of Enduring Freedom, especially as the Army looked at the overall campaign during the 2010–2011 time frame.

---

10. HQDA FM 3–07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008), ch. 4, para. 1, p. 4-1.

11. HQDA FM 5–0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010), ch. 3, para. 2, p. 3-1.



Department of Defense

Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker talks to reporters at the Pentagon on 26 July 2004.

Stresses on the Force

The difficulty of fighting two simultaneous conflicts created a tremendous amount of stress on the Army, particularly its human component. The physical and mental health of service members, whether active or reserve, suffered under the strain of multiple rotations. Although the Army made efforts to address these concerns, particularly by giving reservists access to much-needed healthcare services, it struggled to mitigate the effects of personnel problems and shortages as it responded to the rising tempo of operations overseas.

Dwell Time and Its Effect on Resiliency

Keenly aware that Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld did not support conventional force structure increases as the primary means of meeting sustained operational requirements, Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker instituted a policy known as dwell time in an effort to ameliorate the stress on service members during and in between deployments. As a core component of the Army Force Generation process, dwell time sought to manage the intervals between deployments, providing service members with time to recuperate from their most recent overseas tour while also preparing for their next one. Despite General Schoomaker's best intentions, the policy of managing dwell time met with mixed success depending on the soldier's component. Active component service members could expect only twelve to



Sfc. Jim Downen, U.S. Army (USA)

Michigan Army National Guard Soldiers from the 1432d Engineer Company return home from Afghanistan.

fifteen months at home station between deployments, which was less than the intended goal of a two-year interval. The policy was more successful for reserve component service members: most, but not all, could expect five years at home for every one year deployed. However, the reserve component soon faced a host of unexpected readiness challenges that emerged during the lengthy interval between deployments.[12]

Meeting dwell time goals proved to be even more elusive as the tempo of operations in both conflicts ramped up. As of 2007, the deployed-to-dwell time ratio for the active component was closer to 1:1, and for National Guard and Army Reserve it was closer to 1:3.[13] The Iraq surge, the Afghanistan surge, the transformation to modularity, and reductions in overall end strength

12. Lt Col Jamie S. Gayton, "Have We Found the Manning Holy Grail?," *Military Review* 84, no. 2 (Mar-Apr 2004): 17–20.

13. Rpt, Def Science Board Task Force, Sep 2007, sub: Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism, p. 23; Tom Curry, "'Hillary-care' in Uniform? Plan to Expand Pentagon Health Insurance for National Guard and

following a brief period of growth all combined to push against the trend to make mobilizations predictable. The rotational nature of the Army Force Generation process rested on the assumption that all soldiers, and reserve component soldiers specifically, found multiple rotations less stressful than long mobilizations. For many reservists, this particular assumption did not hold true. With the added commitments to complete professional education courses and the need to continue the cross-leveling of personnel to fill units, multiple deployments meant that military service was a larger part of a reservist's life for longer periods. All of this elevated stress on reservists, who did not have access to the support mechanisms of their active-duty counterparts.[14]

As reservists returned home, the burden of combat shifted to civilian healthcare providers and the Veterans Administration. A Walter Reed Institute study published in 2007 found that there was no reason to believe that reservists were less mentally healthy at the start of a deployment than those on active duty, but they faced significant challenges unique to their situation after a deployment. Active component soldiers continued to have day-to-day contact with their units (or at least with other soldiers) after a deployment, unlike their reserve peers who became isolated in their experiences. As a result, some reservists found little relief in their return to civilian employment. Posttraumatic stress disorder, a condition that affected 15 to 30 percent of soldiers, typically manifested three to twelve months after a traumatic event, but reservists faced legal hurdles in receiving treatment if they did not report symptoms of this condition before they left active duty.[15] As the frequency of deployments increased, many employers unofficially balked at hiring or reemploying reservists. In many cases, unemployment meant that reservists lost their health insurance, which added to their stress and created another hindrance to mobilizing troops.[16]

Demobilization became, in essence, the first chance to prepare a soldier for his or her next deployment. However, the one-year cap on mobilized time increased the pressure on the Army to shorten demobilization procedures to a few days. Healthcare exemplifies the case. Medical and dental care, often needed to treat injuries from previous deployments, continued to be the largest single factor keeping reserve soldiers from returning to combat. In 2007, barely 50 percent of returning Army Reserve personnel sent to Afghanistan or Iraq as individual augmentees met dental readiness requirements at the end of their deployment, mainly because of deferred dental work that had deteriorated further during their deployment. The reservists then returned to their original

---

Reserve," NBC News, 24 Aug 2005, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/9063246/ns/politics-tom_curry/t/hillary-care-uniform/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Rpt, Def Science Board Task Force, Sep 2007, sub: Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism, p. 22.

15. Ibid., p. 14.

16. Congressional Budget Ofc, "The Effects of Reserve Call-Ups on Civilian Employers," CBO Paper, May 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

units, but were nondeployable because the constricted demobilization timeline did not leave enough time to fix their medical and dental issues.[17]

These issues motivated the decision to give all National Guard and Army Reserve personnel access to premium-based healthcare at all times, and starting in October 2007 they would receive free healthcare before deployment. By September 2009, more than 100,000 reservists had signed up for this plan. The program expanded options for reservists who were preparing for deployment and provided comfort to families who now knew that loved ones who were injured on duty would be able to receive long-term medical care. It was also one of the most expensive DoD programs provided to the reserve component after the September 11th attacks.[18]

Stress Within the Force

Although Schoomaker factored dwell time into the Army Force Generation process to help manage the negative effects of multiple combat deployments, it did not turn out to be as effective as hoped. The Army's first mention of perceptible stress within the force appeared in the 2005 *Army Posture Statement*. Although the statement explicitly referred to stress in terms of the recapitalization of equipment used in combat, the remarks applied equally well to individual augmentees serving in joint task force headquarters and similar organizations, as well as "low-density/high-demand" units such as civil affairs, military intelligence, and military police. The narrative of the *Army Posture Statement* soon shifted squarely onto soldiers, their families, and civilian workers as increased stress led to skyrocketing numbers of suicides and other self-destructive behavior.[19]

As Army leaders sought ways to cope with the situation, they learned that stress did not affect soldiers only when they were in combat. In fact, soldiers carried that stress back to their home stations after their deployments ended. Early studies of the problem suggested that stress did not dissipate immediately upon soldiers' return. In fact, the stress levels of soldiers returning from deployments peaked four to nine months after their return—by which time the soldier was already preparing for the next deployment.[20] The secondhand effects of stress took a toll on soldiers' families. Whether the result of a soldier's absence during deployment, violent acts committed by a soldier during or after deployment, or bouts of depression experienced by a soldier who had returned home, stress often had traumatic and damaging results.

---

17. Marygail K. Brauner, Timothy Jackson, and Elizabeth Gayton, *Improving Medical and Dental Readiness in Reserve Components*, RAND Research Brief (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2012), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. National Guard Press Release, "Tricare Reserve Numbers Increase," Sep 2009, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Office of the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army, United States Army Posture Statement 2005 (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 6 Feb 2005), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Lydia I. Marek et al., "Returning Home: What We Know about the Reintegration of Deployed Service Members into Their Families and Communities," *NCFR Report: Family Focus on Military Families*, no. FF52 (Spring 2012): F16–18.

As rising operational commitments made units deploy more frequently, both soldiers and their families turned to extreme measures, such as suicide or divorce, to end a downward spiral from which there seemed to be no escape.[21]

Suicide occurred more frequently in the Army than in other services. The vast majority of suicides took place not while soldiers were in Afghanistan or Iraq, but after they returned to their home stations. White soldiers were one-third more likely to commit suicide than African American, Asian, or Hispanic soldiers. Junior enlisted soldiers were slightly more likely to take their own lives compared to career noncommissioned officers, while officers committed suicide at a rate just over half that of junior enlisted. Suicides were more likely to take place in the barracks or in on-post housing than in homes located outside of a military installation.[22] Just as disturbingly, studies disclosed that stress did not diminish even after soldiers returned to civilian life. A Veterans Administration study covering the period 2001–2007 disclosed that deployed and nondeployed veterans respectively committed suicide at rates of 41 and 61 percent higher than the general population.[23]

Aside from the direct impact of growing stress on soldiers and their families, reduced intervals between deployments created long-term issues that threatened the collective fabric of the Army. Inadequate dwell time at home station between deployments not only reduced the time needed to adequately balance soldiers' needs, but also had detrimental effects on their units. The unit and commanders still had to conduct predeployment training, which encompassed everything from individual skills through large-unit collective training. Officers and noncommissioned officers received fewer opportunities to learn more about their profession as impending deployments delayed their military education. A growing number of potential career noncommissioned officers left the active component for civilian life or reservist duty rather than submit their families to repeated deployments with no relief in sight. Those soldiers who remained in the force, officers and enlisted alike, had to concentrate on learning the counterinsurgency and advisory skills needed for combat deployments rather than hone their abilities to a much broader range of combat operations.[24]

The Army took several different approaches to respond to the increasing stress on the force. The onset of readiness and healthcare problems that followed multiple combat deployments, and the gradual reduction of time spent at home station between overseas tours, became starkly visible in

---

21. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate, "Studies of Tour Lengths," HQDA, 25 Mar 2013, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Simon Rogers, "US Military Suicides in Charts: How They Overtook Combat Deaths," *Guardian*, 1 Feb 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/feb/01/us-military-suicides-trend-charts, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. "Suicide Risk and Risk of Death Among Veterans," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d., https://www.publichealth.va.gov/epidemiology/studies/suicide-risk-death-risk-recent-veterans.asp, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

24. Ibid.



Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, U.S. Air Force (USAF)

General Chiarelli addresses soldiers' mental health at a National Guard conference in September 2009.

2008 when suicide rates exceeded the civilian average for the first time.[25] In a direct response to the increased suicide rate and other reports of high-risk behavior, the Army established the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program on 1 October 2008. The program was designed to "increase the resilience of Soldiers and families," decrease posttraumatic stress, reduce undesirable or destructive behaviors, and promote positive growth from stressors.[26] In 2009, General Chiarelli, now vice chief of staff of the Army, visited six installations to examine suicide prevention efforts in the force. He and his team identified a trend of increased self-destructive, high-risk behavior such as self-harm, illicit drug use, binge drinking, and criminal activity. Chiarelli directed the production of what became the *Army Health Promotion/Risk Reduction/Suicide Prevention Report* in 2010, also known as the "Red Book" for its cover color. The conclusions in the Red Book cited a "direct link to increased life stressors and increased risk behavior," but more pointedly, noted:

> For some, the rigors of service, repeated deployments, injuries and separations from Family resulted in a sense of isolation, hopelessness and life fatigue. For others, a permissive unit environment, promoted by an out of balance Army with a BOG:dwell of less than 1:2, failed to hold Soldiers

25. Gen Peter W. Chiarelli, "General Chiarelli on Army Suicide Prevention," *Small Wars Journal* (26 Jun 2009), http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/general-chiarelli-on-army-suicide-prevention, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. The Hon. Pete Geren and General George W. Casey Jr., "Comprehensive Soldier Fitness," *2009 Army Posture Statement* (May 2009), https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/aps/aps_2009.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> accountable for their actions and allowed for risk-taking behavior—sometimes with fatal consequences.[27]

Addressing sources of the stressors themselves required a reduction in demand, which started with the end of the Iraq surge in 2007, and continued through 2009 when the last soldiers on fifteen-month deployments completed their combat tours. On 4 August 2011, Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh directed that combat tours be reduced from twelve to nine months for active division headquarters and their subordinate forces. Although corps headquarters and individual augmentation tours remained at twelve months, the change brought the deployed-to-dwell-time ratios back into a semblance of the goals originally set as part of Army Force Generation.[28]

Even as the Army significantly curtailed the length of combat deployment tours in comparison to previous years, it continued its efforts to combat stress within the force. Chiarelli's initial findings were followed up in a 2012 report called *Army 2020: Generating Health & Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset*, which was nicknamed the "Gold Book" for its cover. The study illustrated trends resulting from deploying the Army's forces at the intensity required to meet the demand for twenty-three brigade combat teams. The Gold Book featured an update of the Composite Life Cycle Model from the Red Book, illustrating the aggregate stress to the force over time. Whereas previous analyses of stress to the force focused either on equipment or units, stress levels measured across the overall force indicated the situation was more dire than expected. The Gold Book noted that cumulative stress had built up to the point where soldiers were experiencing a lifetime of stress during their first six years in service. Stress typically occurred in overlapping intervals, and when many stressors concentrated at a given time period, it correlated with the greatest risk of self-harm or suicide, as well as related high-risk behaviors or criminal offenses.[29] Obviously this was an issue requiring a generational approach for the Army and all the services to confront and repair in the upcoming years.

The Unsustainability of Individual Augmentation

The sheer number of deployed brigades obscured the fact that the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) command and control structure was taxing the force to its limits. Although the modular force structure resulted in less personnel turbulence within tactical units, it did not address staffing needs for headquarters above the brigade level. Divisions, corps, army service component command headquarters, and units serving as land component headquarters or joint task forces still required robust individual

---

27. Gen Peter W. Chiarelli, *Army Health Promotion Risk Reduction Suicide Prevention Report 2010* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2010), pp. 3–4.

28. The Hon. John M. McHugh, "SECARMY Memorandum: Army Deployment Period Policy," 4 Aug 2011, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. Rpt, HQDA, 2012, *Army 2020: Generating Health and Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2012), p. 40.

augmentation to fill positions coded for skills normally found only above the tactical level within the Army. Examples of the latter category included strategic intelligence, operations research and systems analysis, force management, acquisitions, and strategic plans and policy specialists. The majority of those positions were also found outside of what the Army called its Operations Career Field, which were its traditional command-track branches and specialties. Joint task forces that were not built around existing organizations, such as Multi-National Force–Iraq, Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A), Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, and Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A), had to fill personnel requirements from other organizations.

The DoD's method of sourcing individual staffing requirements across the components, the Worldwide Individual Augmentation System, dated back to the early 1990s. Under that system, initial responsibility for sourcing a requirement in a combatant command area of responsibility fell to the theater army, navy, or air force using its own assets. For the U.S. Army in particular, if the theater army could not meet the requirement, then it was passed back to Headquarters, Department of the Army, which then tasked the requirement out to another Army organization. Tasked individuals deployed under temporary change of station orders—normally orders for up to one year—to fill the wartime requirement, but this temporary deployment left a vacancy in their parent organizations that would not be backfilled during their absence. For short-term contingency operations, sourcing requirements through individual augmentation was not an excessive strain, but over many years it had a detrimental effect on both individual and collective readiness across the entire force.[30]

The long-term requirements of individual augmentation, such as those necessitated by Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, became a major burden on the active Army for certain high-demand, low-density skills. The impact of maintaining this level of readiness through individual augmentation did not become apparent until several years into the conflict, and it differed by component. The reserve component was able to fill the ranks with volunteers in the short term, but by 2004 the lack of available personnel made many units nondeployable. This was most pronounced in the psychological operations and civil affairs forces that were slated to deploy. At the end of 2004, close to 50 percent of Army Reserve personnel (almost 100,000) had been mobilized since 11 September 2001, including 15,000 who had been mobilized twice and 2,000 mobilized three or more times. Within a few months, only 31,000 of 205,000 Army Reserve soldiers were eligible for mobilization under the policy of twenty-four-month cumulative mobilization without a volunteer statement.[31]

---

30. Lt Col Radames Cornier Jr., "The Army's Individual Augmentation Management System: A Temporary Expedient or a Viable Army-Wide Program?" (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2000), pp. 1–2.

31. "Sourcing Future Deployments: What's Left in the Army Reserve," Slide dated 15 Dec 2004, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

In the active component, those pressures became most apparent by 2006. The individual augmentation requirements for both Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom started in earnest in 2003. Individual augmentees typically deployed for a full year in a combat zone. During that time, they were unavailable to their organizations, and according to Army personnel policy they could not be replaced as they were on temporary change of station orders. Once they had returned to their home units, they were nominally exempt from deployment for another year as they met mandatory dwell time at home station. Furthermore, wartime requirements created the additional load of filling organizations such as advisory teams or joint manning documents that did not exist in the permanent force structure.[32] However, the Generating Force that was the usual source for those personnel had already been gutted to provide additional personnel spaces to the Operating Force under modularity. In both cases, personnel deficits—especially in low-density, high-demand specialties—peaked during 2007, just as the Army hit its peak demand for brigade combat teams in Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Personnel deficits paralleled equipment shortages as the Army shuffled equipment among organizations to meet requirements for the units slated for deployment. This trend did not abate until November 2008, when equipment-on-hand numbers finally began to improve as surge operations in Iraq came to an end.[33] By 2006, active component brigade combat teams were deploying after spending only a year at home station, even with the Army National Guard's commitment to replace units undergoing modular conversion. Division and corps headquarters were on similar deployment timelines. For much of the Army, there simply were no personnel available to backfill all of the shortages.[34]

The Near-Term Impact of the Iraq Surge on the Army

Under the force-sizing construct envisioned by the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, the Army maintained an authorized personnel end strength of 480,000 active component, 350,000 Army National Guard, and 205,000 Army Reserve soldiers.[35] Although those authorizations never envisioned the Army supporting two simultaneous regional conflicts, for more than six years the troop figures remained virtually unchanged. From April 2003 to

32. Col Joseph M. Martin, "The Global War on Terror and Army Officer Military Education" (Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 2008), pp. 6–7.

33. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, Opns, Readiness, and Mobilization Directorate, "Army Strategic Readiness Update, March 2011," HQDA, 1 Apr 2011, p. 26.

34. Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Force Management Directorate, DMS GENSER Msg, sub: CSA Initiative on ALO and AC/RC Balance, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

35. Harvey and Schoomaker, 2005 Army Posture Statement, p. 21; Mary Manjikian, "Do Fewer Resources Mean Less Influence?: A Comparative Historical Case Study of Military Influence in a Time of Austerity" (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2015), pp. 39–49.



MCS1 Chad J. McNeeley, U.S. Navy (USN)

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

January 2007, the Army usually sent fourteen brigade combat teams to Iraq and another three to Afghanistan while continuing to meet other contingency response requirements articulated in standing war plans. Those figures tilted dramatically when the Bush administration decided to surge additional forces into Iraq. The commitment of additional troops began with the deployment to Baghdad of the 82d Airborne Division's 2d Brigade Combat Team, then serving as the CENTCOM "call forward force" in Kuwait. On 10 January 2007, President Bush announced that the Army would send four more brigade combat teams from the United States to Baghdad as part of the surge strategy designed to reclaim the Iraqi capital from insurgents. In addition to the five active component brigade combat teams, the National Guard's 1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, would remain in Iraq for 125 days past its original redeployment date.[36]

Curtailing Predeployment Training

The need for more personnel in Iraq temporarily overwhelmed both the Army Force Generation process and its related Army policies. Two of the five brigades being sent to Iraq did not have enough time to go to the Joint Readiness Training Center or the National Training Center for their mission rehearsal exercises, originally scheduled for February and May

36. Amy Belasco, *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars FY 2001–2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues*, Report 40682 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2 Jul 2009), p. 38; DoD, Office of the Asst Sec Def (Public Affairs), "DoD Announces Force Adjustments," News Release No. 028-07, 11 Jan 2007, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/01/mil-070111-dod05.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2007 respectively. Instead, those two combat training centers sent observers/controllers, role players, opposing forces, and equipment to Fort Lewis, Washington, to train the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, and to Fort Stewart, Georgia, to train the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division.[37] Although Army Force Generation originally had been predicated on a deployment cycle in which brigades remained at home station for two years before serving twelve months in Iraq or Afghanistan, brigade combat teams were now deploying less than two years after returning from a previous combat tour.

Extending Tours of Duty

Even before the additional demand from the Iraq surge, the Army's standard twelve-month deployment tour did not allow the units next to deploy sufficient time at home station to prepare for their combat deployment. The Army's solution was to increase deployment lengths to fifteen months for active component brigades, which Secretary of Defense Dr. Robert M. Gates announced on 11 April 2007. The rationale for the three-month extension to overseas tours was twofold. First was for "a fair, predictable and sustainable commitment to our troops," to provide as much advanced notice as possible to units that were deploying, as well as to eliminate uncertainties that surrounded past extensions. The other reason was to provide the capability to sustain the deployed force.[38] The ad hoc mission rehearsal exercises at units' home stations were a necessary stopgap, but it would be unacceptable to deploy insufficiently prepared forces. Keeping units at home station for a year was the minimum time required to adequately prepare those units that were returning to combat.[39] However, the cuts made to the Generating Force to fill the Operating Force meant that the Army had already mortgaged its institutional capacity to speed up both individual and collective training.

Secretary Gates' directive met with the approval of General George W. Casey Jr., who assumed the position of Army Chief of Staff from Schoomaker on 10 April 2007. General Casey described the existing strategic environment as a period of protracted confrontation among state, nonstate, and individual actors using violence to achieve their political and ideological ends. He also emphasized that the Army was out of balance: the demand for forces exceeded the sustainable supply, systems designed for a pre–September 11th peacetime

37. Matthew Cox, "Bigger 'Surge': Ground Commanders Call for 7,000 More Troops," *Army Times*, 12 Mar 2007; Robert Burns, "2 Army Units Will Forgo Desert Training," *USA Today*, 27 Feb 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

38. "DoD News Briefing with Secretary Gates and Gen Pace from the Pentagon,"11 Apr 2007, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3928, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Change 4 (2006)*, F–2–6.

force had been unequal to the pressures of six years of war, and the Army's readiness was being consumed as fast as it could be built.[40]

Utilization of the Total Force

By late 2007, the increased operations tempo in Iraq compounded the pressures on the force to a critical point. The peak demand to the Army started that October, when it had twenty-three brigade combat teams in combat, of which twenty were in Iraq. At the same time, three brigade combat teams were still operating in Afghanistan. These were the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division; the South Carolina Army National Guard's 218th Infantry Brigade; and the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, which had been redirected from its originally intended Iraq deployment.

The reserve components received some relief from the policy changes initiated in anticipation of the October 2007 peak. On 19 January 2007, Gates took the next step in transforming the reserves by outlining a new policy on the "Utilization of the Total Force," codifying best practices for mobilization. It would provide for consistent troop presence; develop a sustainable long-term rotation policy; spread the burden of operational demands across components; provide predictability to service members, families, and employers; and maintain the all-volunteer force for the long war.[41] The policy outlined several key items:

1. Planning objectives for the active force would be a 1:2 deploy to dwell ratio, 1:5 for Reserve and Guard.
2. Minimize stop loss [a force management program used to involuntarily retain enlisted personnel] for both active duty and reserve component members.
3. Establish a new program to incentivize or compensate active and reserve members required to deploy/mobilize early or often, or beyond rotational goals.
4. Provide hardship waivers that recognize exceptional circumstances facing members and families of mobilized/deployed members.
5. Manage mobilization of reserve component members on a unit basis.
6. Limit involuntary mobilizations of reserve component members and units to one year.[42]

Although the reserve typically had mobilized for sixteen to eighteen months under previous policies, the new approach limited the entire mobili-

---

40. Gen George W. Casey Jr., "The Strength of the Nation," *Army Magazine* 57, no. 10 (2007): 20–21.

41. Defense Science Board Task Force, "Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism," Sep 2007, p. 21.

42. Memo, Sec Def Robert M. Gates, 17 Jan 2007, sub: Utilization of the Total Force, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

zation and deployment process to one year.[43] The revised deployment cycle consisted of extended training weekends and annual training periods for a year before mobilization, forty-five days of premobilization, and nine months deployed time in theater.[44] The policy also made reserve leadership responsible for predeployment training and certification. This development was a dramatic shift from long-standing guidance that only training witnessed by an active component representative at a designated mobilization station was valid for certifying reserves readiness. The new policy remained unchanged for little more than a year before Congress passed legislation in January 2008 prohibiting the deployment of reservists without a minimum of thirty days' advanced notice.[45]

That same month, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, an independent thirteen-member body charged with studying reserve component organization, equipment, and compensation, published *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force*. The commission's findings were a policy watershed: it recommended that the reserves be reshaped as a force designed for consistent deployments.[46] The DoD would implement that finding, along with many of the commission's other recommendations, in DoD Directive 1200.17, *Managing the Reserve Component as an Operational Force*.[47] The new directive had minimal impact on existing practices, however, because the Army's deputy chief of staff G–3/5/7 for operations, plans, and training had anticipated the impending changes by almost a year when he issued Execution Order 150–08 on 29 February 2008. This order contained an expansive adjustment of mobilization procedures, which included bringing Army-wide expectations in line with Directive 1200.17, adjusting critical timelines and benchmarks, and providing detailed procedures for training tasks and validations, particularly for nonstandard missions.[48]

Readiness and Training

When the Army realized Afghanistan and Iraq had evolved into protracted conflicts waged by ground troops, it began to discard long-accepted readiness practices. The standards used up to 2001, including tiered readiness, the mix

43. John D. Ellis and Laura McKnight Mackenzie, *Operational Reservations: Considerations for a Total Army Force* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2014), p. 7.

44. Defense Science Board Task Force, "Deployment of Members of the National Guard and Reserve in the Global War on Terrorism," Sep 2007, p. 21.

45. 10 U.S.C. § 12301(a)-(b) (2008), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, Transforming the National Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force (Arlington, Va.: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 31 Jan 2008), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

47. DoD Dir 1200.17, 29 Oct 2008, sub: Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. Ellen M. Pint et al., *Active Component Responsibility in Reserve Component Pre- and Postmobilization Training* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2015).

of organizational designs in the force, and particular types of unit or force packages, provided the only broadly quantifiable measure of readiness. The structures of those units were aligned with the acquisitions system and its goals, rather than operational requirements. Such an arrangement would have sufficed had the transformational form of warfare envisioned by the DoD produced rapid, decisive victories. In reality, it became clear that pre–September 11th readiness models and organizational methodologies were increasingly irrelevant given the frequency with which units deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq replaced outgoing units with significantly dissimilar structures and capabilities.

Recognizing that a wartime army could not afford to take risks in its current capability to resource future force development, the Army implemented plans to spend more money to increase force readiness. From 2003 to 2009, a huge amount of supplemental funding was allocated to that program in order to provide combat units with the necessary capabilities to perform all assigned missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. That action also marked a repudiation of the previous vision of transformation. The issuance of the *Army Campaign Plan* in 2004 meant that the old *Army Transformation Campaign Plan*, and everything it was supposed to drive, no longer applied.[49] Other changes included cancellation of the Comanche helicopter and the Crusader howitzer, along with major restructuring of the Future Combat System designed to "spiral" capabilities as they were ready as opposed to fielding full combat systems. The Future Combat System lingered for several years in a reduced capacity until it was canceled in 2009, having faced criticism that it did not "adequately reflect the lessons of counterinsurgency and close quarters combat in Iraq and Afghanistan."[50]

The implementation of modularity and Army Force Generation, combined with Schoomaker's directive to bring the entire Army to the highest manning possible, sought to ensure that all units, most notably brigade combat teams, received equitable resources and training to fit their intended mission. In sharp contrast to the discarded tiered readiness and resourcing approach, the constant rotation of forces between home station and combat ensured that the state of training and readiness among active component brigade combat teams reached a rough parity. Units that had not been maintained at full readiness before September 2001 now benefited from an Army Force Generation process that allocated resources solely on the basis of scheduled combat deployments.[51] Within the active component, high readiness levels were no longer limited to select units with a contingency response mission.

---

49. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. Park and Maj Matthew B. Smith, OEF Study Grp, with Brig Gen (Ret.) Robin P. Swan, 24 Sep 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Julien Demotes-Mainard, "RAH-66 Comanche—The Self-Inflicted Termination: Exploring the Dynamics of Change in Weapons Procurement," *Defense Acquisition Research Journal* 19, no. 2 (Apr 2012): 187; Christopher G. Pernin et al., *Lessons from the Army's Future Combat Systems Program* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2012), pp. 36–48.

51. Memo, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, 8 Sep 2015, sub: [D]iscussion with Mr. Jim Stratton and Mr. Frank Pannocchia, HQDA G–3/7 Collective Training Division, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Instead, the preponderance of the force was now trained to the highest levels of readiness based on a unit's upcoming deployment or mission set.

In addition to improving force readiness, the Army's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq meant that light and heavy forces gained a degree of mutual familiarization that would not have happened in peacetime. The nexus between the two communities that began with the creation of Stryker brigades expanded further when the Army deployed all three types of brigade combat teams to fill requirements in a given division's area of operations, as was the case in 2005–2006 in Multinational Division North in Iraq. The first heavy brigade combat teams to deploy to Afghanistan did so in an advisory role, and two-star headquarters long associated with the mechanized and armor community, such as the 3d Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Division, and the 1st Cavalry Division, began serving as regional command headquarters in Afghanistan from 2011 onward. Time and repetitive combat rotations helped break down the divides between the light and heavy subcultures.

Although units from various communities worked with increasing harmony and synchronization in overseas combat zones, predeployment training continued to focus on specific mission-oriented tasks rather than a broader approach to honing warfighting proficiency. An unintended effect of that approach, which concentrated on specific deployed mission-essential tasks at the expense of core mission-essential tasks, resulted in a loss of proficiency for traditional skills such as combined arms warfare. That troubling development convinced Col. Sean B. MacFarland, Col. Michael H. Shields, and Col. Jeffrey J. Snow, who had respectively commanded the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division; 172d Infantry Brigade Combat Team; and the 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, to formulate and send a white paper to Army Chief of Staff General Casey.

That jointly authored document, released in May 2008, minced no words with its title: "The King and I: The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery's Ability to Provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders."[52] The authors asserted that "no branch of the Army has suffered a greater identity crisis than Field Artillery, as a result of transformation, COIN-centric [counterinsurgency] operations, and the nonstandard staff demands of OIF/OEF." The basic premise was alarming in itself, but the white paper also provided a wealth of evidence from home station and the combat training centers highlighting the fact that the loss of those skills and the attrition of experienced artillerymen risked "mortgaging not only flexibility in today's fight, but our ability to fight the next war as well."[53] The paper, one of the few internal critiques of modularity, went viral soon afterward. Anticipating that decreasing force levels in Iraq from 2008 onward would permit more emphasis on regaining proficiency in core mission-essential warfighting tasks, the Army acknowledged the concerns raised by MacFarland, Shields,

52. Richard Hart Sinnreich, "Field Artillery's Effectiveness a Casualty of Wars," *Army Magazine* 58, no. 7 (Jul 2006): 19.

53. Sean MacFarland, Michael Shields, and Jeffrey Snow, "The King and I: The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery's Ability to Provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders," May 2008, pp. 1–3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

and Snow by issuing updated training and leader-development guidance. The new directive stated that active units with eighteen months or more (thirty-six months for reserve units) of dwell time would retrain on core mission-essential warfighting tasks in addition to their deployment-oriented mission-essential task training, while units with twenty-four months or more dwell time would regain proficiency in both core tasks and deployment tasks.[54] In the years to follow, many of the modularity force structure changes would be reversed.

The mission-specific requirements of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts not only influenced the Army's overall training philosophy but also created internal organizational tensions, arising from the use of a predominantly conventional force against irregular opponents. An increasingly vocal group of irregular warfare proponents sought to influence the ongoing debate over the roles, missions, and structure best suited for the Army. Two influential papers published in 2007 and 2008 highlighted their views. The first, "An Army at the Crossroads" by Andrew F. Krepinevich, proposed a formal division of forces between those geared to conduct irregular warfare and security force assistance versus those focused on major combat operations. The second, "Institutionalizing Adaptation" by Lt. Col. John A. Nagl, proposed the creation of a permanent advisory corps using personnel drawn from the conventional force.[55] Although the papers had a considerable following, the successes of the Iraq surge convinced senior Army leaders that conventional forces could conduct irregular warfare as well as they carried out major combat operations. In addition, the Army's institutional expertise in advising was already resident in the Special Forces, and conventional forces could and did supplement these capabilities as needed.[56]

An Army Out of Balance

Even with the ongoing revisions to doctrine and structure intended to improve efficiency and overhaul the service's approach to twenty-first-century warfare, the Army faced one overarching problem: it simply did not have enough soldiers to carry out its missions. After years of constraints on the force structure, the Bush administration embarked on an ambitious plan to grow the Army across the board, with a particular focus on the skill sets needed for continued operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

---

54. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Training and Leader Development Guidance* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2008), pp. 2–3.

55. Andrew F. Krepinevich, "An Army at the Crossroads" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008); John A. Nagl, "Institutionalizing Adaptation: It's Time for a Permanent Army Advisor Corps" (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 2007).

56. Lt Gen Peter W. Chiarelli and Maj Stephen M. Smith, "Learning From Our Modern Wars: The Imperatives of Preparing for a Dangerous Future," *Military Review* 87, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2007): 7–8.

Grow the Army

In early 2007, President Bush approved adding 74,000 active Army, 8,200 National Guard, and 1,000 Army Reserve soldiers to the force. That increase allowed for an initiative that became known as "Grow the Army," resulting in an authorized permanent end strength of 547,000 active personnel and 358,200 national guardsmen by 2010, as well as 206,000 reservists by 2013. The decision to increase the Army force structure signaled the Bush administration's acceptance of the fact that the Army had to expand because there was no other way to reduce the amount of time soldiers were deployed versus at home. Army Force Generation planners had optimistically estimated the deployed-to-dwell ratio as not exceeding 1:2 for the active component and 1:5 for the reserve component. In reality, most active component brigade combat teams were deployed at a 1:1 ratio, with certain portions of the reserve component force, predominantly military intelligence and aviation units, at a 1:3 ratio.[57]

The Grow the Army initiative began to reverse the previous Army end strength plan for modularity, which had paid for the Army's deployable Operating Force increases by cutting the Generating Force and lesser-used combat formations. On numerous occasions, the Army had redirected or reappropriated the Generating Force's personnel and resources to make up deficits in other areas, ranging from bringing the entire force to the highest readiness levels, to modular conversions, individual augmentation, and the Iraq surge. However, that approach was a short-term solution at best. The Generating Force was the Army's institutional repository of knowledge and skills, and it needed sufficient instructors, trainees, transients, and students to continue to resource future requirements in the Operating Force.[58]

Secretary Gates further approved an accelerated Grow the Army plan that would restore balance in the force in 2011, rather than 2013 as originally planned (*Figure 1.2*). This increase would create another six infantry brigade combat teams, two signal brigades, and one additional brigade in fires, maneuver enhancement, battlefield surveillance, sustainment, air defense, and engineers.[59] In the meantime, the Army accepted that the Generating Force would have to make do with its existing resource and personnel shortages until the Operating Force expanded enough to meet demand.[60]

The first brigade combat team to be built from scratch as part of that expansion, which was flagged as the 3d Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, initially stood up on 2 July 2009—spanning four force generation cycles from decision to availability of the first new Grow the

---

57. U.S. Army, *The Army Posture Statement 2008: A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 26 Feb 2008), pp. 9–10.

58. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Execute Order 2008* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2008), pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp

59. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *The Army Strategy 2008* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2008), p. 1; Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Execute Order 2008*, pp. A-1–A-5.

60. Ibid., p. 4.

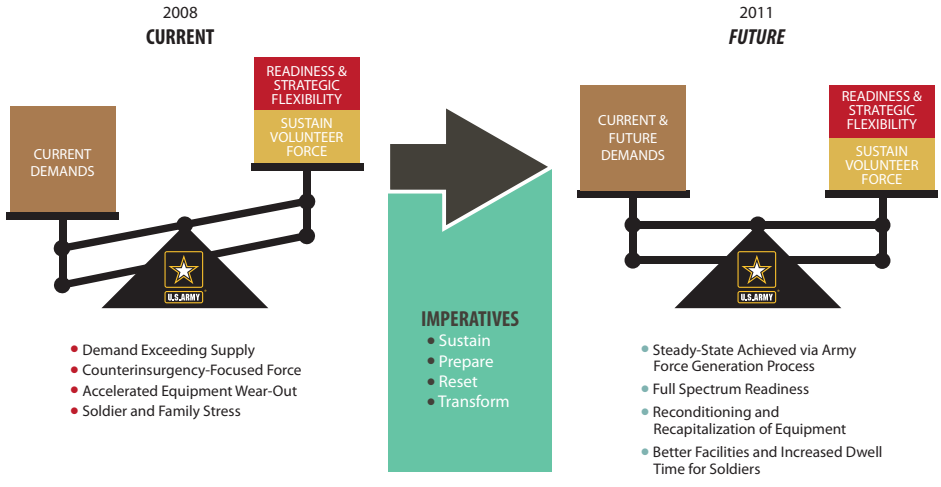


Figure 1.2. Efforts to Bring the Army into Balance by 2011

Army unit. The new brigade then underwent almost two years of training, culminating with a June 2011 validation exercise at Fort Irwin, California, before deploying five months later to Afghanistan. Other units built under the provisions of Grow the Army had been converted from units that were already in the force structure and were not representative of the true time required to build a unit from scratch.[61] No matter what plans or programs were implemented to accelerate the growth of the Army, it would simply take time to build and train ready forces for deployment in combat.

Even though it took several years to produce a deployment-ready infantry brigade combat team from scratch, Grow the Army did not create any heavy brigade combat teams, which also would have placed a much greater demand on the supporting industrial base. The Army sought to avoid exactly that type of situation because it was still reconstituting its prepositioned equipment stockpiles, which had been depleted as units rotated through combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.[62]

The expansion also allowed the Army to end certain policies that had been difficult but unavoidable for the force. President Bush reinstituted twelve-month deployments on 10 April 2008, effective for units deploying after 1 August 2008, to return to a dwell time of two years at home station for each year deployed. The president's directive happened to coincide with the withdrawal of the five surge brigades committed to IRAQI FREEDOM. In the sixteen months that the Army used those units in the Iraq surge, multiple active brigade combat teams had an aggregate deployed-to-dwell ratio below 1:1.[63]

---

61. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2010), pp. A-11, D-3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.*

62. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan, Execute Order 2008*, p. 5.

63. C. Todd Lopez, "12-Month Deployments to Reduce Stress, Build Depth," *Army News*, 21 Apr 2008, https://www.army.mil/article/8665/12-month-deployments-to-reduce-stress-build-depth/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The combined effects of the end of the Iraq surge and the expansion in troop numbers also allowed the Army to end the force management program known as stop loss, in which the Army involuntarily extended or retained active-duty enlisted personnel beyond the end date of their enlistment. Stop loss had existed in various forms since 2002, mostly to prevent soldiers in critical occupation fields from leaving the military, but its most unpopular form started in late 2003 and affected all personnel (regardless of component) in units that were slated to deploy. On 18 March 2009, Secretary Gates announced that the stop loss policy would end in August and September for the reserve component and on 1 January 2010 for the active component.[64]

Growing Special Operations

Efforts to field sufficient Special Forces personnel to meet the combined requirements of both Afghanistan and Iraq predated programs to expand conventional forces. The 2006 National Defense Authorization Act included a proposal to increase Army Special Operations authorizations over the next four years. The increase sought to expand each active component group by one battalion, add a forward-support company to each Special Forces battalion, and expand the group-support battalions. Army National Guard Special Forces battalions would not undergo identical changes, but they received additional support units, including augmented military intelligence, logistics, and reconnaissance detachments. To meet the additional personnel demands, U.S. Army Special Operations Command also received permission to form a Special Operations recruiting battalion.[65]

The force structure increases in the defense act affected more than just the seven active and reserve Special Forces groups. The 160th Aviation Regiment (Special Operations), which supported not only the groups but also Joint Special Operations Command, doubled in size to six battalions. The 75th Ranger Regiment added a Ranger company and a forward-support company to each of its three battalions, and bolstered its intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance capabilities. In addition, the sole active component civil affairs battalion expanded to form the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, which would provide dedicated support to deployed SOF. A second active component civil affairs brigade was projected to be activated in 2009 to perform a similar function for conventional forces. Recognizing the need to fully support an increased number of deployed units, the 528th Support Battalion tripled in size to become the 528th Sustainment Brigade. These proposals were approved without significant modification, which allowed the expansion to begin as scheduled in 2007.[66]

---

64. Charles A. Henning, *U.S. Military Stop Loss Program: Key Questions and Answers* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 10 Jul 2009), pp. 1–6; C. Todd Lopez, "Stop-Loss Stops in January, Army Leaders Say," *Army News*, 18 Mar 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/18429/stop-loss-stops-in-january-army-leaders-say/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

65. National Defense Authorization Act of 2006, PL No. 109–163, 119 STAT. 3136 (2006).

66. Ibid.

Increased SOF force structure meant additional buildings, training areas, and facilities, and realignment of training and deployments to support conventional forces whenever possible. The Special Warfare Center and School readily adapted to growing requirements for qualified Army SOF, and did so in a deliberate manner. To train more personnel and units, it expanded existing facilities at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, eventually moving an entire training battalion there. Simultaneously, each SOF group received additional facilities at Forts Campbell, Bragg, and Lewis to accommodate their fourth battalion and to meet their increased sustainment and training requirements.

As the ranks of the SOF community swelled, individual SOF units found themselves competing for access to ranges and training areas on major installations with sister organizations as well as conventional units. Seeking a near-term solution to that challenge, Army Special Operations turned to contractors in order to maintain, refine, and enhance their shooting, driving, and sustainment skills. The contractors conducting this training provided fully supported, dedicated training areas and instructors, as well as adaptive scheduling. Special Operations personnel attending the training later disseminated the techniques they learned to other members of their units upon returning to home station.

After evaluating the results of the initial contracted training programs, Army Special Operations leadership expanded them to include other specialized mission-essential skills such as diving, military freefall operations, and the newly added multipurpose canine enablers. More Special Operations personnel requested contractor-led training, and some even felt that the training set the standard for determining a team's deployment readiness. U.S. Army Special Operations Command initially funded these courses and eventually incorporated them into their programmed budget request.

Reliance on contractor support augmented, rather than diminished, the Special Warfare Center and School's role in providing advanced skills training. Based on lessons learned and collected from teams returning from combat tours, the Special Warfare Center instituted new courses tailored for troops in Afghanistan, such as high-angle shooting, pack animal operations, and parachute resupply. Unlike the conventional army, which had access to combined arms training centers, the Special Warfare Center and School did not have the ability to conduct predeployment certification rotations—featuring friendly and neutral role players as well as simulated enemy forces—at a specially tailored training center resembling the remote, isolated environments they would encounter in Afghanistan and Iraq.

By 2009, however, U.S. Army Special Operations Command gained the funding necessary to create a Special Operations training facility at Fort Bliss, Texas. Although the new facility addressed long-deferred collective training requirements, it failed to meet a critical shortfall for the Army: incorporating Special Operations training and support into an overall exercise with conventional forces. This mission belonged to the combat training centers and could never be completely satisfied for several reasons. First, the seven-month rotation cycles for Special Operations personnel rarely matched the conventional force's twelve-month deployment cycles,

making it difficult to coordinate predeployment training and their respective arrival dates in theater. Second, the inherently light nature of Army Special Forces meant that the majority of their training center rotations took place at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, rather than the National Training Center at Fort Irwin—while conventional forces trained at both locations. Third, as the Special Operations commitments in theater increased, they had less time for anything besides mission-critical predeployment training.

An often overlooked development during this period was the growing reliance on female soldiers within Special Operations. With all Special Forces and Ranger authorizations coded for male soldiers, Army Special Forces relied heavily on female soldiers in its civil affairs, psychological operations, support, and staff organizations to engage with female civilians who made up 50 percent of the population in Afghanistan and Iraq. Recognizing the need to communicate with these individuals, Army Special Operations formed ad hoc teams of female soldiers as early as 2002 to enhance civil-military operations. By 2009, U.S. Army Special Operations Command formally created a new organization known as a cultural support team. Cultural support teams interacted with indigenous female populations when such contact was deemed culturally inappropriate if performed by a male soldier. Although similar to the female engagement team program for conventional units, cultural support team members were specifically assessed, selected, trained, and educated to support Army Special Operations.[67] The cultural support teams participated in a wide spectrum of activities ranging from medical civic-action programs, searches and seizures, humanitarian assistance, and civil-military operations.

Not only did the Special Operations community have to meet operational requirements while synchronizing force structure increases, constructing additional facilities, and allotting sufficient preparation time to deploying units, it also had to cope with unforeseen decisions by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. The commission was created to provide an objective, thorough, accurate, and nonpartisan review and analysis, through a process determined by law, of the list of bases and military installations that the DoD recommended be closed or realigned.[68] In 2007, that body determined the 7th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment, would relocate from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, by 2011. However, because Eglin Air Force Base did not have facilities to accommodate the incoming unit, the DoD spent $255 million to construct new ranges, training areas, motor pools, and barracks before the 7th Special Forces Group arrived.[69] The move also effectively precluded the 7th Special

67. "About the Cultural Support Program," U.S. Army Special Operations Command, n.d., http://www.soc.mil/CST/about.html (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

68. "Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission," n.d., https://www.brac.gov/about.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

69. David Agan, "Rucker Supports 7th SFG at Eglin," Fort Rucker Public Affairs Office, 20 Oct 2011, https://www.army.mil/article/67628/Rucker_supports_7th_SFG_at_Eglin/ (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Forces Group from serving as the headquarters and primary force-providing elements for Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF)–Afghanistan from mid-2010 through late 2011. This only added to the tempo and stress of the other Special Forces Groups who had to fill the void.

As an institution, the U.S. Army's evolution during these years was critical to its ability to support the Global War on Terrorism with trained and ready forces, as well as to the development of updated counterinsurgency doctrine to guide those operations. As the following chapters will show, this doctrine provided a sound basis for future operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Doctrine was only a part of the overall project; efforts to relieve stresses on the force were another vital component. Getting dwell time back to acceptable lengths, reducing stress on military families, improving medical and dental readiness, growing the force, and updating training facilities all would be key elements needed to sustain the U.S. Army through the conflicts ahead.

Chapter Two

A War in Transition



With the completion of the Bonn Process, Afghanistan possessed the framework for a centralized state that could support the U.S.-led Global War on Terrorism. However, adopting a constitution, holding elections, and forming a government did not by themselves guarantee a functioning bureaucracy or popular support. To achieve those objectives, the state needed to protect its population from foreign and domestic threats, provide essential services such as healthcare and education, and support an economic environment in which people provided for themselves and their families. Consequently, linking the state apparatus established during the Bonn Process to the general populace was necessary for creating a unified nation. As Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann stated, "The fundamental issue all along has been that if you have the goal of preventing a recurrence of terrorism in the country then you have to have a security force to do that. To have a security force you have to have a government. To have a government you have to have a state and an economy. And then you're doing nation-building."[1]

Implementing the NATO Operational Approach

As the lead nation for building the Afghan National Army (ANA) under the Bonn Process, the U.S. effort that started with only a few Special Forces detachments had expanded into the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan, an element of Operation Enduring Freedom coequal with its counterterrorist operations under Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76).[2] Insurgent attacks in 2005 and 2006, however, made it evident that more work needed to be done before the Afghan government could provide its citizens with adequate security. Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry and Ambassador Neumann inherited a program to develop the Afghan Army that was well underway by 2005, as well as efforts to build the Afghan National Police (ANP) that could not yet meet the nation's basic security needs.

After the coalition removed insurgents from communities, a representative of national authority had to secure the population and demonstrate the Afghan government's presence before Provincial Reconstruction Teams, nongovernmental organizations, and other agencies

1. Interv, U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute (CSI), with Ronald E. Neumann, former (frmr) U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 19 Feb 2006, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. The Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan was renamed the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan when it assumed the police training mission.

could inject seed money to build local institutions. Neumann and Eikenberry focused on building indigenous security forces because they saw the Afghan army and police as fulfilling important roles in establishing a functioning Afghan state.[3] While they championed Afghan participation in ongoing combat operations, they also embraced the continued upgrading of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capabilities. In the view of Eikenberry and the CFC-A, ANSF owned the "hold" phase of the "clear, hold, build, and engage" counterinsurgency model.[4]

The Bush administration held views similar to Eikenberry and Neumann, but for different reasons. It viewed Afghanistan's National Assembly and provincial council elections as the culmination of the Bonn Process and a potential transition point for Enduring Freedom. The elections prompted Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to ask Joint Chiefs Chairman General Richard B. Myers in January 2005 for a strategic approach to Afghanistan for the next twelve to eighteen months. "I think it is critically important that we, very promptly, have a plan for the rest of this year in Afghanistan," wrote Rumsfeld. "If we announce it and it is a good plan, it can have a positive effect in Iraq."[5] The note indicated that although the Pentagon needed clear direction in Afghanistan, the secretary's focus remained on the war in Iraq.

Rumsfeld's concerns stemmed from his belief that the United States could not maintain its current levels of commitment in Afghanistan as violence mounted in Iraq.[6] As CFC-A understood it, Rumsfeld sought to put U.S. forces on a path out of Afghanistan.[7] He demanded weekly metrics from CFC-A showing progress in ANA training and customs collection and the public revenue necessary for the Afghan government to sustain its army. To hasten the development of Afghan security capabilities, the defense secretary also sought to gain control of training the ANP. He understood that "an effective, professional police force" would be "central to the achievement of [the] U.S. Government's strategic objectives in Afghanistan."[8] Effective

---

3. Interv, Donald P. Wright, CSI, with Lt Gen Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A) Cdr, 23 Feb 2012, p. 46, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Ronald E. Neumann, frmr U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 24 Aug 2009, p. 13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Myers, 24 Jan 2005, sub: Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Gen Myers, 31 Jan 2005, sub: Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 245. Indicative of Rumsfeld's cost-cutting concerns, a memo from the DoD comptroller compared the cost of recruiting, training, equipping, and deploying one U.S. soldier to Iraq or Afghanistan, compared with the cost of training one Afghan or Iraqi soldier: Memo, Under Sec Tina W. Jonas for Sec Rumsfeld and Deputy Sec Def Wolfowitz, 15 Feb 2005, sub: Cost for a Soldier, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Bradley Graham, *By His Own Rules: The Ambitions, Successes, and Ultimate Failures of Donald Rumsfeld* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009), pp. 501–04.

8. Bfg, Ofc of the Under Sec of Def for Policy for Sec Rumsfeld, 28 Feb 2005, sub: Afghan National Police Update, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

police forces were needed for counterinsurgency (in support of similar ANA efforts), political development (such as election security), counternarcotics (including interdiction and eradication), border security, customs collection, domestic law and order (personal security for the Afghan people), and the disarmament and demobilization of the remaining private militias.[9] In April 2005, after much interagency and congressional wrangling, the State Department relinquished its responsibility for overseeing Afghan police training to the DoD.

Meanwhile, Rumsfeld also pushed NATO to increase its combat involvement in Afghanistan. Even though ISAF initially agreed to expand into RC West, force generation issues prevented that expansion from happening before the Afghan presidential election.[10] When NATO forces did arrive, the North Atlantic Council could not reach an agreement with the Bush administration about merging the Enduring Freedom (counterterrorist) and ISAF (security) missions. At a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Berlin in September 2005, Germany—with the support of France, Britain, and other European countries—made it clear that they would not accept such a merger.[11] Rumsfeld seemed intent on beginning a U.S. drawdown, with or without increased NATO involvement, as reports surfaced that the Pentagon was considering downsizing the U.S. presence by as much as 4,000 troops.[12]

With the Bonn Process completed and the war in Iraq showing no signs of ending, the American government unilaterally decided to reduce resources already allocated for Afghanistan. The administration reduced total spending on the country from $4.9 billion in fiscal year 2005 to $3.5 billion in 2006. Cuts across the board included significant reductions in the security, governance, development, and humanitarian allocations.[13] In terms of deployed troops, the United States had just 19,500 service members in Afghanistan in April 2005, compared to roughly 137,000 in Iraq.[14] American policymakers continued to press for keeping the U.S. Army's footprint in Afghanistan

---

9. Ibid.

10. Craig Smith, "NATO Runs Short of Troops to Expand Afghan Peacekeeping," *New York Times*, 18 Sep 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/18/international/asia/18kabul.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11. David S. Cloud, "Europeans Oppose U.S. Plan for NATO in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 13 Sep 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/13/international/europe/13cnd-rumsfeld.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. Eric Schmitt and David S. Cloud, "U.S. May Start Pulling Out of Afghanistan Next Spring," *New York Times*, 14 Sep 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/14/international/asia/14afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Richard Norton-Taylor, "Allies Rule Out Bigger Afghan Role," *Guardian*, 14 Sep 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/sep/15/politics.afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. Maj Gen Arnold Fields, "Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction: Quarterly Report—October 2008" (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2008), pp. 21–24, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Alan McLean and Archie Tse, "American Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq," *New York Times*, 22 Jun 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/06/22/world/asia/american-forces-in-afghanistan-and-iraq.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

small. As a result, Rumsfeld ordered the 10th Mountain Division to trim its planned 2006 Enduring Freedom deployment by roughly 40 percent. The decision reduced the projected number of American forces in Afghanistan from 19,000 to 16,000 by spring 2006.[15]

With the Bush administration intent on reducing U.S. military participation in Afghanistan, NATO took steps to secure and develop the country until the Afghans were capable of doing so themselves. By September 2005, the treaty organization expanded ISAF's footprint into RC West. Three months later, the North Atlantic Council agreed to a timeframe for taking over RC South and RC East.[16] That same month, NATO revised Supreme Allied Commander Europe Operational Plan 10302 to better align its political and military goals with those pursued by the United States. Politically, NATO aimed for "a self-sustaining, moderate and democratic Afghan government able to exercise its sovereign authority, independently, throughout Afghanistan." NATO planned to achieve these goals through security and stability operations, in particular through reconstruction teams who would "expand the beneficial ISAF effect" into unassimilated provinces. Militarily, the goal was to develop ANSF to the point that they could "provide security and sustain stability . . . without NATO support." As with the United States, NATO's exit from Afghanistan was "dependent on the successful development of credible, professional and legitimate Afghan security structures." In contrast with earlier American campaign language, the plan called on NATO to "operate with subtlety and a light touch" and to "facilitate the continued physical and moral extension of Afghan government authority."[17]

The Pentagon welcomed this pathway to securing Afghanistan because it did not rely exclusively on U.S. troops. The shift to international responsibility meant that the United States could begin extricating its forces and sending them to Iraq. In deciding on this course of action, Rumsfeld listened to his closest military advisers rather than their civilian counterparts.[18] Even though Rumsfeld shared his civilian advisers' worries that ISAF's capabilities would be limited by member nations' caveats on force contributions, NATO's inability to sustain itself over long distances without U.S. assistance, and the inevitable reduction in American influence following a U.S. troop drawdown, he ultimately accepted the military's opinion that NATO was ready. The next

---

15. Eric Schmitt, "U.S. to Cut Force in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 20 Dec 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/20/international/asia/20military.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Gerry J. Gilmore, "U.S. Troop Levels in Afghanistan Slated to Drop Next Year," *American Forces Press Service*, 20 Dec 2005, https://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=18492, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Col Bryan R. Gibby, Brian F. Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John R. Abizaid, frmr U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 10–12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 50.

17. Ibid.

18. Graham, *By His Own Rules*, pp. 644–45; Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 23–26.

four years would show this assessment to be a critical miscalculation that ignored the enemy's ability to alter the strategic equation.[19]

The Afghanistan Compact

As the United States and NATO worked to transition the ISAF mission, President Hamid Karzai's government and the international community made new plans for Afghanistan's future. At a January 2006 conference in London, all parties agreed on a new framework to guide development for the next five years. The subsequent Afghanistan Compact amounted to a pledge by the international community to "build lasting Afghan capacity" with an eye toward Afghan "ownership," and in return the Afghan government promised to "combat corruption and ensure public transparency and accountability."[20] Combined with an Interim National Development Strategy agreed upon around the same time, the Afghanistan Compact set specific deadlines for improving security, governance, and economic development.[21]

The compact called for the disbandment of all "illegal armed groups" in 2007, an ethnically balanced Afghan army of 70,000 to be fully operational by 2010, and a combined ANP and Border Police component of 62,000 by the end of 2010. Among the numerous development initiatives, two in particular would affect U.S. Army operations: the call for a "fully upgraded and maintained" Ring Road, with arteries connecting Afghanistan's main national highway to neighboring countries by the end of 2008; and an electric system that could supply 65 percent of households and 90 percent of nonresidential establishments in urban areas, as well as 25 percent of households in rural areas, by the end of 2010.[22] Sixty countries represented at the London Conference pledged more than $10 billion to fund these projects. This sum was significant but met only half of Afghanistan's projected needs for the next five years.[23] To guide program implementation and report on progress, the Afghanistan Compact also established a Joint Coordination Monitoring Board of international and Afghan representatives in Kabul.[24]

---

19. Graham, *By His Own Rules*, pp. 644–45.

20. "The Afghanistan Compact," The London Conf on Afghanistan, 31 Jan–1 Feb 2006, p. 2, https://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/afghanistan_compact.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy: An Interim Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth & Poverty Reduction* (Jan 2006), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/AFA4970B33A0505E49257107000811C6-unama-afg-30jan2.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. The United Nations (UN) Security Council endorsed the Afghanistan Compact with Resolution 1659, S/RES/1659, 15 Feb 2006, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Afgh%20SRES1659.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. See *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*, p. 14.

24. Ronald E. Neumann, *The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009), pp. 80–83; "The Afghanistan Compact," 31 Jan–1 Feb 2006, pp. 2, 15.

For the U.S. Army, the compact's most relevant portions dealt with security. Its authors articulated that ISAF, U.S. forces, and partner nations would continue to "provide strong support to the Afghan Government in establishing and sustaining security and stability in Afghanistan, subject to participating states' national approval procedures."[25] Security and stability operations would become ISAF's responsibility, particularly through Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which would increase in number to cover the entire country by the end of the year. The agreement further stated that the Enduring Freedom counterterrorism mission, specifically identified as a separate American effort, would be closely coordinated with the Afghan government and ISAF. Taken as a whole, the Afghanistan Compact reaffirmed the international community's involvement in and support for Afghan development and formalized the process by which NATO would assume the strategic lead for coalition activities in Afghanistan. The United States would continue to conduct counterterrorist operations, but it would fold most American forces into the ISAF structure.

Unfortunately for the coalition, none of the plans for Afghanistan's future—America's gradual exit, NATO's assumption of the stability mission, and the Afghanistan Compact—fully accounted for the realities on the ground. Requests for increased resources by American leaders in Afghanistan went unfilled by Washington. Throughout the fall and winter of 2005–2006, Ambassador Neumann fought to increase funding for agriculture and infrastructure development programs with little success. He warned in October 2005 that the embassy could not implement the National Security Council's comprehensive strategy without additional monies.[26] In a February 2006 cable, he argued that the United States stood to lose years of critical infrastructure development, especially in the transportation and energy sectors, with negative strategic consequences for the overall war effort.[27]

General Eikenberry separately recommended increases for the train-and-equip missions for both the ANA and the ANP. Unfortunately for America's ranking civilian and military leaders in Afghanistan, the Office of Management and Budget was dealing with more urgent priorities in Iraq and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina at the time, and ultimately included only $32 million (rather than the $600 million originally requested) for Afghanistan in the emergency supplemental budget that year.[28] As other priorities diverted and distracted the Bush administration's attention over the next three years, circumstances in Afghanistan slowly deteriorated.

---

25. "The Afghanistan Compact," 31 Jan–1 Feb 2006, p. 3.

26. Neumann, *The Other War*, p. 41.

27. Cable, Ambassador Neumann to Sec Rice, 6 Feb 2006, sub: Afghan Supplemental, The National Security Archive, George Washington University (hereafter NSA GWU), https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc25.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Neumann, *The Other War*, pp. 39–50.



Spc. Jerry T. Combes, USA

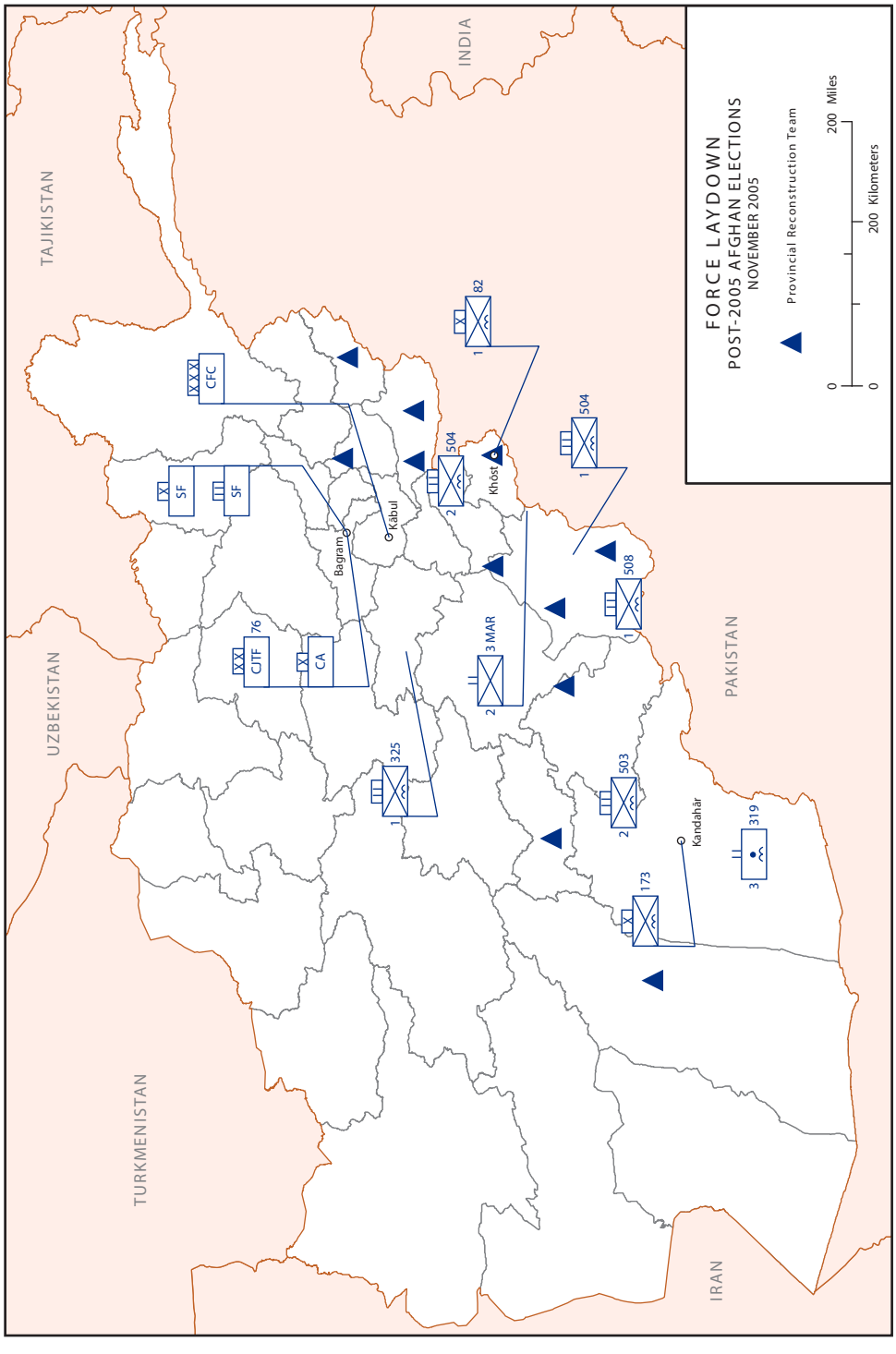
Maj. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya (left) presents a coin to Uruzgan provincial governor Haji Jan Mohammed in March 2005.

The Situation in Fall 2005

At the operational level, the 2005 National Assembly and provincial council elections had little influence on U.S. forces in Afghanistan (*Map 2.1*). Based out of Camp Eggers in Kabul, General Eikenberry continued to exercise command and control through his two major subordinate headquarters, the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan under Air Force Maj. Gen. John T. Brennan and CJTF-76 under Maj. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya. Kamiya's maneuver forces consisted of Col. Patrick J. Donahue II's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division (Task Force Devil), located in RC East, and Col. Kevin C. Owens' 173d Airborne Brigade (Task Force Bayonet) in RC South.

As the CJTF-76 commander, Kamiya exercised operational control over all conventional U.S. Army forces in the country, as well as CJSOTF-Afghanistan until December 2005.[29] To support CJTF-76's main lines of effort, U.S. SOF conducted counterterrorism operations against high-value targets, foreign internal defense operations in support of the new Afghan government, and security assistance to develop ANSF participation in security sector reforms. At the operational level, the SOF mission included supporting the National Assembly and provincial council elections; disbanding the Afghan militias

29. U.S. Special Opns Cmd, *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition—Founding, Commanders, SEALS and Rangers, War on Terror, Saddam Capture, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom* (Progressive Management, 2012), p. 115.


FORCE LAYDOWN
POST-2005 AFGHAN ELECTIONS
NOVEMBER 2005
Provincial Reconstruction Team
0
200 Miles
0
200 Kilometers
INDIA
TAJIKISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
PAKISTAN
Kābul
Bagram
Khōst
Kandahār
XXXX CFC
XX SF
XX SF
XX CJTF 76
XX CA
II 3 MAR
III 1 82
III 2 504
III 1 504
III 1 325
III 2 503
III 3 319
XX 173
III 508

Map 2.1

under the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs; and preparing for the realignment of coalition SOF under ISAF. At the tactical level, SOF aided CJTF-76 with armed reconnaissance, network assessment, and battlefield preparation. A combination of nonlethal and lethal operations had succeeded in safeguarding the presidential elections in 2004 and, to a lesser degree, the national and provincial elections in 2005. Kamiya looked to continue the practice for as long as he had the authority to do so. With the help of Special Forces, Kamiya increasingly emphasized civil affairs and psychological operations during this period. These techniques for exercising influence became particularly relevant as Provincial Reconstruction Teams increased in number.[30]

With the SOF remaining under CJTF-76 until December 2005, they requested permission to change missions from guarding borders to developing, partnering, and advising newly trained ANA infantry *kandaks* (Afghan battalion-sized unit). Recognizing the role that Operation Newburgh played in securing the elections, Kamiya approved the request, directing the Special Operations Task Force to issue a new directive named Valley Forge in October 2005, outlining the change in mission.[31] To ease the planned handover, Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs) holding isolated firebases along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in RC East and RC South were augmented with infantry squads or an infantry platoon in order to familiarize incoming units with mission requirements.[32]

As the order was being finalized, the command's ODAs transferred their border mission to conventional forces while preparing for 7th Special Forces Group's return. The change ensured the incoming group would become intimately involved in training and partnering with ANA kandaks, border police, and local security forces.[33] The new mission also meant that special operations units would be working throughout the country rather than along the borders, which translated into a significant need for additional airlift. With the Army sending most of the 160th Aviation Regiment (Special Forces) to Iraq, a dearth of dedicated airframes, combined with poor roads in many parts of RC South and RC East, forced SOF to rely increasingly on conventional army airframes, which often were not equipped to the same standards as SOF aircraft.[34]

The SOF were not alone in having to meet their mission objectives with limited resources. Eikenberry understood that political leaders in Washington expected U.S. troop levels to drop over the next several years. Correspondingly, he viewed his primary mission as creating "the

30. Donald P. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II, October 2005–July 2008" (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: CSI, n.d.), p. 294.

31. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition,* p. 115.

32. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," p. 287.

33. Ibid.

34. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 115.

conditions for a successful battle handoff from CFC-A to ISAF."[35] He had reduced Lt. Gen. David W. Barno's lines of operation from twelve to three. Security remained the primary focus for CFC-A in this reduction, with the interconnected goals of defeating al-Qaeda and its associated groups and building up the Afghan government's ability to provide for its national security as supporting lines. Two parallel lines of effort—governance and justice, and economic and strategic reconstruction—now supported the security thread. Counternarcotics operations remained a tertiary goal, integrated into the primary and secondary lines of operation.[36] Finally, Eikenberry set for himself the tasks of engaging with Central Asia governments and communicating the threat posed by Pakistan to Washington.[37]

While Eikenberry harmonized CFC-A's theater approach with ISAF's increased operational role, Kamiya cautioned his task force commanders that "the enemy, realizing defeat in his efforts to derail the election process, will launch at least one more offensive surge prior to beginning withdrawal to winter sanctuary [in Pakistan]." U.S. forces would "meet his [i.e., the enemy's] challenge by sustaining the tempo and nature of our offensive operations." To do so, Kamiya called for "equally aggressive non-kinetic, offensive-oriented CERP [Commander's Emergency Response Program]/civil military operations in those areas that the enemy will cede to us due to the oncoming of winter."[38] Kamiya further noted that although initial planning requests for emergency response funds totaled some $67 million for fiscal year 2006, that amount would grow to $166 million by the end of the fiscal year.[39] Thus, U.S. forces sought to bolster their gains along the Pakistani border during the remainder of 2005 with an ambitious aid program designed to foster support among the local population. An aggressive program of information operations highlighted projects to erode the standing of enemy leaders and build support for Afghan government officials. As Kamiya recalled, "We are engaged in an information campaign that is supported by military operations. We are no longer in a military campaign supported by military operations."[40]

General Kamiya and the CJTF-76 headquarters, the Southern European Task Force, were scheduled to rotate out of Afghanistan in early 2006. In preparation, CJTF-76 crafted its last major operation, Secure Prosperity, to begin in February 2006 and continue into the 10th Mountain Division's deployment. In congruence with the contraction of U.S. forces in theater to RC East, the plan called for targeting Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) until it was "defeated and incapable of supporting [al-Qaeda] operations or disrupting

35. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 3.

36. Presentation, CFC-A, 2 Jun 2005, sub: Command Update, slide 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, pp. 27–28.

37. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 4.

38. Memo, Maj Gen Jason K. Kamiya, 29 Aug 2005, sub: Cmdrs Guidance: CJTF Non-Kinetic Off (Cerp-CMO) 1-2 Qtrs FY 06, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. Ibid., p. 2.

40. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Maj Gen Jason K. Kamiya, frmr Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 76 Cdr, 11 Sep 2007, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the CJTF relief-in-place process."[41] Operations in central and southern RC East, as well as those in RC South, were to "contain" Haqqani and Taliban forces while, at the same time, build Afghan security force capabilities. The four-phased operation included elements of U.S., coalition, Afghan, and Pakistani forces on both sides of the border. The operation's goals were to deny the enemy a permanent base of operations in Afghanistan, to maintain continuity of operations during the U.S. transition, to increase Afghan confidence in their own security forces, and to establish a more permanent Afghan security presence in northern RC East, to include establishing a reconstruction team in Nuristan Province.[42] By acclimating Afghan forces to winter operations, Kamiya hoped they would stay close to local communities long enough to build relationships and prevent a resurgence of the insurgency in the spring.[43]

With the successful National Assembly and provincial council elections and apparent synchronization of the Enduring Freedom and ISAF missions, ISAF moved forward with its plan to take over the final two regional commands in 2006. After months of deliberation and planning, NATO announced in December 2005 that it would accomplish that goal over the following year.[44] The move to RC South would be completed by midsummer 2006. A Canadian task force would deploy in the spring, operating under CJTF-76 until additional NATO forces arrived and RC South transitioned to ISAF control. After that, ISAF would take control of RC East. CJTF-76 would contract its forces into the region and shift from CFC-A to ISAF command sometime in the fall. With the transition finalized, CFC-A would be disbanded and ISAF would become the headquarters responsible for all military operations in Afghanistan.

Reforming the ANP Training Mission

As American forces prepared to transition security responsibilities to NATO ISAF, the Office of Security Cooperation spent the latter half of 2005 building a police program and supporting ANP training. The realization that trained and equipped police units were just as important as ANA units gained increasing traction among American and NATO officials as the transition to ISAF control loomed. In December 2005, President Karzai approved an organizational document known as the *tashkil* (from the Dari word for "organization," used here in the sense of an official list) that dictated "force

41. Operational Order (OPORD), HQ CJTF-76, 17 Dec 2005, sub: OPORD 05-09, Opn SECURE PROSPERITY, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Ibid., pp. 1–3.

43. Presentation, CJTF-76, 28 Jan 2006, sub: CJTF-76 After Action Review: A Year in Review, slides 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Maj Gen Jason K. Kamiya, frmr CJTF-76 Cdr, 3 Feb 2009, pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Michael G. Waltz and Peter Bergen, *Warrior Diplomat: A Green Beret's Battles from Washington to Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2014), p. 14; Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, RL33627 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2 Jul 2009), p. 9.

structure, personnel end strength, command relationships, and unit/staff functions and mission descriptions for the ANP."[45] The product of negotiations between the German Police Project Office and the Afghan Ministry of Interior, with input from the United States and other international partners, the tashkil set the maximum size of the ANP at 62,000. The Afghanistan Compact detailed this desired end state in early February 2006, stating that the ANP not only would become "fully constituted, professional, functional and ethnically balanced" by the end of 2010 but also would be "able to meet the security needs of the country and will be increasingly fiscally responsible."[46] Considering the current state of the force, these were ambitious goals.

In addition to overseeing the creation of the tashkil, General Brennan initiated pay and rank reform to "break the chain of corruption" that low wages encouraged and designed a nationally recruited police force that based rank and promotion "on merit, not loyalty or connections."[47] To oversee the effort, the Ministry of Interior formed an all-Afghan board known as the Rank Reform Commission.[48] After consulting with the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan, the commission determined that all new officers would be graduates of the police academy and both new and existing officers would be paid according to new pay scales. Salaries would be funded from the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan at the annual rate of $75 million.[49] As conceived by the Security Cooperation headquarters, the commission would finish its work by June 2006. Unfortunately, this milestone also proved ambitious. The new protocol called for all officers to take a written exam and mandated both a file review by the Rank Reform Commission and vetting for human rights abuses by the United Nations (UN) Assistance Mission and State Department officials. Widespread illiteracy and the paucity of available records meant that vetting the almost 20,000 officers and noncommissioned officers took longer than anticipated; the final phase (selecting sergeants and patrolmen) did not begin until May 2007.[50]

Reforming the Afghan police required effective leadership as well as time. By necessity, selecting senior ANP officers became the first step in instituting change. After the Reform Commission chose the ANP's most

---

45. U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, Offices of the Inspector General, Inspector General Report: Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness, DOS Report No. ISP-IQO-07-07, DoD Report No. IE-2007-001, Nov 2006, p. 11. The tashkil is similar to the U.S. Army's Modified Table of Organization.

46. "The Afghanistan Compact," 31 Jan–1 Feb 2006, An. I, p. 6.

47. U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, Offices of the Inspector General, Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness, p. 27.

48. Ibid., pp. 27, 70.

49. In addition to the $75 million for salaries, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan paid out $25 million a year for food and $11.2 million for severance pay. Ibid., app. C, pp. 69–70.

50. One grouping of roughly 600 officers took more than two months to vet. Progress Rpt on Ministry of Interior Reforms, Ministry of Interior, 4th Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board mtg, Berlin, 30–31 Jan 2007, p. 29; Andrew Wilder, "Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police," Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit Info Paper Series (Jul 2007), p. 41, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

senior generals, it filled the Ministry of Interior's 34 provincial police chief positions from a pool of 317 applicants. Driven by a different understanding of effective leadership, Karzai ignored the commission's recommendations and named his own appointees, including fourteen individuals who either had failed their exams or were known to be corrupt. Although the president eventually agreed to replace eleven of the fourteen generals with commission recommendations, his intransigence set the process back six months.[51]

Karzai's reluctance to follow his commission's recommendations highlighted the difference between Afghan and Western concepts of effective governance. While Americans and their allies wanted to remove the corruption they believed was impeding institutional growth, Karzai viewed the political landscape differently. He needed influence and a support base to maintain his position, and experience in Afghan politics had taught him that effectiveness depended on indebting powerful leaders to himself and his network. According to Ambassador Neumann, "Without force, money, or unified support within the government, the power of appointment to build political support networks was Karzai's only political tool." By distributing political offices as far down as the district level, Karzai and his coterie could build a patronage system with the stability that the formal Afghan political structure lacked. The practice also ensured that a steady stream of favors and money made their way back to Karzai as officeholders of questionable competency sought to maintain their positions of power. "Some of those appointed were corrupt," Neumann noted, "but when the U.S. menaced them, it menaced [Karzai's] entire structure of support."[52] Unsurprisingly, the patronage system undercut the official political system's legitimacy, which the Taliban exploited to promote instability. Short-term expediency and personal gain took precedence over the long-term stability of the nascent Afghan government in the eyes of those profiting from the patronage arrangement.[53]

In January 2006 the U.S. Army's Maj. Gen. Robert E. Durbin succeeded General Brennan as the chief of the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan. Unlike his predecessor, Durbin had significant experience in training ground combat troops. Before arriving in Afghanistan, he

---

51. Wilder, "Cops or Robbers?," pp. 40–42.

52. Ronald E. Neumann, "Failed Relations between Hamid Karzai and the United States: What Can We Learn?," United States Institute of Peace Special Report 373 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, May 2015), p. 3.

53. Joshua Foust, "You Would Cry Too: In Defense of Hamid Karzai," *Foreign Policy*, 28 Sep 2010, https://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/09/28/you_would_cry_too_in_defense_of_hamid_karzai, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Dipali Mukhopadhay, Provincial Governors in Afghan Politics, Special Rpt 385 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Jan 2016), https://www.usip.org/publications/2016/01/08/provincial-governors-in-afghan-politics, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; James Sisco, "Karzai's Governing Strategy: A Threat to ISAF COIN Implementation," *Small Wars Journal* (31 Jan 2011): 2–6, https://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/662-sisco.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts and the Failures of Great Powers* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2013), p. 643; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), pp. 325–35.

commanded at company, battalion, and brigade levels in armored and infantry divisions. Soon after Durbin's arrival, the CENTCOM commander, General John P. Abizaid, elevated Durbin's organization from an office to a command. The organization's new name, Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A), went into effect in a redesignation ceremony at Camp Eggers on 6 May 2006.[54] The move not only made the command arrangement between Durbin and his higher headquarters similar to that used in Iraq, but also raised the profile of the training mission in anticipation of CFC-A's impending disestablishment at the end of the year. Once CFC-A went away, the security transition headquarters could absorb some of its personnel and, because it would operate outside the ISAF chain of command, the training organization needed to have increased authority in theater.[55]

After discerning that he lacked the resources for the mission given to his command, Durbin sought to add an additional brigade-sized training force to his organization. It took until February 2007 for the Army to agree to his request, and it was not until 2009, long after Durbin had left the assignment, that any significant troop increases took place. Durbin also was dismayed to find a significant imbalance of capabilities within his command. More than 4,000 personnel were involved with training the Afghan Army, while only 88 personnel—later increased to 108—were overseeing the police training mission. Durbin would later observe that police training was "under resourced dollar wise for the first four years, [and] under resourced manpower wise for the next three to four years."[56] General Eikenberry concurred: "Here, I think the competing demands of the Iraq War were hurting our own efforts."[57]

One particularly troubling development in local security was that government officials were hiring militia forces as police officers and using them for personal protection.[58] Afghanistan had a long history of local militia leaders increasing their power by supporting warlords. Hiring police as personal militias undercut their professionalism and divided their loyalties, making it possible for police to join militia groups that challenged the central government's authority. To prevent this from happening, Karzai initiated two new programs. The first, known as Disarmament of Illegal Armed

---

54. General Abizaid approved the change on 4 April 2006. Memo, Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan (OSC-A), 17 Apr 2006, sub: Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) for Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan (OSC-A) Re-designation to Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) Ceremony 0900 hours, 6 May 2006, Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan, file 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

55. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Gen Robert E. Durbin, frmr Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) Cdr, 19 and 23 Mar 2009, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Ibid., p. 8.

57. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 21.

58. "American officials feared they were seeing the beginnings of de facto private militias." James Glanz and David Rohde, "Panel Faults U.S.-Trained Afghan Police," *New York Times*, 4 Dec 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/04/world/asia/04police.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Tech. Sgt. Laura K. Smith, USAF

An ANA officer instructs new recruits at Kabul Military Training Center in November 2008.

Groups, was launched in May 2006 as a successor to the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program that ended with the completion of the Bonn Process. The program sought to disarm and disband all armed groups that were not sanctioned by Kabul.[59] The second was a bridging mechanism that Karzai hoped would provide local security until the Afghan Uniformed Police were more capable. Despite objections from the international community, the Afghan president moved in early June to coopt militias by incorporating them into a new organization called the Afghan National Auxiliary Police.[60] Formalized by presidential decree in October, the auxiliary police proposal called for a force of 11,241 recruited from local militia pools in 124 high-risk districts in Farah, Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Zabul Provinces.[61] Recruits would receive ten days of training (five days of classroom instruction, five of range firing) and then be issued an AK47 rifle and a standard ANP uniform (with a distinct patch). Afghan auxiliary policemen would receive a further ten days of training every three

59. International Crisis Group, "Reforming Afghanistan's Police," Asia Rpt 138 (Brussels, 30 Aug 2007), p. 5.

60. Wilder, "Cops or Robbers?," p. 17; International Crisis Group, "Reforming Afghanistan's Police," p. 13.

61. Presentation, Afghan Ministry of Interior, 7 Jan 2007, sub: Ministry of the Interior Police Reform Progress, slide 4, file: MOI_Reform_Brief_v10_(7_Jan_07), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Neumann, *The Other War*, pp. 123, 225.

months, and would be paid the same monthly salary (US$70) as their regular police counterparts.[62]

The auxiliary police program sought to legitimize the tribal militia groups that played an important part in Afghan politics. Despite his support for the new disarmament program, Karzai did not want to end the power that the militias represented; rather, he wanted to incorporate their influence into Afghanistan's formal government. Supporting the Afghan National Auxiliary Police allowed him to regulate a power base that he did not normally control. Reflecting the president's position, the disarmament and auxiliary police programs were politically sensitive elements of the American and coalition "rebalancing plan" for the ANP. This rebalancing involved eliminating the corrupt and ineffective Afghan Highway Police and integrating their rolls into the Uniformed Police. Unfortunately, many highway police chose to quit rather than join the regular police force, taking their uniforms and weapons and going home.[63] CSTC-A initially intended the auxiliary police to protect rural Afghans for two years while it developed other reform initiatives, but the program's deficiencies caused it to end within eighteen months.[64] The Afghan auxiliary police program's failure surprised coalition leaders such as Ambassador Neumann, who later stated that "we knew that the program was a desperate effort when we set it up, but we spent that whole winter of 2005–2006 groping around for anything we could do to deal with what we assumed was going to be an intensified insurgency."[65]

The rebalancing plan had greater success with the Afghan Standby Police. Instead of simply folding the unit back into the regular police, Durbin's planners decided to convert it into a specialized force. The result was the Afghan National Civil Order Police. Developed in the fall of 2006, the concept gave the new unit two primary roles: respond to civil unrest and national emergencies in eight major metropolitan areas and patrol high-threat and remote areas to maintain a robust police presence there. The 5,000-strong, multiethnic force would receive modern equipment and vehicles (including armored patrol vehicles for increased IED survivability), robust training (sixteen weeks rather than the ANP's standard five to eight weeks), increased communications and logistical support, and other incentives "to attract a better pool of applicants."[66] The overall force consisted of a headquarters

---

62. Neumann later wrote, "Before we started I made sure we had the funding to carry the program through the first year by ourselves. However, more money would be needed, and I left the resources issue unclear to encourage other donors to participate." Ibid., p. 121.

63. Neumann, *The Other War*, pp. 73–76, 121; Wilder cites an instance in which members of a highway police brigade in northern Afghanistan refused to be relocated to the south, instead choosing to desert en masse. Many simply went home. See Wilder, "Cops or Robbers?," p. 15.

64. The Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) was suspended by joint agreement between NATO and the Afghan government. Robert M. Perito, Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform, Special Rpt 227 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Aug 2009) p. 9; Neumann, *The Other War*, pp. 123–24.

65. Interv, CSI with Neumann, 19 Feb 2006, p. 22.

66. CSTC-A, Police Reform Directorate, "Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) Concept Brief," 8 Nov 2006, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The initial sixteen weeks of training were

company, three patrol brigades, and one civil order brigade. The Ministry of Interior distributed the patrol brigades among the most unstable districts in the country's southern and eastern provinces and divided the civil order brigade among eight major population centers.[67] Although the units had specific geographical responsibilities, they could be sent to other provinces as needed. To prevent provincial governors from blocking their deployments, all civil order police units fell under the authority of the Ministry of Interior, with their headquarters in Kabul. Although small, the civil order police would be a vital component of U.S.-led police reforms in the coming years.

Civil-Military Operations

By the fall of 2005, reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan faced two dramatically different environments. In the western and northern regions, where the Taliban had failed to regain a foothold, reconstruction flourished. In sharp contrast, enemy activity in RC South and RC East threatened humanitarian efforts and inhibited development projects. As the Taliban and its associated insurgent groups intensified their campaigns against the Kabul government and the international coalition, nongovernmental organizations began leaving threatened areas, even if the district or province was otherwise calm. In some cases, the Taliban targeted aid workers and employees of these organizations, seeing them as agents or partners of the government. In other instances, criminal groups preyed on unarmed aid workers, prompting a similar hurried departure and a marked reluctance to return unless their security could be absolutely assured. Over time, this phenomenon resulted in nongovernmental organizations clustering in quiet regions such as northwestern Afghanistan and being virtually absent from the country's volatile south and east.[68]

---

followed by an additional eight weeks of more specialized training on special weapons tactics. See Robert M. Perito, Afghanistan's Civil Order Police: Victim of Its Own Success, Special Rpt 307 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, May 2012), p. 2. By 2010, Afghan National Civil Order Police members earned roughly twice as much as their Afghanistan National Police (ANP) counterparts. C. J. Chivers, "Afghan Police Earn Poor Grade for Marja Mission," *New York Times*, 1 Jun 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/02/world/asia/02marja.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

67. There were three battalions in Herat, one in Nimroz, two in Helmand, two in Kandahar, one in Ghazni, one in Paktika, one in Paktiya, one in Nangarhar, and one in Kabul (all regions determined to have moderate, significant, or high threat levels). The 1,200-man civil order brigade was divided into eight 150-man companies based in Mazar-e Sharif, Herat, Farah, Kandahar, Gardez, Kabul, Jalalabad, and Faizabad. CSTC-A, Police Reform Directorate, "Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) Concept Brief," 8 Nov 2006.

68. Farahnaz Karim, "Humanitarian Action in the New Security Environment: Policy and Operational Implications in Afghanistan," Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Study Group Background Paper, Sep 2006, pp. ii, 10–18. In March 2003, International Committee of the Red Cross member Ricardo Munguia was killed in Uruzgan Province, prompting the Red Cross to temporarily freeze all movements in the country; "Swiss ICRC delegate murdered," IRIN, 28 Mar 2003, https://www.irinnews.org/news/2003/03/28/swiss-icrc-delegate-murdered, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. In February 2004, five aid workers

As the Taliban grew more aggressive, it began to threaten national infrastructure projects funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Insurgents targeted the building efforts of the Kajaki hydroelectric facility in northern Helmand, the Gardez to Khost road, large portions of the Ring Road near Kabul, and the Jalalabad to Asadabad road. The U.S. Agency for International Development was just as reluctant as nongovernmental organizations to venture into disputed provinces. Even the temporary absence of aid officials degraded regional reconstruction efforts because each major project required time, site observation, and constant attention to maintain momentum. As a result, humanitarian projects could take place only in areas where U.S. and ISAF forces maintained a presence or conducted major operations to reestablish security.

In order to focus efforts, General Eikenberry's reconstruction plans centered on rebuilding Afghanistan's basic road network. Better roads would not only enable the transport of goods but also improve the Afghan government's access to communities, strengthening their ties to Kabul. Eikenberry did not want the U.S. military to dominate reconstruction efforts, thinking instead that civilian agencies had the technical expertise needed to oversee projects. He understood that "relative to the civilian team, a military commander usually has comparative advantages in transportation, communication, security, planning competency, flexible funding, and niche skills."[69] In Eikenberry's view, the military needed to make these resources available so that civilians could apply their expertise to mission-critical areas while avoiding "the hubris of believing [that] soldiers can do everything well and then indeed trying to do everything."[70] Instead, he preferred to work in support of the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development's reconstruction projects. These initiatives included both those that could provide short-term tactical benefits for U.S. and Afghan forces as well as those offering long-term improvements to be sustained by the Afghan government.[71]

With American maneuver forces focusing on security, reconstruction teams continued to be the primary means of promoting governance and reconstruction. The teams had been created as "an interim civil-military organization designed to operate in semi-permissive environments" in order to "improve stability in a given area by helping build the host nation's legitimacy and effectiveness in providing security to its citizens

---

with the Sanayee Development Foundation were shot and killed in their vehicle forty miles east of Kabul; "Five Afghan Aid Workers Killed in Ambush," *USAToday*, 26 Feb 2004, https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2004-02-26-afghan-attack_x.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. In June 2004, five members of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) were killed when their car was ambushed in Badghis Province. The deteriorating security climate prompted the organization to suspend its operations in Afghanistan; see "Doctors Without Borders Shocked by Killing of 5 Staff in Afghanistan," Médecins Sans Frontières, 3 Jun 2004, https://www.doctorswithout borders.org/news-stories/press-release/doctors-without-borders-shocked-killing-5-staff-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

69. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, p. 23.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.



U.S. Agency for International Development

The Gardez-Khost road construction project was intended to link population centers in Afghanistan.

and delivering essential government services."[72] Ideally, the reconstruction teams could be dissolved "when normal development operations can be carried out without [their] assistance."[73] Therefore, teams needed sufficient security to prevent the enemy from disrupting their efforts to improve governance and support reconstruction.

A Renewed Enemy

Compared to earlier years, the prospects for enhancing the security situation in Afghanistan seemed dim. During the 2006 fighting season, sustained offensives replaced the Taliban's hit-and-run tactics of previous years. In 2004, ISAF reported 900 security-related incidents countrywide. Attacks increased in the later part of the campaigning season but were largely held in check by the resource surge that preceded the National Assembly and provincial council elections. By 2006, reported security incidents rose to 5,000. In particular, IED attacks increased from 325 to 1,931 over the period. Coalition casualties also increased, more than tripling from 58 killed in action in 2004 to 191 killed two years later.[74] While Afghanistan had experienced continuous violence since early 2003, the increase in attacks demonstrated

72. U.S. Army Center for Lessons Learned, Handbook 07–34, *Provisional Reconstruction Team Playbook*, Sep 2007, p. 1.

73. Ibid., p. 3.

74. Anthony H. Cordesman, *Losing the Afghan-Pakistan War? The Rising Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2008), p. 10; John R. Ballard,

that the insurgency was "well past the incubation stage."[75] Coalition forces now faced deliberate attacks and ambushes, along with attempts to interdict ground lines of communications, harass key bases in outlying provinces, and assassinate effective Afghan partners. All these actions ensured that insurgents maintained a coercive influence on a population suspicious of the Karzai government.

The fact that the U.S.-led coalition did not face a unified front further complicated matters. By the end of the 2005 fighting season, coalition and Afghan security forces faced three interconnected conflicts. The first was a regional struggle against the Afghan Taliban and associated groups such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's HIG and the Haqqani Network. These groups were motivated by a desire to expel foreigners from Afghanistan and return to implementing the rule of law according to their interpretation of Islam. The second was the Global War on Terrorism directed against al-Qaeda remnants based in Pakistan's tribal areas and enabled by Pakistani extremists. Finally, coalition and Afghan troops faced numerous destabilizing actors: predatory warlords, narcotics producers, criminal gangs, petty thieves, and smugglers. Some of these parties occasionally allied with factions within the government or insurgent groups, but in sum they were a corrosive presence in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.[76]

Of these three conflicts, the Taliban-led insurgent coalition posed the greatest direct threat to Afghan stability and security. The Quetta Shura Taliban had its strongest organizations in Afghanistan's Pashtun-dominated southern provinces of Zabul, Uruzgan, Helmand, and Kandahar. In 2005, coalition officers estimated the threat posed in these provinces as low key, with IEDs and ambush cells periodically recruiting the help of local farmers. The absence of sustained enemy activity led one American commander to think that they had the Taliban "all but defeated."[77] The remaining armed opposition groups in Helmand, Uruzgan, and Kandahar were considered marginal threats. However, fighters trained in Pakistan were arriving in strength, ready to conduct operations once the poppy harvest ended in the late spring.[78] Their successful and largely unnoticed infiltration into the Arghandab and Helmand River valleys menaced the provincial capitals of Kandahar City and Lashkar Gah.[79] By April 2006, the Taliban had

---

David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The U.S. at War in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2012) p. 137.

75. Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan, 2002–2007* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 161.

76. Ballard, Lamm, and Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, p. 116.

77. Interv, Maj Gen Eric T. Olson, in *Enduring Voices: Oral Histories of the U.S. Army Experience in Afghanistan, 2003–2005*, ed. Christopher N. Koontz (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2008), p. 260.

78. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Ian Hope, frmr Task Force (TF) Orion Cdr, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 32, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

79. Carlotta Gall, *The Wrong Enemy: America in Afghanistan, 2001–2014* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), p. 130.

assembled numerous well-trained and well-supplied foot soldiers in southern Afghanistan (*Map 2.2*).

The south was not the only region penetrated by substantial insurgent forces. In eastern Afghanistan, the Haqqani family network directed or facilitated many insurgent and tribal militia groups operating in a region, encompassing Khost, Logar, Paktika, Paktiya, and parts of Nangarhar and Wardak Provinces called Loya-Paktia. The Haqqani and their subordinates were not strictly Taliban, but they were willing to affiliate with Mullah Mohammed Omar's movement for pragmatic objectives: fighting foreign soldiers, capturing Kabul for the Pashtuns, and establishing *sharia* (Islamic religious law). In exchange, the Haqqani family had free rein to run their own *jihad* (struggle, in the sense of a holy war waged on behalf of Islam) on both sides of the border.[80] The Haqqani Network's main ties to the insurgency stemmed from its value as a facilitator for al-Qaeda and other foreign extremists. From their Pakistan base area of Miran Shah, Haqqani transit lines entered Afghanistan's Khost Province. The Haqqani knew Khost well, and the restrictive terrain ensured the region remained an active sanctuary for insurgents operating as far away as Kabul. With dozens of *madrassas* (religious educational institutions) across the border churning out thousands of graduates each year, units operating in eastern Afghanistan faced a seemingly endless stream of potential recruits prepared for jihad.[81]

Throughout 2005 and into 2006, the Haqqani Network expanded from its established positions along the border into Khost and Paktiya Provinces. This expansion was possible not only because of the Haqqani forces but also because religious networks had become stronger at the expense of local tribal leadership. This shift toward fundamentalism allowed the Haqqani to substitute their patronage of madrassas for traditional power structures. Ineffectual district governance then gave the Haqqani the opportunity to exploit their financial strength and prestige as successful *mujahideen* (holy warriors) in a grab for power.[82] Haqqani-backed insurgents operating from Pakistan became more ambitious in 2006, establishing infiltration routes across the frontier leading to Kabul. As in the south, these groups became more aggressive after several years of low-level action, targeting troops, combat outposts, and forward operating bases with IEDs and rockets.[83] As a significant threat, they endangered the villages and district centers that the United States considered crucial to the region's stability and inhospitality to al-Qaeda.

Farther north, HIG also became more active in 2006. Pursuing Hekmatyar's exclusionary political program, HIG fighters surrounded their

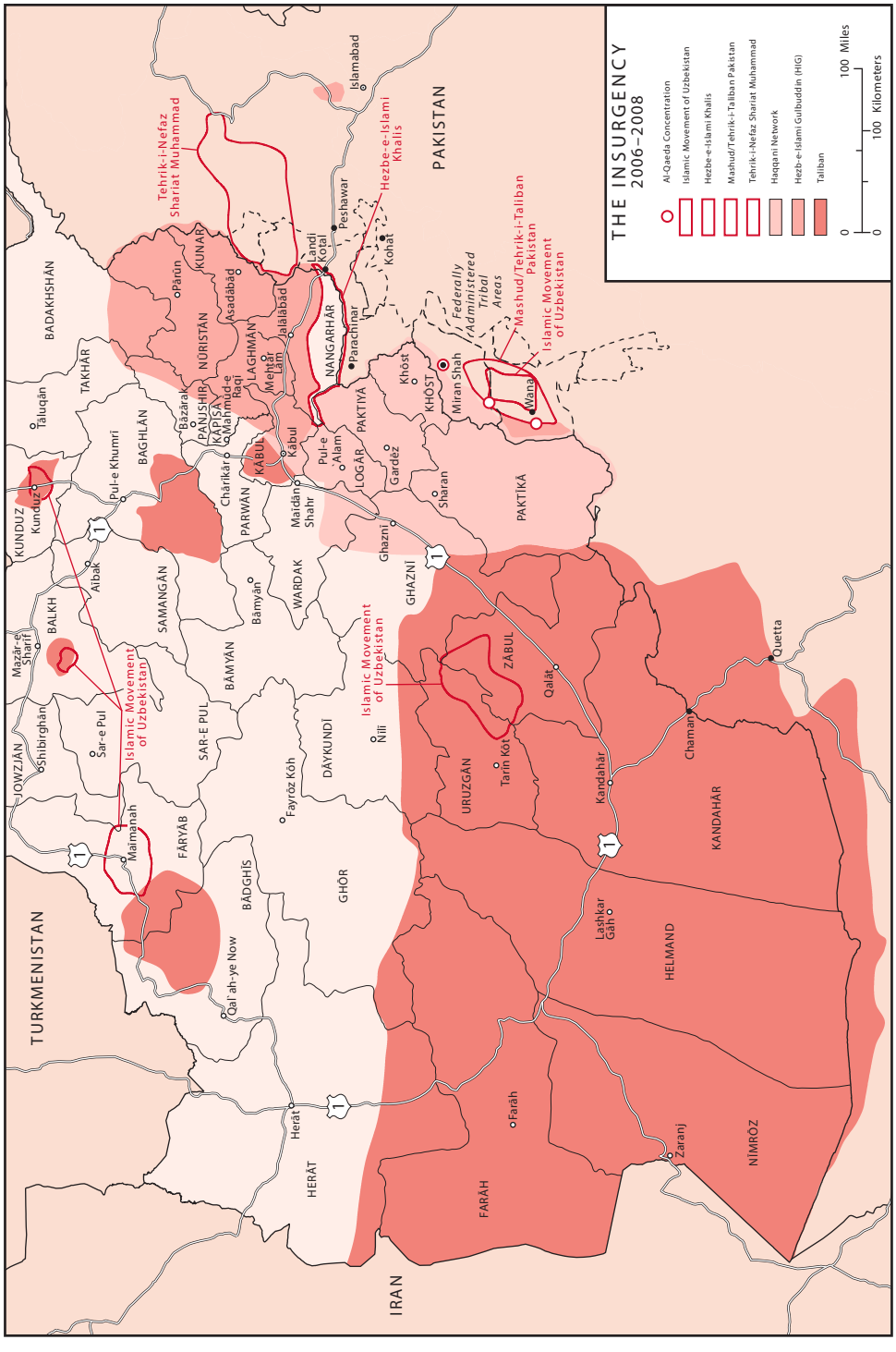
---

80. Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973–2012* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), pp. 130, 134.

81. Bing West, *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy, and the Way Out of Afghanistan* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2012), p. 117.

82. Jeffrey A. Dressler, *The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2010), p. 21.

83. John R. Bruning and Sean Parnell, *Outlaw Platoon: Heroes, Renegades, Infidels, and the Brotherhood of War in Afghanistan* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), pp. 26–27, 134–35.


THE INSURGENCY
2006–2008
Al-Qaeda Concentration
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
Hezbe-e-Islami Khalis
Mashud/Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
Tehrik-i-Nefaz Shariat Muhammad
Haqqani Network
Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG)
Taliban
0 100 Miles
0 100 Kilometers
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
PAKISTAN
Tehrik-i-Nefaz Shariat Muhammad
Hezbe-e-Islami Khalis
Federally Administered Tribal Areas
Mashud/Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
BADAKHSHAN
TAKHAR
BAGHLAN
KUNDUZ
BALKH
SAMANGAN
JOWZJAN
SAR-E PUL
FARYAB
BADGHIS
HERAT
BAMYAN
DAYKUNDI
GHOR
WARDAK
PARWAN
KABUL
KAPISA
PANJSHIR
NURISTAN
KUNAR
LAGHMAN
NANGARHAR
PAKTIYA
LOGAR
GHAZNI
PAKTIKA
KHOST
ZABUL
URUZGAN
KANDAHAR
HELMAND
FARAH
NIMROZ
Islamabad
Peshawar
Landi Kotal
Kohat
Parachinar
Miran Shah
Wana
Khost
Gardez
Ghazni
Kabul
Jalalabad
Asadabad
Parun
Bazarak
Mehtar Lam
Pul-e Alam
Maidan Shahr
Charikar
Kunduz
Taluqan
Pul-e Khumri
Aibak
Mazar-e Sharif
Shibirghan
Sar-e Pul
Maimanah
Bamyan
Faryab
Herat
Qal'ah-ye Now
Nili
Qalat
Tarin Kot
Kandahar
Lashkar Gah
Chaman
Quetta
Zaranj
Shkin
1

Map 2.2

fundamentalism with a modern, disciplined organization that resembled a Soviet-style political front. Although the group numbered only a few thousand active members, Hekmatyar exploited his position around the Pakistani city of Peshawar to increase his ranks and prepare for military operations in Nuristan, Kunar, and Nangarhar Provinces. These isolated provinces were full of capillary valleys populated by tribes that resented any intrusion by outsiders, especially by those who did not practice their fundamentalist version of Islam. HIG might not have enjoyed tremendous popularity in these regions, but they could exploit the ideals of *pashtunwali*, Wahhabism, and traditional sociopolitical norms better than any other intruding force could.[84]

The region also contained numerous other militant groups with agendas in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or both. Two of the larger groups, based out of North Waziristan within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, were the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The former had fought alongside the Afghan Taliban from the earliest days of the U.S. invasion, while the latter was a more recently organized coalition of different Pakistani Taliban groups that opposed not only the U.S. and ISAF presence but also the central government in Islamabad. Hezbe-e-Islami Khalis, an HIG splinter group that broke with Hekmatyar's forces in the late 1970s, was located along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in southern Nangarhar Province. Finally, the group known as Tehrik-i-Nezaf Shariat Muhammad was located north of the Pakistan city of Peshawar and inside the northern sections of the tribal areas. For the most part, these organizations did not conduct unilateral operations within Afghanistan, but instead provided support to the larger forces of the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, or HIG.

As the 2006 fighting season began, a new Taliban opposed the coalition and its Afghan partners. Their tactics were beginning to show greater sophistication, daring, and effectiveness. Taliban fighters now went to battle armed with rifles, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, mines, mortars, and rockets. They were led by command and control elements capable of discriminating targets and taking countermeasures against U.S. tactics. As an American intelligence officer recalled, by 2006, "You get a large enough [friendly] force and the enemy would disappear; get a small enough force and [the Taliban] would come out from behind every rock or hill top."[85] The Taliban also began importing methods used by insurgents in Iraq, employing ambushes, IEDs, and suicide attacks. They also benefited from training, financing, and logistical support from extremist groups such as the Haqqani Network.[86]

---

84. Pashtunwali is an ancient Pashtun code of conduct that includes a strong tradition of hospitality. Many indigenous Pashtun people, particularly in rural tribal areas, still follow this system of law and governance today. Wahhabism is an Islamic movement that insists on a literal interpretation of the Quran. Strict Wahhabis believe that all those who do not practice their form of Islam are heathens, infidels, and enemies. West, *The Wrong War*, p. 248.

85. Interv, Col Bryan Gibby, OEF Study Group, with Maj Travis J. Maples, frmr S–2, 4th Bde Combat Team, 10th Mtn Div, 11 Jan 2016, p. 2.

86. Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, pp. 147–51.

The use of IEDs escalated in 2006 with nearly 1,300 attacks compared to 782 the year before.[87] Although Taliban IEDs never reached the level of sophistication seen in Iraq, coalition troops learned to respect these deadly and difficult-to-detect bombs.[88] A network of informants, sometimes children, gave advance warning to allow Taliban groups to mass fighters and arm preplaced IEDs, which often initiated or accompanied an ambush. Insurgents began using radio-controlled bombs in 2005–2006, which were more sophisticated than the booby traps with trip wires previously seen. A triggerman could now detonate a hidden bomb from several hundred meters away. When coalition forces began using radio-defeating technologies to protect mounted and dismounted forces, the insurgents went low-tech, substituting command-wire detonators for the radio-controlled variety.[89]

Even as IEDs became more prolific, the tactic that had the most dramatic impact in Afghanistan was the suicide bomb. Unlike in Iraq, suicide attacks began slowly in Afghanistan. The first documented attack took place on 7 June 2003, when a single bomber killed four ISAF soldiers and wounded thirty-one bystanders in Kabul.[90] In just a few years, however, suicide bombings had increased from 21 in 2005 to 141 in 2006, causing a reported 1,166 casualties.[91] This new lethality was attributable primarily to foreign volunteers and technical and ideological training in Pakistan's tribal area sanctuaries.[92] Often recruited in Pakistani madrassas, bombers were glorified as martyrs, and their families usually received cash payments. On occasion, madrassa students in Pakistan were specifically groomed to participate in these operations, as peer pressure and ideological training made them reliable delivery systems.[93]

---

87. Rick Atkinson, "You Can't Armor Your Way Out of This Problem," *Washington Post*, 2 Oct 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/01/AR2007100101760.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 367.

88. Mark Silinsky, *The Taliban: Afghanistan's Most Lethal Insurgents* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2014), pp. 111, 114; Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, p. 148.

89. Rick Atkinson, "The IED Problem Is Getting Out of Control. We've Got to Stop the Bleeding," *Washington Post*, 30 Sep 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/29/AR2007092900751.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

90. Msg, Cmd Center Joint Staff-Intel Div, CENTCOM, sub: Anti-Government/Coalition Militants Changing Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, General Abizaid Files, abizaid-ahec, rec_13833, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

91. Exact numbers of annual suicide attacks differ. One source suggests that there were 6 attacks in 2004, 21 in 2005, 141 in 2006, and 137 in 2007; see Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 366. The UN Security Council, by comparison, recorded 160 suicide attacks in 2007, with a further 68 thwarted attempts, as well as 123 actual and 17 thwarted in 2006; see Rpt, Sec Gen, "The Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security," A/62/722–S2008/159, 6 Mar 2008, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

92. Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, p. 108.

93. There are also reports of attackers having been drugged and their bombs being detonated remotely. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 366; Silinsky, *The Taliban*, p. 107; Atkinson, "You Can't Armor Your Way Out of This Problem."

The Taliban's greatest advocate for these martyrdom operations was Mullah Dadullah "Lame" Akhund. In April 2007, a month before he was killed in a U.S. airstrike, Dadullah told a reporter, "We have sent thousands of Taliban suicide bombers to all Afghan cities for attacks on foreign troops and their Afghan puppets, and we will turn our motherland into the graveyard of the U.S. forces, and their families should wait for their dead bodies." He and others in the Taliban's leadership justified such tactics by arguing that the Taliban was fighting "for the freedom of Afghanistan from the enemies of Muslims."[94]

As evidenced by the rise of IEDs, suicide attacks, assassinations, and abductions, the superiority of Afghan and coalition security forces in conventional battles had forced insurgent groups to adopt asymmetric tactics aimed largely at Afghan security and civilian targets. Although the insurgency drew strength from elements within the Afghan community, its leadership, planning, training, funding, and equipment came from foreign-based networks.[95] These networks remained largely beyond the reach of U.S. and ISAF forces in Afghanistan, being formed and controlled from bases in Pakistan.

These same extremists also were poised to attack Pakistan itself. Whether by design or neglect, the Pakistani military proved incapable of securing the border crossings, allowing insurgents to travel back and forth between the Pakistani safe havens and the Afghan battlefields almost at will. Despite growing complaints from American officials and Karzai, the Pakistani government of President Pervez Musharraf issued a steady stream of denials regarding the existence of a Taliban-driven insurgency emanating from Pakistan.[96] The Pakistanis were playing a complicated diplomatic game by accepting billions in U.S. aid to eradicate al-Qaeda in connection with Enduring Freedom counterterrorist operations, while offering political cover and financial support for other militant groups operating in Afghanistan. Pakistan's true motivations concerned its territorial disputes with India. Its decades of support for radical Islamic governance in Afghanistan was

---

94. Saeed Ali Achakzai, "Taliban Deploy Thousands of Suicide Bombers: Commander," *Reuters*, 2 Apr 2007, https://www.reuters.com/article/2007/04/02/us-afghan-taliban-idUSISL15115720070402, Hist Files. OEF Study Grp.

95. Rpt Sec Gen, "The Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security," 6 Mar 2008, p. 5.

96. Zalmay Khalilzad, *The Envoy: From Kabul to the White House, My Journey through A Turbulent World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), pp. 208–10; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 246; Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, p. 624; Interv, Christiane Amanpour, CNN, with President Pervez Musharraf, 23 Jan 2004, http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/01/23/musharraf.transcript.cnna/index.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Carlotta Gall, "Pakistan Lets Taliban Train, Prisoner Says," *New York Times*, 4 Aug 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/04/world/pakistan-lets-taliban-train-prisoner-says.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Declan Walsh, "How to Find the Elusive Taliban: Pop Down to the Shops in Quetta," *Guardian*, 3 Dec 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/dec/04/afghanistan.declanwalsh, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "CIA 'knows Bin Laden whereabouts,'" BBC News, 20 Jun 2005, https://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4110786.stm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, PBS Frontline with Gen Pervez Musharraf, 8 Jun 2006, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/interviews/musharraf.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

intended to provide both fighters and a secure flank for future conflicts in Kashmir. The Pakistanis thus saw the transfer of authority to NATO ISAF as an opportunity to return to a more traditional security state. With the United States apparently divesting itself of Enduring Freedom, much as it had turned away from Afghanistan after the 1989 Soviet withdrawal, Washington's support seemed less important to securing Pakistan's sovereignty.[97]

Islamabad had been utilizing groups such as the Haqqani Network to maintain order among the tribes in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas since before the Soviet-Afghan War. In recent years, however, Pakistan's evolving interests and loyalties proved unable to provide stability along the frontier, and it was now suffering from the threat of a "Talibanized belt" in the tribal areas. As the region became less stable, the Pakistani government decided that the traditional militia-based security force for the provinces, the Frontier Corps, was no longer sufficient to maintain security. Instead, it turned to the Pakistani Army to assert governmental authority in North and South Waziristan in June 2002.[98]

As thousands of Pakistani soldiers deployed to the tribal areas, radical Islamist groups began calling for a jihad against the central government. Multiple operations by Pakistani military forces that had no counterterrorism or counterinsurgency training invariably failed to constrain the region's tribal and religious forces while at the same time inflaming local sentiment and increasing popular discontent with the government.[99] After several years of inconclusive results and growing dissent within the army, the Pakistani government agreed to a truce with militants in South Waziristan in early 2005.[100] The government withdrew its troops from the tribal zone in exchange for assurances that the militant groups would not attack the Pakistani Army or give shelter to foreign terrorists. It did not, however, prevent radical Islamists from launching attacks against coalition troops in Afghanistan.[101]

After signing the truce, the Pakistani military began operating in North Waziristan to pursue foreign militants fleeing the southern tribal areas.[102] As in other parts of the tribal areas, soldiers met heavy resistance from groups motivated by both Islamist ideology and tribal autonomy. In an effort to restore

---

97. Hassan Abbas, *The Taliban Revival: Violence and Extremism on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 62–67.

98. Ibid., pp. 78–82.

99. Interv, Barno in Koontz, *Enduring Voices*, p. 32.

100. Beginning with the deployment of 8,000 soldiers in June 2002, Islamabad maintained a constant military presence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas that peaked before the Afghan October 2005 elections when 80,000 troops were deployed there. However, the campaign generated mounting opposition within the Pakistani armed forces to Musharraf's policies, not least because Pashtuns were the second-largest ethnic group represented among the troops.

101. Amir Mir, "War and Peace in Waziristan," *Asia Times*, 4 May 2005, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/GE04Df03.htm (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, *Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Walker and Company, 2007), p. 433.

102. Abbas, *Taliban Revival*, pp. 106–07, 112–13.

order, the Haqqani family helped broker a peace between the government and tribal representatives in North Waziristan in early September 2006. Once again the government agreed to withdraw troops in exchange for a cessation of hostilities, although this time it also secured promises from militants not to conduct attacks in Afghanistan.[103]

The coalition in Afghanistan suffered from Islamabad's reluctance to continue employing tens of thousands of troops to quell the fiercely independent Pashtun tribes dominating affairs within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. As General Eikenberry noted in November 2006, the number of attacks emanating from North Waziristan tripled after the peace agreement.[104] The coalition had little means of blunting this influx as U.S. forces in theater began to contract into RC East in preparation for ISAF's postelection and postconflict stabilization campaign. Policymakers remained blind to a brewing catastrophe as Eikenberry struggled to convince his political superiors that they needed to pressure Islamabad on sanctuaries.[105]

Apart from destabilizing Pakistan and supporting the growing Afghan insurgency, radical Islamists in the tribal areas also helped ensure the survival of al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's continued leadership of Sunni extremist groups.[106] Although al-Qaeda's cohesion had been shattered during its withdrawal from Afghanistan, hampering its ability to oversee a global jihad, the group had enough support in Pakistan to survive.[107] In fact, al-Qaeda soon expanded its sanctuary in South Asia by partnering with groups such as the Haqqani Network.[108] This reliance on allies meshed with al-Qaeda's original intent of representing the Islamic vanguard for the global jihad. Al-Qaeda

---

103. Pamela Constable, "Pakistan Reaches Peace Accord With Pro-Taliban Militias," *Washington Post*, 6 Sep 2006, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/05/AR2006090501249.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. In September 2006, the Pakistani government signed the Waziristan Accord with North Waziristan tribal leaders and members of the Taliban. The agreement held for ten months before the tribes renounced the deal. Carin Zissis and Jayshree Bajoria, "Pakistan's Tribal Areas," Council on Foreign Relations, 26 Oct 2007, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/pakistans-tribal-areas, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

104. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 277.

105. Eikenberry eventually went so far as to have his staff put together a briefing using news reports from the U.S. Public Broadcasting System program *Frontline* that indicated that the Taliban were using sanctuaries in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas to support their insurgency in Afghanistan. Interv, Wright with Eikenberry, 23 Feb 2012, pp. 30, 70–72; "The Return of the Taliban," PBS *Frontline*, 3 Oct 2006, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

106. Samina Ahmed, "The United States and Terrorism in Southwest Asia," *International Security* 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001-2002): 79 – 91; Ahmad Shah Katawazai, "The Evolution of FATA into the Hub of Terrorism," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, 15 Dec 2016, https://www.saisreview.org/2016/12/15, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

107. Patrick Porter, *The Global Village Myth: Distance, War, and the Limits of Power* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2015), p. 110.

108. Thomas Joscelyn, "Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan: An Enduring Threat," *Long War Journal*, 20 May 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/05/al_qaeda_in_afghanis.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

did not need to engage directly in bombings to be dangerous: its value to the jihadist movement was its ability to link local groups with global sources and to merge regional conflicts with bin Laden's vision of a worldwide struggle.

Even before the September 11th attacks, bin Laden had supported Pakistan's conflict with India over the Kashmir region, comparing it to the jihad in Afghanistan and inviting Pakistanis to join his movement.[109] After the U.S. invasion toppled its Taliban allies, al-Qaeda used its ideological authority to promote increased confrontation with the Pakistani state. The objective was to destabilize the Pakistani government, distract U.S. attention from Afghanistan, and undermine Islamabad's support for America's war on terrorism in Southwest Asia. Al-Qaeda's leaders followed their own lines of operation: providing religious justification to rally tribal support for antigovernment militants; leveraging military experience and organizational reach to train, advise, and fund militant groups; and mediating disputes and building coalitions within Pakistan to insulate bin Laden from external attack.[110]

Though al-Qaeda remained active, bin Laden maintained a low profile, likely settling down in a reclusive Abbottabad compound on the southeastern edge of the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan in early 2006. His deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, regularly moved among safe houses in the tribal areas.[111] Al-Qaeda's entrenchment in Pakistan's tribal areas secured the ideological foundation of the radical Islamist movement. At the same time, the Taliban's reestablishment in Quetta and the growth of such groups as the Haqqani Network and HIG gave the Islamist militants a stable support base and access to thousands of potential recruits from local madrassas. With sufficient international financial backing, a capable training system, and a logistical network, nefarious groups had the motivation and means to wage a large-scale, multifaceted insurgency against the international coalition and the Karzai government. At a time when the war in Iraq was limiting the resources the United States could make available for its fight in Afghanistan, these militant groups looked to expand their campaign. Because Afghanistan's new security forces were still being developed, its security and stability would depend on ISAF's ability to quell an armed insurgency operating out of a Pakistani safe haven.

The Return of 10th Mountain Division

With the Taliban and other anticoalition groups preparing to mount offensives in 2006, the United States rotated its maneuver forces for the coming year. Senior Defense officials had chosen the 10th Mountain Division to oversee the transition to ISAF lead in Afghanistan. Initial proposals called for the 10th Mountain to divide its 3d and 4th Brigade Combat Teams between

109. Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* (New York: Hurst, 2015), pp. 249–50.

110. Don Rassler, "Al-Qa'ida's Pakistan Strategy," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 6 (Jun 2009): 1, 3.

111. Seth G. Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of Al Qa'ida Since 9/11* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), pp. 225–31.



Steve Arel, USA

General Freakley, pictured here as a lieutenant general in 2011.

RC East and RC South, where they would spend the year-long deployment conducting major operations. However, the Department of Defense settled on sending only a portion of the 4th Brigade Combat Team to RC South due to concerns about generating sufficient combat troops for Iraq, coupled with Abizaid's and Eikenberry's belief that sending an entire U.S. brigade to RC South could stall the NATO deployment. This meant that U.S. commanders in Afghanistan would not be able to mount simultaneous major operations in the two regional commands, and instead would need to shift forces between the two in order to weight the one most in need.[112]

Advance units from the 10th Mountain Division began arriving in December 2005, with the majority of the troops touching ground in January and February. The full transition would be completed by April 2006.[113] The 10th Mountain commander, Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, brought his division headquarters and took over CJTF-76 from General Kamiya on 21 February at Bagram Air Base. Col. Michael S. Rose's Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Task Force Falcon), and Col. Larry D. Wyche's 10th Sustainment Brigade (Task Force Muleskinner) also deployed to Bagram, where they could provide air and logistical support to CJTF-76.

Col. John W. "Mick" Nicholson Jr.'s 3d Brigade Combat Team (TF Spartan) was the 10th Mountain Division maneuver force in RC East. Headquartered

112. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Gen Benjamin C. Freakley, frmr CJTF-76 Cdr, 10 Jun 2009, pp. 6, 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Neumann, *The Other War*, p. 49. A Pentagon official reported that the decision stemmed from recommendations from Eikenberry and Abizaid; see Schmitt, "U.S. to Cut Force in Afghanistan."

113. OPORD 05–10, Opn Secure Harmony, Cdr, CJTF-76, 15 Dec 2005, pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

at Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khost Province, Colonel Nicholson's force included four combat battalions: Lt. Col. Christopher G. Cavoli's 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment (Task Force Chosin); Lt. Col. Christopher R. Toner's 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment (Task Force Catamount); Lt. Col. Joseph M. Fenty's 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Titans); and Lt. Col. David A. Bushey's 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment (Task Force Wolfpack). Nicholson distributed the combat units across the regional command while retaining his field artillery at Salerno. Filling out Nicholson's combat team were Lt. Col. Richard G. Kaiser's Special Troops Battalion (Task Force Vanguard) and Lt. Col. Vernon L. Baker's 710th Support Battalion (Task Force Support).[114] For the first few months of its deployment, TF Spartan also included 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, under the command of Lt. Col. James "Chip" Bierman, which was nearing the end of its seven-month rotation.[115]

The impending ISAF transition in southern Afghanistan, and the U.S. decision not to deploy all of 10th Mountain's 4th Brigade Combat Team, significantly limited planned operations in RC South. In evaluating the impact of that decision, CENTCOM planners noted that "CFC-A's current analysis does not indicate the need for [4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain] as long as Canadian and Great Britain . . . forces arrive as currently planned [no later than] April, 2006."[116] However, CENTCOM also estimated that if British "forces do not arrive in adequate numbers by the end of March 2006; there will likely be a maneuver force capability gap from April to May."[117] The absence of 10th Mountain's 4th Brigade Combat Team would therefore create deficiencies only if NATO deployments were delayed.

Canadian Brig. Gen. David Fraser, who took over RC South from Colonel Owens's TF Bayonet in mid-February 2006, would oversee the incoming ISAF units. His new command headquarters, Combined Task Force Aegis, initially fell under CJTF-76's command before the formal turnover to ISAF. At the time, Fraser's command consisted of a Canadian task force (Task

114. AAR, Opn Enduring Freedom, Afghan Cdr, Book 7, Mar 2007, Mar 2007, pp. 47–49, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

115. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Christopher G. Cavoli, frmr 1st Bn, 32 Inf Cdr, 5 Mar 2009, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Christian Lowe, "A Mission Ends: As Army, NATO Troops Take Over in Afghanistan, Marines Reflect on a Tour that 'You Never Forget,'" *Marine Corps Times*, 29 May 2009, reprinted in David W. Kummer, ed., *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2009: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Quantico, Va.: History Division, United States Marine Corps, 2014), pp. 141–45.

116. Although Canadian troops did not participate in Operation Enduring Freedom following an accidental bombing in 2002, they continued to deploy to Afghanistan, under the mandate of Operation Athena, as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) units protecting Kabul. In 2005, the Canadian effort transitioned from Kabul to southern Afghanistan when they assumed responsibility for the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. See "History of Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan, 2001-2014," Government of Canada, https://international.gc.ca/afghanistan/history-histoire.aspx?lang=eng, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; CENTCOM, "Factors Affecting Decision on 4-10th BCT Deployment," Afghanistan Operational Info Paper (7 Oct 2005), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

117. Ibid.

Force Orion) under the command of Col. Ian Hope built around the newly arrived 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the Canadian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar City.[118]

Problems emerged with the projected RC South deployment soon afterward because, unlike earlier ISAF efforts in northern and western Afghanistan, sending troops into a potentially dangerous region sparked vigorous political discussions within some participating NATO nations. The Dutch contingent, for example, only received approval to deploy following an extensive parliamentary debate that ended in February 2006, which meant it could not take over responsibility for Uruzgan Province until August.[119] The debate took place because the Dutch government deliberately chose a province where Taliban fighters were active rather than settle for reconstruction work in quieter northern Afghanistan.[120] This delay also set back the arrival of British forces until April because London wanted firm commitments from the other NATO members before sending its own troops.[121]

The combined delays produced the worst-case capability gap in RC South, prompting CENTCOM to fill the void with a composite organization siphoned from Freakley's newly formed 4th Brigade Combat Team based at Fort Polk, Louisiana.[122] That unit, built around Lt. Col. Frank D. Sturek's 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment (Task Force Warrior), contained three more companies in addition to its three organic rifle companies, antitank company, and headquarters company to enable the unit to operate as an independent task force. In March, General Freakley sent Sturek's task force to Zabul Province in RC South, where it covered ISAF forces filtering into the region.[123]

---

118. Sean M. Maloney, *Fighting For Afghanistan: A Rogue Historian at War* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2011), pp. 9–15.

119. Molly Moore, "After Long Debate, Dutch Agree to Send Force to Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 3 Feb 2006, https://wwwwashingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/02/AR2006020202543.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

120. Rem Kortenberg, "The Netherlands: To Fight, or Not to Fight? The Rise and Fall of a Small Power," in *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance*, ed. Gale A. Mattox and Stephen M. Greiner (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2015), pp. 143–44.

121. Christopher Elliott, *High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 133.

122. Maj. Gen. Douglas E. Lute, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Director of Operations (J–3), raised objections to deploying only one battalion from 4th Brigade Combat Team as it would impact the Army's ability to later send the entire brigade to Iraq; see CENTCOM, "Factors Affecting Decision on 4-10th BCT Deployment," Afghanistan Operational Info Paper (7 Oct 2005). To ensure the bulk of 4th Brigade Combat Team would be able to deploy together, the 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, was replaced by another unit from the brigade, Lt. Col. Ronald J. Metternich's 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment. The switch permitted 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry, to return to Fort Polk in time to complete its theater-specific predeployment training before leaving for Iraq. Interv, Jim Bird, CSI, with Col A. Kent Schweikert, frmr 4th Bde Combat Team, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 5 Feb and 6 May 2009, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

123. In addition to organic elements, Task Force (TF) Warrior consisted of the engineers of Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain

Although the entire 4th Brigade did not deploy, Freakley received Col. A. Kent Schweikert, the 4th Brigade commander, along with parts of his staff and 200 soldiers from Lt. Col. Michael C. Howitz's brigade support battalion (Task Force Strength). Freakley dispatched Schweikert to Kandahar to perform as U.S. National Command Element, U.S. National Support Element, and General Fraser's deputy for Combined TF Aegis. As head of the U.S. National Command and Support Elements, Schweikert provided logistical, intelligence, and communications support to American (but not ISAF) forces operating in RC South.[124] With the Americans and Canadians comprising the core of his multinational brigade-sized force, Fraser's command slowly grew as more NATO forces arrived in anticipation of the RC South transfer of responsibility to ISAF. The rotation for 10th Mountain culminated in March 2006, at which point General Freakley's command now consisted of roughly 20,000 troops, with the majority of U.S. forces located in RC East.

The campaign plan for the new CJTF-76 built on CFC-A's emphasis on security, governance, and reconstruction as well as ISAF's goal to "extend and deepen the areas in which the [Afghan Government] and [international agencies and nongovernmental organizations] can safely operate in the interests of the people of Afghanistan."[125] Freakley thought that Eikenberry's guidelines and objectives permitted CJTF-76 to exercise "pretty much free rein with constructing our campaign plan."[126] His staff took this opportunity to develop a campaign to extend the Afghan government's reach into isolated regions in northeast RC East, block insurgent infiltration routes in the central and southern portions of RC East, and facilitate NATO forces as they moved into RC South.

CJTF-76 sought to achieve these objectives by simultaneously conducting "full spectrum operations" and integrating "joint, inter-agency and multi-national forces partnered with the Afghans [in order to] establish security and deter the re-emergence of terrorism to enhance the sovereignty of Afghanistan."[127] These goals would be realized by implementing a four-step "clear, hold, build, and engage" approach.[128] In simpler terms, coalition troops conducted combat operations against enemy fighters, reducing their strength to the point at which Afghan troops and police could maintain a permanent presence in the designated area of operations. At that point, CJTF-76 would initiate reconstruction projects designed to better the life of local inhabitants

---

Division; Company E, 94th Support Battalion; and the 105-mm. howitzers of Battery A, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment. Interv, Bird with Schweikert, 5 Feb and 6 May 2009, pp. 3, 6–8.

124. Ibid., pp. 4–5.

125. Presentation, sub: Campaign Plan-OEF VII_Draft_version_7, slide 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

126. Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, p. 4.

127. Bfg, CJTF-76, 9 Sep 2006, Campaign and Operational Effects Briefing, slide 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

128. Col Michael A. Coss, "Operation Mountain Lion: CJTF-76 in Afghanistan, Spring 2006," *Military Review* 88, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 2008): 22.

while supporting Afghan government and coalition efforts to develop ties with the local communities. The CJTF-76 approach emphasizing "build" and "engage" was a more nuanced variation of the "clear, hold, and consolidate" method found in *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual–Interim 3–07.22).[129]

For CJTF-76's major operations, the four phases were "initially sequential and [began] with kinetic operations to kill or capture insurgents in a named area of operation."[130] A further technique to clear an area was an amnesty program that sought to align insurgents behind the Afghan government.[131] Once the clear phase separated the enemy from the population, U.S. and Afghan security forces would maintain or hold that separation by building combat outposts, overseeing the development and deployment of local security forces, and establishing government agencies. The third phase, build, consisted of transforming "the physical and human terrain" through reconstruction and development projects, creating stable local security forces, and encouraging relationships between the population and their governmental representatives.[132] The final phase, engage, was an overarching effort that included meetings with Afghan civil and military leaders and regular civilians "to help them develop the sense of responsibility they would need to eliminate insurgent activity in sanctuaries, among the population, or in transit through the border region."[133] Although initially sequential, implementation eventually would shift to all four phases being performed in conjunction as "concurrent and ongoing efforts."[134]

The clear, hold, build, and engage model not only translated operational objectives into tactical approaches but also aligned CJTF-76's efforts with General Eikenberry's desire to improve access to communities in RC East. Eikenberry summarized the problem: "Where the road ends, the Taliban begins."[135] He and Ambassador Neumann had made road construction a centerpiece of their efforts in 2005. Neumann sought additional congressional funding while Eikenberry pushed his military forces to improve the Afghan government's access to isolated areas and deny that access to insurgents. As NATO prepared to move into RC South, TF Spartan would spread throughout RC East, often moving into regions that had seen only limited coalition activity in the past.[136]

---

129. HQDA Field Manual–Interim 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 2004), secs. 3-50–3-59.

130. Bfg, CJTF-76, 9 Sep 2006, Campaign and Operational Effects Briefing, slide 6.

131. Ibid., slide 4.

132. Coss, "Operation Mountain Lion," p. 23.

133. Ibid.

134. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," p. 180.

135. Eikenberry, quoted in Paul Wiseman, "The Perils of Carving a Path to the Taliban's Front Door," *USA TODAY*, 20 Jun 2007, https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-06-19-afghan-road_N.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

136. Neumann, *The Other War*, p. 39.

In addition to U.S. conventional forces, the 2006 campaign relied heavily on SOF. CJSOTF-Afghanistan now fell under the operational control of Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan and the tactical control of CFC-A, meaning that CFC-A could only assign missions to SOF and not task-organize or relocate them in theater. The new SOF task force commander, Col. Edward M. Reeder Jr., returned to Afghanistan in February 2006, having twice served in the country as a battalion commander in 3d Special Forces Group. His new command consisted of twenty-five ODAs, six civil affairs teams, six psychological operations teams, and SOF units from five partnering nations. His mandate was to develop the ANA, particularly the Afghan 205th and 207th Corps.[137] With Afghanistan rotations normalized between the 3d and 7th Special Forces Groups, 1st Special Forces Regiment, SOF could now be integrated more efficiently into CJTF-76's upcoming operations.[138]

CJTF-76 planned to conduct four major operations in 2006, two of which specifically targeted RC East. The first, Operation Mountain Lion—the second operation in Afghanistan with that name—would take advantage of a Marine Corps battalion that stayed in country when Kamiya's forces departed. (*See Map 2.3.*) Freakley wanted to use these available combat forces to push into the northeastern provinces of Nuristan, Kunar, and Laghman, all of which were dominated by isolated river valleys whose resident communities had little to no contact with the central government, much less the outside world.[139] The plan was for U.S. and Afghan troops to move gradually into these regions, especially the dangerous Pech River Valley in Kunar Province and border district of Kamdesh in southern Nuristan Province. In addition, the CJTF-76 commander sought to improve security forces and developmental projects in Nangarhar Province. Unlike previous operations where coalition forces stayed in a region for a brief time, CJTF-76 units would establish outposts and remain for an extended period, overseeing development projects and supporting Provincial Reconstruction Team efforts.

Operation Mountain Lion had two purposes. First, Freakley wanted to connect the Afghan government to areas where it had little to no influence. Second, the operation was to "employ our strengths against the enemy weaknesses" by targeting HIG forces that constituted the primary threat in the region.[140] Though Hekmatyar had a long history of radicalism and armed opposition to any Kabul government that did not reflect his Islamist views, his organization remained a consortium of disparate groups held together more by personality and rhetoric than by core principles. The combination of Hekmatyar's brutal reputation and vocal opposition to the Kabul government,

---

137. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 116

138. Ibid., p. 117

139. Kummer, U.S. Marines in Afghanistan 2001–2009, p. 379.

140. Interv, Div Cmd Lessons Learned Program with Lt Gen Benjamin C. Freakley, 10th Mtn Div CG, 10 Sep 2007, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; OPORD 06–01, Opn Mountain Lion-Sheer Kohestan, CJTF-76, 21 Feb 2006, V1.6, 3.C.1.C, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

his known ties to al-Qaeda, and his group's relative weakness in comparison to the Taliban or Haqqani Network made HIG an appealing target.

CJTF-76 would conduct the second operation, Mountain Thrust, in RC South from mid-May until the transfer of authority to ISAF on 31 July. Freakley intended to reduce insurgent capabilities long enough to ensure a smooth transition to NATO ISAF. NATO movements likely would be met with lethal attacks. To counter this possibility, Mountain Thrust would send patrols into isolated areas of Zabul, Uruzgan, and Kandahar Provinces.[141] The operation was designed to "inflict a defeat upon the Taliban, sufficient to force them on the defensive for the time being, and to temporarily instill a period of calm in the southern provinces at a time of year when the Taliban were usually at their strongest."[142] The objective was not to eliminate opposition groups in RC South but to give international forces time to establish positions within the region and begin their own operations.

Once NATO forces established themselves in RC South, TF Spartan would shift forces back to RC East for an offensive named Operation Mountain Fury. As units in northeast Afghanistan continued to occupy new outposts, the 10th Mountain's remaining forces would keep the insurgency off balance. Anticipated for late summer or early fall, Mountain Fury targeted the Haqqani Network by securing the border in "Paktika and Khost Provinces and expanding internally in Paktiya and Gardez [*sic*] Provinces." The operation would also increase the ANA's footprint in the region as elements from the 203d Corps moved to positions from which they could protect approaches to Kabul. Freakley intended the operation to "defeat [Haqqani-backed insurgents], help the Afghan army with that deployment in that area, and reinforce [local, district, and provincial] governments."[143]

The fourth major effort for TF Spartan, initially called Operation Mountain Victory, was planned to begin when the fall weather started to hinder insurgent operations and continue until the anticipated transfer of command and control of CJTF-76 to the 82d Airborne Division. The operation extended northeast from Paktiya Province in central RC East to Nuristan Province. Freakley designed Mountain Victory to ensure "insurgent forces and terrorist networks are defeated in the interior portions of RC-East" so as to consolidate gains made during Mountain Lion and Mountain Fury.[144] TF Spartan sought to assess the enemy's capabilities throughout the operation so as to advise their successors on how best to secure the gains made in 2006. Freakley would use this intelligence to shift units into new areas to continue

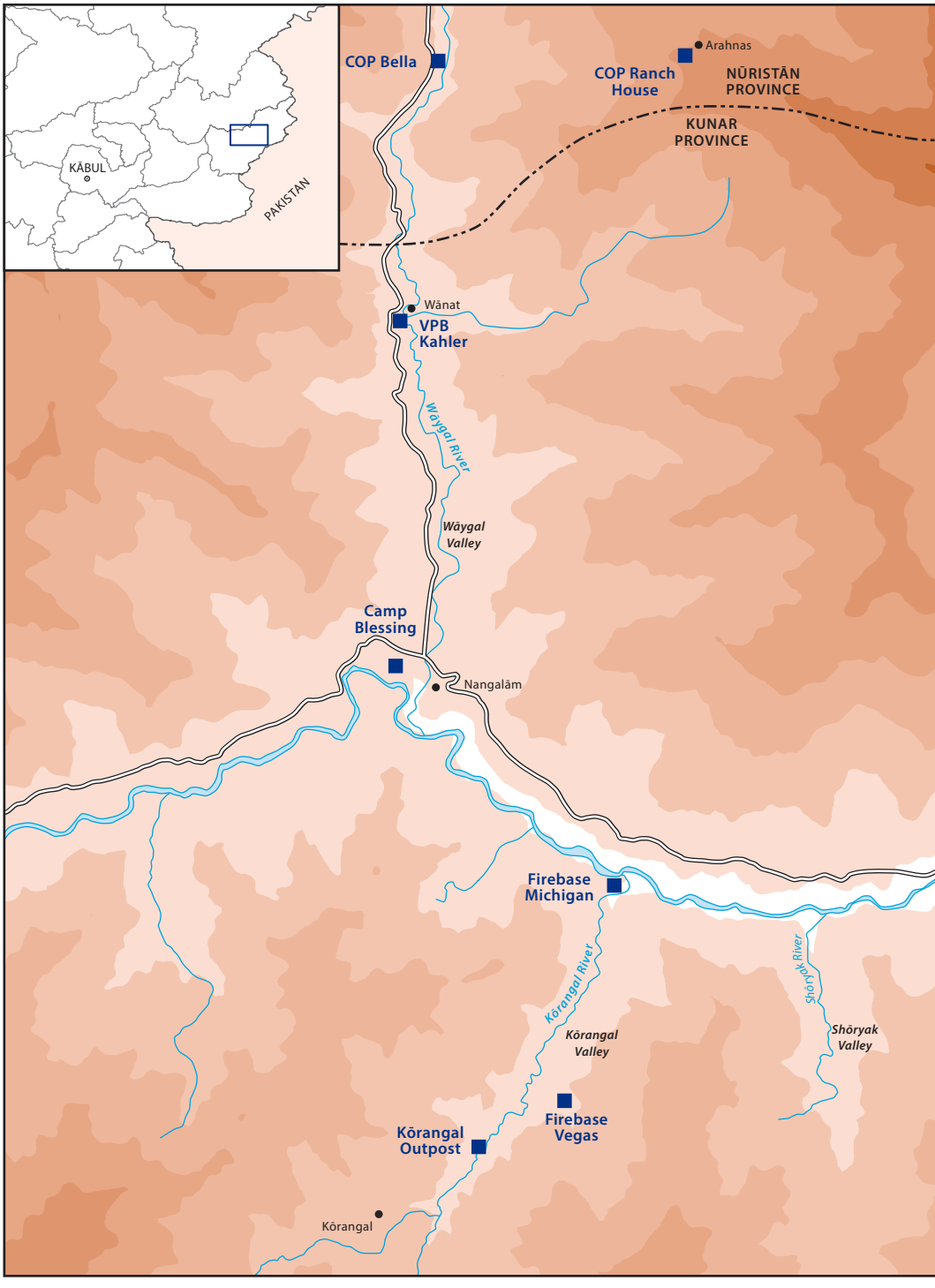
---

141. OPORD 06–01, Opn Mountain Lion-Sheer Kohestan, CJTF-76, 21 Feb 2006, V1.6, 3.C.2.C, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

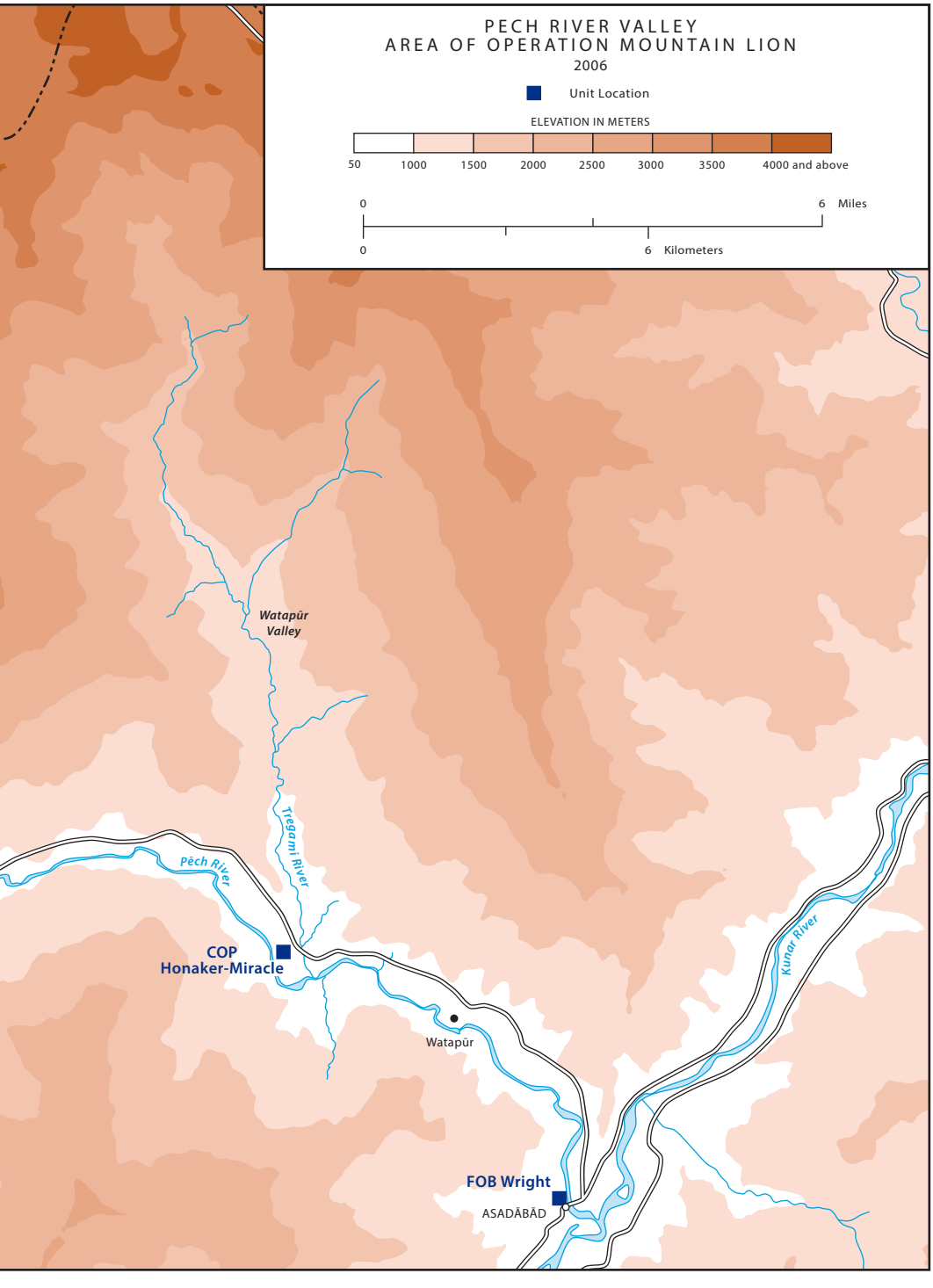
142. Douglas R. Cubbison, *The Crossed Swords Tribe of Afghanistan: The 10th Mountain Division and Counterinsurgency Excellence in Afghanistan* (Fort Drum, N.Y.: U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division, 2008), p. 97.

143. It is probable that General Freakley meant Ghazni Province. Interv, Div Cmd Lessons Learned Program with Freakley, 10 Sep 2007, p. 10; OPORD 06–01, Opn Mountain Lion-Sheer Kohestan, CJTF-76, 21 Feb 2006, V1.6, 3.C.3.C, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

144. OPORD 06–01, Opn MOUNTAIN LION-SHEER KOHESTAN V1.6, 3.C.4.C. This operation eventually would be replaced by MOUNTAIN EAGLE.


KĀBUL
PAKISTAN
COP Bella
Arahnas
COP Ranch House
NŪRISTĀN PROVINCE
KUNAR PROVINCE
Wānat
VPB Kahler
Wāygal River
Wāygal Valley
Camp Blessing
Nangalām
Firebase Michigan
Kōrangal River
Kōrangal Valley
Shōryak River
Shōryak Valley
Firebase Vegas
Kōrangal Outpost
Kōrangal

Map 2.3


PECH RIVER VALLEY
AREA OF OPERATION MOUNTAIN LION
2006
Unit Location
ELEVATION IN METERS
50
1000
1500
2000
2500
3000
3500
4000 and above
0
6 Miles
0
6 Kilometers
Watapūr Valley
Tregami River
Pēch River
COP Honaker-Miracle
Watapūr
Kunar River
FOB Wright
ASADĀBĀD

pushing the enemy away from the population. Of particular concern was maintaining access to roads cleared or built over the year. All of this had the dual purpose of supporting ISAF and setting conditions for a successful February 2007 handover with the 82d Airborne Division.[145]

Operation Mountain Lion (April–June 2006)

In his preparation for Operation Mountain Lion, Freakley took an important step in improving relations between CJTF-76 and the Afghans. During a planning meeting, the general asked Abdul Rahim Wardak, the Afghanistan minister of defense, for permission to execute the operation. It was the first time an American commander sought such permission, and it marked an important turning point in American-Afghan relations. Deeply appreciative of the request, Wardak gave his approval, and the operation began on 11 April. In addition to TF Spartan, participating units included the 3d Brigade of the Afghan Army's 203d Corps and the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines.[146]

Preparations for Operation Mountain Lion began in March 2006. Initial movements called for the insertion of a reconnaissance and surveillance unit in Asadabad where it could monitor Kunar and Nuristan. Next, Colonel Fenty's TF Titans would move north of Asadabad to secure the Chawkay Valley in central Kunar Province, from which TF Spartan would mount its movement into the two northeastern provinces. The main part of the mission involved soldiers from Colonel Cavoli's TF Chosin and Fenty's squadron air-assaulting into previously isolated valleys to establish company-sized operating bases and platoon-sized combat outposts. The marines were vital to the operation, as Colonel Nicholson needed additional combat power to support his two battalions. They had been responsible for the entire operational area now being divided between the two U.S. Army battalions.

By nearly doubling the forces in the region, Nicholson's men could reach isolated areas that had not seen foreign troops since the 1980s.[147] In one remote village, an elder mistook the soldiers for Russians and inquired as to when they had changed their uniforms. An Afghan interpreter explained who the soldiers were and reassured the elder that the Americans were better behaved than the Soviets, which comforted the old man considerably. The arrival of the Americans had a marked effect on insurgent groups. The insurgents had become accustomed to U.S. forces conducting operations for only a few days and then withdrawing, and so they were surprised by the Americans' new tactic of setting up permanent positions. They eventually withdrew to assess the new situation and determine how to react.[148]

---

145. Interv, Div Cmd Lessons Learned Program with Freakley, 10 Sep 2007, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," p. 232; Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, p. 8.

146. Interv, Clay with Cavoli, 5 Mar 2009, p. 4; Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, pp. 5–8.

147. Interv, Clay with Cavoli, 5 Mar 2009, pp. 4–5.

148. Cubbison, *The Crossed Swords Tribe of Afghanistan*, pp. 80–81.

The movement into the Korangal and Shoryak River Valleys of Kunar and Nuristan Provinces also included a large SOF presence. The Special Operations Task Force tasked its Naval Special Warfare assets, the SEALs, and coalition SOF to conduct special reconnaissance and direct action missions targeting mid-level HIG leadership before conventional forces began clearing operations. Colonel Reeder followed these initial forays with orders for six ODAs from Special Operations Task Force 202 to conduct partnered operations with the Afghan 201st and 203d Corps.[149] Operation Mountain Lion lasted roughly a month, ending in mid-May, and did not force any major engagements with enemy combatants, who evidently were trying to determine how to adjust to losing their freedom of movement. Intelligence analysts continued to find it difficult to provide maneuver commanders with actionable information.

The American push into the valleys did not come without tragedy. On 5 May, during a nighttime extraction of two observation teams from mountainside positions, a CH–47 Chinook helicopter struck a tree and crashed. The TF Titans commander, Colonel Fenty, was riding in the helicopter's jump seat. He and nine other soldiers died when the aircraft fell several hundred feet to the rocks below. Their deaths were the first fatalities for TF Spartan and highlighted the difficulties faced by U.S. Army aviators operating in Afghanistan's rugged mountain terrain.[150]

One of TF Spartan's most ambitious moves came on 7 May, when it established an outpost in the middle of the Korangal Valley. The Korangalis had a long tradition of hostility toward anyone they viewed as an outsider, including Afghans from other valleys. They also practiced Wahhabism, which was brought into their valley in the 1980s by foreign mujahideen fighters sheltering from Soviet attacks. When the ANA chief of staff, General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, raised the Afghan national flag over the Korangal outpost, he signaled the beginning of a government effort to exert its authority over the traditionally isolated region. (The Korangalis, for their part, seemed indifferent to the arrival of the Afghan government.) This flag-raising accomplished Freakley's objective for the operation, which was "to go where we hadn't been before with strength, establish a presence with combat outposts and partner with the Afghan military, and stay there . . . [to] do reconstruction."[151] The soldiers of TF Spartan were ready to begin their counterinsurgency efforts in the northern provinces of RC East.[152]

---

149. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 117.

150. Jake Tapper, *The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor* (New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company, 2012), pp. 81–82.

151. Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, p. 5.

152. Cubbison, *The Crossed Swords Tribe of Afghanistan*, pp. 83–85.

Chapter Three

The Conflict Intensifies



The handover to NATO ISAF presented unexpected challenges to the coalition's key leaders, including Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry and British Lt. Gen. David J. Richards, who assumed command of ISAF on 4 May 2006. Despite different geography and enemy formations, the regions coming under ISAF control presented similar problems for coalition forces. Whether facing HIG or the Taliban, the United States and its ISAF allies had to defeat the enemy and convince local populations to accept the authority of Afghanistan's central government. Whether fighting in the mountains or over open terrain, they had to locate insurgents, apply firepower, stay supplied, and partner with the ANSF. The central differences between RC East and RC South were the arrival, focus, and capabilities of the forces executing the main effort. Whereas RC East was a unilateral effort, RC South was coalition warfare, with American units operating alongside British, Canadian, ANSF, and Dutch forces.

By late 2005, NATO finalized Supreme Allied Commander Europe's Operations Plan 10302 to implement the final transitions of the Afghan regional commands. The plan articulated a clear political and military end state, as well as a basic strategy for how to achieve them. According to 10302, the alliance would follow the transfer of the regional commands to NATO ISAF control with a period of "stabilization" in which ISAF forces would "assist the Afghan government to extend and exercise its authority and influence" until enough "stability is achieved to allow the handover of ISAF military tasks to Afghan authorities." The operations plan specified that "Provincial Reconstruction Teams . . . will be at the leading edge of NATO's effort" and "military support to them is one of NATO's major contributions to the success of ISAF in Afghanistan." Although "recognizing the different national characters of PRTs [Provincial Reconstruction Teams]," the plan optimistically stated that "increasing convergence between the activities of all PRTs, with synchronized movement towards a set of common objectives, will have the desired strategic impact."[1] How to accomplish this synchronization was left to Richards to work out with the national contingents under his command.

1. SACEUR OPLAN 10302 (Revise 1), 3.a., Dec 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

NATO ISAF in RC South

Responsibility for overseeing the transfer of RC South and RC East fell to Richards.[2] As commander of NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, a high-readiness force that could deploy within a week's time to address emerging crises, Richards faced a daunting challenge. His most pressing concern was the fact that ISAF did not have a permanent headquarters. Richards solved the problem by bringing the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps headquarters with him, though he struggled to get the unit prepared for deployment.[3] Employing the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps staff proved only a temporary solution, however, as it did not have the mandate or personnel to deploy for long periods or exercise control over international forces. Ultimately, ISAF solved the problem by creating a permanent headquarters in Kabul but, much to Richards' dismay, not until early 2007.

Richards occupied a unique position as the ISAF commander during this period. He operated within the NATO command chain, reporting to the head of Joint Forces Command–Brunssum, German General Gerhard Beck, in the Netherlands. Above Beck was the American General James L. Jones, who served as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. Richards did not occupy a position within his national command chain, but exerted control over British soldiers indirectly via Canadian Brig. Gen. David Fraser's Combined TF Aegis. While preparing for his deployment, Richards struggled to convince officials in London and Brussels of the complexity of the task ahead:

> I was a British General about to command a major NATO campaign but my own country was not prepared to give me a helicopter or an aircraft to fly around a country that was half the size of Europe so that I could properly exercise command. More important than that, I had no proper reserve force of any kind. No military commander, even at the platoon or company level, will go on operations without a reserve. I had none and NATO and my own country appeared content with this.[4]

Richards never received dedicated air transportation, instead having to work with what he could secure in theater. As for a reserve force, he eventually received a light infantry company from Portugal that would serve as his only reserve unit. Unfortunately, Richards would not be the last ISAF commander frustrated with the level of support he received from NATO.[5]

With Operations Plan 10302 as their guide, Richards and his staff developed a three-pronged operational approach for Afghanistan. Richards found that the plan contained "lots of fine intent, phasing, and all that, but it is not an

---

2. Michael Evans and Tim Albone, "Briton Takes Charge of Fight to Tame Warlords," *Times* (London), 2 May 2006, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/briton-takes-charge-of-fight-to-tame-warlords-w005lnhpcz2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; David J. Richards, *Taking Command* (London: Headline Publishing Group, 2014), p. 198.

3. Richards, *Taking Command*, pp. 183–84; Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 117.

4. Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 185.

5. Ibid.



Cherie A. Thurlby, DoD

Defense Secretary Gates (left) and ISAF commander General Richards in Kabul, January 2007.

operational plan for ground forces in the provinces of Afghanistan."[6] He soon discovered "big gaps between the ground needs and the higher headquarters' plan."[7] Richards therefore used higher headquarters' guidelines to develop an intent that focused on three areas. The first involved identifying highly populated regions where the majority of security, development, and governance efforts would take place. Termed Afghan Development Zones and modeled after the Regional Development Zones that Lt. Gen. David W. Barno sought to implement in 2004, they were to expand the central government's influence by widening the spheres of control and progress found around reconstruction team locations.[8] Once security and development improved within a zone, the coalition would tie that progress to the Afghan central government and publicize it.[9] The second element of Richards' approach was the creation of a Policy Action Group in Kabul with President Hamid Karzai as the head and key leaders of the Afghan government and the international community as its members. The Policy Action Group would monitor the development zones, direct the distribution of resources, and provide unity of effort for Afghan and ISAF endeavors. The final feature of Richards' approach looked to areas outside of the Afghan Development Zones. Rejecting the American practice

6. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 118.

7. Ibid.

8. Col. Ian Hope, who had worked at ISAF headquarters in 2004 when Barno commanded Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A), briefed Richards on the zone idea soon after the British general assumed command. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Ian Hope, frmr TF Orion Cdr, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 26.

9. Richards, *Taking Command*, pp. 188–93; Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, pp. 117–18.

of targeting insurgents, Richards wanted operations outside these zones to persuade local leaders to align with the central government. Where necessary, his forces would engage in combat operations, but the emphasis would be on shaping the operational environment in preparation for a counterinsurgency-driven clear, hold, and build campaign.[10]

Although Richards based his approach on a classic understanding of counterinsurgency operations, he incorporated a degree of controversy. First and foremost, his plan to mass forces in Afghan Development Zones was complicated by the fact that several NATO members prohibited their troops from engaging in combat operations. Massing forces anywhere in an economy-of-force effort led to a second problem: the need to forgo an operational reserve. Without a dedicated theater-level reserve, Richards could not respond to changing circumstances on the ground, especially if he honored the various national caveats within his command. With slim chance of having those caveats rescinded, Richards would need either additional forces or a different plan to succeed in RC South.

The security situation in RC South further constrained Richards' options. In January, a suicide attacker in Kandahar City killed senior Canadian diplomat Glyn R. Berry, the director of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team.[11] The Taliban had infiltrated into Zabul and Uruzgan Provinces, intending to bring pressure against Kandahar City from the north. At the same time, Taliban infiltration from Helmand into Kandahar helped reactivate long dormant mujahideen networks in the Arghandab River districts west of Kandahar City. Many Taliban leaders hailed from these districts, so local tribal sympathy, if not active support, was easily obtained.[12] At the time, coalition forces lacked any presence in the region capable of countering Taliban influence. U.S. Special Forces, trying to stave off Taliban encroachment into areas previously considered secure, executed night raids at the expense of rural development and local security. For its part, TF Bayonet was absorbed in maintaining freedom of movement along the Ring Road, leaving it without the combat power to police the provincial boundaries, interdict the flow of Taliban from the north, or halt insurgent traffic between Helmand and Kandahar.[13]

The Arrival of NATO Forces

Col. Kevin C. Owens' TF Bayonet (173d Airborne Brigade) departed Afghanistan in March as an assortment of NATO battle groups rotated into

10. Ibid.

11. Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 48.

12. Carl Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, Afghanistan Rpt 3 (Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, Dec 2009), p. 24; Abdul Salam Zaeef, *My Life with The Taliban* (New York: Hurst, 2011), pp. 57–80.

13. Rusty Bradley and Kevin Maurer, *Lions of Kandahar: The Story of a Fight Against All Odds* (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), pp. 20–22; Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, pp. 23–24.

RC South.[14] Before the ISAF transfer of authority on 31 July, the regional command operated under the authority of Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley's CJTF-76. The departure of Owens' brigade and the reduced number of 4th Brigade Combat Team soldiers deployed to Afghanistan limited Freakley's ability to use U.S. units to provide space and time for incoming NATO forces in RC South. To set the conditions for their arrival, Freakley directed NATO maneuver forces already in the region to operate under the command of U.S. forces in the months leading up to the ISAF transition. Already on the ground were the Canadians, who had staffed the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar the previous August. In February, General Fraser's headquarters, Combined TF Aegis, became Multinational Brigade South under CJTF-76. Freakley's decision to assign Col. A. Kent Schweikert as Fraser's deputy at Combined TF Aegis placed a liaison in the brigade with enough rank to settle problems that arose between the Canadians and the U.S. command. Schweikert and his staff "focused on making sure the American contribution to the combat effort was straight [i.e., with clear and understood command lines], and did all [they] could to ease the bumps to not only the Canadian multinational brigade coming in, but later [with] the arrival and integration of ISAF into the effort."[15] Despite the best efforts of Fraser and Schweikert, synchronization could not overcome the shortage in effective combat power caused by the staggered arrival times of incoming NATO forces.

Maneuver forces tasked to resource NATO ISAF's first year in RC South began arriving in February 2006 with Col. Ian Hope's TF Orion in Kandahar City.[16] Colonel Sturek's TF Warrior followed in March by moving into Zabul Province until the Romanians' Task Force Calugenari could take over in July.[17] After the Romanians arrived, TF Warrior served as the command's quick reaction force until it redeployed to Fort Drum in November.[18] Britain's Task Force Helmand assumed responsibility for Helmand Province in April 2006, while Uruzgan remained a U.S. joint special operations area until the arrival of the Dutch Task Force Uruzgan in August.[19] On 29 April, Lt. Col.

---

14. Interv, Steven Clay, Angela McClain, and Jim Bird, CSI, with Col Kevin C. Owens, frmr 173d Abn Bde Combat Team Cdr, 9, 10, 15 Dec 2008, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. Schweikert had to juggle what intelligence he could share with Fraser, who did not have access to the U.S. classified Secret Internet Protocol Router Network initially. Interv, Jim Bird, CSI, with Col A. Kent Schweikert, frmr 4th Bde Combat Team, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 5 Feb and 6 May 2009, pp. 5, 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Combined Task Force Aegis, TF Orion, and the Canadian PRT all comprised the Canadian TF Kandahar. Maloney, *Fighting For Afghanistan*, pp. 9–15; Nancy Teeple, *Canada in Afghanistan: 2001–2010, A Military Chronology* (Ottawa: Defense Research and Development Canada, Center for Operational Research and Analysis, 2010), pp. 28–29.

17. OPORD, Cdr CJTF-76, 18 Jul 2006, sub: OPORD 06-04, OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY, para. 3.B.10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. Interv, Jerry England, CSI, with Lt Col Frank Sturek, frmr 2d Bn, 4th Inf Cdr, 16 Oct 2008, pp. 3, 6–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Patrick Bishop, *3 Para* (London: Harper Press, 2007), p. 32; George Dimitriu and Beatrice de Graaf, "The Dutch COIN Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006–2009," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 3 (Sep 2010): 429–58, 431.

Steven Gilbert's 1st Battalion, 102d Infantry (Connecticut Army National Guard), conducted a transfer of authority with the 3d Battalion, 141st Infantry, at Forward Operating Base Ghazni.[20]

The fundamentally disjointed nature of NATO's contingency planning and command structure meant that each national battle group arrived with its own ideas about what it was going to do in its respective province. Some, like the Dutch, focused on promoting "stability and security by increasing the support of the local population for the Afghan authorities and eroding the support for the Taliban and related groups."[21] Although this approach sounded something akin to counterinsurgency, the Dutch government omitted that word from their mission objectives and refused to admit that their troops were involved in a "combat mission."[22] In a similar vein, the British government did not anticipate that its troops would be engaged in intensive combat. As described by British Lt. Col. Stuart Tootal, the commander of 3d Battalion, Parachute Regiment, "the mission was conceived as a peace support operation. Any use of force was seen as a last resort and actually having to hunt down the Taliban was not part of the mission. Instead our intended role was to provide security to protect the development and reconstruction efforts of the [Provincial Reconstruction Team] that would deploy with the task force."[23]

Because the British categorized their missions as peacekeeping rather than counterinsurgency, Tootal's unit deployed without indirect fire assets, armored transport, or attack aviation. The British paratroopers employed unarmored vehicles so as to move easily about the population without conveying an aggressive military presence.[24] The British also staggered Tootal's deployment, sending one parachute company at a time so as not to overstress their limited strategic movement assets. Consequently, while the first British soldiers began

---

20. Sfc Michael Pintagro, "TF Spartan Remembers Alamo, Iran Gray Members," TF Spartan Public Affairs Ofc, 5 May 2006, http://www.sitemason.com/newspub/dtWzug?id=30456, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Dimitriu and de Graaf, "The Dutch COIN Approach," pp. 429–58, 431.

22. The Dutch government fiercely debated the nature of its forces' deployment to Afghanistan; popular unease with the Netherlands' colonial legacy gave the concept of counterinsurgency negative domestic connections. Ibid., p. 433.

23. The 3d Battalion, Parachute Regiment (colloquially known as 3 Para) was the main combat force for TF Helmand. Stuart Tootal, *Danger Close: Commanding 3 PARA in Afghanistan* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2009), pp. 25–26.

24. The primary British transport was the Land Rover Weapon Mount Installation Kit, which could support an array of weapon systems but did not have armored protection. The British Ministry of Defense had resisted earlier efforts to develop a mine-resistant vehicle in order to devote funding to a future mechanized infantry combat vehicle. The British also deployed with only six Chinook HC–2 twin-rotor helicopters. Leigh Neville, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14: Task Force Helmand* (New York: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2015), p. 13; Elliott, *High Command*, p. 46.

arriving in Helmand in April, the full battle group was not in place until July.[25]

Incoming ISAF units rarely replaced American units with anything close to equal numbers, let alone firepower. With the end of the Cold War, most NATO countries had significantly reduced their militaries, and many of the remaining units were still serving in the Balkans. When TF Orion assumed responsibility for Kandahar in February 2006, its 850 troops took on a mission that previously involved many more soldiers. In a more dramatic example, the Romanian task force replacing Sturek's TF Warrior had only a third of the combat power of its predecessor. As Colonel Schweikert observed, "you don't just replace an enabled, fully loaded battalion . . . with what is really less than a battalion. . . . [I]t just wasn't going to be the same and they didn't have the capability to go into some of the areas [we did] because they just didn't [have the numbers]."[26] CJTF-76 had to assign an American company from 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, to provide additional support to the Romanians.[27]

Finally, because the British initially approached operations in RC South with a nonlethal focus, TF Helmand contained only about 650 combat troops, with the remaining four-fifths of its 3,300 soldiers serving support functions. This balance severely limited the task force's ability to contribute to combat operations while, at the same time, it simplified the Taliban's goal of mustering sufficient resources to challenge NATO.[28] As ISAF assumed command of RC South, it was evident that its units had differing levels of combat effectiveness, support capabilities, or rules of engagement, making it difficult to achieve unity of effort throughout the regional command.

Operation Mountain Thrust (May–July 2006)

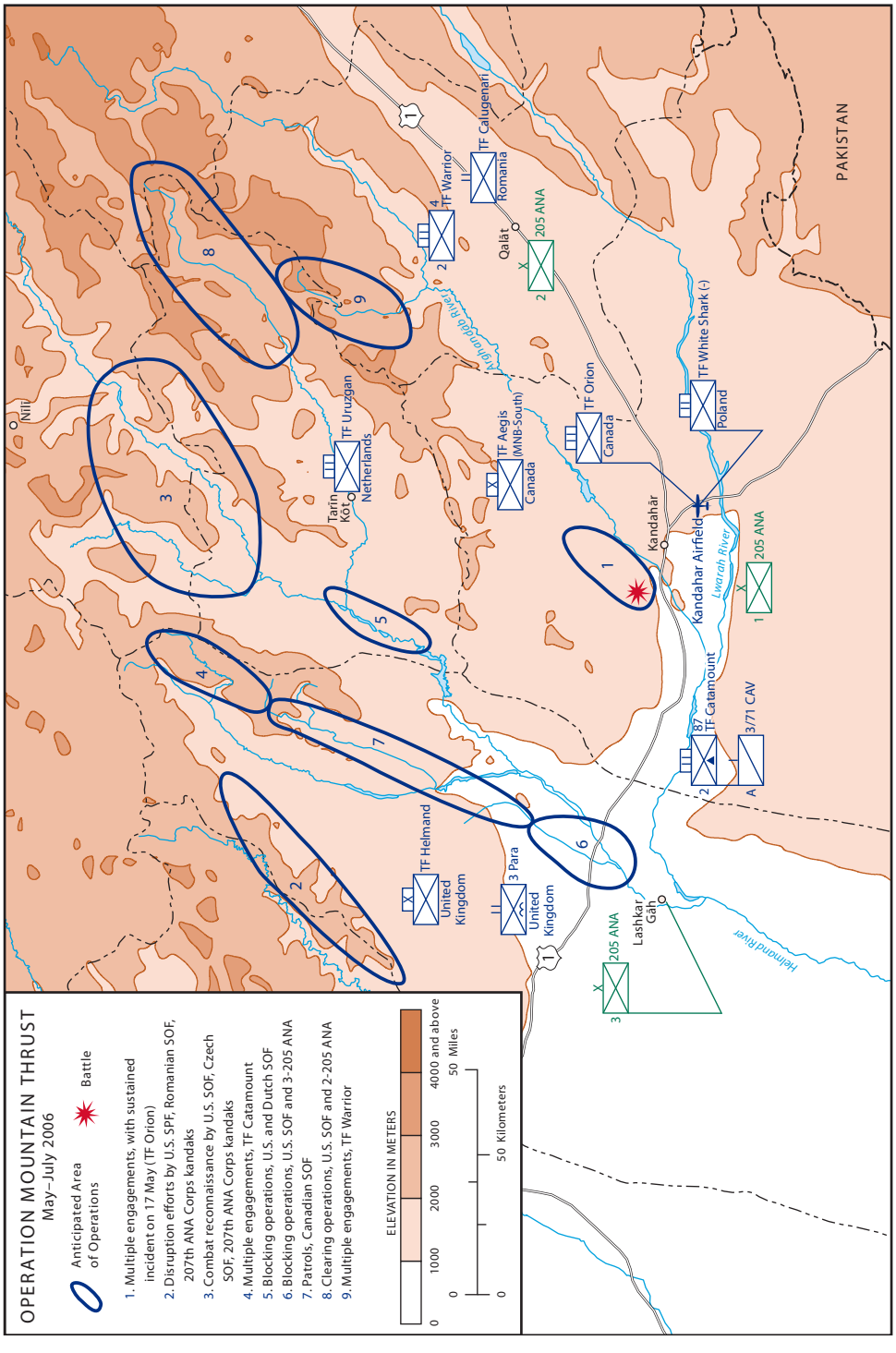
As Operation Mountain Lion drew to a close, CJTF-76 and TF Spartan launched Operation Mountain Thrust to transition RC South to NATO

25. Colonel Tootal argued that his three companies should arrive at the same time and then the logistics could be built. His concerns were ultimately rejected. Tootal, *Danger Close*, pp. 33–34.

26. Interv, Bird with Schweikert, 5 Feb and 6 May 2009, p. 20.

27. TF Warrior had more than 1,000 men, whereas the Romanian task force had 350, of which 125 were Americans providing communication and logistical support; see Interv, Jerry England, CSI, with Lt Col Frank Sturek, frmr 2d Bn, 4th Inf Cdr, 21 Oct 2008, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The initial Romanian deployment included the U.S. Army's commander in chief, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 76 identified the Romanians as lacking "several mission essential enablers, logistic support, and personnel to accomplish its mission," so they were provided additional support from TF Warrior for 90 days after the transfer to NATO ISAF control. OPORD, Cdr CJTF-76, 18 Jul 2006, sub: OPORD 06-04, OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY, para. 3.B.10.

28. Interv, Matt Matthews, CSI, with Brig Gen Edward A. Butler, frmr U.K. National Element Cdr, 16 Apr 2008, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; James Ferguson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan* (London: Bantam Press, 2008), p. 157.


OPERATION MOUNTAIN THRUST
May–July 2006
Anticipated Area of Operations
Battle
1. Multiple engagements, with sustained incident on 17 May (TF Orion)
2. Disruption efforts by U.S. SPF, Romanian SOF, 207th ANA Corps kandaks
3. Combat reconnaissance by U.S. SOF, Czech SOF, 207th ANA Corps kandaks
4. Multiple engagements, TF Catamount
5. Blocking operations, U.S. and Dutch SOF
6. Blocking operations, U.S. SOF and 3-205 ANA
7. Patrols, Canadian SOF
8. Clearing operations, U.S. SOF and 2-205 ANA
9. Multiple engagements, TF Warrior
ELEVATION IN METERS
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 and above
0 50 Miles
0 50 Kilometers
PAKISTAN
Nīlī
Tarin Kot
TF Uruzgan
Netherlands
TF Helmand
United Kingdom
3 Para
United Kingdom
205 ANA
Lashkar Gāh
Helmand River
Arghandab River
TF Aegis (MNB-South)
Canada
TF Orion
Canada
Kandahar
Kandahar Airfield
Arghandab River
TF White Shark (-)
Poland
205 ANA
TF Catamount
3/71 CAV
Qalāt
TF Warrior
TF Calugenari
Romania
205 ANA

Map 3.1



Cpl. John Rafoss, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC)

Romanian troops perform clearance operations in RC South.

ISAF control (*Map 3.1*).[29] The absence of Freakley's entire 4th Brigade Combat Team compounded problems created by the piecemeal arrival of NATO forces into RC South and different understandings of the operations in which those forces would engage. The CJTF–76 commander "advocated for 4th Brigade to come to take the pressure off of NATO, to let 4th Brigade come and do [Mountain Thrust], let NATO get there, get their feet on the ground, understand the situation, start operating, and then send the 4th Brigade home," but to no avail.[30]

Without requisite support for a smooth transfer, the responsibility for executing Mountain Thrust devolved to TF Aegis and the assorted coalition battle groups available in RC South. Changing units presented a problem because the British and Canadians did not anticipate taking part in a major U.S. operation, even if only in a supporting role. Trying to align the various

29. The American units remaining in Regional Command (RC) East were ordered to "focus on consolidating gains achieved in MOUNTAIN LION in [Nangarhar, Nuristan, and Kunar Provinces] and preparing the battle-space for future operations in [Paktiya, Paktika, and Khost Provinces]. RC-E[ast] will remain an economy of force mission throughout until conditions indicate that transition to MOUNTAIN FURY is possible." The operation order further stated that, "Effects from MOUNTAIN LION should be exploited by ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] [to] free [coalition forces] for operations in RC-S[outh]." OPORD, Cdr CJTF-76, 26 Apr 2006, sub: OPORD 06-02 Operation MOUNTAIN THRUST–NEEROY KOHESTAN V1.2, para. 3.D., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Gen Benjamin C. Freakley, frmr CJTF-76 Cdr, 10 Jun 2009, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

coalition forces operating in RC South in the early summer of 2006 would reveal fundamental flaws within the NATO ISAF mission.

Operation Mountain Thrust proved nonstandard in that CJTF-76 utilized SOF as the decisive effort and defined success as SOF's ability to partner effectively with reliable ANA forces.[31] Special Operations Task Force 73, based out of Kandahar, and Special Operations Task Force 202, based out of Bagram, began operations in May 2006 with a straightforward task: "ANA 205th Corps, combat advised by CJSOTF-A [CJSOTF-Afghanistan], conducts combat operations to defeat Taliban extremists in NE [northeast] Helmand/Uruzgan and deny them sanctuary in this area."[32] The ANSF were to remain in the area while a Dutch battalion and reconstruction team moved into Uruzgan Province and Romanians took over operations in Zabul Province.

The plan called for coalition forces to establish positions in Qalat, Kandahar City, and Lashkar Gah by mid-May. From there they would push north to "reduce the enemies [*sic*] ability to either reinforce or exfiltrate from key sanctuaries in [northeast] Helmond [*sic*] and Uruzgan."[33] This force array would form a protective belt around Uruzgan Province, allowing Sturek's TF Warrior to conduct aggressive operations in Zabul and Canada's TF Orion to move into northern Kandahar. Freakley wanted to use British troops for operations in northern Helmand as well, but their staggered deployment meant that too few were available for this mission.

On paper, Freakley was able to commit more than 10,000 troops to Mountain Thrust (3,300 British, 2,200 Canadians, 2,300 Americans from conventional and special operations units, and 3,500 Afghans) but only a fraction of those were combat forces. To provide additional combat power for the operation, Freakley moved elements of Toner's TF Catamount, augmented by Troop A, 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, into RC South. Colonel Toner's forces conducted a 750-kilometer road march from Paktika to Kandahar Airfield in early May before moving into northern Helmand for operations in the Baghran District.[34] Significantly, CJTF-76 placed TF Catamount under the tactical control of the CJSOTF, while TF Warrior would be under the operational control of the same SOF headquarters.[35]

---

31. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition,* p. 117.

32. Presentation, CJTF-76, 9 May 2006, "Commanders' Backbriefs, OPORD 06–02 Mountain Thrust," slide No. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. OPORD, Cdr CJTF-76, 26 Apr 2006, sub: OPORD 06-02, OPERATION MOUNTAIN THRUST-NEEROY KOHESTAN, para. 3.C.

34. Freakley entrusted tactical control of the operation to Fraser's Combined Task Force Aegis, who would oversee the coalition battle groups. See Maloney, *Fighting for Afghanistan*, pp. 28–29; Cubbison, *The Crossed Swords Tribe of Afghanistan*, pp. 97–98. Given their location in the southern half of RC East, the soldiers in TF Catamount supported RC South on several occasions. Interv, Douglas Cubbison, CSI, with Lt Col Christopher R. Toner, frmr 2d Bn, 87th Inf Cdr, 30 Jun 2008, pp. 7–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

35. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 117.

Early reports from Mountain Thrust indicated far stiffer resistance than anticipated.[36] RC South contained only 10 percent of the total Afghan population, but Kandahar and Uruzgan were the birthplaces of the Taliban movement and harbored numerous committed fighters. Helmand was also home to large numbers of Taliban supporters but, more importantly, accounted for more than 85 percent of all opium and heroin production in Afghanistan, which the Taliban levied to fund their insurgency. As the Taliban's spiritual and financial base, RC South would not surrender to NATO willingly.

As a result, the Taliban presented a stauncher defense against the spring operation than in previous years. On 17 May, Canadian troops fought a sustained battle against Taliban fighters who stayed in defensive fighting positions until killed in close combat or by U.S. AH–64 Apache helicopters. Over the following three weeks, Colonel Hope and his soldiers "were engaging, on some days, four or five platoons' worth of enemy in different locations in these districts . . . there are hundreds of Taliban fighters here."[37] ISAF troops found enemy bases with logistical support for insurgent forces, including medical services and a cottage industry of IED and suicide vest production. Unable to prevail over the Canadians, insurgents focused on inflicting casualties on Afghan police units in the area.[38]

Conventional U.S. forces fought numerous platoon- and company-sized engagements as the operation's supporting effort. Soldiers from Toner's TF Catamount met stiff opposition in the Baghran Valley in northeast Helmand. A vital avenue used by the enemy to move south from staging areas in Uruzgan Province into the northern portions of Helmand and Kandahar, the valley had been the launching point of several large-scale ambushes to disrupt the American movements. Even though Toner's men repulsed attacks, conducted cordon-and-search operations, held village *shuras* (local consultative councils or assemblies) to connect with the local population, and delivered humanitarian assistance, the situation remained tenuous throughout June and July.[39]

Colonel Sturek's TF Warrior faced similar opposition in Zabul Province. He utilized one of his rifle platoons, an Afghan Army platoon, and a Special Forces ODA, supported by six artillery pieces, to establish a base in the Chalekor Valley in the Daychopan District in northern Zabul. Like the Baghran Valley, Chalekor provided an infiltration route into Uruzgan. If TF Warrior blocked both valleys, then the Taliban would be hard-pressed to bring reinforcements into Uruzgan. The Chalekor Valley contained members of Mullah Mohammed Omar's tribe, and as Sturek recalled, "We didn't find many friendly people when we moved into the area." In a meeting with local villagers, elders asked U.S. and Afghan governmental forces to withdraw

36. Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 19.

37. Ibid., p. 21.

38. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 361–62.

39. Donald P. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II, October 2005–July 2008" (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: CSI, n.d.), p. 204–08.

from the region. According to Sturek, "When it was understood that we were not leaving the villagers started to leave."[40] Anticipating an enemy attack, Sturek sought to secure air and artillery support, but he "couldn't convince anybody it was really happening." Only after his men began taking enemy fire did he receive the requested support.[41]

The special operations contribution to Mountain Thrust proved to be a truly international effort. As supporting efforts, Romanian and U.S. SOF units partnered with a kandak from the 207th ANA Corps to disrupt Taliban elements on the eastern border of Farah Province. The main effort required coalition and U.S. special operations personnel to partner with 205th ANA Corps kandaks in order to shape operations in Kandahar, Helmand, and Uruzgan Provinces. Combined U.S., Czech SOF, and ANA units executed combat reconnaissance in the Chahar Chinah and Khod Valleys of northern Kandahar Province to identify and target enemy forces. At the same time, Dutch and U.S. special operations units partnered with the ANA to reinforce U.S. infantry units conducting air assaults in southern Uruzgan and northern Helmand Provinces to block entrance into the Baghran Valley. Finally, U.S. Special Operations and ANA air-assaulted into the southern portion of the valley in conjunction with Canadian SOF reconnaissance patrols. With the assistance of kandaks from the 205th Corps, the coalition's special operations detachments were able to push into the Khod, Baghran, and Chore Mandeh Valleys. These forces conducted clearing operations "as part of Mountain Thrust [which] enabled PRTs [Provincial Reconstruction Teams] and engineers to initiate selected reconstruction projects."[42] Through the efforts of combined special operations units, the operation ended in late July, with RC South deemed secure enough to continue transitioning to ISAF control.

Despite unexpected difficulties, Operation Mountain Thrust accomplished its goal of creating time and space for the United States to transfer RC South to NATO ISAF on 31 July. The main problem was achieving unity of effort among the various coalition elements. According to Freakley, "We were operating on a seam between Operation Enduring Freedom rules and procedures, and then ISAF rules in the south."[43] During the operation, TF Aegis had to coordinate the decisive ANA and SOF effort taking place in and around Uruzgan under CJSOTF-Afghanistan while managing American maneuver task forces in Zabul and Helmand, along with Canadian units in Kandahar. For their part, the Canadians had to oversee the staged insertion of British troops into Helmand over the course of Mountain Thrust, and provide road support for the Dutch task force moving into Uruzgan.[44] The organized resistance that all of these

40. Interv, England with Sturek, 16 Oct 2008, p. 18.

41. Ibid., p. 16.

42. Presentation, CJTF-76, "Commanders' Backbriefs, OPORD 06-02 MOUNTAIN THRUST," slides 83–93, 9 May 2006, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Interv, Steve Clay, CSI, with Lt Gen Benjamin C. Freakley, frmr 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 5 May 2008, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 52.

units faced showed that the insurgency presented a far greater threat than previously anticipated. The Taliban, in fact, was mustering a major effort to defend its homeland from NATO forces.[45]

With a rejuvenated Taliban arrayed against an untested international military coalition consisting mainly of inexperienced combatants, the situation in RC South in 2006 marked the beginning of a new phase in the Afghan war. Unlike in previous encounters, the enemy now routinely stood to fight rather than flee to nearby sanctuaries after minimal contact. In numerous platoon- and company-sized engagements, coalition units faced insurgent groups numbering in the hundreds that displayed levels of tenacity, training, and staying power previously unseen during the war. Though coalition firepower prevailed in most cases, insurgents waged a steady propaganda campaign to counter their field losses. They maintained ties to the local population, threatening any who aided the coalition or the Karzai government, and brought in reinforcements to keep the pressure on NATO ISAF.

The Taliban Seizes the Initiative in Helmand

The most significant setback for NATO occurred during summer 2006 in Helmand Province. Like the Canadians, the British government deployed troops to Afghanistan with a view of the mission that did not account for all variables. In looking at the upcoming deployment, British Defense Minister John Reid announced that the British "would not be aggressors." Instead, he highlighted the planned reconstruction and development work British forces would undertake, and believed that, "If we came for three years here to accomplish our mission and had not fired one shot at the end of it, we would be very happy indeed."[46] However, Reid's statement overlooked the fact that the United Kingdom planned to wage a drug eradication program in the same region in which it sought to conduct reconstruction and stability operations. Given that many Afghans in Helmand depended on opium farming for income, the local population would view any attempt by foreigners to eradicate the poppy fields as an aggressive move against their economic livelihood, and instigate rising levels of violence.

Stability and economic development would support the other British mission: counternarcotics. The fight against illegal drug proliferation was critical to building domestic support for the mission in Afghanistan. It was a way for politicians to justify foreign intervention to their constituents and, while not explicitly stated as such, an effective condition for the United Kingdom's continued involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom. General John P. Abizaid, a strong proponent of British leadership of ISAF, instructed Eikenberry to support the program, even though he personally viewed

45. Ibid., p. 35.

46. Channel 4 News, "Fact check: A Shot in Afghanistan?," 14 Jul 2009, http://www.channel4. com/news/articles/uk/factcheck+a+shot+in+afghanistan/3266362.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; John Reid, quoted in Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan* (New York: Random House Books, 2012), p. 48.

counternarcotics as a periphery effort that drained limited military assets.[47] Supported by CENTCOM and the CFC-A commander, British soldiers would eradicate poppy fields and target production and transportation networks. It was a daunting task, as opium production was 30 percent of the Afghan economy. Helmand alone accounted for 42 percent of all poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2006 and 30 percent of the world's supply of opium.[48] Also, the powerful provincial governor, Sher Mohammed Akhundzada had suspected ties to the narcotics trade.

Given their mandate for counternarcotics, the British pushed to have Akhundzada removed from office before they arrived.[49] An important ally of Karzai's, Akhundzada used his connections to secure a seat in the Afghan senate and arranged for his replacement, Mohammed Daoud, to accept Akhundzada's younger brother as his deputy, thus ensuring that the elder Akhundzada's interests remained secure.[50] Even then, however, Akhundzada did not step down quietly; he later claimed to have encouraged 3,000 of his supporters to side with the Taliban.[51] The nature of the Afghan economy and Helmand politics presented tremendous challenges to the British from the outset.

Some individuals within the British defense establishment felt that British soldiers might encounter armed resistance in Helmand, but they exerted little or no influence over predeployment preparations. When the commander of the British contingent slated to deploy to Afghanistan informed his superiors that a minimum of 14,000 military personnel would be required to secure Helmand, they greeted that number with derision before pointedly directing him to downsize the estimate.[52] Although some lower-ranking British military

---

47. Interv, Col Bryan Gibby, Brian Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 65–70, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. Opium production exploded in Helmand Province just as the British were set to arrive, with the area under cultivation increasing by 162 percent over the previous year. Between 2005 and 2006, the area under poppy cultivation increased from 26,500 hectares to 69,324 hectares. Eradication efforts rose as well, from 1,046 hectares in 2005 to 4,973 hectares in 2006, but the effort barely impacted the total amount of opium produced in the province. House of Commons Def Committee, *UK Operations in Afghanistan: Thirteenth Report of Session 2006–07 (London: The Stationery Office Ltd.,18 Jul 2007),* p. 38; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006*, Oct 2006, p. 26.

49. During a raid of Akhundzada's house in July 2005, Afghan counternarcotics agents seized nine metric tons of opium. Akhundzada claimed he was storing material his men had seized. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, p. 48; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 326.

50. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 327; Elliott, *High Command*, p. 132; Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 48–9.

51. Akhundzada explained, "When I was no longer governor the government stopped paying for the people who supported me." He thus "sent 3,000 of them off to the Taliban because I could not afford to support them but the Taliban was making payments." Quoted in Damien McElroy, "Afghan Governor Turned 3,000 Men Over to Taliban," *Telegraph*, 20 Nov 2009, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6615329/Afghan-governor-turned-3000-men-over-to-Taliban.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

52. Elliott, *High Command*, p. 155.

leaders harbored concerns about their ability to conduct their assigned mission, Americans interacting with senior British officials came away with a different impression. General Freakley later recalled, "[The British] held us in somewhat of a negative light in that we had Vietnam and they had Northern Ireland; who had the better outcome? So far as counterterrorism, they looked at themselves as 'we know how to do this.'"[53]

To accomplish their objectives for Helmand, the British planned to create a secure area (which they called the "Triangle" or "Lozenge") circumscribed by their main base at Camp Bastion, the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, and the market town of Girishk.[54] Although this zone represented less than a sixth of the province's total area, it included two major population centers and comprised the economic heart of the province, bisecting the fertile Helmand River Valley that ran through the province from northeast to southwest. To secure this area, the British sent 16 Air Assault Brigade under Brig. Gen. Edward A. Butler. Because their troops fell under RC South led by a Canadian brigadier, the British military deemed it improper for Butler to serve under a foreign officer of the same rank. London subsequently removed Butler from the ISAF command chain and established him as national contingent commander and senior officer in Afghanistan answering to his political leaders at Whitehall.[55] Effectively removed from any ISAF tactical responsibilities, Butler instead had authority under his national command chain. British forces in Helmand (TF Helmand) were placed under Col. Charles P. H. Knaggs, who reported to both Fraser and Butler. Knaggs exercised direct authority over British maneuver forces (Tootal's battalion) and the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team.[56]

Knaggs planned to secure the Triangle with the 3d Parachute Battalion, which would enable the reconstruction team to begin work. According to Butler, "Our priorities were to build up the Camp Bastion infrastructure, establish our presence in Lashkar Gah and in Girishk, raise the PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team] and forge our relationship with Governor Daoud."[57] Once they were secure, the British would then range outward to the north and south, expanding their area of control in an effort to challenge Taliban encroachment, support the ANP, and link the villages to the provincial capital.[58]

---

53. Interv, Brian F. Neumann, OEF Study Group, with Lt Gen Benjamin C. Freakley, frmr CJTF-76 Cdr, 15 Mar 2016, p. 24, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Interv, Matthews with Butler, 16 Apr 2008, p. 4.

55. General Fraser found the divided command chain unnecessarily complicated and stated that the division created "initial frictions between Ed Butler and my own chain of command." Interv, Matt Matthews, CSI, with Brig Gen David Fraser, frmr Combined TF Aegis Cdr, 3 May 2009, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Fraser's complaints eventually convinced Richards to place Butler firmly under Fraser once RC South finally shifted to NATO ISAF control. Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 222.

56. Bishop, *3 Para*, pp. 44–45; Tootal, *Danger Close*, pp. 31–32.

57. Interv, Matthews with Butler, 16 Apr 2008, p. 5.

58. Bishop, *3 Para*, pp. 36–7; Neville, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14*, p. 18; Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, pp. 17–18.

Meanwhile, the Taliban strengthened its position in RC South in anticipation of the arrival of additional NATO troops. The impending transition offered them an unparalleled opportunity: the Americans were being replaced by newcomers unfamiliar with the region, and the Pashtun majority population remained either uncommitted or supportive of Taliban efforts.[59] Mullah Mohammed Omar dispatched Mullah Dadullah "Lame" Akhund, one of his most committed followers, to take command of the fighters in the south. A native of Uruzgan Province, Dadullah came from the younger generation of Taliban commanders absolutely committed to Omar's Islamist vision.[60] He also was described as "the most brutal of all [the Taliban's] commanders" for having shot his own men and massacred unarmed Hazaras a decade earlier.[61] NATO estimated that his fighting force ranged from 300 to more than 2,000. In February 2006, Dadullah sent 300 men to capture Sangin, a town controlling the northern branch of the Helmand River. His fighters also turned the town of Marjah in central Helmand into the Taliban's biggest stronghold in the province. Unfortunately, these actions were merely a glimpse of what was to come.[62]

By May 2006, the Taliban established a strong position in the town of Baghran in northern Helmand and made a move to seize key points in the adjacent Musa Qal'ah District.[63] After a battle that killed twenty Afghan soldiers, a Taliban spokesman declared, "We are here to destroy the British. We will hunt and kill them. We will not let them go back to England and say that they have defeated the Afghans."[64] The Taliban were consciously invoking nearly 200 years' worth of animosity dating back to the British-Afghan wars of the mid-nineteenth century. One British officer recalled, "What we found when we had forces on the ground was starkly different from what we had anticipated and hoped for. We were ready for an adverse reaction, but to be fair we did not expect it to be as vehement as it turned out to be."[65] That situation did not stem from the British forces' inability to anticipate Afghan reactions, but rather from systemic issues within the U.S. intelligence effort, which now had to figure out how to share sensitive material with NATO allies in addition to identifying effective methods to gain relevant information about their elusive enemies.

The decision to delay the British deployment until late spring limited what 16 Air Assault Brigade could accomplish. Instead of establishing positions in a relatively benign environment, the British began arriving at the traditional start of the fighting season in April and May. Their staggered

---

59. Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, pp. 22–23; Carter Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 100.

60. Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban*, p. 87.

61. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, p. 71.

62. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 359–60.

63. Tootal, *Danger Close*, p. 53.

64. Quoted in Bishop, *3 Para*, p. 51; Neville, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14*, p. 11.

65. Neville, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14*, p. 17.

arrival also meant they could not contribute to Operation Mountain Thrust to the degree that General Freakley wanted.[66] To make matters worse, Governor Daoud responded to the Taliban's attacks in northern Helmand, often with the support of President Karzai, by requesting that the British protect the district centers. As Tootal's solitary battalion still did not have all of its combat units, sending even a platoon up north limited British ability to develop the Triangle. Even though Butler tried to explain that he was trading space up north for time to build a zone from which to mount a counterattack, "Governor Daoud and President Karzai made it very clear that the 'black flag' of Mullah Omar should never be allowed to fly over the district centers and that the Afghan flag must fly at all costs." Daoud told Butler, "Unless [the British] occupied the District Centers, [they] might as well go home."[67] Daoud had few other options because both the ANA and the ANP lacked the skill and numbers necessary to confront the Taliban.

In June, Butler consented to secure the province's northern district centers. Establishing permanent positions in the northern districts meant abandoning their plan to develop the Triangle. It also meant his troops were now spread so thin holding static positions that 16 Air Assault Brigade lacked any capability to maneuver against the Taliban. The British established fortified positions in the government buildings (termed "platoon houses") in Musa Qal'ah, Sangin, and Now Zad, along with a position protecting the vital Band-e Kajaki hydroelectric complex.[68] What initially had been characterized as a peace-support mission soon turned into a bitter defense of isolated positions.

The Taliban reacted predictably by launching numerous attacks on the dispersed British units. When direct assault failed to bring victory, the Taliban sought to cut the defenders off from supplies by laying numerous IEDs along access roads. Even though the defenders enjoyed adequate artillery and air support, they now could be supplied only by air, which presented the constant threat of the enemy downing a helicopter.[69] Despite the unfavorable tactical situation, Butler thought that the Taliban had made an error:

> [The Taliban] became engaged in a conventional fight, a pretty ferocious one. We fixed them and fixed ourselves, but that kept the fight on what I called the "strategic pegs" of the northern District Centers. They were acting as "breakwaters" which the Taliban focused on for the next three months. As a result of that, we kept the "deep."[70]

Freakley disagreed. To the CJTF-76 commander, the British "played straight into the Taliban's hands," falling into the same type of trap that the

---

66. Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, p. 7; Bishop, *3 Para*, pp. 171–72.

67. Interv, Matthews with Butler, 16 Apr 2008, p. 8.

68. Neville, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14*, p. 20; Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 191.

69. Bishop, *3 Para*, pp. 67–69.

70. Interv, Matthews with Butler, 16 Apr 2008, p. 9.

mujahideen had used against the Soviets in the 1980s.[71] Fraser had a more measured view, saying that the British would have been hard-pressed to avoid getting fixed "without ignoring the Afghans completely."[72]

General Richards thought that the platoon houses, although they might have "achieved some sort of ascendancy over the Taliban in a military sense," did nothing to win Afghan "hearts and minds."[73] Prodigious use of artillery and air support invariably devastated the villages in the vicinity of the outposts, while many of the Taliban fighters killed by the British were unemployed opium farmers with familial and tribal ties to the local area.[74] Whatever the case, the British conducted far more combat operations than reconstruction and development missions during their first six months in northern Helmand.

The constant attacks and wide distribution of their forces so strained the British that TF Helmand agreed in October to withdraw from Musa Qal'ah District Center if the Taliban followed suit. The controversial deal, initially put forward by locals who wanted the fighting to stop, called for a temporary ceasefire followed by the withdrawal of both British and Taliban forces from the area.[75] Although the Americans were critical of the deal, it helped British leaders to recognize belatedly that they had underestimated the security needs of Helmand Province. Whitehall therefore made sure that the 3d Parachute Battalion's replacement would not cede the initiative to the enemy. When 3 Royal Marine Commando Brigade arrived in Helmand in October 2006, it brought an additional 870 soldiers, armored vehicles, heavier weaponry, more helicopters, and an aggressive tactical mindset.[76] The British had learned a hard lesson about the resources needed to bring stability to southern Afghanistan.

Operation Medusa (2–17 September 2006)

Even after RC South came under ISAF control, the Taliban showed no signs of reducing their attacks in the area. Three days after the transfer of

---

71. Interv, Neumann with Freakley, 15 Mar 2016, p. 25.

72. Interv, Matthews with Fraser, 3 May 2009, pp. 5, 6.

73. House of Commons Def Committee, *UK Operations in Afghanistan: Thirteenth Report of Session 2006–07*, p. 30.

74. Elliott, *High Command*, p. 158.

75. General Richards opposed the plan but could not prevent it from going into effect. Bishop, *3 Para*, pp. 256–61; Tootal, *Danger Close*, pp. 268–71, 276, 282; Carlotta Gall and Abdul Waheed Wafa, "Taliban Truce in District of Afghanistan Sets Off Debate," *New York Times*, 2 Dec 2006,http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/02/world/asia/02afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "British Troops in Secret Truce with Taliban," *Dawn*, 3 Oct 2006, http://www.dawn.com/news/213159/british-troops-in-secret-truce-with-taliban, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bill Roggio, "The Taliban Return to Musa Qala," *The Long War Journal*, 2 Nov 2006, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/11/the_taliban_return_t.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 238.

76. Neville, *The British Army in Afghanistan 2006–14*, pp. 24–25; House of Commons Def Committee, *UK Operations in Afghanistan: Thirteenth Report of Session 2006–07*, p. 25.

authority, the Taliban sprang a deadly ambush on Canadian troops southwest of Kandahar City.[77] Intelligence reports confirmed that, while Canadian forces were operating in the province's northern districts, the Taliban had relocated west and southwest of the provincial capital. Having failed to stop NATO's entry into the region, the Taliban now focused on retaking Kandahar City.[78] Taliban infiltration had already secured entire districts surrounding the city. Abandoning low-level guerrilla tactics, battalion-sized Taliban elements openly fought against coalition troops in a major push, despite their vulnerability to air and rotary-wing support.[79] Coalition leaders understood these tactical changes as evidence that the area around Kandahar City was growing increasingly volatile.

The Canadians also could not counter Taliban presence in Panjwa'i and Zharey Districts west of the city because of their commitments to Mountain Thrust. General Fraser understood that the region was "an important area for the Taliban" but "didn't have enough forces to go in there earlier for a sustained offensive effort."[80] When the Canadians did launch a clearing mission into Panjwa'i on 3 August, a vehicle struck a large IED, killing two soldiers. After dismounting, the Canadians found themselves facing determined fire on three sides from enemy fighters displaying unusual tactical skill. Radio chatter indicated that there might have been as many as a thousand insurgents in the area. After a hard fight to extricate their lead elements, the Canadians pulled back to reassess the situation.[81] Many Kandaharis openly began speculating that the Taliban would return and seize the capital.

Colonel Hope, who led the 3 August attack, anticipated that a determined effort to clear Panjwa'i would require "a brigade operation."[82] As events transpired, neither a brigade nor Hope's battalion undertook that mission. Due to the fixed rotation schedule, Fraser would have to rely on a new force for the mission, as Lt. Col. Omer H. Lavoie's 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (Task Force Kandahar) began replacing TF Orion in mid-August.[83] Planning for a return to Panjwa'i also began mid-August. The first substantive step of the plan envisioned a major offensive against the town of Pashmul and was set for October.

---

77. The attack killed four Canadian soldiers and wounded ten others. "Afghanistan: A Canadian Story," http://www.afghanistanacanadianstory.ca/whats-new/casualties/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

78. Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 32.

79. Ibid., pp. 36, 43–44.

80. Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, p. 26; Brig. Gen. Fraser, quoted in Bernd Horn, *No Lack of Courage: Operation Medusa, Afghanistan* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010), p. 34.

81. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 33.

82. Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 24.

83. The new rotation was known as Third Deployment (Roto 2) of Operation Athena, Phases II (August 2006–February 2007). Teeple, *Canada in Afghanistan*, p. 39.

Events converged to accelerate the original timetable. The Taliban's steady propaganda sparked considerable distress and increased anxiety among Afghan civilians and international aid workers in Kandahar City. In mid-August, the governor of Kandahar, Asadullah Khalid, exacerbated the situation by ordering local Afghan Border Police commander Abdul Raziq, a Karzai ally and virulent opponent of the Taliban, to clear Panjwa'i. The move ignited a violent tribal feud, as it sent Raziq's mostly Achakzai forces into traditional Noorzai territory. Haji Mohammed Qassam, a Kandahar Provincial Council member, acknowledged that the operation boosted local support for the Taliban. "One village had 10 or 20 fighters against the government before he [Raziq] came," he noted, "and the next day, maybe 200."[84]

Although the new fighters were inexperienced and untrained, they confronted ISAF and Afghan troops in open battle, presenting a direct challenge not only to coalition forces but also to the Karzai government.[85] As if to drive the point home, on the afternoon of 19 August an insurgent force of 300–500 fighters launched a coordinated attack on an ANP position at the large Ma'sum Ghar hill adjacent to the Bazar-e Panjwa'i city center. After hard fighting, the Afghan police unit and an undersized Canadian company (sent as a quick reaction force) withdrew under cover of darkness. Fraser could now see that the "scale of Taliban activity made it clear that we would have to come back" to Pashmul. Only one question remained: When?[86]

In response to the Taliban's growing influence, Richards and Fraser accelerated the move into Panjwa'i. Spurring their efforts was their knowledge that Freakley's CJTF-76 wanted to launch Operation Mountain Fury in RC East in late September, which would limit the availability of U.S. assets in RC South.[87] The attack in Panjwa'i, called Operation Medusa, would test ISAF's ability to conduct major operations against the Taliban. With Richards describing it as the "NATO main effort" and the "first large-scale offensive in [NATO's] history," Fraser set about developing his plan and assembling his forces.[88] The main effort consisted of three Canadian infantry companies (designated as Task Force 3-06) commanded by Colonel Lavoie, supported by a battalion from the 205th Afghan National Army Corps. Fraser could also count on the services of a company headquarters and two ODAs from Lt. Col.

---

84. Graeme Smith, "Inspiring Tale of Triumph Over Taliban Not All It Seems," *Globe and Mail*, 23 Sep 2006, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/inspiring-tale-of-triumph-over-taliban-not-all-it-seems/article586060/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

85. Linda Robinson, *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2013), pp. 4, 13.

86. Fraser, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 35.

87. Interv, Clay with Hope, 7–9 Jan 2009, p. 25. Of particular importance was the availability of key U.S. enablers such as Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Memo, Director, Army Training, for Cdr, Land Force Development Training System, 21 Sep 2006, sub: Tactical Reconnaissance Report—Training Assessment OP Archer Rotation 3, p. 4, cited in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, pp. 167–68n13, 168.

88. Richards, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 44; Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 233.

Donald C. Bolduc's Special Operations Task Force 31, which were partnered with comparably-sized Afghan units.[89]

Given the Taliban's willingness to engage in open battle, Fraser decided against a frontal assault on Pashmul, instead directing one company to advance from the north while another moved from the southeast. This double envelopment sought to prevent the Taliban from escaping toward Highway 1 to the north or Kandahar City to the east. After examining the draft plan, Richards felt that it lacked sufficient combat power.[90] At the ISAF commander's request, Freakley assigned Company A from Sturek's TF Warrior to augment the northern effort while also sending Company C from TF Catamount south to support TF-31. In addition, various ISAF contingents would establish blocking positions to the west. Freakley also dedicated additional artillery (including 105-mm. howitzers from Battery B, 2d Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, and a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System launcher) and aviation support to the operation, and asked the 1st Kandak, 3d Brigade, 201st Afghan Corps, to serve as a reserve. Richards approved the adjustments, thinking it enabled Fraser and Lavoie to "compensate for lack of troops with firepower."[91]

Colonel Bolduc's ODAs were to conduct reconnaissance, act as a diversion for the Canadian main effort, and establish a blocking position south of Panjwa'i.[92] As Bolduc evaluated the plan, he decided to reinforce the ODAs with additional command and control capabilities to ensure nothing went wrong during the next phase of the operation. The augmented SOF task force planned to take a circuitous route to minimize the chances of inadvertently encountering enemy fighters. Although they would begin by heading south parallel to Highway 4, the SOF personnel then planned to detour west and north through a sparsely populated stretch of desert before occupying their assigned objective. A third ODA would join the task force to act as a quick reaction force. Even with the addition of more command and control capabilities, the SOF element remained a secondary effort in the overall battle plan.[93]

Medusa: PHASE I (2–4 September 2006). The initial ISAF plan called for several days of heavy bombardment by indirect fire and aviation assets. During this period, an international battle group composed of Lavoie's Company B; Company A from the 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment; and a third company from the 205 ANA Corps would move south from Afganistan National Highway 1 toward Objective Cricket on the northern edge of Pashmul. The move would be a feint to draw the Taliban fighters out

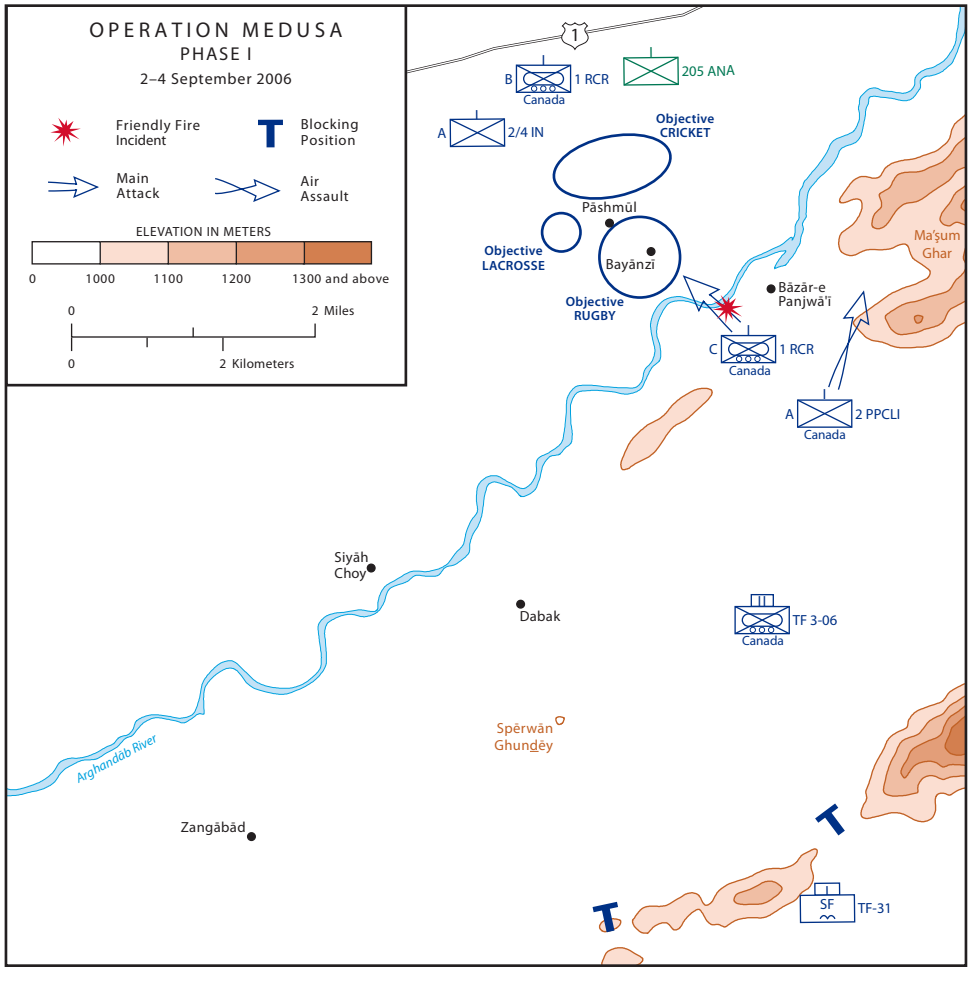
89. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, pp. 50–54; Kenneth Finlayson and Alan D. Meyer, "Operation Medusa: Regaining Control of Afghanistan's Panjwayi Valley," *Veritas: Journal of Special Operations History* 3, no. 4 (2007): 3–4.

90. Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 235.

91. Ibid.; Col Gary M. Bowman, Operation Medusa: Coalition Operations in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, Sep 2006, n.d., p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

92. Bradley and Maurer, *Lions of Kandahar*, pp. 68–70.

93. Bowman, Operation Medusa, p. 4.



Map 3.2

of their fortified positions and distract them from operations to the south. The main effort was to come from Company C, 1 Royal Canadian Regiment, setting up a blocking position on the southern bank of the Arghandab River as the bombardment pounded the enemy. After the bombardment inflicted enough casualties on the defenders, Canadian foot soldiers were to cross the river and move on Objective RUGBY, the small village of Bayanzi just south of Pashmul, with the support of Lavoie's Company A, which would air-assault behind Company C, isolate Bazar-e Panjwa'i, and provide overwatch from the Ma'sum Ghar hilltop (*Map 3.2*).[94]

As ISAF prepared to launch Operation MEDUSA, the governor of Kandahar announced on 1 September that civilians should evacuate Panjwa'i. Civilian casualties were a likely consequence of military action that neither NATO nor the Afghan government wanted to face. The call also helped to isolate the Taliban from the populace, as the locals were showing every sign of

94. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, pp. 50–54.

opposing a coalition move on the town. The terrain around Pashmul (situated between company objectives Rugby, Cricket, and Lacrosse), just north of the Arghandab, was littered with irrigation ditches, bunker-like grape storage huts (some with mud walls up to three feet thick), and lush fields of grape and marijuana. Intelligence was vague; most estimates of Taliban strength ranged in the hundreds. The actual number was likely closer to 2,000 to 3,000 men capable of coordinating large attacks with multiple groups of fighters.[95]

Like innumerable military operations, Medusa did not proceed as planned. The step-off on 2 September went well as both northern and southern task forces established their positions while artillery rained down upon the enemy positions. The first deviation from the plan occurred soon afterward as reports that the Taliban fighters were fleeing prompted pressure from higher headquarters for Colonel Lavoie to push Company C across the river to assault Rugby on 3 September.[96] The Canadians crossed only to encounter intense fire from prepared defensive positions well-stocked with weapons and ammunition. Mud-walled compounds, reinforced dugouts, trenches, and fighting bunkers turned every cluster of homes into a miniature fortress, impervious to all but armored bulldozers, tanks, or artillery.[97]

Following a seven-hour fight in which they suffered deaths and the loss of vehicles to rocket-propelled grenade fire, the Canadians extricated themselves and reestablished their position on the southern bank of the Arghandab. After spending the night preparing to relaunch the assault, disaster struck. Just after 0500 on 4 September, a U.S. A–10 Thunderbolt II attack aircraft accidently strafed the Canadian position. The attack killed one soldier from Company C, wounded at least thirty others, including the company commander, and rendered the company combat-ineffective. For the second time during Enduring Freedom, mistakes made by American pilots caused the deaths of Canadian soldiers. Unlike the previous incident, however, this fratricidal attack had far more tragic consequences, throwing the main thrust of TF 3-06's attack into complete disarray.[98]

To the north, the attack of Company B initially went well. The terrain was suited to the Canadian wheeled light-armored vehicles, which could cover a good deal of ground with their 25-mm. cannon. The international battle group had established positions just south of Highway 1 by 2 September. From there the attackers began a back-and-forth engagement with the Taliban, alternating between small feints toward Objective Cricket and repulsing enemy attacks, while coalition artillery and air assets dropped ordnance on Taliban positions. Company B was preparing to launch its strongest move

95. Bradley and Maurer, *Lions of Kandahar*, pp. 68, 140.

96. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 62; Richards, *Taking Command*, pp. 236–37.

97. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 138–39.

98. The A–10 pilot reportedly became disoriented after several hours of providing close air support. As a result, he mistook a fire burning in the Canadian camp for smoke marking a Taliban position. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 85; Richards, *Taking Command*, pp. 237–38; Adam Day, "Operation Medusa: The Battle for Panjwai: Part 2: Death in a Free Fire Zone," *Legion Magazine*, 1 Nov 2007, https://legionmagazine.com/en/2007/11/operation-medusa-the-battle-for-panjwai-2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

against the Taliban lines when it received word of the friendly-fire incident to the south. All operations ground to a halt as Fraser and Lavoie evacuated their casualties and reassessed the situation.[99]

Medusa: PHASE II (5–10 September 2006). The errant A–10 strike that halted TF 3-06's southern attack had a profound effect on the coalition. Colonel Lavoie and his men were shocked by the incident, with some arguing that allowing the scheduled three-day bombardment could have averted the tragedy.[100] Fraser acknowledged pressure coming from higher headquarters to "get it done" but responded that "you don't fight a plan; you fight the enemy guided by a plan."[101] Intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was sufficiently battered by the initial day's bombardment, and Fraser decided to push forward rather than allow the Taliban time to recover or withdraw.[102] Now Fraser faced a different challenge. Lavoie had no desire to resume the attack along the same path and preferred a more methodical approach to seizing Rugby. Fraser understood that this would delay the operation, which was contrary to the desires of ISAF headquarters.

According to the TF Aegis operations officer, Richards and Freakley were adamant that the attack go forward, telling Fraser, "this is the most important thing NATO's ever done, the future of NATO rides on this, the future of Afghanistan rides on this."[103] At the same time, as the Canadian national component commander, Fraser was under pressure from Ottawa not to incur heavy casualties. Richards had to communicate directly with the Canadian government to convince them to approve the attack's continuation. The next few days would show whether the coalition was capable of conducting the aggressive combat operations needed to secure RC South.[104]

To the southwest, the soldiers of Special Operations TF-31 provided an unexpected opportunity for the coalition to reclaim the initiative. After departing Kandahar on 26 August and moving along a circuitous path from which they could identify Taliban infiltration and resupply routes, training camps, and a command and control node, the Special Forces soldiers and their Afghan partners established their assigned blocking positions on 1 September.[105] Following the friendly fire incident, the partnered SOF task force asked to move from its blocking positions and occupy key terrain to support the offensive (*Map 3.3*).

---

99. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, pp. 88–89.

100. "Medusa Unit – 1st C.A.V," 1 Jan 2015, http://medusaunit.com/history/operation-medusa, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, pp. 90–92.

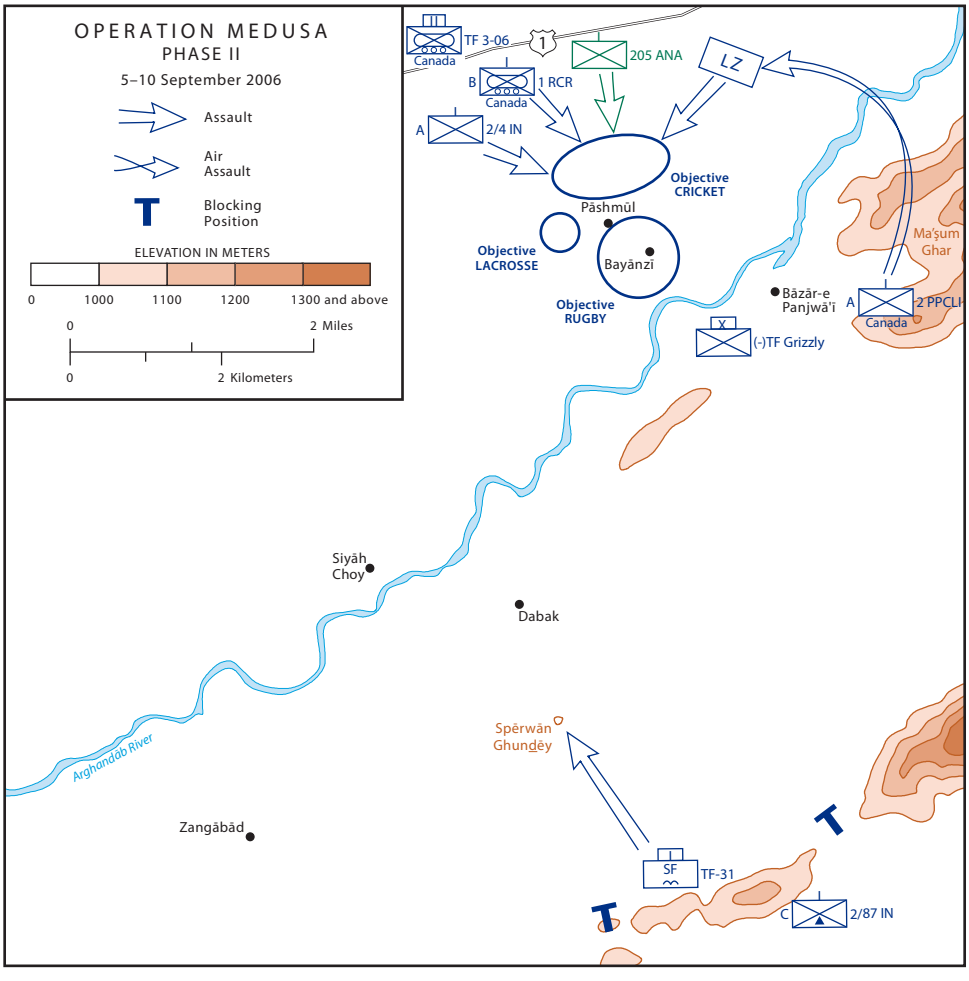
101. Fraser, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 82.

102. Adam Day, "Operation Medusa: The Battle for Panjwai: Part 1: The Charge of Charles Company," *Legion Magazine*, 1 Sep 2007, https://legionmagazine.com/en/2007/09/operation-medusa-the-battle-for-panjwai/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

103. Schreiber, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 92.

104. Richards, *Taking Command*, pp. 239–40; Schreiber, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 92.

105. Bradley and Mauer, *Lions of Kandahar*, p. 151.



Map 3.3

With ISAF permission secured, and with the rifle company from 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, taking over its original positions, the small force of eighty-nine U.S. SOF and ANA soldiers assaulted a large hill, called Sperwan Ghundey (also known as Sperwan Ghar), which overlooked the surrounding area. After being repulsed on their first attack, the combined SOF-ANA force took Sperwan Ghundey on 6 September. The feat handed possession of the high ground covering the entire area to Fraser. In evaluating TF-31's accomplishment, one Canadian officer called it, "one of the most profound acts of bravery I've seen since I've been over here."[106] Facing an anticipated counterattack from the Taliban, the special operators and their Afghan counterparts dug defensive positions. They were soon aided by the arrival of an additional ODA and troops from Company C, 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment. With the extra firepower, along with artillery and

106. Ibid., pp. 154–90; Schreiber, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 96.



Cpl. Lou Penny, Canadian Forces

Member of Company A, 2d Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, prepare an attack on 13 September 2006 as part of Operation Medusa.

air support, TF-31 defeated multiple Taliban counterattacks before finally establishing a firebase at Sperwan Ghundey on 11 September.[107]

As SOF seized the initiative to the southwest, Fraser reconstituted his brigade and revised his attack plan. With General Freakley's support, Fraser turned to Col. R. Steven Williams, whose Task Force Grizzly had replaced Schweikert's force in June as the U.S. National Command Element in RC South. Williams' unit, composed of the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Infantry Group headquarters and the 297th Support Battalion, was never intended to operate as a combat force. Fraser, however, now called on his American deputy to reinforce and reorganize Company C for a renewed move on Objective Rugby. In an effort to fix the enemy in place, Williams was told to make his ad hoc unit "look like a thousand man organization."[108] Williams

107. Bradley and Mauer, *Lions of Kandahar*, pp. 239–66; Finlayson and Meyer, "Operation Medusa," pp. 8–10.

108. Williams' new battle group was an estimated 250 strong, consisting of: his 207th Group Headquarters; members of the 297th Support Battalion; the remainder of the Canadian Company C; a Canadian Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance Squadron; a number of Canadian sniper teams; forward observer teams; forward air control teams; a psychological operations team; and an Afghan National Army (ANA) Quick Reaction Force. Adam Day, "Operation Medusa: The Battle for Panjwai: Part 3: The Fall of Objective Rugby," *Legion Magazine*, 26 Jan 2008, https://legionmagazine.com/en/2008/01/operation-medus-part-3-the-fall-of-objective-rugby/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col R. Steven Williams, frmr Cdr TF Grizzly, 27 Jan 2009, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bowman, "Operation Medusa," pp. 8–9.

and his men moved out on 6 September and consolidated the Canadian position south of the Arghandab. Described by Fraser as a "warrior," Williams immediately began calling in airstrikes against the Taliban across the river and doing everything he could to signal an impending assault against Rugby from the southeast.[109]

With Special Operations TF-31 securing the high ground to the southwest and TF Grizzly fixing the enemy at Rugby, the main focus of the battle shifted north. Fraser redeployed Company A, 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, to the northern battle group to increase its combat strength. Now with three coalition companies (two Canadian and one American) and support from the ANA's 205th Corps, the combined task force began a slow but steady push south on 6 September. Using what one officer described as "World War I tactics," the battle group established a line of advance, identified Taliban targets, destroyed them with air and ground fire, and then sent the infantry bounding forward to establish a new position.[110] In this manner the combined task force slowly ground through the Taliban, who found that the constant pressure shattered their command and control and logistics capabilities. As the Taliban began to lose cohesion, the combined task force secured Objective Cricket on 10 September, setting the stage for Medusa's final phase.[111]

Medusa: PHASE III (11–17 September 2006). By 11 September, Fraser began preparing to end Operation Medusa. With his northern battle group clawing its way south and TF-31 and TF Grizzly directing fire on the Taliban from the south and southeast, Fraser directed Williams to assault Rugby. Against weak resistance, Williams led his men across the river, swept north, and then turned east to advance on the objective.[112] Meanwhile, the combined battle group to the north continued its attack. The U.S. contribution (Company A, 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, called Task Force Mohawk) shifted to the west and seized Objective Lacrosse on 12 September, after which it moved against the western portion of Rugby. As the Canadian Company A drove toward the northeast portion of Rugby, Williams' TF Grizzly approached from the east. By 13 September ISAF forces controlled roughly 65 percent of the objective, and TF Mohawk seized the western portion of Rugby the following day (*Map 3.4*).[113]

As his forces consolidated at Objective Rugby, Fraser shifted his attention to the southwest, where TF-31 remained entrenched atop Sperwan Ghundey. Fraser ordered the Special Forces task force to push across the river to seize Objective Tennis at the village of Siyah Choy. For the move, which Fraser designated as the new "main effort," he "allotted them priority on artillery, aviation, and everything else."[114] The original plan never called for TF-31

---

109. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, pp. 97–9; Interv, Clay with Williams, 27 Jan 2009, p. 7; Day, "Operation Medusa: The Battle for Panjwai: Part 3."

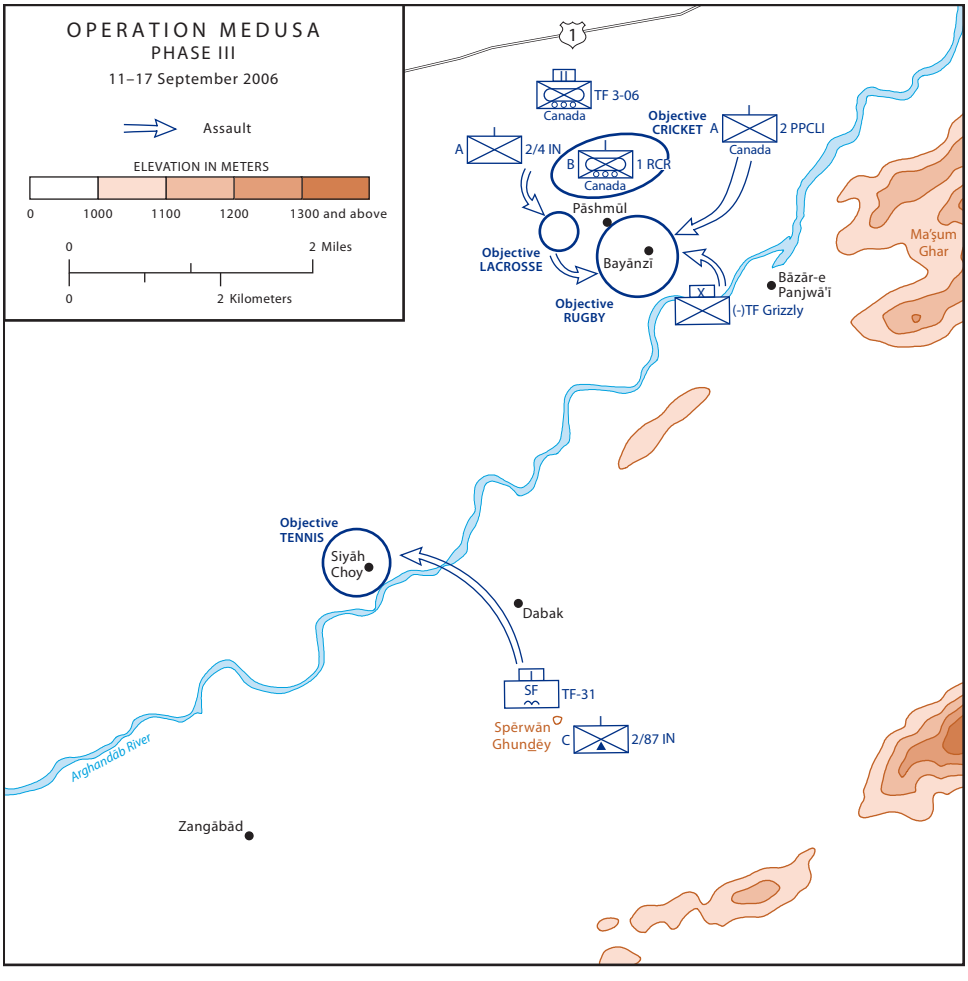
110. Maj. Greg Ivey, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 101.

111. Ibid., pp. 98–105; Day, "Operation Medusa: The Battle for Panjwai: Part 3."

112. Interv, Clay with Williams, 27 Jan 2009, pp. 7–8.

113. Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 106; Bowman, "Operation Medusa," pp. 9–10.

114. Fraser, quoted in Horn, *No Lack of Courage*, p. 82.



Map 3.4

to cross the Arghandab but, as with their earlier exploits, the American and Afghan soldiers unhesitatingly accepted the mission. They forded the river on 12 September, supported by two companies of ANA troops and Company C, 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, to begin a sweep west toward Siyah Choy. They found that most of the Taliban had departed, allowing the soldiers to secure the entire objective within a week.[115] Fraser's units then began preparing for Phase IV operations by establishing security positions near villages in the area. As villagers returned to their homes around Pashmul, General Richards announced that Operation MEDUSA had been successful.[116]

115. Finlayson and Meyer, "Operation Medusa," pp. 10–11.

116. "NATO Hails Afghan Mission Success," BBC News, 17 Sep 2006, http://bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5354208.stm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Continuing the Fight

As the largest battle since Operation Anaconda in March 2002, Operation Medusa was an anomaly. It was far closer to a conventional force-on-force battle than the typical experience in Afghanistan. Although the Taliban committed a significant tactical misstep attempting a deliberate defense of Pashmul and Panjwa'i, those actions revealed an enemy with previously unseen military capabilities and resilience. Taliban fighters had stockpiled several months' worth of munitions that they utilized during Medusa and they did not give ground even in the face of logistical shortages. The Taliban fired off 400,000 rounds of small arms, 2,000 rocket-propelled grenades, and 1,000 mortar shells during the battle, expenditures which reflected firepower rarely seen since the first months of the war.[117] Personnel losses, which the coalition estimated to be 512 killed and 160 captured, were easily replaced by the Pakistan madrassas.[118] In the meantime, the insurgents either retreated to Pakistan or melted into the population, content to resume their insurgency at a time and place of their choosing. As for ISAF, the battle ended without coalition forces possessing sufficient resources to prevent the Taliban from returning to Kandahar's western districts.[119] The engagement, however, assuaged doubts that NATO forces could not or would not fight when pressed. By its international involvement and conventional tactics, if not its ambiguous outcome, Operation Medusa had little parallel in almost five years of combat operations.

After Medusa, CJTF-76 withdrew U.S. conventional forces from RC South for duty in RC East. The Americans would not return to the south in large numbers until 2008. In the meantime, CJSOTF-Afghanistan continued to support both ISAF and CJTF-76, despite not having a direct command and control relationship with either headquarters. Special Operations TF-31 was called upon to support ISAF in the south not long after Medusa's end. Though ISAF forces began stability operations in Panjwa'i on 23 September, the lack of a large, capable, and permanent security force enabled the Taliban to reoccupy many of their previous strongholds. The Taliban also took advantage of the pause created by ISAF changing command in RC South from Fraser to Maj. Gen. Ton van Loon of the Netherlands on 1 November 2006.[120] In keeping with his experience in Bosnia, van Loon brought with him a new mission emphasis, shifting ISAF efforts to provide more humanitarian assistance.

---

117. Bradley and Maurer, *Lions of Kandahar*, p. 5.

118. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 363–64; Edward Stewart, "Op-Medusa – A Summary," The Royal Canadian Regiment, 2007, http://regimentalrogue.com/rcr_history/1992-present/1rcr_op_medusa_summary.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

119. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, p. 140; Bradley and Maurer, *Lions of Kandahar*, p. 273; Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, p. 27.

120. "Canada Hands Over South Afghanistan Command," CBC News, 1 Nov 2006, https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/Canada-hands-over-south-afghan-command-1.579214, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Following a month of increasing violence and stalled reconstruction in Panjwa'i, van Loon approved Operation Falcon Summit (Baaz Tsuka in Dari) to follow Medusa in December. He sought to drive the Taliban out of its strongholds, provide humanitarian assistance, enhance local infrastructure, and reestablish an Afghan security presence. As executed, Falcon Summit was a series of coordinated efforts involving ANA, U.S. SOF, and Canadian and Dutch forces. Between 15 December 2006 and 12 January 2007, ISAF cleared the Zharey and Panjwa'i regions around the village of Howz-e Madad, located north of the Arghandab River, while SOF-ANA partnered units cleared objectives west from Sperwan Ghundey. The operation included an air assault by a Dutch infantry company into the village of Mushan on 22 December, which established the overall western limit of advance. The operation successfully concluded with the creation of permanent ANSF-staffed checkpoints throughout the area.[121]

The key American contribution to Falcon Summit was to locate and kill Taliban commander Akhtar Mohammed Osmani in Helmand.[122] His loss was a blow to the Taliban leadership and removed a major conduit for funding al-Qaeda. Two months later, as Vice President Richard B. "Dick" Cheney visited Afghanistan and Pakistan in February 2007, Pakistani forces arrested Mullah Obiadullah Akhund, the former Taliban defense minister and insurgent commander, in Quetta. In May 2007, coalition forces in Helmand killed Mullah Dadullah Akhund, described by a NATO spokesman as "the top person in our scope of Afghanistan that we were interested in removing."[123] These losses, when added to the overall impact of ISAF counterinsurgency efforts, significantly reduced the possibility of renewed Taliban offensive across the south and west in the summer of 2007.[124] The trio of successes capped a year of frustration in Afghanistan, staunching the trend of local reverses that had started with the Taliban revival in late 2005.

Coalition Difficulties

Although ISAF successfully took over responsibility for RC South in mid-2006 and reduced the enemy threat to Kandahar City with Operation Medusa, coalition efforts in Afghanistan still faced clear internal problems. The decision not to deploy 10th Mountain's 4th Brigade Combat Team meant

---

121. Kenneth Finlayson, "Operation Baaz Tsuka: Task Force 31 Returns to the Panjwayi," *Veritas: Journal of Special Operations History* 4, no. 1 (2008): 16–18.

122. "Taliban Confirm Top Commander Killed in U.S. Strike," *Washington Post*, 27 Dec 2006, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/27/AR2006122700330.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Group; Michael Smith, "Taliban Leader Killed After RAF Tracks Phone," *Sunday Times*, 24 Dec 2006, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/taliban-leader-killed-after-raf-tracks-phone-9w5hx9zw3ln, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

123. Maj. John Thomas, quoted in Griff Witte and Javed Hamdard, "Taliban Military Leader Is Killed," *Washington Post*, 14 May 2007, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/13/AR2007 051300226.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

124. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 119.

that the forces operating in RC South in mid-2006 had varying capabilities, missions, and rules of engagement. The core issue remained a failure to achieve unity of effort among the troop-contributing nations. Each assumed responsibility for a separate province, crafted its own campaign plan, and deployed forces specifically designed to achieve its objectives. As a result, no single effort covered all of RC South. With the exception of Operation Mountain Thrust, task forces conducted operations according to their own goals, which were normally national goals. This segmented approach proved ill-suited to the environment, where important tribal alliances spanned provinces. The Taliban, which was not tied to political boundaries, operated along provincial borders to take advantage of weaknesses within the coalition's structure. The lack of significant reserve forces made it difficult for U.S. and ISAF commands to shift forces between provinces when necessary. The degree to which these ambiguities caused problems varied within the untested, multiple chains of command, but on the whole they highlighted the inefficiency that often defines coalition operations.[125]

Even Mountain Thrust, which was designed to coordinate multiple national task forces across four provinces, was not free from coalition friction. Although CJTF-76 had designed the operation, the execution fell to the Canadian TF Aegis. As one observer noted, "The reality was that Mountain Thrust was a divisional plan using mostly resources executed in TF Aegis' area of operations, with CJSOTF-A commanding its own part of the operation and TF Aegis commanding two battle groups in a supporting role—TF Orion in Kandahar and TF Warrior in Zabul."[126]

Aligning those various efforts proved challenging, particularly because many incoming NATO units had not been briefed on their participation in the operation. General Butler complained that the staggered nature of the British deployment left his nation's forces with "very little influence on Mountain Thrust planning, but we were expected to participate in it. . . . We were being asked to do too many tasks beyond our capabilities."[127] In the end, the British were not able to contribute to Mountain Thrust to the degree CJTF-76 intended, forcing Freakley to shift U.S. units to Helmand for the operation.[128]

Operation Mountain Thrust exposed the problems that NATO incurred by not utilizing a rigid chain of command. As a political alliance, each government within NATO maintained control over its own forces. Field commanders could therefore receive directives from their NATO superiors that contradicted instructions from their own national governments. Navigating these situations required commanders to display more diplomatic skills in executing their military operations and placed a premium on personal relationships. Some, like General Fraser, adapted easily to the challenge. Although deployed to command a NATO force, Fraser served for

125. Interv, Matthews with Fraser, 3 May 2009, pp. 6–7.

126. Maloney, *Fighting for Afghanistan*, p. 29.

127. Interv, Matthews with Butler, 16 Apr 2008, p. 5.

128. Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, p. 7.

several months under the U.S. chain of command. To Fraser this was not an issue: "It was real dead simple. General Freakley was the commander of Combined Joint Task Forces 76. [As the RC South commander,] I worked for Freakley."[129] Others, however, found the command arrangement more difficult. While the British TF Helmand fell under Fraser's command, it also reported to General Butler. Although Butler possessed no tactical command authorities, he represented the direct link between British ground forces in Helmand and Whitehall in London. When Fraser sought to use British forces as a part of larger operations in RC South, Butler became an impediment rather than an enabler.[130] The situation eventually pushed Fraser to insist that Richards rectify the matter once RC South transitioned to ISAF control. Richards complied, placing Butler under Fraser's command authority.[131]

For his part, Butler never thought General Freakley appreciated the pressures constraining national component commanders, nor the fact that they remained responsible to their home governments.[132] "I think as the Afghanistan campaign matures," Butler later stated, "it will be better understood that" lead nations have to increase their ability to accommodate the "coalitions of the willing."[133] Freakley drew different conclusions. In looking at NATO, he thought the alliance was "a good strategic platform to keep nations in the fold, have a common interest, have common goals and objectives and strategies, but operational[ly] and tactically . . . [it was] extremely hard" to implement these ideals.[134] The respective viewpoints are telling. Butler focused on personalities and the immature nature of ISAF, whereas Freakley emphasized the ways in which coalition forces cooperated seamlessly with their American counterparts. As the violence spread in Afghanistan, the commanders of ISAF contingents faced the difficult choice of supporting American needs or following the wishes of their home governments.

Competing Approaches to Police Training

The understandable frictions taking place on the battlefield as NATO ISAF assumed responsibility for Afghan security were mirrored in other areas as well. Although the United States took responsibility for developing the ANP in 2005, the coalition still played a role, leading to continuing disagreements over the proper direction of reforms and the training program. Americans believed that police should be incorporated in the larger framework of Afghan security, linking their efforts to those of coalition and Afghan

129. Interv, Matthews with Fraser, 3 May 2009, p. 4.

130. Freakley specifically described British units delaying a multinational operation for roughly fifteen to forty minutes until Butler gave the approval to begin. According to Freakley, the delay "destabilized the entire operation." Interv, Neumann with Freakley, 15 Mar 2016, p. 20.

131. Interv, Matthews with Fraser, 3 May 2009, p. 4; Richards, *Taking Command*, p. 222.

132. Interv, Matthews with Butler, 16 Apr 2008, pp. 5–6.

133. Ibid., p. 6.

134. Interv, Neumann with Freakley, 15 Mar 2016, p. 50.



Cpl. John Rafoss, USMC

42d Brigade (Romania) troops staged in an assault position preparing to move forward in support of clearance operations in RC South.

military forces. Afghan police, therefore, needed to be equipped and trained to secure territory cleared through combat operations, enabling army units to move to other areas. Holding territory, however, required "the addition of a counterinsurgency role for the ANP."[135] For the Germans, who continued to operate the Kabul Police Academy, this militarization constituted a shift away from the idea that police served as providers of civilian law enforcement. Unlike the Americans, the Germans still believed that there needed to be a sharp division in Afghanistan between the police and the military. According to German embassy officials, the ANP needed to continue exercising "policing functions and should not be altered into a paramilitary force."[136]

The German viewpoint diverged significantly from tactical reality in 2006 as the resurgent Taliban and other insurgent groups increasingly targeted the ANP. According to CSTC-A, the ANP suffered 1,113 casualties (406 killed and 707 wounded) from May 2006 to May 2007 while the ANA suffered 776 casualties (170 killed and 606 wounded) during the same period. Comparatively, coalition forces suffered 1,220 causalities (181 killed and 1,039 wounded). For the ANP, therefore, 36.5 percent of total casualties were

135. U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, Offices of Inspector General, "Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness," DOS Report No. ISP-IQO-07-07, DoD Report No. IE-2007-001, Nov 2006, p. 41, https://oig.state.gov/system/files/76103.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

136. Andrew Wilder, "Cops and Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police," Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit Info Paper Series (Jul 2007), p. 44, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

fatalities, compared to 21.9 percent for the ANA and 14.8 percent for coalition forces.[137] Another report indicated that police killed in action rose from 9 in 2002–2003 to 627 in 2006–2007.[138] As Maj. Gen. Robert E. Durbin explained, "we had more Afghan National Police dying [by the fall of 2006] than Afghan National Army and Coalition military combined . . . so, we made the decision that the Afghan National Police needed to be at least as well armed and at least as well trained in self-defense as the enemy they were fighting."[139]

In 2006, the mounting human cost, coupled with a belated willingness to contribute additional resources, helped the American vision supersede German arguments on Afghan police training. Germany had reached the limits of its capacity regarding the Afghan police program. Although the nominal lead for police reform, it could not match the $2.1 billion in aid that the United States contributed to the ANP between 2002 and 2006.[140] Sensing Germany's financial limitations, the European Union discussed taking an increased role in police training in mid-summer 2006. After sending a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan, the European Union announced in February 2007 that it would take the international lead. The European Police, formed in the following months, assumed control over Afghan police training from Germany in mid-June 2007. Europeans subsequently deployed some 220 personnel to Kabul, including 160 police officers. However, the involvement of the European Police did not expand police training. Instead, it drew "under one umbrella nearly all non-U.S. actors, including sixteen European Union member states and seven others."[141] The Germans represented the largest contingent of European Police, with more than thirty members of the former Police Policy Office participating in the effort. The renamed German Police Project Team shed some personnel but continued mentoring police trainers at the Kabul Police Academy.[142] Not surprisingly, the Germans influenced the European Police's efforts, which were oriented primarily on developing new

---

137. Presentation, CSTC-A, "Afghan National Police Programs Overview Brief," Slide 23, Jul 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

138. Wilder, "Cops or Robbers?," p. 44.

139. Interv, Clay with Durbin, 19 and 23 Mar 2009, p. 19.

140. The actual total for German contributions between 2002 and 2006 varies depending on sources. Current estimates from Germany place the figure at roughly $80 million, while Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) estimated that Germany contributed only $18.1 million over that period. The international community was reported to have contributed $262 million in total to police reform. Presentation, Afghan Ministry of Interior, 7 Jan 2007, sub: Ministry of the Interior Police Reform Progress, slide 16, file: MOI_Reform_Brief_v10_(7_Jan_07), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Wilder, "Cops or Robbers?," p. 19; Presentation, CSTC-A, Jul 2007, sub: Afghan National Police Programs Overview Brief, slide 12.

141. International Crisis Group, "Reforming Afghanistan's Police," Asia Rpt 138, (Kabul/Brussels, 30 Aug 2007), p. 8, https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/reforming-afghanistan-s-police, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

142. Marcus Feilke, "German Experiences in Police Building in Afghanistan," GRIPS Policy Research Center Discussion Paper 10–02 (Tokyo: National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 27–28 Jan 2010), pp. 13–15, http://www.grips.ac.jp/r-center/wp-content/uploads/10-02.pdf, Hist Files OEF Study Grp.

officers and less focused on meeting American concerns about the inadequate scope of the program or expanding ANP capabilities.

Recognizing the disconnect, Maj. Gen. Robert W. Cone, General Durbin's replacement at CSTC-A, ordered his staff to reassess the U.S. police training program.[143] It found little improvement, even though the program had shifted roughly 800 trainers from the ANA to the ANP during the previous year. Members of Cone's staff and CFC-A argued repeatedly that systemic corruption within the Ministry of Interior and the ANP prevented the police from deterring crime, providing stability, and combating the growing insurgency. As Cone explained, "What was actually happening was [trainers] were training large numbers of individuals and then firing them out into these dysfunctional and corrupt organizations that they couldn't change."[144] Cone and his staff concluded that they needed to concentrate on individual districts while stepping up their efforts to implement ministerial reform. Adding a local focus had the benefit of allowing Cone's organization and the ANP to contribute to the fight against the Taliban, something General Dan K. McNeill, the new ISAF commander, expected CSTC-A to do.[145]

Recalibrating Reconstruction

In 2006, the U.S. military's main effort to oversee Afghan reconstruction consisted of twelve Provincial Reconstruction Teams, ten of which were spread throughout RC East. Eight of the teams in RC East, located in the contested provinces of Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktika, and Paktiya, consisted of roughly eighty-nine military personnel, several interpreters, and two or three interagency civilians.[146] They coordinated their activities with the U.S. maneuver brigades operating in that region. The reconstruction teams in Parwan and Panjshir Provinces were allocated somewhat fewer personnel because they were located in relatively benign areas compared to RC East. These teams were eventually placed under an ad hoc tactical headquarters, which had the mission of transitioning ongoing reconstruction projects from the reconstruction teams to the U.S. Agency for International Development and nongovernmental agencies.[147] The final

143. Cone took the helm of CSTC-A from Durbin in June 2007.

144. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Maj Gen Robert W. Cone, frmr CSTC-A Cdr, 2 Mar 2009, p. 12.

145. DoD, "United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces," Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1231, PL 110–181), Jun 2008, p. 23.

146. Maj John H. Ebbighausen, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Good Governance," AY 2010, School of Advanced Military Studies (Monograph, U.S. Army Sch of Advanced Mil Studies, 2010), pp. 24–25.

147. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Jonathan Ives, frmr TF Cincinnatus Cdr, 25 Feb 2009, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; As of January 2007, two additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams in RC East were overseen by members of the international coalition. New Zealand operated Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Bamyan Province, while Turkey maintained Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Wardak Province. North Atlantic Treaty

pair of U.S. teams operated under ISAF control in RC South and RC West. These, located in Zabul and Farah Provinces respectively, were authorized ten additional personnel because they were responsible for managing the forward operating bases that housed them and coalition units. Unfortunately, their ISAF-related responsibilities became so consuming that these teams often lacked the time and resources to conduct their primary mission.[148]

In contrast to their U.S. counterparts, the fourteen ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Teams varied significantly in size and composition. The Italian, German, Canadian, and British Provincial Reconstruction Teams all numbered over a hundred personnel, with the Germans having nearly 500 in Kunduz. The non-U.S. teams also had far more civilians, with the German and Canadian contingents numbering twenty civilian personnel each, while the British in Helmand had thirty civilian experts divided into functional cells such as rule of law, governance, development, and stability. The civilian head of the Helmand reconstruction team outranked, but did not exercise direct command of, the British military officer in the province. In addition to non-U.S. civilians, U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. State Department representatives were assigned to a number of ISAF reconstruction teams.[149]

Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan had ample opportunity to improve the economic situation of ordinary Afghans through both direct and indirect means. The teams, however, had to ensure that every project that they sponsored advanced the goals articulated in the document governing Afghanistan's reconstruction and development: the Afghan National Development Strategy. Approved in interim form at the London Conference held on 31 January–1 February 2006, the Afghan National Development Strategy was a vision for development that was consistent with Islamic law and the cultural values stated in the Afghan constitution.[150] The strategy not only supported the Afghanistan Compact but also included language to reassure international donors that their reconstruction funds were being used in an effective and coherent manner. Finally, it integrated existing provincial development plans by approving projects drawn up by 345 district development assemblies and 16,753 (later 18,500) community development councils.[151]

As the conflict in Afghanistan entered its sixth year, Provincial Reconstruction Teams deploying to that country underwent significant

---

Organization (NATO), International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Placemat, 2 Jan 2007, http://www.nato.int/isaf/placemats_archive/2007-01-29-ISAF-Placemat.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

148. Ebbighausen, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Good Governance," p. 25.

149. Carter Malkasian and Gerald Meyerle, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How Do We Know They Work?" (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, Mar 2009), p. 6.

150. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Afghanistan National Development Strategy: An Interim Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth & Poverty Reduction (May 2006), p. 2.

151. Maj David. K. Spencer, "Afghanistan's Nangarhar Inc., A Model for Interagency Success," *Military Review* 89, no. 4 (Jul–Aug 2009): 34.

changes in order to meet the needs of the greater war on terrorism. With the Iraq war limiting available Army personnel, the DoD assigned Air Force and Navy officers to command reconstruction teams. The teams were reconfigured based on feedback from earlier deployments and a growing awareness of Afghan needs. Each of the twelve authorized U.S. teams now had five primary sections: command, administrative, logistics, security forces, and specialized staff comprising the State Department, Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Agency for International Development experts. Reconstruction teams also now included two engineer officers who provided expertise as project managers for construction projects. The engineers, along with interagency subject matter experts and three to eight civil affairs officers, performed most reconstruction-related tasks. The remaining seventy to eighty personnel provided security, mostly for those dozen or so individuals who managed the core missions of the teams.[152]

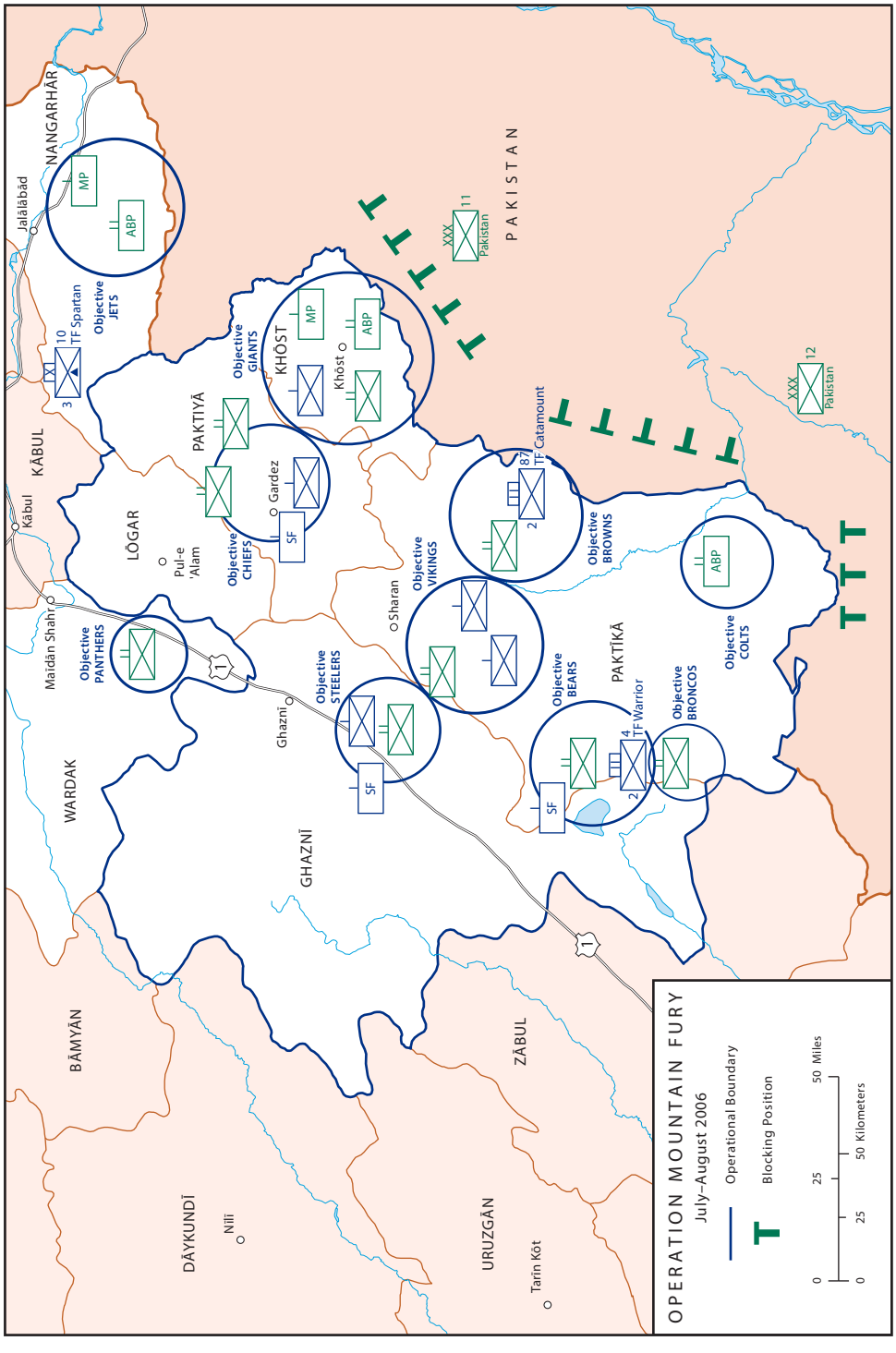
By 2007, most Provincial Reconstruction Teams sought to give local shuras the responsibility for making key reconstruction decisions. The shura would develop ideas, identify the right contractors, and ensure locals were employed as workers. This approach fostered the notion among Afghans that coalition troops were not a threat to the established hierarchy. As using shuras became accepted practice, U.S commanders recognized that "the more we work in partnership with them, the more the government works in true partnership with them, the more they come to the side of the government, and the more likely they are to take an active role in denying the influence of the insurgents in their local areas."[153] It took time to build these relationships and establish trust, but designing reconstruction and development efforts so that they were seen as providing sustainable value to the local community was the most effective way to grow support for the central government.

Operations Mountain Fury and Mountain Eagle (July 2006–February 2007)

As NATO and U.S. forces battled for control of RC South, American efforts in RC East continued on a considerably smaller scale. The soldiers in TF Titans and TF Chosin worked to establish relations with local villagers and solidify the inroads they had made into Kunar and Nuristan during Operation Mountain Lion. With the majority of CJTF-76's logistics and air support operating in RC South, Eikenberry and Freakley allowed RC East to become a secondary effort. Units still held outposts and patrolled their immediate areas, but efforts to expand the coalition footprint would have to wait until additional resources became available. By August, after most of TF Warrior and TF Catamount returned from RC South, Freakley stood

152. Russell L. Honore and David V. Boslego, "Forging Provincial Reconstruction Teams," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 44 (1st Qtr 2007): 86–89.

153. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Christopher Kolenda, frmr 1st Sqdn, 91st Cav Cdr, 30 Jan 2009 and 6 Feb 2009, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY
July–August 2006
Operational Boundary
Blocking Position
0 25 50 Miles
0 25 50 Kilometers
PAKISTAN
NANGARHĀR
Jalālābād
KĀBUL
Kābul
Maidān Shahr
LŌGAR
Pul-e 'Alam
PAKTIYĀ
Gardez
KHŌST
Khōst
WARDAK
Ghaznī
GHAZNĪ
PAKTĪKĀ
BĀMYĀN
DĀYKUNDĪ
Nīlī
URUZGĀN
Tarin Kōt
ZĀBUL
Objective JETS
Objective GIANTS
Objective CHIEFS
Objective PANTHERS
Objective STEELERS
Objective VIKINGS
Objective BEARS
Objective BROWNS
Objective BRONCOS
Objective COLTS
TF Spartan
TF Warrior
TF Catamount
MP
ABP
SF
XXX
Pakistan
1
2
3
4
10
11
12
87

Map 3.5

ready to execute Mountain Fury, an operation targeting the provinces of Paktika, Paktiya, Khost, and Ghazni.[154]

In designing Operation Mountain Fury, CJTF-76 planners took into consideration developments within Pakistan and among the various enemy groups. The Taliban's efforts in RC South had made it clear that its fighters were attempting to isolate the region from Kabul and the eastern provinces.[155] At the same time, the Taliban was making inroads into Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the base of the Haqqani family franchise. The result was a "simultaneous expansion of [Taliban] influence from the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas] into the interior portions of Afghanistan [which] has empowered the [Haqqani Network] to establish sanctuaries within Afghanistan."[156] Haqqani fighters began arming in Ghazni Province as early as 2005, and foreign fighters, including al-Qaeda recruits, began transiting through Paktiya Province via old mujahideen supply routes in the Shahi Kot.[157]

The Taliban leadership pushed the Haqqani Network to pressure the Afghan government in Logar, Paktiya, Khost, and Paktika Provinces; establish shadow governments; and target Afghan government and security force officials. The network utilized its ties to al-Qaeda, the Pakistani intelligence service, and other militant extremists to launch its signature tactic: the high-profile attack. These attacks, executed by Haqqani operators but typically claimed by the Quetta Shura Taliban, embarrassed the Karzai government and increased the cost of the U.S. and NATO occupation. Favored targets were political and diplomatic figures, civilian-commercial facilities in Kabul, and ISAF bases in eastern Afghanistan. The potential for high casualties became one of the most significant strategic threats to the ISAF mission, earning the Haqqani Network the label of "most lethal insurgent actor operating in Afghanistan today."[158]

For Operation Mountain Fury, Freakley consolidated his forces in RC East (*Map 3.5*). Their primary mission was to eliminate insurgent strongholds in western Paktika and southeast Ghazni while simultaneously disrupting enemy activity along the Pakistan border.[159] Freakley and Colonel Nicholson, the TF Spartan commander, divided the regional command into seven operational areas, each with a battalion-equivalent force. Units throughout RC East began shaping operations in late August to set conditions for the operation's decisive phase. Colonel Nicholson also called upon TF Warrior in southern Ghazni and TF Catamount in Paktika to clear insurgents out

154. OPORD, Cdr CJTF 76, 18 Jul 2006, sub: OPORD 06-04 OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY, para. 1.A.1.

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid., para. 1.A.2.

157. Dressler, *The Haqqani Network*, p. 27.

158. Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, pp. 158, 219.

159. OPORD, Cdr CJTF 76, 18 Jul 2006, sub: OPORD 06-04 OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY, para. 2.

of the districts along the provincial boundary with the Afghan Army's 203d Corps.[160]

Unlike previous operations in which American maneuver units tried to connect their efforts in an overarching framework, Mountain Fury consisted of small unit actions across large areas. As in RC South, the insurgent groups reacted aggressively to coalition movements into previously unoccupied areas, massing fighters against U.S. mounted patrols in an effort to gain an information operations victory by wiping out a platoon-sized American force. ISAF soldiers were usually outnumbered in these attacks, but their better skill, training, and firepower inflicted considerable damage on the enemy.[161] Despite coalition successes, the attacks continued, reminding the Americans they were operating in hostile territory. Ultimately, CJTF-76 utilized roughly 7,000 soldiers in six weeks of operation across the four provinces, killing hundreds of insurgents and capturing numerous weapons caches while suffering sixteen American deaths and eighty-four other casualties.[162]

Operation Mountain Fury included efforts to improve the lives of local residents. In Paktika and Ghazni Provinces, civil affairs teams followed clearing operations, identifying small, immediate-impact projects that could link communities to Afghanistan's central government. The teams utilized funds from the Commander's Emergency Response Program to repair roads, rebuild district centers, provide medical and veterinary assistance, and distribute supplies for schools and clinics.[163] Throughout the rest of TF Spartan's operational area, U.S. forces continued to consolidate the gains achieved during Mountain Lion and support reconstruction and development. During the six-week operation, TF Spartan completed one major road project, built thirty-eight district centers, and provided medical assistance to more than 6,000 patients.[164] The tactics pursued in Mountain Fury were not new, although, like in the 10th Mountain Division's three previous operations, Freakley directed them to be exercised in communities that had not yet experienced coalition activity.

Halfway through Mountain Fury, American conventional forces completed the final shift to NATO ISAF authority. On 5 October 2006, CJTF-76 formally became the ISAF RC East headquarters.[165] Freakley maintained command over U.S. forces but took on the role of ISAF deputy commanding officer for security operations. British General Richards said of the move, "By bringing all of these forces under unified command, we enhance the

160. Ibid., paras. 3.B.12.A.1, 18.

161. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," p. 227. For a description of these platoon-sized engagements in Paktika's Bermal District over the summer of 2006, see Bruning and Parnell, *Outlaw Platoon*.

162. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," pp. 231–32.

163. OPORD, Cdr CJTF 76, 18 Jul 2006, sub: OPORD 06-04 OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY, para. 3.J. 1-3.

164. Cubbison, *The Crossed Swords Tribe of Afghanistan*, p. 145.

165. NATO, ISAF Placemat, 29 Jan 2007, http://www.nato.int/isaf/placemats_archive/2007-01-29-ISAF-Placemat.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

effectiveness of the operation, as we have far greater flexibility in the use of our assets."[166] For Freakley, the added duties began "one of the hardest times in my life."[167] He was particularly concerned that German General Beck, the Joint Forces Command–Brunssum commander and Richards' direct NATO superior, wanted him to spend most of his time in Kabul and travel throughout the other regional commands to coordinate operations. Freakley also had to fend off requests from NATO nations for using American assets in other regional commands. "Had I just agreed," Freakley later stated, "they would have, in essence, pulled [CJTF-76] apart."[168] Thankfully for Freakley, Richards allowed the American general to maintain his headquarters at Bagram. For his part, Richards was fighting his own battles trying to secure more troops for the ISAF mission, with limited success.[169]

With Richards' support, Freakley designed the last operation for TF Spartan's year-long deployment to return American soldiers to aggressive counterinsurgency tactics. The RC East commander wanted to set conditions for TF Spartan's relief by 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division (Task Force Fury), and was already seeing his forces rotate out of theater, as Lt. Col. Ronald J. Metternich's 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Task Force Wild Boar), replaced Sturek's TF Warrior in November.[170] In Freakley's understanding, the best way to protect the gains achieved during the three previous operations was to open more of the countryside to "steady state COIN [counterinsurgency]" operations.[171]

Operation Mountain Eagle (1 November 2006–20 February 2007) therefore pushed soldiers into remote valleys in the northeastern provinces and pressured infiltration routes in RC East's southern provinces. To block enemy lines of communications with Pakistan and disrupt Taliban and Haqqani coordination before winter, coalition and Afghan forces established twelve new combat outposts during the operation.[172] As Eikenberry prepared to end the CFC-A mission, the political counterinsurgency he had inherited from General David W. Barno, which had been simplified during his first months of command and then imperfectly implemented by NATO in RC South, now became Freakley's preferred method of securing Afghanistan.

---

166. Paul Watson, "NATO Takes Security Helm," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 Oct 2006, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-oct-06-fg-handover6-story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

167. Freakley not only had new duties under ISAF, but also was responsible for all of the 10th Mountain Division forces in Afghanistan, along with elements from the division that remained at home in the United States or were deployed to Iraq. Interv, Clay with Freakley, 10 Jun 2009, p. 20.

168. Freakley says the NATO allies were specifically interested in securing U.S. intelligence assets, fire support, logistics, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) capabilities. Ibid.

169. Richards, *Taking Command*, pp. 251–52.

170. Maj Eric Atherton, ed., Spartan Review, Interim Draft, pp. 2–30, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

171. Presentation, CJTF-76, 25 Oct 2006, OPORD 06-06 Mountain Eagle Cdr's Backbrief, Slide 16, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

172. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," pp. 232–35.

While U.S. conventional forces conducted their final operations in RC East, Colonel Bolduc's CJSOTF focused on disruptive elements closer to Kabul. In Kapisa Province, just north of RC Capital, Taliban forces had infiltrated the Tagab District in Kapisa Province and established a sanctuary from which they could launch attacks into Kabul, harass convoys, and threaten the security of Bagram Air Base.[173] The locals, left without security since a coalition offensive cleared the valley in 2005, feared Taliban reprisal and were reluctant to accept humanitarian assistance, let alone provide information on Taliban networks or activities.[174] In response, Bolduc directed Special Operations Task Force 33 to plan a multinational effort to establish long-term security and reaffirm Afghan governmental legitimacy in the area.

Described as a three-way partnership including TF-33, ANSF, and Task Force 8 (a United Arab Emirates SOF task force), the effort was more than a clearing operation.[175] TF-33 integrated the ANSF, Kapisa provincial government, U.S. agencies, and the United Arab Emirates in the operational planning to ensure a holistic effort that could be transitioned to Afghan lead. The plan leveraged the good relationship between the TF-8 commander, Lt. Col. Nasser al Ottabi, and the Kapisa governor, Satar Murad. Their cooperation led to a better understanding of the terrain, local leadership, and Taliban networks, as well as corresponding improvements in both civil-military targeting and kinetic operations.[176]

The Kapisa segment of Mountain Eagle began on 31 October when coalition forces air-assaulted into the northern end of the Tagab Nawah, and two U.S. SOF A-teams infiltrated the southern end with their ANP partners. Aided by AH–64 Apaches, AC–130 Spectre gunships, and more than 900 ANP personnel from Kapisa and neighboring provinces, the combined force cleared the valley over the next eleven days. Within hours of areas being cleared, support personnel built firebases using prepackaged construction materials (often referred to as "firebases-in-a-box") for the ANSF. An ODA combat outpost was established to maintain partnership with the ANP and develop new auxiliary police forces.[177]

More importantly, the combined multinational and interagency force provided humanitarian and medical assistance to the local residents using international and Afghan government resources.[178] The United Arab Emirates contributed to the effort by funding infrastructure projects, as its international development financing had fewer restrictions than those of the Afghan or

---

173. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 118; Maj Scott T. McGleish, Maj Darin J. Blatt, and Capt Peter G. Fischer, "Operation Al Hasn: Planning and Executing a Full-Spectrum Operation in the Afghan Theater Today," *Infantry Magazine* (Jul-Aug 2007): 19.

174. Ibid.

175. *USSOCOM History 6th Edition*, p. 118; Ibid.

176. McGleish, Blatt, and Fischer, "Operation Al Hasn," pp. 20–21.

177. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 120.

178. McGleish, Blatt, and Fischer, "Operation Al Hasn," pp. 22–24.



1st Lt. Eric Jungels, USA

Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, set out on a nighttime patrol in Nuristan Province.

U.S. systems.[179] CJTF-76 later dedicated millions of dollars in Commander's Emergency Response Program funds to the area, while the Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team and the U.S. Agency for International Development produced a long-term infrastructure strategy with the governor. All of these efforts were publicized through a radio, leaflet, and shura campaign in which the governor highlighted the benefits of the operation and refuted Taliban misinformation. Partnered security operations, unprecedented levels of civil-military coordination, and substantial infrastructure support during and after kinetic operations all helped the operation succeed, and Eikenberry considered it a model for future counterinsurgency operations.[180]

Reassessing the Situation

TF Spartan's deployment occurred during a tumultuous period as the Taliban committed everything to opposing the shift to NATO ISAF lead. In RC East, American forces pushed into new regions to expand Kabul's reach. During their deployment, soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division increased the number of outposts in RC East from twenty to forty, conducted hundreds of patrols, and attended seemingly endless shuras as they worked

179. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 118.

180. McGleish, Blatt, and Fischer, "Operation Al Hasn," p. 25.

to implement a comprehensive counterinsurgency approach.[181] At the same time, RC South erupted in a level of violence not seen since 2001. British soldiers in Helmand Province and Canadian soldiers in neighboring Kandahar Province faced a far greater test than anyone anticipated. Over many months of hard fighting, they strove to adapt to the enemy while reassessing their resources for the campaign.

In Washington, U.S. policymakers tried to downplay the return of the Taliban.[182] Even with the increase in enemy attacks, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld maintained that "weak provincial governments and corruption" and not security were the chief problems in Afghanistan.[183] In the summer of 2006, he sent Marin J. Strmecki, a former assistant to Ambassador Zalmay M. Khalilzad, to analyze the situation in order to develop policy recommendations.[184] Strmecki's diagnosis supported Rumsfeld's views, identifying a "crisis in governance" in Afghanistan. "Enormous popular discontent is building against corrupt and ineffective governance," Strmecki concluded, "undermining Karzai's political standing, weakening the legitimacy of the new political order, and creating a vacuum of power in the south and other areas that the Taliban can control."[185] The insurgency had boomed when the Taliban decided to exploit this "vacuum of governance."[186]

Strmecki recommended escalating initiatives in the security, governance, and economic sectors.[187] Beyond poor governance, he highlighted Pakistan's role in providing a safe haven for the insurgents. He stated that the elements within Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence organization who had provided "some operational support" to enemy activities and President Pervez Musharraf had "not made the strategic choice to cooperate fully with the U.S. and Afghanistan to suppress the Taliban."[188] Strmecki recommended a diplomatic initiative to induce "Pakistan's leaders to deprive the Taliban of sanctuary and support."[189] Crucially, this "asymmetrical counter-escalation" of diplomatic efforts and reconstruction efforts did not require more U.S. or international military forces.[190] Rumsfeld was so impressed with Strmecki's

---

181. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II," p. 250.

182. George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Broadway Books, 2011), pp. 210–11. Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2012), p. 687.

183. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Under Sec Edelman, 18 May 2006, sub: Strmecki, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

184. Marin Strmecki, *Afghanistan at a Crossroads: Challenges, Opportunities, and a Way Ahead*, Briefing, 17 Aug 2006, slide 2, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/456/2006-08-17%20from%20Marin%20Strmecki%20re%20Afghanistan%20at%20a%20Crossroads%20Briefing.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

185. Ibid., slide 36.

186. Ibid., slide 5.

187. Ibid., slide 10.

188. Ibid., slides 5, 11.

189. Ibid., slide 10.

190. Ibid., slide 2.

analysis that he asked Vice President Cheney and National Security Advisor Steven J. Hadley to try to arrange a briefing for him with the president.[191]

Rumsfeld and Strmecki were not wrong about Musharraf, governmental weakness, or endemic corruption; nonetheless, their analysis was self-serving in that it did not lead to changes in the conflict's ends or means. The related Enduring Freedom and NATO ISAF campaigns had weathered a tumultuous year in 2006. Poor governance might have been the central reason why the country had returned to a degraded existence, but other factors contributed as well. Some of these were preventable. The late and insufficient arrival of partner nations in RC South, their misunderstanding of the conflict to which they had deployed, and their lack of flexibility on the ground were solvable problems. The enemy's growing assertiveness owed as much to the coalition and the ANA's inability to provide consistent levels of security as to domestic issues or the innate popularity of violent Islamic fundamentalism. Faced with multiple challenges, Eikenberry, Richards, and Freakley designed campaigns that addressed the threats they faced. Unfortunately for them and their successors, the execution of these campaigns could never account fully for Afghanistan's social and political complexities.

191. Memo, Sec Rumsfeld for Vice President [Richard B.] Cheney, 25 Aug 2006, sub: Marin Strmecki and Afghanistan Briefing, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/455/To%20Vice%20President%20Richard%20B%20Cheney%20re%20Marin%20Strmecki%20and%20Afghanistan%20Briefing%2008-25-2006.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Chapter Four

Holding the Line

The war in Afghanistan entered a new phase in 2007 as NATO ISAF struggled to react to the growing insurgency. The United States now split its forces and missions between ISAF under NATO leadership and Operation Enduring Freedom under U.S. command. While NATO ISAF continued to provide security, governance, and reconstruction assistance to the Afghan government, the remaining American forces divided their efforts between counterterrorist operations and building Afghanistan's own security forces. The separate American efforts featured competing command chains that could be ruinous to both. In particular, the incoming ISAF commander, American General Dan K. McNeill, would need to overcome burdensome national caveats that prevented him from responding adequately to an increasingly active insurgency.

For the U.S. forces in RC East, 2007 brought a much-needed infusion of troops with the arrival of Col. Martin P. Schweitzer's 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division (TF Fury), and the four-month extension of 3d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (TF Spartan). Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, the 82d Airborne commander, and General McNeill's senior tactical commander in the east, replaced Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley and his headquarters. Having two brigades allowed General Rodriguez to conduct operations in the northeastern provinces while maintaining pressure on the central provinces and the Pakistan border.

Unfortunately, these efforts spread American forces thin across the regional command. Insurgents responded by massing fighters and identifying potential weaknesses in the American force array. Taliban efforts to exploit the extension of forces led to a massive attack on a new outpost in the town of Wanat in Nuristan's Waygal Valley in July 2008 and the stalling of U.S. efforts to exert influence in RC East's northern provinces.

In RC South, coalition forces presided over a measurable decline in the overall security situation. Insurgents continued to pin down the British in Helmand while increasing the pressure on the Canadians in Kandahar. Taliban fighters avoided a direct confrontation after Operation Medusa, choosing instead to infiltrate the territory surrounding Kandahar City as a preliminary step to laying siege to the provincial capital. To aid NATO, the United States sent the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit to RC South in early 2008, signaling a major increase in the American commitment to the region and an expansion in the overall U.S. effort in Afghanistan.

Strategic Drift

Violence against American forces in Iraq increased drastically at the same time that attacks on coalition units began to permeate Afghanistan. From his headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, General John P. Abizaid agreed that "the situation in Iraq was deteriorating. And it was more essential to have combat power in Iraq than in Afghanistan."[1] He acknowledged that "the priority for all military activity was in Iraq. And whatever we need to do to fight the fight in Iraq, that's what took priority."[2] Concerned more with Iraq, President George W. Bush increased deployments to that country in what would become known as "the surge." This prioritization meant that the war in Afghanistan would remain a supporting effort in the Global War on Terrorism as long as Iraq absorbed the majority of available U.S. resources.

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates faced that reality when he replaced Donald H. Rumsfeld in December 2006. When Gates took the position, he resolved to "give our commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan everything they needed to be successful," but he soon learned that he could not "deliver in both places at once."[3] He agreed to keep two brigades in Afghanistan, but found that "in terms of major units, that was all we could do, frankly, until we began drawing down from the [planned] surge in Iraq."[4] In the meantime, the mission for U.S. forces in Afghanistan remained the same: to create a stable state that could support America's war on terrorism and deny al-Qaeda a safe haven for large-scale terrorist operations.[5]

Instead of charting a new path in Afghanistan, the Bush administration began 2007 by pressuring NATO partners to meet their troop commitments, drop national caveats, and combat the growing insurgency.[6] As General Abizaid explained, the United States pushed NATO and the international community to increase their troop levels because "there weren't enough American forces to be able to do the things that we wanted ultimately to do with combat power."[7] Despite this push, some NATO allies continued to resist calls for boosting force levels, insisting instead that the alliance focus on reconstruction and economic development.[8] NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer argued to Gates, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley that NATO could contain but

---

1. Interv, Col Bryan Gibby, Brian Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John P. Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, p. 12.

2. Ibid., p. 92.

3. Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York: Vintage, 2015), p. 200.

4. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Lt Col John R. Stark, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Robert M. Gates, frmr Sec Def, 7 Dec 2015, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Memo, CENTCOM, 26 Jan 2007, sub: Theater Campaign Plan 2006–2016 Executive Summary, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. Waltz and Bergen, *Warrior Diplomat*, p. 200–203.

7. Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016, p. 23.

8. Gates, *Duty*, p. 203.

not prevail against the Taliban.[9] Moreover, diplomatic overtures to Pakistan failed to eliminate insurgent sanctuaries across the border.[10]

Unity of effort within the international coalition was proving elusive, as was gaining a clear picture of the situation on the ground. Secretary Gates remained frustrated by conflicting intelligence estimates, with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analysts painting a dire picture while General McNeill, Ambassador William B. Wood, and others assuring him that the Taliban posed no strategic threat.[11] The frustration would continue through the first half of 2007, culminating in June when Gates concluded that, strategically, the war was "at best, at a stalemate."[12] Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael G. Mullen summed up the situation: "In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must."[13] The United States' continued relegation of Afghanistan to an economy of force effort fixed the conflict's strategic and operational direction for the next two years. Although Gates provided what resources could be spared, success rested on the international community and its ability to provide forces to achieve the security, governance, and reconstruction objectives outlined in the Afghanistan Compact.

A New American Team

After nearly seven years of war, the U.S. Army in Afghanistan had gone through five theater commanders and an evolving operational framework. Though each of the five commanders implemented his own initiatives, the overall U.S. policy objectives remained the same, as did restrictions on troop levels from Washington. Secretary Rumsfeld had begrudgingly accepted the additional tasks of security assistance and state building in Afghanistan, but staunchly opposed major U.S. troop increases. This restriction changed with Gates. In his first meeting with President Bush, the defense secretary expressed deep "concern about Afghanistan and [his] feeling that it was being neglected."[14]

Gates' willingness to accept that Afghanistan needed additional resources was not lost on the CFC-A staff. Col. Bart Howard, Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry's chief of staff, noted that his subordinates briefed Secretary Rumsfeld in October 2006 about the deteriorating situation in RC East and the danger of CJTF-76 becoming too dispersed. Unconvinced, Rumsfeld

9. Ibid., p. 209.

10. Ibid., p. 205.

11. Ibid. pp. 208–09; Waltz and Bergen, *Warrior Diplomat*, p. 205.

12. Gates, *Duty*, p. 210.

13. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, *Security and Stability in Afghanistan: Status of U.S. Strategy and Operations and the Way Ahead*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 11 Dec 2007, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg43957/html/CHRG-110hhrg43957.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Gates, *Duty*, p. 7.

asked CFC-A to make better use of what it had on hand.[15] Gates received a similar briefing during his first visit to Afghanistan in January 2007. General Freakley, in his last full month as CJTF-76 commander, pointed to the fact that neither ISAF nor U.S. forces had a reserve force, which limited their ability to mass for specific operations without putting considerable strain on other units.[16] Throughout 2006, Freakley continuously shifted units within RC East and between the eastern and southern regional commands, interrupting the continuity of effort fundamental to counterinsurgency. Gates recognized his predicament, stating that RC East needed another brigade.[17] As the Iraq surge had left only limited forces available, Gates extended TF Spartan's tour for 120 days until it could be replaced by a yet-to-be-determined brigade. Despite Gates' inability to immediately secure more forces, those on the ground in Afghanistan found the new secretary's approach "refreshing."[18]

The soldiers Gates extended would serve alongside members of the 82d Airborne Division arriving in theater beginning in mid-January 2007. The division commander, General Rodriguez, assumed command of CJTF-76 from Freakley on 2 February.[19] On Rodriguez's order, that headquarters renamed itself Combined Joint Task Force 82 (CJTF-82) on 7 March.[20] For maneuver forces, Rodriguez brought Colonel Schweitzer's TF Fury, which included three maneuver battalions: Lt. Col. Brian J. Mennes' 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment (Task Force 1 Fury); the 2d Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment (Task Force 2 Fury) under Lt. Col. Timothy J. McAteer; and Lt. Col. David J. Woods' 4th Squadron, 73d Cavalry Regiment (Task Force 3 Fury). Because of the lack of an ISAF reserve, the CJTF-82 commander designated TF 1 Fury as a tactical theater reserve.[21]

The other units that Rodriguez brought from Fort Bragg to Afghanistan included Lt. Col. Scott D. Custer's 2d Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment (Task Force Professionals); Lt. Col. Michael P. Peterman's 782d Support Battalion (Task Force Spartans); and Lt. Col. Steven A. Baker's Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Task Force Diablo). The latter pair were responsible for providing TF Fury's combat support and combat service

15. Interv, Brian F. Neumann, OEF Study Grp, with Col Bart Howard, frmr CFC-A Ch of Staff, 12 Dec 2013, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Interv, Brian F. Neumann, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Benjamin C. Freakley, frmr CJTF-76 Cdr, 15 Mar 2016, p. 31.

17. Interv, Neumann with Howard, 12 Dec 2013; Gates, *Duty*, p. 202. Ambassador Neumann echoed the need for more forces in a 20 December 2006 message to Washington; see Neumann, *The Other War*, p. 152.

18. Neumann, *The Other War*, pp. 161–62.

19. Ana K. Perry, "82nd Airborne Accepts Responsibility for Afghanistan Task Force," DoD News, 2 Feb 2007, https://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=2903, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. FRAGO, CENTCOM, 7 Mar 2007, sub: CENTCOM FRAGO 07-472 REDESIGNATION CJTF-76 TO CJTF-82, 1.A., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. CJTF-82 is the traditional name for this level of headquarters headed by the 82d Airborne Division.

21. OPORD, Cmdr CJTF-76, 15 Feb 2007, sub: CJTF-76 OPORD 07-05 COMMAND AND CONTROL, 3.C.11.E.–3.C.11.E.2., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Amber Robinson, USA

TF SPARTAN commander Colonel Nicholson (left) briefs CJTF-82 commander General Rodriguez on coalition operations in northeastern Afghanistan.

support while Custer's unit furnished indirect fires to Schweitzer's infantry battalions as needed. Finally, Col. Kelly J. Thomas' Combat Aviation Brigade, 82d Airborne Division (Task Force PEGASUS), provided airlift, aerial fires, and medical evacuation support for the new CJTF headquarters.[22]

In addition to acquiring a new defense secretary and extra ground forces, the United States assumed leadership of NATO ISAF. On 4 February 2007, General McNeill formally replaced Lt. Gen. David J. Richards as ISAF commander.[23] Having served as the Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180) commander from May 2002 to May 2003, McNeill was no stranger to Afghanistan. His second deployment, however, would be markedly different than his first tour. Instead of heading an American force of less than 10,000, McNeill now led an international coalition of more than 35,000 service members from thirty-seven countries.[24] The mission also had changed from destroying al-Qaeda and the Taliban remnants in Afghanistan to countering a growing insurgency operating from Pakistani sanctuaries while simultaneously strengthening the nascent Kabul government.

---

22. Donald P. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II, October 2005–July 2008" (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: CSI, n.d.), p. 305.

23. Carlotta Gall, "American Takes Over Command of NATO Force in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 5 Feb 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/05/world/asia/05afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

24. Belasco, Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001–FY2012, p. 63. American forces in ISAF totaled 14,000; see NATO, ISAF Placemat, 29 Jan 2007, https://www.nato.int/isaf/placemats_archive/2007-01-29-ISAF-Placemat.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

McNeill understood the challenges and constraints he faced. As for the U.S. military, the new ISAF commander believed "the expectation was we were an economy of force and that our real mission was to train Afghan National Security Forces so that someday . . . they took responsibility for themselves."[25] At the same time, he wanted "to attack the insurgents more" in order to gain "better control of certain amounts of battlespace [so that] . . . reconstruction would really take off."[26] To some degree, these objectives mirrored NATO's lines of effort, which remained focused on security, governance, and reconstruction.

Despite the apparent similarity, aligning these efforts proved challenging. As McNeill knew, "In Coalition warfare, members will first and foremost see to their own interests, their own national security needs, before they see to anything in the collective and they will see to things in the collective only when it doesn't go contrary or detract from their national interest."[27] This focus on national interest included the United States. "I didn't delude myself," he later stated, "I got it. It was all about Iraq. I understood that."[28] The challenge, therefore, was to achieve unity of effort among coalition forces, most of whom had their own conceptions of what they wanted to achieve as well as national caveats that set out what their soldiers would and would not do.

The change in ISAF leadership also marked an overhaul in the American chain of command. As a NATO commander, McNeill reported to Joint Forces Command–Brunssum, then to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, and finally to the North Atlantic Council. This meant that two American command chains would operate in Afghanistan: the ISAF chain through NATO and the Operation Enduring Freedom chain through CENTCOM. It also meant that even though McNeill would be the highest-ranking American commander in Afghanistan, he did not have command authority over all American troops in theater. That command would now fall to General Rodriguez. With NATO ISAF having assumed responsibility for all regional commands, CENTCOM determined that CFC-A no longer had a purpose, and shuttered the headquarters.[29] This situation led to a unique relationship between McNeill and Rodriguez. As the RC East commander, Rodriguez reported to McNeill in his NATO role but, as commander of the U.S. National Support Element, Rodriguez answered to CENTCOM.[30]

At the time of McNeill's return to Afghanistan, CENTCOM experienced a leadership change of its own, with Admiral William J. Fallon replacing

---

25. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Gen Dan K. McNeill, frmr ISAF Cdr, 24 Aug 2009, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Ibid., pp. 6–7.

27. Ibid., p. 6.

28. Ibid., p. 7.

29. General McNeill supported the decision to close CFC-A, believing it was an unnecessary layer in the command chain. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Gen Dan K. McNeill, frmr ISAF Cdr, 21 Apr 2009, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. FRAGO, CENTCOM, 4 Oct 2006, sub: CENTCOM FRAGO 07-435 MOD 1 COMMAND AND CONTROL IN AFGHANISTAN, 3.B.1.D., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Abizaid in March 2007. A stickler for formal procedures, Admiral Fallon nixed a workaround that would have enabled McNeill to give orders through the CENTCOM command chain directly to U.S. forces—a move the theater commander believed would have simplified targeting operations.[31] McNeill suffered this predicament throughout his command, as did his staff and subordinates at CJTF-82.[32]

Steady-State Operations

At the tactical level, Schweitzer's staff incorporated both TF Spartan's ongoing efforts and NATO ISAF's overall initiatives when composing TF Fury's deployment order. Planners noted the insurgents had targeted western Paktika and southern Ghazni Provinces in an attempt to cut off lines of communications between Kandahar City and Kabul. With greater Kandahar remaining the Taliban's decisive effort, the southern half of RC East became an avenue of transit for fighters and equipment from Pakistan.[33] Despite significant combat losses in RC South during 2006, "the steady influx of replacement fighters . . . resulted in little degradation in the [Taliban's] ability to conduct operations."[34] The Taliban's growing cross-border influence also strengthened the organization's position in the Afghan interior. Recognizing their increasing strength, Mullah Mohammed Omar and other senior Taliban leaders pushed their fighters to take "a more proactive stance in the insurgency."[35] Their foot soldiers responded with a nuanced effort that combined lethal methods (direct attacks on coalition and ANSF, targeted assassination of government officials, and increased usage of IEDs) with nonlethal efforts such as propaganda campaigns and the creation of shadow governments.

Complicating the problem facing ISAF was the realization that areas often deemed stable because of a lack of insurgent activity were in fact enemy safe havens. As one officer found out over the course of 2007, "just because we didn't see [incidents] occurring [in certain areas] that didn't mean that we didn't have to look there."[36] Another officer explained, "If the insurgents were walking on [a] path every day for the last year and there was nobody to fire upon and then all of a sudden you put a force there and they are fired upon, does that mean that area has now become worse?"[37] These observations suggest

---

31. Interv, Sanborn with McNeill, 21 Apr 2009, p. 6.

32. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Lt Col John M. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen David M. Rodriguez, frmr CJTF-82 Cdr, 17 Mar 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Operations Plan (OPLAN), Incoming Cdr CJTF-76, CJ5, 03 Feb 2007, sub: CJTF-76 OPLAN 07-01, 1.B.2., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Ibid., para. 1.B.6.

35. Ibid., para. 1.B.2.

36. Interv, Clay with Ives, 25 Feb 2009, p. 10.

37. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Lt Col Carmine Apicella, frmr CJ–2 CJTF-82, 11 Dec 2008, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

that the insurgents remained capable of exploiting the Kabul government's lack of a strong presence, even in relatively quiet areas.

At the operational level, General Rodriguez focused on maintaining the integrity of the coalition while, at the tactical level, he utilized Provincial Reconstruction Teams and maneuver forces to support the provincial governments and build ANSF capabilities.[38] To implement these efforts, CJTF-82 adopted the clear, hold, and build dynamic of their predecessors, with the understanding that "the decisive operation will fall within the build portion."[39] With the extension of the 3d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, CJTF-82 scrambled to accommodate two brigades in RC East. The revised plan divided RC East in half, with TF Spartan operating in Nuristan, Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman Provinces and TF Fury taking Paktiya, Paktika, Khost, Ghazni, and Logar Provinces.[40] Focusing on the build phase, CJTF-82's plan envisioned three sequential counterinsurgency operations to establish Afghan Development Zones around Ghazni, Sharan, and Gardez. These zones eventually would connect to form one single zone in the center of TF Fury's southern area.[41]

Depending on circumstances, CJTF-82 considered executing a branch plan that would shift the decisive effort to the north in June by creating a development zone in Nuristan that could be linked to the one around Jalalabad in Nangarhar. If the CJTF-82 leadership chose this option, efforts in the south would become shaping operations focused on creating a development zone in Ghazni and Sharan, but forgoing the one in Gardez.[42] Whichever path CJTF-82 took, its subordinate units would work to enhance security, promote good governance, and support economic reconstruction and development throughout RC East.

Before this plan could be enacted, however, the American infrastructure within the regional command needed to be expanded to accommodate two brigade combat teams. Gates' late decision to extend TF Spartan meant that most of TF Fury's equipment was already enroute to Afghanistan. As previously planned and coordinated, the paratroopers had been counting on using equipment that TF Spartan left behind as it rotated out of theater and did not ship their total inventory. The extension decision meant that TF Fury logisticians had to reroute some of their equipment and secure additional materiel. The process took time, as facilities had to be expanded to accommodate the larger American military footprint. In the end, it took several months for logistical systems to adapt to the increased requirements. By the time TF Spartan rotated out in May 2007, RC East had forty-three

38. OPLAN, Incoming Cdr CJTF-76, CJ5, 03 Feb 2007, sub: CJTF-76 OPLAN 07-01, 1.C.-1.C.1.A.

39. Ibid., para. 3.B.

40. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Maj Robert Neitzel, frmr Opns Ofcr TF Fury, 21 Oct 2008, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

41. OPLAN, Incoming Cdr CJTF-76, CJ5, 03 Feb 2007, sub: CJTF-76 OPLAN 07-01, 3.B.2.A.–3.B.2.C.

42. Ibid., paras. 3.B.4.–3.B.5.

forward operating bases and combat outposts, roughly twice the number that had existed at the beginning of 2006.[43]

Even with two brigades, Rodriguez lacked sufficient forces to cover RC East in its entirety. One key location that he did not want to leave unattended was eastern Paktika.[44] Keeping TF Catamount there required him to make creative adjustments to his subordinate units' missions. As a result, Colonel Baker's Special Troops Battalion became a battlespace owner with a maneuver mission. The unit sent its signal and military intelligence companies to Forward Operating Base Salerno to support the brigade headquarters and, in turn, received maneuver and artillery support from other TF Fury units.[45] Even with the new forces and mission, Colonel Baker understood that his unit "was the economy of force within the greater economy of force, in comparison of Afghanistan to Iraq."[46] Likewise, TF Professionals continued the practice of splitting its resources between fire support and maneuver tasks. Colonel Custer divided responsibilities between his two key subordinates, directing his executive officer to serve as deputy commander for fires and his operations officer to be the deputy commander for maneuver.[47]

The Army's attempts to solve resource shortfalls by assembling bits and pieces of disparate organizations to perform nonstandard missions extended well beyond Schweitzer's brigade. Another hastily formed ad hoc unit became CJTF-82's third major battlespace owner: Task Force Cincinnatus. Shortly after CJTF-82 arrived, the Minnesota Army National Guard's 219th Support Group, which had provided support and base management for TF Spartan, rotated out of Afghanistan. The active component 43d Support Group normally would have replaced them in support of the 82d Airborne Division. However, the critical needs of the Army diverted that unit to Iraq. In response, U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) pieced together TF Cincinnatus, a unit built around officers and noncommissioned officers drawn from Lt. Col. James Bonner's 23d Chemical Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington.[48] Its initial responsibilities were to oversee base operations for

---

43. Interv, Ross Steele, CSI, with Col Michael Peterman, frmr 782d Bde Support Bn Cdr, 20 Feb 2009, pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Task Force Spartan Summary, n.d., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

45. Depending on mission requirements, Baker's unit had different elements placed under it. These included elements such as a fire direction center and an infantry platoon from the brigade's cavalry squadron. Baker also was supported by a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) collocated at one of his bases. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Lt Col Steven A. Baker, frmr Special Troops Bn, 4th Bde Combat Team, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 18 Nov 2008, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Presentation, Combined TF Fury, n.d., sub: Maneuver Units, n.p., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. Interv, Sanborn with Baker, 18 Nov 2008, p. 6.

47. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Lt Col Scott D. Custer, frmr 2d Bn, 321st Field Arty Cdr, 12 Nov 2008, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. The 23d Chemical Battalion contributed just under 90 soldiers to the task force, which initially consisted of 120 personnel; Interv, Clay with Ives, 25 Feb 2009, p. 4. Having most of the chemical battalion's leadership in Afghanistan proved particularly difficult in September 2007 when the unit was reassigned to the 48th Chemical Brigade at Fort

CJTF-82 installations at Bagram, Kandahar, Salerno, Jalalabad Airfield, and Camp Eggers in Kabul. To command the new task force, FORSCOM assigned Col. Jonathan G. Ives from the Army Reserve.[49]

When TF Cincinnatus mobilized on 19 January 2007, it received a complex, nonstandard mission (*Map 4.1*).[50] Fifteen days before his task force took over the area support mission, Ives learned that he would become the battlespace owner for five provinces north and west of Kabul, though he would turn over Wardak Province to TF Diablo and then TF 2 Fury as security in the province deteriorated.[51] Ives also gained responsibility for New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan, a Turkish one in Wardak, and American teams in Panjshir and Bagram. To create maneuver forces for his area of operations, Ives pulled the security elements out of the Bagram reconstruction team along with military police from the division special troops battalion and whatever other qualified augmentees he could find.[52] With its forces set across RC East, CJTF-82 was prepared to commence operations.

Operation Oqab Hamkari (February–June 2007)

Operation Oqab Hamkari (Eagle Teamwork), McNeill's first brigade-level operation as ISAF commander, had been designed by his predecessor in an effort to forge Afghan Development Zones. As the CJTF-82 deputy commander for operations termed it, the operation was "a little bit of an 'ink blot' approach" to counterinsurgency, and it became the underlying theme for CJTF-82's efforts in their southern zone of RC East over the first half of 2007.[53] Responsibility for making and maintaining connections with the populace was divided between unit commanders and members of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, while brigade and battalion commanders developed connections with the provincial governors and the democratically elected provincial councils. Bottom-up and top-down approaches would

---

Hood, Texas. Colonel James Bonner and his staff had to coordinate the transition while in Afghanistan. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col James Bonner, frmr 23d Chemical Bn Cdr, 13 Feb 2009, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

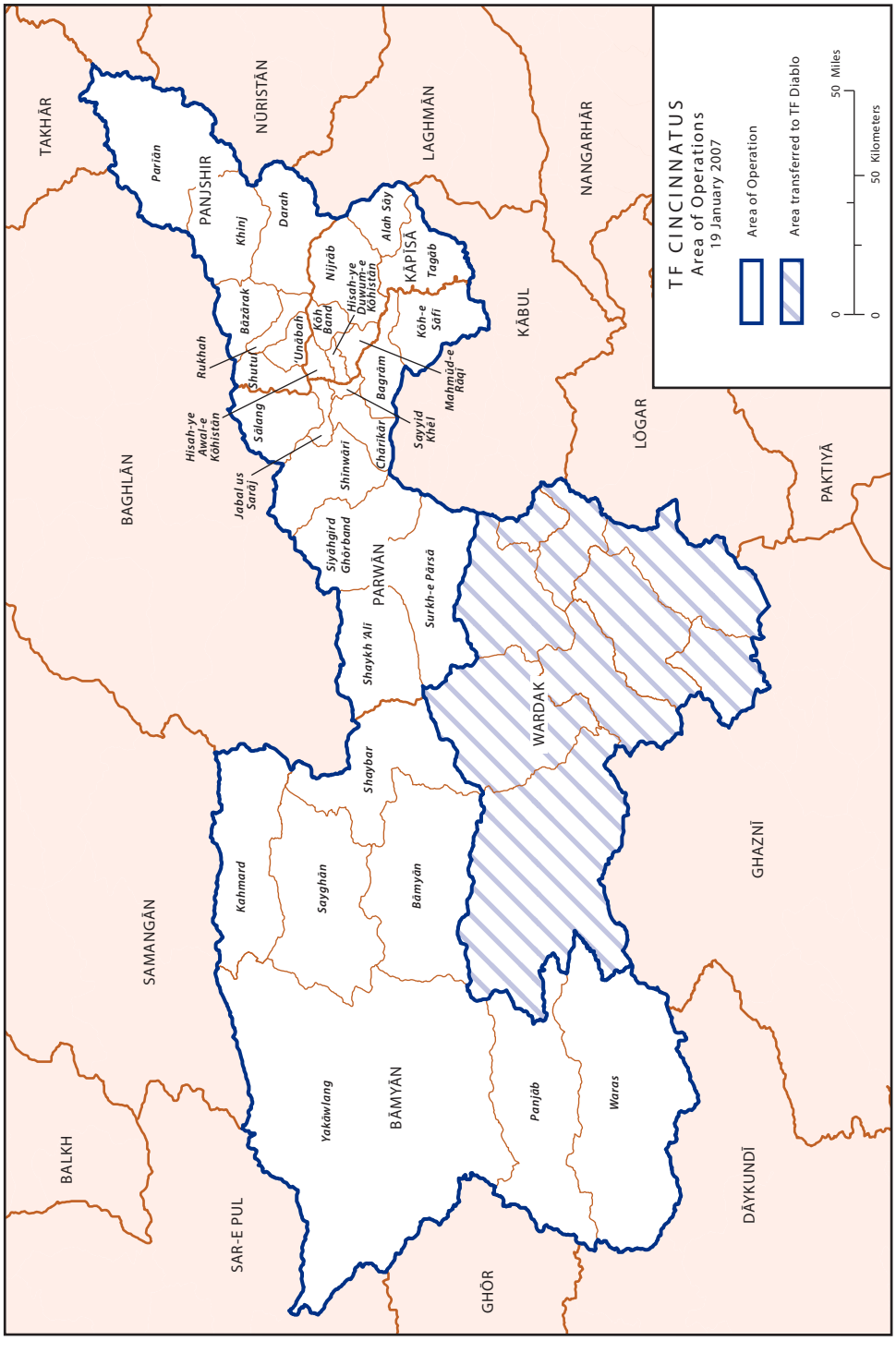
49. Ibid.; Ltr, Col Jonathan Ives to Brian F. Neumann, 19 May 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Normally, the Area Support Group also would have overseen base operations at Forward Operating Base Salerno in Paktika, but the task force's limited capacity meant that the division's engineer brigade received that duty instead. Interv, Clay with Bonner, 13 Feb 2009, p. 7.

51. Interv, Clay with Ives, 25 Feb 2009, p. 5.

52. Ibid., p. 9.

53. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Maj Gen Joseph Votel, frmr CJTF-82 Deputy Cdr for Opns, 14 Jan 2009, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Also known as "oil spot strategy," the tactic calls for political or military organizations to secure key areas, and use those secure areas as staging points to launch subsequent operations, expand their perimeters, and eventually connect the secured areas. French efforts to control Indochina in the late 19th century were an early example of this strategy; see Frederick Quinn, *The French Overseas Empire* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 2000), pp. 144, 153.


TF CINCINNATUS
Area of Operations
19 January 2007
Area of Operation
Area transferred to TF Diablo
0
50 Miles
0
50 Kilometers
TAKHĀR
NŪRISTĀN
LAGHMĀN
NANGARHĀR
PANJSHIR
KĀPĪSĀ
KĀBUL
LŌGAR
PAKTIYĀ
BAGHLĀN
PARWĀN
WARDAK
GHAZNĪ
SAMANGĀN
BĀMYĀN
BALKH
SAR-E PUL
GHŌR
DĀYKUNDĪ
Parián
Khinj
Darah
Alah Say
Nijráb
Tagáb
Hisah-ye Duwum-e Kohistán
Bázarak
Kóh Bánd
Kóh-e Safí
Rukhah
Shutul
Unábah
Bagrám
Mahmúd-e Raqí
Hisah-ye Awal-e Kohistán
Sálang
Sayyid Khel
Chárikar
Jabal us Saráj
Shinwárí
Siyahgird Ghórband
Surkh-e Pársá
Shaykh 'Alí
Shaybar
Kahmard
Sayghán
Bámyán
Yakáwlang
Panjáb
Waras

Map 4.1



U.S. Army

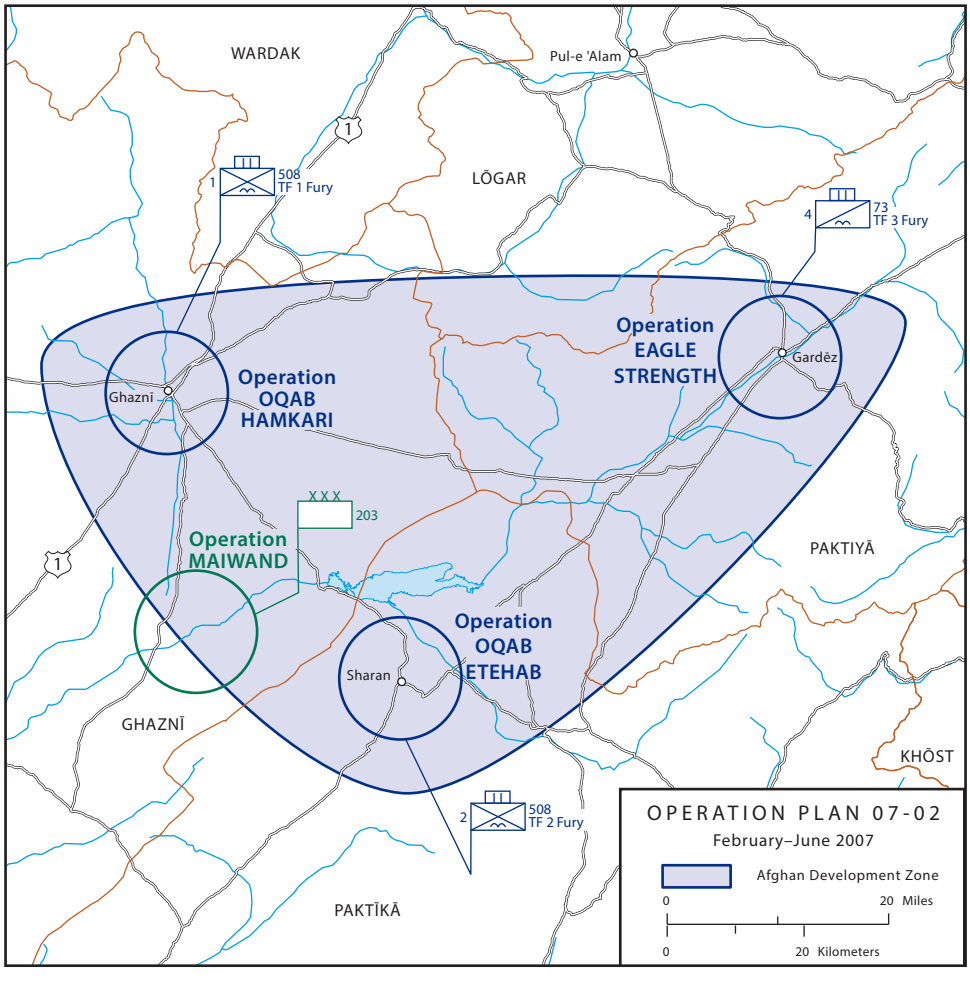
Maj. Rosemary Reed helps Sfc. Paula Reill of the 3-19th Indiana Agricultural Development Team with her headscarf before a women's shura in Khost Province.

create a latticework where government officials established connections with their superiors and subordinates and reached out to other leaders for advice and support.[54]

Operation Oqab Hamkari had been developed before TF Spartan had its tour extended. It primarily involved TF Fury, and was one of three operations ordered in RC East's Operation Plan 07–02 (*Map 4.2*). The other two operations in the plan were Oqab Etehab (Eagle Unity) and Eagle Strength. The overall scope of the plan centered on RC East's southern provinces, with Oqab Hamkari focused on establishing an Afghan Development Zone in Ghazni. The operation, which was designed to exploit the gains achieved during Operation Mountain Eagle, had three interlocking phases: build, clear, and hold.[55] In the first phase, TF Fury would build relationships with local leaders, identifying target areas for economic development and partnering efforts with ANSF. The orders established the conditions for a functioning Afghan Development Zone as: "security threats reduced to minor criminal elements, rule of law maintained by [Afghan government] officials and enforced by ANP, [Afghan government] officials [able to] provide for population needs, local market activity expanded in terms of quality

54. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Martin P. Schweitzer, frmr TF Fury Cdr, 10 Dec 2008, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Connors with Neitzel, 21 Oct 2008, pp. 10–11; Interv, CSI with Lt Col Michael R. Fenzel, 23 Jun 2009, pp. 9–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Sanborn with Custer, 12 Nov 2008, pp. 11–13.

55. The terminology does not align with traditional doctrine, which uses the concepts of shape, clear, hold, and build.



Map 4.2

and diversity, and lines of communication expanded to connect outlying communities."[56] In the second phase, clearing missions would allow the ANSF to maintain security, defeat insurgent groups, and deny sanctuary.[57] American forces were to partner with Afghan forces to improve the latter's ability to operate alongside coalition forces and eventually as independent units. Once coalition and Afghan forces had cleared an area, then efforts would shift to the holding phase, as police established themselves and linked local communities judicially to the central government.[58]

The most significant display of ANSF capacity-building occurred during Operation MAIWAND, a supporting effort of OQAB HAMKARI. The former,

56. OPLAN, Incoming Cdr CJTF-76, CJ5, sub: CJTF-76 OPORD 07–02 OPERATION OQAB HAMKARI (EAGLE TEAMWORK), 3 Dec 2006, 3.B.–3.B.1.D., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. Ibid., para. 3.B.2.

58. Ibid., paras. 3.B.–3.B.3.E.

which sought to clear the restive Andar District of Ghazni Province, marked the first time in which Afghans took the lead in both operational planning and execution. It grew out of a meeting in May between Schweitzer and Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq, commander of the 203d Afghan Corps. While discussing the anticipated events that would take place over the next three months, the pair agreed that Andar had become increasingly problematic. Khaliq assured Schweitzer that his men could clear the district in a month if the ANA received logistical support during the operation. Schweitzer concurred, but wanted Khaliq's men to plan and conduct the operation with coalition forces operating in support. Both men agreed and set their staffs to work.[59]

Named after the Afghan victory over the British in 1880, Maiwand was a substantial step forward in ANA development. To aid Khaliq's efforts, Schweitzer placed his tactical operations center with the headquarters of the Afghan 2d Brigade, which became the 203d Afghan Corps main effort.[60] He also ordered troops from McAteer's TF 2 Fury, Woods' TF 3 Fury, U.S. support elements, and the Polish Brigade Group to assume blocking positions, clear roads, and provide logistical support. Finally, TF Fury helped the 203d Corps establish a fires and effects coordination cell that mirrored the American model but reflected Afghan cultural and religious sensitivities.[61]

Operation Maiwand began on 1 June 2007, following a shura attended by President Hamid Karzai.[62] Though there were sporadic firefights, the Afghans met limited resistance. In most cases, the insurgents fled long before the ANA arrived. Whenever Afghan soldiers appeared, the local population welcomed them and provided intelligence on insurgents and weapons caches.[63] While Maiwand garnered little attention from the media or from the CJTF-82 staff, the thirty-day operation succeeded in building "the reputation among the people for the police and the army."[64] The Afghan people's acceptance of national police and army forces was not the ultimate goal of the development zone concept; nonetheless, it was progress along the government's long path to political legitimacy. The mission also reverberated within ISAF after a German officer attended a briefing on the operation. Though initially critical of the American approach, he soon came to believe that the partnering and support displayed between U.S. and Afghan forces during Maiwand was exactly the type of effort that needed to be replicated amongst ISAF forces.

---

59. Interv, Peter Connors, CSI, with Lt Col Hugh Shoults, frmr TF Fury Current Opns Ofcr, 21 Oct 2008, pp. 5–7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

60. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Schweitzer, 10 Dec 2008, p. 5.

61. The ANA effects cell was led by an Afghan religious and cultural affairs officer who could better align military support with local cultural and religious considerations. It also provided fire support, public affairs, psychological operations, information operations, family support, medical support, an educational officer, and a mullah. George B. Graff, "203d Corps Effects Cell Is Born," *Fires*, U.S. Army Field Arty Center and Sch, Fort Sill, Okla. (Jan-Feb 2008): 38.

62. Interv, Connors with Shoults, 21 Oct 2008, p. 9.

63. Graff, "203d Corps Effects Cell Is Born," p. 38.

64. Interv, Connors with Shoults, 21 Oct 2008, p. 9.

He encouraged British and Canadian commanders in RC South to study the operation closely.[65]

TF Fury commanders considered the operation successful as their staffs were able to build effective working relationships with their Afghan counterparts. As the Afghan officers began to write their own orders and give briefings in Dari, both they and their American counterparts developed more confidence in the ANA's ability to operate as an independent force.[66] According to one American officer, "getting a cohesive U.S. staff married up with an Afghan brigade staff began to show some incredible benefit."[67] The example set during Maiwand would be emulated in several operations conducted by the 203d Corps and TF Fury over the remainder of the latter's deployment in Afghanistan. The Afghan Development Zone concept may not have been universally successful, but in fostering the relationships between U.S. and ANA units, it had shown clear progress.

Task Force Bayonet in Nuristan, Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman Provinces

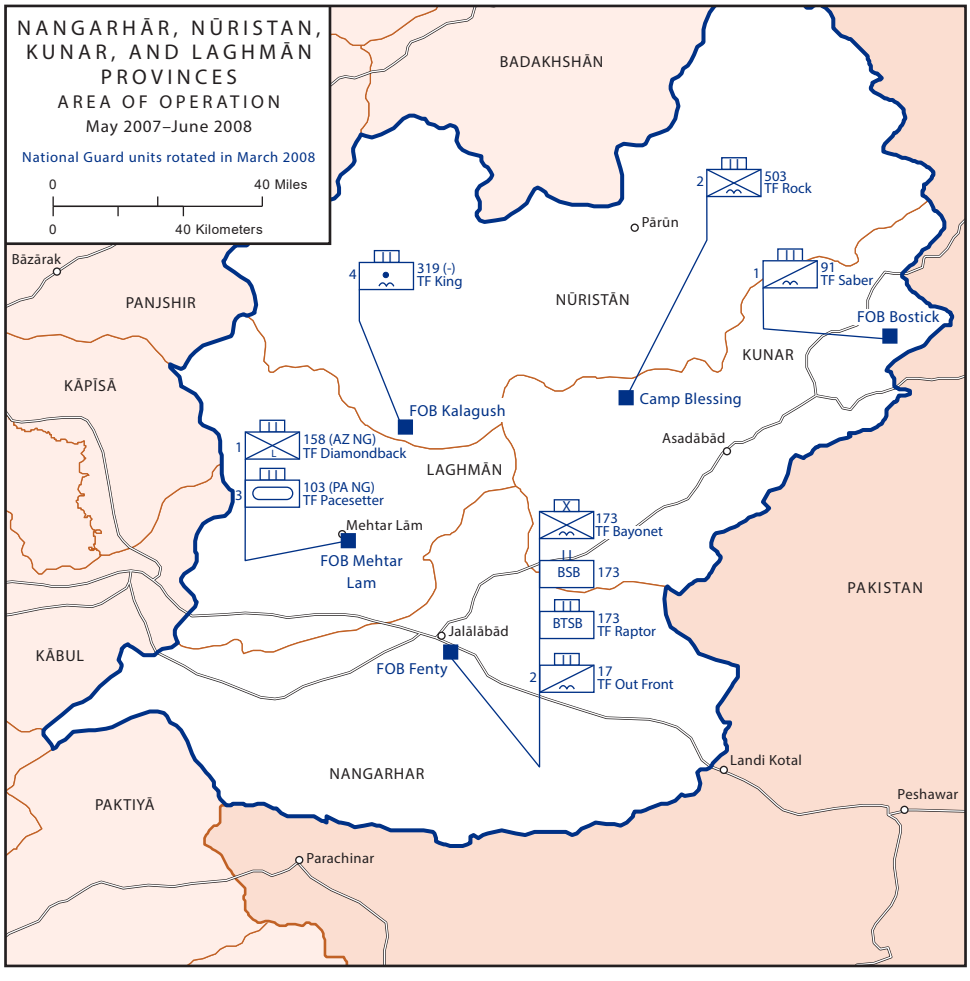
TF Spartan's extended tour began winding down several weeks before Maiwand commenced, as the brigade started a relief-in-place with Col. Charles A. Preysler's 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team (TF Bayonet).[68] TF Bayonet's five battalion-sized elements assumed control of TF Spartan's operational area of Nuristan, Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman Provinces in the northern portion of RC East (*Map 4.3*). At this point, relief-in-place operations started to become much more structured and formal in order to give the incoming unit full critical knowledge of all facets of the area of operations. Three or more days were set for "right-seat ride" opportunities, during which the incoming leadership followed their outgoing counterparts throughout daily operations, followed by "left-seat ride" sessions, in which the incoming leaders led the daily operations and the outgoing leaders rode along to coach them. At the end of the cycle, a brief would be given to the higher headquarters. If requirements were satisfied, a transfer of authority to the incoming unit was approved. On the whole, the 173d deployed some 3,500 soldiers to provide support to four Provincial Reconstruction Teams while

65. Ibid., p. 14. The German officer in this case was a senior general officer reportedly critical of U.S. operations, referring to them as "too kinetic." Upon receiving briefings on the operation once he arrived in theater, he changed his opinion on the U.S. approach to operations.

66. Interv, Connors with Neitzel, 21 Oct 2008, pp. 7–8.

67. Interv, Connors with Shoults, 21 Oct 2008, p. 12.

68. Preysler previously commanded the 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry, during Operation Anaconda in March 2002, and later served as the joint military operations (J3) officer for CJTF-76 during the Southern European Task Force rotation of 2005–06. CSI, *Wanat: Combat Action in Afghanistan, 2008* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), pp. 18, 28.



Map 4.3

also providing security for an area the size of West Virginia with a population of just over 2.3 million.[69]

Initially, Colonel Preysler's brigade had been slated to deploy to Iraq, but TF BAYONET's readiness for deployment and its soldiers' familiarity with Afghanistan made it a natural selection to fulfill Secretary Gates' commitment to deploy two brigades to RC East.[70] The decision was controversial because the change meant that the brigade could not undergo the normal deployment preparation or gather detailed intelligence of the intended area of operations. As the brigade commander noted, "there's [*sic*] two different wars here." Training for the primarily urban environment of Iraq was not applicable in the remote mountains of Afghanistan, which required more "light infantry

69. NATO, ISAF Placemat, 31 May 2007, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

70. Interv, Degen, Stark, and Roberts with Gates, 7 Dec 2015, p. 8.

classic warfare."[71] The truncated timetable for preparation also meant that Preysler and his staff were conducting a predeployment site survey in Afghanistan while the rest of the brigade began its mission-rehearsal exercise. During his visit to their proposed area of operations, Preysler discovered that although one battalion from TF Spartan had spent the last year in the region, the remainder of the brigade had been in the area for only a few months. This short tenancy limited the situational awareness available to Preysler's incoming units. Upon their return, Preysler and his staff completed the training exercise, enjoyed a brief holiday, and rolled out for Afghanistan eight days later. Upon reflection, he thought it was a "pretty tough way to come into combat."[72]

The deployment promised to be a lively one for Colonel Preysler's paratroopers, as Nuristan and Kunar Provinces were traditional safe havens for regional militant groups. Taliban leaders sought to safeguard the lines of communications running from the tribal areas and Pakistan's northwestern provinces through the region's steep river valleys to the provinces surrounding Kabul.[73] To block routes into Nangarhar and Kabul, Preysler spread his three maneuver battalions along a line straddling the southern border of Nuristan and bisecting the brigade's area of operations. In the northeast, Lt. Col. Christopher D. Kolenda's 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Saber), established a position at Forward Operating Base Bostick. Lt. Col. William B. Ostlund's 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment (Task Force Rock), established itself at Camp Blessing in the Pech River Valley in Kunar Province. Farther to the west, Lt. Col. Stephen J. Maranian's 4th Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment (Task Force King), converted part of itself to light infantry and settled into Forward Operating Base Kalagush.

The brigade headquarters, Lt. Col. James R. Ryan's 173d Support Battalion, and Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Milhorn's Special Troops Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team (Task Force Raptor), located themselves at Forward Operating Base Fenty near Jalalabad. Originally configured as a support unit, Milhorn's TF Raptor received a cavalry troop from 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment; two field artillery batteries operating in a dismounted infantry role; and a company of Fort Lewis–based military police to enable it to operate in a maneuver role mirroring that of TF Diablo.[74] The brigade received air support from the 101st Airborne Division's 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Out Front) led by Lt. Col. John M. Lynch, also at Fenty. The Arizona Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment (Task Force Diamondback), under the command of Lt. Col. Alberto C. Gonzalez, arrived with the rest of TF Bayonet and took

71. Interv, Center for Army Lessons Learned with Col Charles A. Preysler, frmr 173d ABCT Cdr, 22 Jul 2008, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

72. Ibid., p. 5.

73. Michael Moore and James Fussell, *Kunar and Nuristan: Rethinking U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations*, Afghanistan Rpt 1 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, Jul 2009), p. 9.

74. Mark St. Clair, "Adjusting on the Fly," *Stars and Stripes*, 18 Sep 2008, https://www.stripes.com/lifestyle/adjusting-on-the-fly-1.84747, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



305th Military History Detachment (MHD)

173d Airborne Brigade soldiers begin to establish positions in RC East.

up position at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam in Laghman Province until the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 3d Battalion, 103d Armored Regiment (Task Force Pacesetter), commanded by Lt. Col. Stephen M. Radulski, arrived in March 2008 for service in the same operational area.[75]

Preysler designed his campaign to build upon the 10th Mountain Division's efforts to develop the two most populated areas in the region: Nangarhar and the Pech River Valley. Nangarhar Province would be the focus of the brigade's main developmental effort, with an Afghan Development Zone centered on the city of Jalalabad and stretching out into most of the province. Termed "Nangarhar Inc." by the Americans, the zone was designed to bring $3.2 billion in economic development and employment opportunities to the province.[76]

Preysler distributed his forces across the operational area to build support among the local population, deny insurgents safe havens and infiltration routes, and project TF Bayonet units north of Jalalabad, all in accordance with current counterinsurgency doctrine. Movement north of Jalalabad had begun in 2006 under TF Spartan, but could be executed only incrementally; the farther American troops penetrated into remote valleys, the fewer soldiers

75. OPORD, RC East Bagram-Afghanistan, sub: RC-E OPORD 07-08 SPRING ROTATION OF FORCES, 3.B.1., 06 Mar 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; One of the brigade's two organic infantry battalions—the 1st Bn, 503d Inf—was detached to 4th ABCT, 82d Abn Div for the first half of its deployment and then to the 4th BCT, 101st Abn Div for the remainder. CSI, *Wanat*, pp. 26–27; Presentation, CJTF-82, "OPORD 07-28 OPORD Brief," Slide 75, 14 Sep 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

76. Interv, Ellson with Preysler, 22 Jul 2008, p. 6

could participate in missions and the more contact they made with enemy fighters. The rough terrain isolated American and ANSF positions in Kunar and Nuristan and made them vulnerable to attack. Moreover, the incursions presented a broad spectrum of opponents, including local extremists, criminal terrorists, and Taliban insurgents, all of whom refused to accept encroachment by the Karzai government. Isolation made remote American and ANSF detachments prime targets for militants and extremists, based just across the border in Pakistan, who had sophisticated tactical training, leadership, and modern equipment.[77]

The Taliban's most experienced commander in Nuristan and Kunar, Sheikh Dost Mohammed, had been the top military leader and shadow governor in Nuristan Province for several years, and his influence helped make the resistance to coalition forces formidable. Sheikh Dost Mohammed's insurgent network maintained deep ties to regional Salafist movements and al-Qaeda, and promoted local Taliban and Haqqani Network operations.[78] Proximity to the border brought the region under firm Taliban influence and made it susceptible to militant strikes from Pakistan. These militants engaged in a constant probing war with the Americans, waiting for the proper time and place to mount a sustained attack to drive the intruders out of the region.[79]

Improving Afghan Security Capabilities

As the Americans deployed more troops to restive RC East, CSTC-A planners began developing a complementary program for comprehensive, security-sector reform. The new initiative, known as Focused District Development, was designed to improve police standards and capabilities at the district level.[80] Once a district was designated for police reform, it would go through six phases of reform in forty-three weeks. The first phase, lasting eight weeks, was an evaluation by a district assessment and reform team, composed of a police mentor team, representatives from several Afghan governmental ministries, and other international partners. After the assessment, the second phase began as an Afghan National Civil Order Police unit deployed to the district to relieve the local Afghan Uniformed Police. The uniformed police then reported to a regional training center to begin eight weeks

77. According to some defense experts, the Haqqani Network was the most formidable of the threats facing U.S. troops in that region. The North Waziristan–based group received support and training not only from the Pakistani intelligence services, but also from the al-Qaeda–affiliated Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. See Dressler, *The Haqqani Network*.

78. Salafism is a branch of Sunni Islam whose followers advocate a return to the traditional lifestyle of the first three generations of Muslims after the Prophet Muhammad. The ideology espoused by Salafists is considered extremely conservative.

79. "Report: Airstrike Killed Taliban Shadow Governor Sheikh Dost Mohammed," *Long War Journal*, 3 Mar 2011, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/03/report_airstrike_kil.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; West, *The Wrong War*, pp. 14–20.

80. Sascha Waltemate, "Focused District Development: Turning Point for Police Building in Afghanistan?," DIAS-Analysen 47 (Duesseldorf Institute for Foreign and Security Policy, 9 Apr 2011), p. 19.

of reconstitution (the third phase). In addition to intense training and administrative processing, the police received daily instruction from their mentor teams, which would return for a week with the reformed police unit to its home district (fourth phase). Once there, they began the fifth phase, consisting of twelve weeks of collective training in the district. Finally, after validating the trained police force, the mentor team shifted into an oversight role (during the sixth and final phase, lasting twelve weeks) to ensure the police retained the ethics and skills they had learned.[81] The first cycle of Focused District Development commenced in seven districts in November 2007.[82] McNeill had chosen these districts, which were scattered across the country, "for military imperatives rather than their potential for durable institutional reform."[83] Because of this criterion, McNeill's efforts to improve individual districts were unable to build momentum nationwide. Even so, the ISAF commander believed Focused District Development would "bear some fruit," although it would "take several years" to do so.[84] He was correct in his prediction. Shortages in available police mentor teams, trained civil order police, and training center billets slowed the pace of training. By December 2008, roughly fifty districts had undergone part or all of the program, though only the first seven had reached full capability.[85]

Although Focused District Development was a step in the right direction, several problems prevented it from building on its initial successes. In particular, the program suffered from a lack of necessary resources. The security transition command estimated that it needed a total of 399 police mentor teams, with the first 250 teams being fielded by the end of 2009 and the remainder by the end of 2010, to apply the program to the entire uniformed police force. Even if the additional personnel were made available by the stated milestones, too much time had passed for the program to meet the deadline established in the Afghanistan Compact for a fully trained and functioning police force by the end of 2010.[86] In addition, the Focused District Development effort placed so much unanticipated stress on the Afghan Civil Order Police that attrition rates skyrocketed and significantly threatened its capabilities.[87]

---

81. DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, p. 23.

82. Interv, Clay with Ives, 25 Feb 2009, p. 14.

83. International Crisis Group, "Policing in Afghanistan: Still Searching for a Strategy," Asia Bfg 85 (Kabul/Brussels:, 18 Dec 2008), p. 12; DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, p. 23.

84. McNeill is taking the number of districts (364) and adding a capital district for each of the 34 provinces, hence the total of 398. Interv, Sanborn with McNeill, 21 Apr 2009, p. 13.

85. U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Afghanistan Security: U.S. Programs to Further Reform Ministry of Interior and National Police Challenged by Lack of Military Personnel and Afghan Cooperation," GAO-09-280, Mar 2009, p. 15; Interv, Chandler-Garcia with Cone, 2 Mar 2009, p. 12.

86. GAO, "Afghanistan Security," p. 17.

87. Perito, *Afghanistan's Civil Order Police*, pp. 7–8.

Growing and Mentoring the Afghan National Army

If Americans were exasperated by the problems they faced in building the ANP, they could at least take satisfaction in the ANA, which was developing more or less according to plan. The program called for creating an ANA that could act as the bridge between ISAF and the Afghan police. Coalition forces were responsible for engaging with and destroying enemy forces and reducing opposition enclaves to a point at which they could hand over responsibility to the ANA, whose mission was to prevent the enemy from reestablishing a foothold in that area. Once the central government had secured a solid police and governance presence in that region, the ANA would then turn its security responsibilities over to the Afghan police.

However, the ANA's potential had not been acknowledged at the onset, when the DoD viewed it as a counterbalance to warlord militias rather than a full-fledged counterinsurgency partner. As a result, the nascent Afghan military did not receive sufficient security assistance funding from the start. Although additional dollars were allocated from 2003 onward, the Bush administration remained reluctant to send more trainers, invest in building ministerial capacity, or create a logistics infrastructure. U.S. efforts continued to gain momentum, but the main problem from 2005 to 2008 was not the ANA's structure, deployment, or ethnic balance but rather its effectiveness against the resurgent Taliban. Battlefield proficiency took time to develop. Even so, compared to the problems affecting the ANP, the ANA remained a bright spot in the effort to build Afghan National Security Forces.

The most positive ANA development from September 2005 to November 2008 resulted from the decision to implement Accelerating Success. That program succeeded in increasing kandak production to the point at which the Ministry of Defense could start building regional corps. In addition to the Kabul Corps, renamed the 201st Sailab (Flood) Corps, the Ministry of Defense had established the 203d Tandar (Thunder) Corps in Paktiya Province, the 205th Atal (Hero) Corps in Kandahar Province, the 207th Zafar (Victory) Corps in Herat Province, and the 209th Shaheen (Falcon) Corps in Balkh Province. These commands continued to grow as the allowable size of the ANA increased from 70,000 to 80,000 in February 2008. The authorized ceiling rose again in September to 122,000.[88]

Each of the ANA's corps resided in one of the coalition's regional commands, presenting opportunities for partnered operations.[89] Partnering increased in frequency under Eikenberry and expanded to include coalition forces after McNeill took over ISAF. Including kandaks on operations did not differ tactically from working with warlord militias or early incarnations of Afghan security forces; nonetheless, it had strategic benefit in that it helped

88. Obaid Younossi et al., "The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army," National Def Research Institute, sponsored by the Royal Danish Def College and the Office of the Sec Def (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2009), pp. 7, 23.

89. The operational boundaries for the ANA corps did not align perfectly with U.S. or ISAF operational areas, resulting in some overlap regarding unit partnering.

legitimize the Afghan national government. Coalition units partnered with Afghan forces "in almost all operations," letting them take "the lead in about half of them by 2009."[90]

Embedded Training Teams operating under Task Force Phoenix became the primary mechanism for overseeing Afghan units in the field. These nineteen-man teams started working with kandaks before graduation and shared their expertise in both garrison and combat duties. Like many jobs in Afghanistan, training-team duty was difficult. Embedded teams served far from U.S. leadership, logistical support, the reach of protective fires, and medical evacuation coverage.[91] They ate, slept, and fought side by side with their Afghan partners, often with limited interactions with or support from coalition maneuver forces. This isolation was not lost on the Taliban, who found the teams to be tempting targets.[92] The training teams were also dangerous to the insurgents, as they had ready access to the freshest and most actionable human intelligence available to non-Afghan forces. Utilizing the information they collected proved challenging, however, as there was no advisory intelligence chain that could receive reports from the field and conduct timely analysis.[93]

Filling these billets proved similarly frustrating. Even after reducing Embedded Training Teams to sixteen soldiers, TF Phoenix never received the personnel it needed to meet requirements. The soldiers it did get often were not of the appropriate rank or specialty for the job, or lacked the training or experience to serve as effective mentors. The personnel shortage was serious enough that a 2005 Army study recommended filling officer positions with senior noncommissioned officers, despite Afghan reluctance to interact with

---

90. Younossi et al., "The Long March," p. xiii.

91. Interv, Steve Clay, CSI, with Brig Gen Thomas Mancino, frmr Joint TF Phoenix II Cdr, 12 Sep 2007, p. 16, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

92. Benjamin Tupper, *Greetings from Afghanistan, Send More Ammo: Dispatches from Taliban Country* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), p. 14. As late as 2006, the joint manning document for the Embedded Training Teams did not include a medic. For comparison, Military Transition Teams in Iraq each had a medic by this point. Interv, Capt Shawn O'Brien, CSI, with Maj Stephen Boesen, frmr Embedded Training Team Leader, 7 Jul 2008, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

93. Most units continued to grapple with the challenges of bringing in information from other sources (including embedded advisers) and then distributing their analysis to the wider community of operators, including their Afghan partnered units. As each element conducted its own analysis independently, the fusion of intelligence knowledge was not guaranteed. "We [knew] little about how various pieces of the puzzle fit from one region into another," said one Army officer deployed as an embedded adviser; see Capt Daniel I. Helmer, "Twelve Urgent Steps for the Advisor Mission in Afghanistan," *Military Review* 88, no. 4 (Jul-Aug 2008): 75–76. An additional hurdle involved intelligence sharing. Unless an intelligence product was made specifically with a "Release" or "Display" caveat, it could not be shared with Afghan forces, even if the information was originally collected by Afghan government sources. As a result, shared intelligence products with Afghan partners often "looked like Swiss cheese," and failed to convey the level of trust implied in partnered operations; see Interv, Col Bryan Gibby, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Travis J. Maples, frmr S–2, 4th Bde Combat Team, 10th Mtn, 11 Jan 2016, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

coalition advisers of lesser rank.[94] NATO's assumption of the ISAF mission did not resolve the problem. Although the alliance had a formation to replace training teams—Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams—it experienced the same team staffing and support challenges that U.S. forces did. Larger than the Embedded Training Teams (twenty-five versus sixteen personnel), mentor teams began replacing their American counterparts in May 2006 when a British team started advising the 3d Brigade, 205th Corps, in Helmand Province. Progress was slow: by August 2008, NATO had contributed personnel for only thirty-four of the seventy-one teams deemed necessary to meet ANA training goals.[95]

TF Phoenix experienced similar difficulties providing sufficient training teams for the 203d Corps in RC East. Because kandaks needed advisers until they were "fully capable of planning, executing and sustaining operations," they had to be supported by successive training or mentor team rotations.[96] As a result, the ANA required a steadily increasing number of advisers. The 119 teams (71 NATO and 48 U.S.) authorized in summer 2008 were estimated to grow to "125 teams in December 2009, 133 teams in December 2010, 141 teams in December 2011, 159 teams in December 2012, and 168 teams in December 2014."[97] Given the scarcity of necessary team personnel in 2008, filling the projected 40 percent increase in teams over the next six years would be impossible without a proportional expansion of the international training mission.

As U.S. conventional forces struggled to find the personnel to partner with Afghan security forces, SOF found similar opportunities dwindling. With the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process winding down in 2005, SOF units had fewer non-Kabul-sanctioned defense forces with which to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Eikenberry accelerated the SOF transition away from partnering operations by directing CJSOTF–Afghanistan commander Col. Edward M. Reeder Jr. to disband the remaining Afghan militia forces partnered with SOF and position his detachments so as to prevent the Taliban from disrupting the upcoming elections. SOF responded by increasing counterterrorism missions in support of Eikenberry and his priorities but did so with decreasing efficiency as SOF operations depended on intelligence gained from their ANSF partners and the access they provided to local communities.[98]

After analyzing the most effective use of the limited U.S. SOF available in Afghanistan, Special Operations Command Central directed Colonel Reeder to form an Afghan special operations capability.[99] Reeder proposed the creation of Ranger-like, light infantry kandaks. Both 3d Special Forces

---

94. Rpt, TF Phoenix, "Afghan National Army Study Phase I Report Executive Summary," 25 Jun–14 Jul 2005, pp. 18–19, File # 22, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

95. Younossi et al., "The Long March," pp. 34–40.

96. Ibid., p. 41.

97. Ibid., p. 38.

98. Ibid.

99. Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, p. 12.

Group and Special Operations Command Central supported the initiative, which helped develop new Afghan Commando kandaks over the next eight months.[100] American SOF formed these units by selecting 100 soldiers from existing ANA kandaks and sending them to Jordan to receive specialized training.[101] After returning to Afghanistan in March 2007, these soldiers formed the cadre for the first two Commando kandaks.[102] By 16 October 2008, each of the five ANA corps had one Commando kandak consisting of 865 officers and enlisted personnel supporting its operations. Two of these units functioned at partial operational capability, two at initial operational capability, and one had just been formed.[103] Even with the varying capabilities between Commando kandaks, the high standards, constant training, and continued support from Reeder's command enabled the Afghan Special Forces to become one of the most effective organizations within the Afghan military.[104]

With the addition of the Commando kandaks, the ANA increased to roughly 70,000 trained soldiers by the end of 2008. Of the forty-two infantry kandaks rated in October 2008, seven were deemed capable of planning, executing, and sustaining operations without the support of mentor or training teams. Thirteen more were assessed to be partially operational, meaning that they could plan and support operations but still required guidance from embedded mentors.[105] Overall, roughly 40 percent of the ANA was judged partially or fully capable of conducting operations above the company level independently or with some support.[106] However, a corresponding 60 percent of the ANA still lacked that capability. Considering that the United States had contributed over $10 billion to train and equip the ANA between 2002 and 2008, tremendous work would be needed before the ANA could make good on that investment.[107]

---

100. Interv, Col Adrian Donahoe, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Gen Christopher Haas, 7 Jan 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

101. *History of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 6th Edition*, p. 119.

102. Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, p. 12.

103. Younossi et al., "The Long March," pp. 44–45.

104. For a more complete description of the SOF units training the Afghan Commandos and their first major mission in April 2008, Operation COMMANDO WRATH, see Mitch Weiss and Kevin Maurer, *No Way Out: A Story of Valor in the Mountains of Afghanistan* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2012).

105. ANA units were rated by ISAF and CSTC-A according to four capability milestones that ranged from level four (training) to level one (full operational capability); Memo, CSTC-A,29 Jan 2008, sub: Campaign Plan for the Development of Afghan National Military and Police Forces-Interim, pp. 13–14, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. see For a complete breakdown of the ANA according to capability milestone criteria, see Table 3.3, "Capability Milestones," and Table 4.1, "Military Unit Capabilities," in Younossi et al., "The Long March," pp. 41, 47.

106. GAO, "Afghanistan Security: Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces," Jun 2008, p. 20.

107. Ibid., p. 11.

Expanding Development

While ISAF increased efforts to build capable Afghan security forces, it also worked to expedite the Afghan governance capacity. The latter effort continued to be challenging. Even though Provincial Reconstruction Teams continued to invest significant effort into new construction and development projects, they found it difficult to make a fundamental and lasting impact on the Afghan standard of living. Reports from reconstruction teams indicated that agricultural knowledge, which had been passed down orally in a culture with a 10 to 15 percent literacy rate, had vanished as tens of thousands of farmers perished or sought other employment as a result of more than twenty years of conflict.[108] Consequently, U.S. civilian and military leaders developed a concept to deploy soldiers with agricultural expertise and embedded security capabilities to Afghanistan as part of the Agribusiness Development Teams. By improving the agricultural system of a nation in which 80 percent of the population was involved in farming or herding, the program would offer young men a reason not to join the insurgency and also contribute significantly to their communities' standards of living. Although the new program marked a change in how the coalition interacted with rural Afghans, it built on a concept that the United States had used with success for more than two decades in Central America.[109] All told, the National Guard Bureau sent six teams in support of Combined Joint Task Force 101 (CJTF-101) (which would replace CJTF-82) during the first year of the program.[110]

The first project for the agribusiness teams was to train Afghan government officials how to perform the duties of provincial and district agricultural advisers. Team members then made their presence known to local communities by teaching farmers techniques to provide better care for the fruit trees that the Americans found in almost every Afghan compound they visited. The teams distributed basic tools such as tree saws, grafting knives, and metal buckets filled with two pounds of hydrated lime—all suitably marked "Courtesy of the Afghan government"—to improve the growing conditions for the fruit. Agribusiness Development Teams built upon their initial offering to rural Afghans with lessons on how to care for fruit trees, fertilize soil, and take care of farm animals.[111] Unlike many

---

108. Interv, Maj Alan Skinner, 138th Military History Detachment (MHD), with Col Brian R. Copes, frmr Missouri Army National Guard Agribusiness Development Team Agribusiness Dev Team Cdr, 25 Jan 2011, pp. 9–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

109. The group who developed the plan included Secretary of the Army Preston Murdoch "Pete" Geren III, Army National Guard director Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, Missouri Farm Bureau president Charles E. Kruse, and Missouri National Guard adjutant general Maj. Gen. King E. Sidwell. Jenny Solon, ed., "Agribusiness Development Teams in Afghanistan; Tactics, Techniques and Procedures," Handbook 10 – 10, Nov 2009, Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., p. 1.

110. Info Paper, sub: Agribusiness Development Team (ADT), 2008 U.S. Army Posture Statement, https://www.army.mil/aps/08/information_papers/other/ARNG_Agribusiness_Development_Team.html, accessed 13 Apr 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

111. Interv, Skinner with Copes, 25 Jan 2011, pp. 11–12.



U.S. Army

Soldiers move through poppy fields in southern Afghanistan.

reconstruction team projects, the agribusiness teams produced sustainable local effects that resulted in long-term gains for Afghans, the ultimate goal for the international development effort.

An Interagency Approach

The growing importance of reconstruction within the overall counterinsurgency approach mandated the need for greater interagency coordination at all levels. Provincial Reconstruction Teams continued to serve as the interagency coordinators for individual provinces while the civil affairs cell within brigade combat teams did the same for all of the provinces within its area of operations. An integrated civil-military action group, consisting of senior State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and military officers with roles in development, was established within the U.S. embassy in 2008 and met regularly to provide senior decision makers with information and recommendations. The State Department's Office of the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization ensured the synergy of the overall effort through planning officers assigned to the embassy, brigades, and reconstruction teams.[112]

The project initiated by the 173d Airborne Brigade staff in Nangarhar Province in 2008 illustrates the benefits of an interagency approach. Nangarhar Inc. brought together U.S. players involved in counterinsurgency, counternarcotics, and long-term development in the province. The brigade

112. Robert Kemp, "Development and COIN in Regional Command–East, 2004–2008," *Military Review* 92, no. 3 (May-Jun 2012): 8.

staff members thought that providing the local population with economic opportunities would complement ongoing counterinsurgency efforts, as most Taliban members in the province appeared to be motivated less by politics or ideology and more by the need to support themselves and their families. The brigade sought to create a sustainable model rather than rely on short-term projects, but it ran into problems because it received little or no assistance from civilian agencies. In an effort to restart the project, the brigade commander sent eight leaders, including his operations officer, fire support officer, CJTF-82 liaison officer, and representatives from the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, to the U.S. Embassy to work with State Department and U.S. development assistance officials on a coordinated economic development plan for the province.[113]

The final version of the plan included a range of projects classified as quick-impact, near-term, and long-range. Quick-impact projects offered Afghan farmers a way out of the opium poppy trade, encouraging them to increase their economic gains by growing alternative crops. Near-term and long-range goals were designed to enable quick-impact projects to realize a profit. Near-term goals involved purchasing portable cold storage units that vendors could use to refrigerate produce before selling it in Pakistan. The high fuel costs of these cold storage units, however, prevented them from being a viable long-term solution. To address this predicament, the 173d Airborne Brigade staff initiated a long-term project to build a series of dams in adjacent Kunar Province that would provide Nangarhar merchants with electricity and improve the storage and transportation options for the local economy. The scope and cost of the long-term project required interagency involvement at all levels because the project fell within the purview of multiple U.S. agencies as well as several Afghan government ministries. The Nangarhar Inc. model demonstrated that multiple agencies could work together to contribute to the overall counterinsurgency effort. It proved so promising that reconstruction teams in Kunar, Laghman, and eastern Nuristan Provinces adopted a similar approach.[114]

Yet even with the success of Nangarhar Inc., the varying capabilities and resources of the different reconstruction teams made it difficult to replicate this model across all of Afghanistan. ISAF had yet to standardize the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which complicated attempts to link efforts across provincial lines. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe's operations plan acknowledged that "a 'one size fits all' PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team] makeup could not be applied to various Afghan provinces," but it still "connected the 'desired strategic impact' to convergence between PRT activities and synchronized movement toward common objectives."[115] Whether a diverse reconstruction team system truly could achieve stability—while also reflecting a unified effort—remained to be seen. Without that

113. Spencer, "Afghanistan's Nangarhar Inc., A Model for Interagency Success," p. 36.

114. Ibid., pp. 38–40.

115. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, pp. 104–05; Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, SACEUR OPLAN 10302 (Revise 1), Sections 3.b.3 and 3.b.4, and App 1, Section 2, 8 Nov 2005, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

unified effort, the various training, reconstruction, and development teams would become an impediment to the very thing they were trying to achieve: a capable, sustainable Afghan state.

Chapter Five

Campaign at the Crossroads



With NATO forces fully engaged across Afghanistan and General Dan K. McNeill aligning, however informally, the American and ISAF efforts, the coalition was approaching the point of maximum effort under economy-of-force resourcing. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates' approval of an additional American brigade had increased the Army's footprint, but rather than significantly expanding the American campaign, the arriving troops mainly shored up ISAF's ability to continue to execute its current operations. Even as the situation in Iraq improved as a result of the surge, coalition forces in Afghanistan were working to simply maintain a status quo against an insurgency that showed little signs of abating.

Continuing Issues with Pakistan

Although more American troops were deploying to RC East, their presence exerted limited influence in Pakistan's adjacent tribal areas. Before the September 2006 peace agreement in North Waziristan, the tribal areas became a collective sanctuary where al-Qaeda terrorists intermingled with the Haqqani family network, Taliban sympathizers, and radicalized tribes such as the Mehsud, and were able to operate with relative impunity. Using funds from various sources, including wealthy private donors from the Arab states in the Persian Gulf region, the militants succeeded in acquiring better weaponry than Pakistan's Frontier Corps, who nominally were in charge of controlling the border provinces.[1] As one Western official noted, militants "have rockets. They have advanced weapons. And the Frontier Corps has sandals and a bolt-action rifle."[2] While Washington pressured Islamabad to take more aggressive action in dealing with the militant problem, President George W. Bush acknowledged that controlling the remote mountainous region was difficult, describing it as "wilder than the Wild West."[3] Even

1. "Mapping Militant Organizations: Haqqani Network," Stanford University, 8 Nov 17, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/363, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. Griff Witte, "Pakistan Seen Losing Fight Against Taliban and Al-Qaeda," *Washington Post*, 3 Oct 2007, https://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/021 AR2007100202211_pf.html (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

3. Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Pressing Allies, President Warns of Afghan Battle," *New York Times*, 15 Feb 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/16/washington/16prexy.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

though the Bush administration was under no illusions about the region's instability, it had given Pakistan $1 billion a year for the past five years and now wanted a return on that investment.[4]

General McNeill, the ISAF commander, remained frustrated with the situation across the border. He had clear evidence of a spike in insurgent attacks in RC East after the Waziristan peace agreement, an increase he logically attributed to the fact that "the Pakistanis quit putting pressure on them." McNeill recalled the radical jihadist leader Baitullah Mehsud telling a gathering of reporters, "Jihad knows no boundaries. There is no reason why we can't go to Afghanistan."[5] Because of the NATO mandate, however, McNeill had limited options in addressing issues with Pakistan. He had no authority to conduct operations across the border and could only affect the situation by improving relations among ISAF forces, Afghans, and Pakistanis. One method of achieving the desired level of unity was the Tripartite Commission, a set of recurring meetings between McNeill, Afghan chief of defense General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, and Pakistan Army chief of staff General Ahsan Hyat (later replaced by General Ashfaq Kayani). Yet getting the sides to cooperate proved difficult. "There is deep and abiding suspicion between the Pakistanis and the Afghans," McNeill noted, "and it is not going away anytime soon."[6]

In an effort to expand the program, Brig. Gen. Joseph L. Votel, the CJTF-82 deputy commander for operations, began coordinating meetings among Afghan, Pakistani, and coalition general officers and senior colonels in early 2007. Votel held these meetings to resolve issues and improve coordination in targeting insurgents traveling across the border.[7] The ultimate goal was to formalize the program with a series of border coordination centers that could bring "Afghans, Paks [Pakistanis], and ISAF, [and] the US, under one roof where they could coordinate activities on a portion of the border."[8] The program went slowly as long-standing disputes over the location of the border and Pakistan's previous support of the Taliban created considerable distrust. An incident during a 14 May meeting in Pakistan, in which U.S. Maj. Larry J. Bauguess Jr. was murdered by a Pakistani soldier, amplified American concerns over Islamabad's ability to deal with the internal threat posed by radical Islamists.[9]

---

4. Jane Perlez and Ishmail Khan, "Taliban Spreading, Pakistani President Is Warned," *New York Times*, 30 Jun 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/30/world/asia/30pakistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Gen Dan K. McNeill, frmr ISAF Cdr, 24 Aug 2009, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

6. Ibid., p. 14.

7. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Martin P. Schweitzer, frmr TF Fury Cdr, 10 Dec 2008, pp. 12–13 , Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Maj Gen Joseph Votel, frmr CJTF-82 Deputy Cdr for Opns, 14 Jan 2009, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Major Bauguess was the operations officer for the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division. After a five-hour meeting, a Pakistani soldier fired on the Americans as they prepared to depart. Bauguess was killed instantly and several other

President Pervez Musharraf's government was slowly recognizing the danger these groups posed. The situation finally exploded in early July when a brigade of Pakistani soldiers surrounded the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) complex in Islamabad. Activists from the mosque had been increasingly aggressive in enforcing their moral views on the community; in one notable instance, they had kidnapped six Chinese women from a local acupuncture clinic on the charge that it was a brothel. Government forces eventually stepped in and laid siege to the mosque for a week (3–11 July). After a three-day battle that resulted in the deaths of more than one hundred militants, including numerous students, and at least ten Pakistani soldiers, the Pakistani military finally seized the compound.[10]

The assault on the Red Mosque reignited the conflict between Islamic militants and the Musharraf government that had been simmering since the North Waziristan peace treaty. Musharraf declared a renewed commitment to securing the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and stated, "Extremism and terrorism will be defeated in every corner of the country."[11] Fazal Hayat, more commonly known by his pseudonym Mullah Fazlullah, one of several radical Islamists energized by the mosque raid, initiated his own revolt against the government that July in the Khiali Valley of the Northwest Frontier Province.[12]

By the fall of 2007, the Pakistan government was in crisis. As militants targeted the Pakistani military and intelligence community, Musharraf began to see his political support crumble.[13] Former political leaders such

---

Americans were wounded. His commander, Lt. Col. Steven A. Baker, disputed characterizing the attack as the act of a lone individual, instead describing it as "almost like a choreographed event"; see Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Lt Col Steven A. Baker, frmr Special Troops Bn, 4th Bde Combat Team, 82d Abn Div Cdr, 18 Nov 2008, pp. 14–16, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. A 2011 *New York Times* investigation, highly critical of official reporting, described attackers firing upon the Americans from multiple positions. Carlotta Gall, "Pakistanis Tied to 2007 Border Attack on Americans," *New York Times*, 26 Sep 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/27/world/asia/pakistanis-tied-to-2007-attack-on-americans.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

10. The mosque's madrassas reportedly taught as many as 10,000 students. The abductors included students from the mosque and at least ten burqa-clad women armed with batons. "Red Mosque Radicals Kidnap Chinese Workers in Raid," *Sunday Times* (Colombo, Sri Lanka), 24 Jun 2007, https://www.sundaytimes.lk/070624/International/i518.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Carlotta Gall and Salman Masood, "At Least 40 Militants Dead as Pakistani Military Storms Mosque After Talks Fail," *New York Times*, 10 Jul 2007, https://nytimes.com/2007/07/10/world/asia/10pakistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 381–83; Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 163–68.

11. "Red Mosque Cleric Predicts 'Islamic Revolution,'" *Associated Press*, 12 Jul 2007, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/19722713/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. The Northwest Frontier Province was formally renamed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in 2010. Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, pp. 145–47; Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows*, pp. 234–35; "Swat Valley: Timeline," Mount Holyoke University, May 2009, https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~naqvi20r/classweb/swat/Timeline.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. The truces in both South and North Waziristan collapsed after the Red Mosque attack. Suicide bombers began targeting Pakistani soldiers and Inter-Services Intelligence

as Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif openly challenged his government. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Supreme Court appeared on the verge of declaring the president's reelection in October invalid. In the face of internal and external threats to his power, Musharraf declared a state of emergency on 3 November, suspending the country's constitution, blacking out independent media, and postponing the upcoming parliamentary elections.[14] Amid domestic and international opposition, Musharraf agreed that he would step down as head of the Pakistani Army the day before he took the oath of office for a new five-year term and would hold parliamentary elections in early 2008.[15] Although he remained in office, Musharraf relinquished his influence over the Pakistani military. Pakistan's political structure was imploding just as the jihadist militancy was threatening to overwhelm the state.[16]

By December 2007, Baitullah Mehsud had increased his political power so much that he could form the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, as an umbrella group harnessing various Islamist factions fighting against the Islamabad government. Although not formally affiliated with Mullah Mohammed Omar's Taliban, many Pakistani Taliban commanders and foot soldiers had fought in Afghanistan. Baitullah Mehsud's forces also benefitted from associations with al-Qaeda, the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and other extremists.[17] This convergence of talent and tactics spawned an increase in suicide attacks against the Pakistani state from 56 in 2007 to more than 100 in 2008, resulting in a staggering 461 deaths.[18] When Benazir Bhutto was assassinated at a political rally in Rawalpindi on 27 December 2007, the Pakistani government and CIA blamed militants with ties to Baitullah's organization and al-Qaeda.[19] Bhutto's death was a tragic end to a long year in

---

personnel. Witte, "Pakistan Seen Losing Fight Against Taliban and Al-Qaeda"; Abdul Nishapuri, "Maulana Hassan Jan, an Unsung Hero," *World Shia Forum*, 31 Jul 2012, https://worldshiaforum.wordpress.com/2012/07/31/maulana-hassan-jan-an-unsung-hero-by-abdul-nishapuri/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. David Rohde, "Musharraf Declares State of Emergency," *New York Times*, 3 Nov 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/03/world/asia/04pakistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 387–93.

16. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 176–77.

17. Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, pp. 139, 146, 155; Abbas, *The Taliban Revival*, pp. 151–52.

18. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) also produced suicide bombers for the Taliban in Afghanistan. Mullah Dadullah allegedly received the bulk of his suicide bombers from madrassas in South Waziristan. See Claudio Franco, "The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan," in *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, ed. Antonio Giustozzi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 283.

19. Joby Warrick, "CIA Places Blame for Bhutto Assassination," *Washington Post*, 18 Jan 2008, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/17/AR2008011703252.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Critics of the Musharraf government raised concerns that it either was directly involved in the assassination or had advanced knowledge and did nothing to prevent it. Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 374–79; Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 179–81; Salman Massod and Declan Walsh, "Pakistani Court Indicts Musharraf in 2007 Assassination of Bhutto," *New York Times*, 20 Aug 2013, https://www.

which radical Islamic fundamentalists in Pakistan offered a more direct and severe challenge to Islamabad than to the fledgling Karzai administration. This new focus made it increasingly unlikely that whoever was in power in Islamabad would be able to offer meaningful assistance to the United States, ISAF, or the Afghan government.

A Shift in the ISAF Effort

As Pakistan grew increasingly unstable, TF Fury made progress in the southern zone of RC East. It expanded the coalition footprint, blocked traditional insurgent infiltration routes, and supported the continuing development of ANSF. In Khost Province, Taliban presence declined until it was more nuisance than threat. The TF Professionals commander, Lt. Col. Scott D. Custer, thought simple criminal activity was the most prevalent problem.[20] Colonel Custer developed a good working relationship with the provincial governor, Arsallah Jamal, whom he considered an effective leader, and encouraged his unit commanders to establish productive relationships with district leaders.[21]

Other provinces proved less welcoming than Khost. In eastern Paktika and western Ghazni, which Operation Maiwand had cleared of insurgents, neither the Afghan government nor TF Fury could prevent the return of terrorist groups.[22] Less than a month after Maiwand, the Taliban captured and held hostage twenty-three South Korean missionaries who were traveling south of the city of Ghazni. The Taliban accused them of proselytizing, while their church leaders claimed they only were doing relief work [23] Much to the dismay of the Americans, the Korean government negotiated directly with the Taliban, "acknowledging or promoting the legitimacy of the enemy," as one American officer put it.[24] Following six weeks of negotiations, during which the captors killed two of the hostages and released two others, the Taliban released the remainder after securing a promise from Seoul to withdraw its 200 troops by the end of the year.[25] Subsequently, U.S. special operators systematically dismantled the kidnappers' network within six weeks, but

---

nytimes.com/2013/08/21/world/asia/pakistani-court-indicts-musharraf-in-assassination-of-bhutto.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Interv, Sanborn with Custer, 12 Nov 2008, pp. 7–8.

21. Ibid., p. 11. Arsallah Jamal died in a 2013 mosque bombing while serving as governor of Logar Province; see "Afghanistan Bomb Blast Kills Prominent Governor Arsallah Jamal of Logar Province," CBS News, 15 Oct 2013, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-bomb-blast-kills-prominent-governor-arsallah-jamal-of-logar-province/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Interv, Kim Sanborn, CSI, with Lt Col Timothy McAteer, frmr 2d Bn, 508th Inf Cdr, 30 Dec 2008, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. Choe Sang-Hun, "Afghan Hostage Crisis Transfixes South Korea," *New York Times*, 26 Jul 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/26/world/asia/26iht-korea.4.6849627.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

24. Interv, Connors with Shoults, 21 Oct 2008, p. 16.

25. "Taliban Promise to Free South Koreans," *World*, 28 Aug 2007, https://world.wng.org/2007/08/taliban_promise_to_free_south_koreans, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the message had been clear: just as they had in Iraq, terrorists could force coalition members to pull out of contested areas.[26]

By summer 2007, the continuing security threat convinced McNeill that ISAF needed to be more aggressive in targeting insurgents. Two months into his tour, he could not get a definitive agreement from coalition members or the Afghan government as to the purpose of Afghan Development Zones. Without a consensus, he abandoned the concept.[27] McNeill believed the zones were too ill-defined to support economic development, especially because security remained so poor. He told one Afghan government official, "We're not where we need to be in security for these things to have a fair chance to succeed. It's that simple."[28]

For McNeill, the problem with the American approach was not a lack of effort, but faulty design. He thought that the continuing instability in RC East warranted shifting the main ISAF effort from the south. Of particular concern was Haqqani infiltration into the Tora Bora cave system in southern Nangarhar, from which the network could interdict the main road between Kabul and Jalalabad. To address this challenge, McNeill transferred his Theater Tactical Force, Lt. Col. Brian J. Mennes' 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, from RC South to RC East in August.[29] The paratroopers in the Theater Tactical Force conducted a relief-in-place with Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Milhorn's TF Raptor before taking responsibility for Nangarhar Province. They would stand ready as the ISAF reserve, keeping one company and the battalion command element prepared to move within twenty-four hours, with the remainder following within forty-eight to seventy-two hours.[30] The Theater Tactical Force remained in RC East until November, when it returned to RC South to help prepare for winter operations.[31]

Operation Pamir Hamkari (October 2007–March 2008)

McNeill's shift away from the Afghan Development Zone concept required an overhaul of CJTF-82's campaign plan. Intelligence analysis indicated that insurgent groups were adjusting to the presence of two combat brigades within RC East. Although they were capable of massing when necessary or when the opportunity arose, they were more interested in mounting attacks that generated instability rather than defeating ISAF and Afghan forces. To accomplish this, the various groups increased cooperation, coordinating a

---

26. Interv, Connors with Shoults, 21 Oct 2008, p. 16.

27. Interv, Sanborn with McNeill, 24 Aug 2009, p. 18.

28. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Dan K. McNeill, frmr ISAF Cdr, 18 Sep 2015, p. 116, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. OPORD, Cdr, Combined Joint Task Force (COMCJTF)-82, 23 Jul 2007, sub: CJTF82 OPORD 07-23 (TTF [Theater Tactical Force] EMPLOYMENT IN RC-E), NAAR, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Ibid.

31. Presentation, CJ35, CJTF-82, "TTF Way Ahead," Slide 4, 14 Oct 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



102d MHD

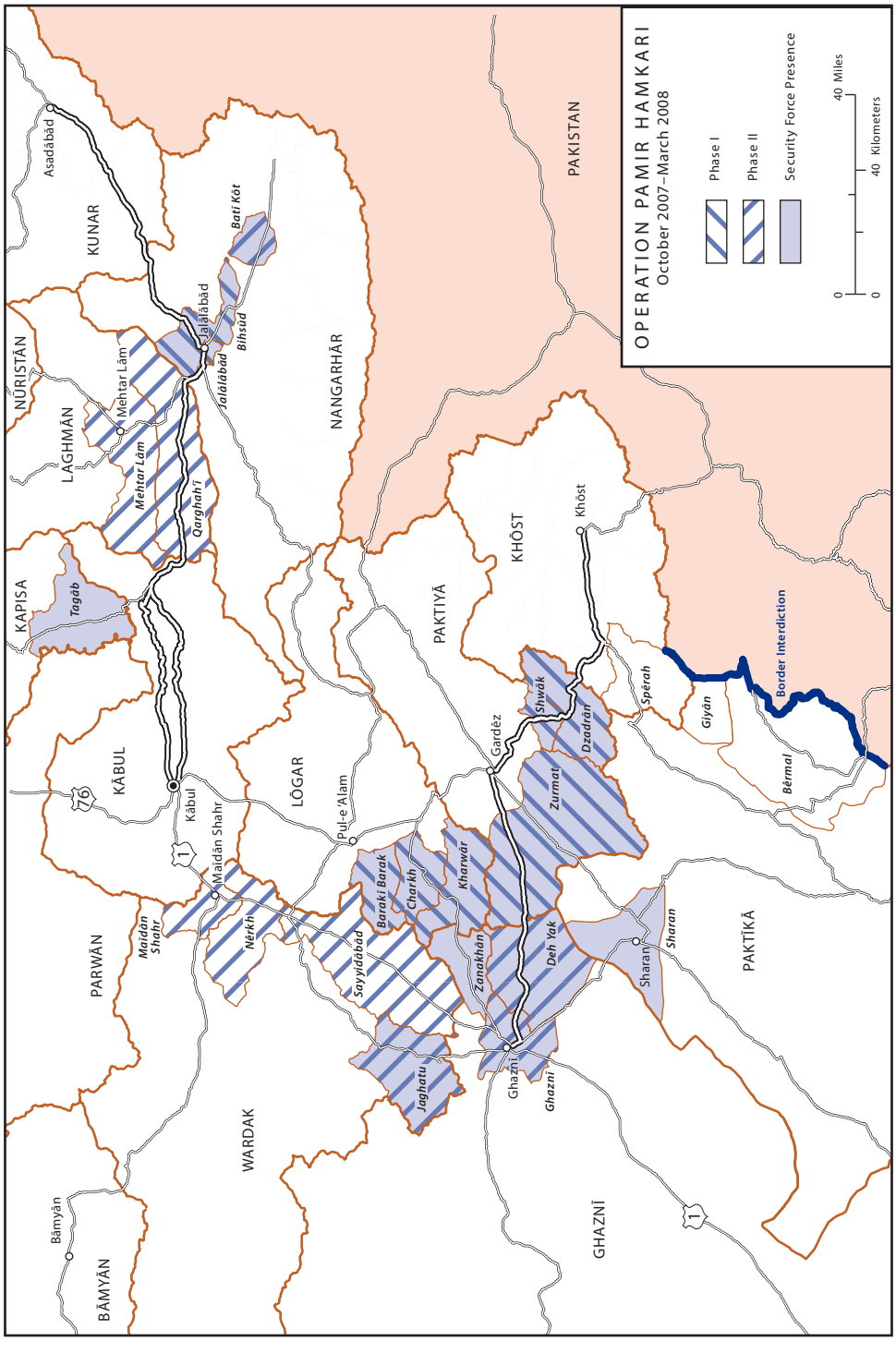
Sgt. Jonathan Guidry of the 173d Airborne Brigade takes a break during operations to reestablish security in RC East.

two-pronged approach to keep ISAF off balance. They continued attacking Afghan Border Police units, forcing other ISAF forces to respond when necessary. At the same time, insurgents sought to establish positions in provinces surrounding Kabul from which they could mount intimidation campaigns against the residents and direct terror attacks against the Afghan government.

To combat these efforts, CJTF-82 developed an operations order to serve as the division's campaign plan from October 2007 to March 2008. The revised plan shifted CJTF-82's focus away from the population by aggressively targeting insurgents. Termed Operation Pamir Hamkari (Mountain Teamwork), it specified that "the decisive operation will remain with TF Fury and its partnered ANA, ANP, and Afghan Border Police forces. TF Bayonet and TF Cincinnatus with their Afghan security counterparts will conduct shaping operations to help set conditions for the main effort."[32] Forces within RC East would maintain pressure along the Pakistan border while continuing to develop ANSF (*Map 5.1*).[33] Pamir Hamkari sought to maintain pressure on the insurgents during the fall and winter in order to disrupt their ability to resume operations in 2008. To ensure favorable conditions for the spring 2008 campaign, Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez and his planners "concentrate[d] CJTF-82's finite resources into prioritized districts to reinforce success from Operation Oqab Hamkari and adjust[ed] to changes in the operational

32. Msg, RC East Bagram AFG [Afghanistan] CJ3 [Joint Special Operations], 15 Sep 2007, sub: CJTF-82 OPORD 07–28, para. 3.B.5., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Ibid., para. 1.C.3.A.


OPERATION PAMIR HAMKARI
October 2007–March 2008
Phase I
Phase II
Security Force Presence
0
40 Miles
0
40 Kilometers
PAKISTAN
NANGARHĀR
KUNAR
NŪRISTĀN
LAGHMĀN
KAPISA
KĀBUL
LŌGAR
PARWĀN
WARDAK
BĀMYĀN
PAKTIYĀ
KHŌST
PAKTĪKĀ
GHAZNĪ
Asadābād
Bati Kōt
Bihsūd
Jalālābād
Mehtar Lām
Qarghah'ī
Tagāb
Kābul
Maidān Shahr
Nērkh
Pul-e 'Alam
Gardēz
Khōst
Shwak
Dzadrān
Spērah
Giyān
Bērmal
Border Interdiction
Zurmat
Kharwār
Charkh
Barakī Barak
Sayyidābād
Jaghatu
Zanakhān
Deh Yak
Ghaznī
Sharan
Bāmyān
76
1
1

Map 5.1

environment."[34] They continued to frame the division's approach in the standard three lines of operation (security, governance, and development) but changed the targeted districts to commercial centers and those with critical lines of communications. Notably, Rodriguez's guidance stated that efforts to reinforce economic successes were "not limited to ADZs [Afghan Development Zones]."[35] This process included identifying essential Afghan leaders who understood the needs of the populace and supported the goals outlined in the Afghan National Development Strategy.[36]

In the first phase, the 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, continued its border security and interdiction efforts in the Burmal and Ster Giyan areas of Paktika Province as supporting efforts while focusing on the Sperah District of Khost Province for the campaign's main effort. Other maneuver forces would secure six vital districts: Dzadran, Shwak, and Zurmat in Paktiya Province; and Kharwar, Charkh, and Baraki Barak in Logar Province. These districts supported key commercial centers in Gardez and Khost. Disruption operations in several other districts were launched either to maintain ANSF and coalition presence or set conditions for phase two of the operation, scheduled to begin in mid-December.[37]

In the second phase, TF Fury would spread to the districts of Deh Yak and Ghazni in Ghazni Province, Jaghatu in Wardak Province, and Sharan in Paktika Province, while securing critical lines of communications and interdicting border crossings. In this manner, TF Fury sought to take advantage of the anticipated winter lull in insurgent activity to expand security operations and make areas hostile to insurgents when they returned in the spring.[38]

Despite the shift away from development zones and toward key districts and lines of communications, the campaign changed little at the tactical level. Instead, the main changes were geographic and therefore operational. The districts with lower priority were along Afghanistan National Highway 1, while higher-priority districts were generally closer to Kabul. Whether centered on Afghan Development Zones or Kabul, the operational approach for RC East still had to be executed by troops on the ground. Maneuver forces had to separate the enemy from the local population, connect that population to the central government, and transform areas from insurgent safe havens to loyal jurisdictions of the central government. It also did not alter efforts to develop ANSF capacity. Their ability to secure operational areas and connect with the population would be one criterion of future success. But there were limits to what U.S. forces could achieve. Without indigenous security forces providing for the needs of the people, it would be

34. Ibid., para. 3.B.1.

35. Presentation, CJ5, 29 Sep 2007, sub: CJTF-82 OPORD 07–28 OPORD Brief, Commanding General (CG) UPDATE, slide 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

36. Msg, RC East Bagram AFG CJ3, 15 Sep 2007, sub: CJTF-82 OPORD 07–28, paras. 3.B.2.–3.B.5.

37. Ibid., para. 3.C.1.A.1.

38. Ibid., paras. 3.C.1.B.–3.C.1.B.1.

difficult for the national government to attain public support. Absent that support and trust, the Karzai government would continue to compete with the insurgency for legitimate political authority.

The Challenge for Task Force Rock

For all of CJTF-82's focus on Gardez and on Khost Province, the soldiers of TF Bayonet in the northern sector of RC East endured some of the heaviest fighting in late 2007 and early 2008. Operation Pamir Hamkari called for TF Bayonet and its partnered Afghan forces to "maintain their forward presence," secure Bihsud and Jalalabad Districts in Nangarhar Province and the city of Asadabad in Kunar Province, continue to interdict cross-border infiltration, and maintain critical lines of communications. Although comprehensive, the effort equated only to a shaping operation for the decisive effort in TF Fury's sector to the south. As a supporting effort, TF Bayonet did not receive as many enablers (such as aviation support; funding for projects; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets) as available elsewhere.[39]

Nangarhar remained the focus of the TF Bayonet's economic development, but the Pech River Valley was the greatest challenge to implementing counterinsurgency tactics and gaining the support of the population. As Col. Charles A. Preysler's battalions distributed companies and platoons, troop levels at key points in the area of operations decreased commensurately, with some outposts held by as few as fifteen to twenty American soldiers, supported by assorted Afghan security personnel. As their units sought to secure areas where U.S. troops had earlier established a presence under far different conditions, some TF Bayonet leaders became concerned that their predecessors had "gone too far, too fast" in establishing bases in the remote valleys in Nuristan.[40] Few units suffered the dangers of dispersion more than Lt. Col. William B. Ostlund's TF Rock in the Pech River.

TF Rock had inherited efforts to build the Pech River Valley politically and economically. To protect these efforts, Ostlund directed his maneuver companies to maintain combat outposts and patrol in three surrounding valleys. Their goal was to extend security and development into the valleys and tie them to the main effort along the river. The TF Rock commander recalled:

> Each platoon went out on two patrols a day, every day, and the intent of nearly every patrol was a non-lethal engagement, checking on a project, meeting with the business people of a village, meeting with the farmers of a village, meeting with the teachers of a village, or meeting with political leaders. It was just shura after shura after shura after shura and with that

39. Ibid., paras. 3.C.1.A.2.

40. Lt Col Jimmy Hinton, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 26.

> constant interaction you kind of get it [i.e., understand the population and the environment].[41]

This constant presence gave Ostlund frequent opportunities to assess intelligence coming out of the communities and reposition forces accordingly. In some instances, this meant pulling back where units were not having the desired influence, or when positions became too difficult to maintain. Such conditions affected two combat outposts in the Waygal Valley: Bella and Ranch House. Both were held by less than a platoon and could be supported only by helicopters. Their small size and isolated positions were considered acceptable risks when they were established in 2006. However, while each new outpost increased the ability of Americans to reach Afghan civilians and link them to the government, it also provided another target for the enemy to attack.

The first significant indication of this vulnerability came on 22 August 2007 when a sizable insurgent force led by Hazrat Omar, a reputed al-Qaeda devotee and resident of the nearby village of Arahnas, assaulted Combat Outpost Ranch House. Having studied the outpost for weeks, Omar had devised a detailed plan that allowed his force to overrun the position before its defenders could mount an effective defense. After penetrating the outer perimeter, the estimated sixty attackers engaged the defenders with hand grenades, not being repulsed until the TF Rock soldiers called in close air support on their own position. Two Afghan soldiers were killed in the assault, and nearly half of the twenty-two American personnel at the outpost were wounded.[42] Hazrat Omar failed to gain the dramatic victory he so eagerly sought—the assault cost him his life without killing a single American.[43]

The attack forced the Army to reevaluate both outposts' locations. Delays in constructing a trafficable road up the valley meant that the local population remained largely isolated from the central government. The valley's residents, who generally did not want a closer relationship with Kabul, grew sympathetic to insurgent groups when the soldiers could not demonstrate the advantages of national governance. The outposts remained accessible only by air, which made them ideal targets for insurgents seeking to control the valley. With the change in circumstances, TF Rock closed Ranch House in October and prepared to transfer Bella to a more suitable position.[44]

Major changes were not limited to ISAF forces. Senior insurgent leaders remained determined to push the Americans out of the valley. With Hazrat Omar dead, they dispatched Mullah Maulawi Mohammed Osman to take

---

41. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Lt Col William B. Ostlund, frmr 2d Bn, 503d Inf Cdr, 19–20 Mar 2009, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. S Sgt Brandon Aird, "Sky Soldier Awarded Distinguished Service Cross," 173d Abn Bde Combat Team Public Affairs, 17 Sep 2008, https://www.army.mil/article/12493/sky-soldier-awarded-distinguished-service-cross/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Gregg Zoroya, *The Chosen Few: A Company of Paratroopers and Its Heroic Struggle to Survive in the Mountains of Afghanistan* (Boston: De Capo Press, 2017), pp. 66–67, 90, 104.

44. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Ostlund, 19–20 Mar 2009, p. 10; Matt Matthews, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 41.



102d MHD

Sfc. Matthew Kahler (left) supervises and provides security for Pfc. Jonathan Ayers and Pfc. Adam Hamby while they emplace a machine gun. The soldiers are all from Chosen Company, 2d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment.

up the fight against TF Rock. Intelligence soon indicated that the insurgents were prioritizing support for Hazrat Omar's replacement, as Osman busily assembled hundreds of fighters from villages throughout the area in preparation for an attack on Bella.[45]

Unsurprisingly, insurgent attacks increased in the Pech River Valley and the ancillary Watapur and Korangal Valleys as well as the Waygal Valley. The Korangal was of particular concern. Historically, the Korangalis had been antagonistic to outsiders, and they refused to side with the Americans despite the economic and developmental incentives the coalition forces offered.[46] The Pashtun residents resisted American penetration in early 2007 even more strenuously than they had in Nuristan. As the situation in the Korangal failed to improve over the summer, Ostlund authorized company-sized air assaults along a series of ridgelines meant to funnel the enemy into kill zones. These October operations, known as Rock Avalanche, drove enemy fighters toward the southern end of the valley, pushing them away from the area and making it easier to link the valley politically and economically to the rest of the region. The fight proved difficult, as every family compound the Americans faced was a hardened fort difficult to overcome without artillery or air power—a perfect recipe for civilian casualties that caused yet further

45. Zoroya, *The Chosen Few*, p. 197.

46. The Korangalis were especially hostile to the Americans due to an ongoing dispute between the local population and the Karzai government over timber rights in the valley. Sebastian Junger, *War* (New York: Hachette, 2010), p. 48.

hostility. Despite significant enemy losses, the local tribal leaders declined to participate in the American plan to secure the valley. In several cases, they sided with the insurgents in opposition to both the Karzai government and its international backers.[47]

Even considering the antagonistic response of some of the Korangalis, Ostlund viewed Rock Avalanche as a success. He noted a sharp decline in American casualties in the valley, dropping from seven killed and twenty-seven wounded in the five months preceding the operation to zero killed and thirteen wounded in the eight months following it.[48] Continual patrolling and aggressive tactics had overcome the lack of resources to make the valley more hospitable to coalition efforts.

Ostlund was overly simplistic in attributing the decline in casualties solely to aggressive operations. Two other factors contributed to the shift in the operational environment: the decline coincided with the onset of winter, traditionally the offseason for insurgents, and improved tactics reduced the troops' exposure to dangers. Whatever the case, the reduced number of American casualties in the isolated valleys of Kunar and Nuristan did not signify that the local population had decided to support the Kabul government. Terrorist leaders still found fertile ground for inspiring homegrown insurgents to fight against the U.S.-Afghan coalition in the northern zone of RC East.

The struggle for the valley was indicative of the larger challenge facing American and Afghan units. Their outposts, purposely positioned in steep valleys, often were surrounded by high ground that made them vulnerable to plunging sniper fire, rocket-propelled grenade volleys, mortar attacks, and outright assault. American and Afghan units existed at the front lines of the war, an environment where success usually was measured in enemy body counts. However, these lethal metrics were the opposite of those articulated as critical in counterinsurgency doctrine, which focused on public diplomacy and strengthening relationships.[49] To influence local populations, units had to push into remote valleys. To create security areas in which Provincial Reconstruction Teams and other agencies could engage in development efforts, commanders had to disperse their forces. At the same time, the division and subdivision of units across multiple outposts increased each position's vulnerability to attack. Balancing the risk of attack against the need to create time and space for the Afghan government was a dangerous undertaking that could have deadly repercussions should the scales shift too far in the insurgents' favor.[50]

Indeed, Rock Avalanche provided only a temporary respite. On 9 November, a complex ambush near Arahnas resulted in the deaths of six

47. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Ostlund, 19–20 Mar 2009, p. 11; West, *The Wrong War*, pp. 43–44; Moore and Fussell, *Kunar and Nuristan*, pp. 22–23; Junger, *War*, pp. 91–100.

48. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Ostlund, 19–20 Mar 2009, p. 11.

49. The struggle for the Korangal Valley is captured in detail in Sebastian Junger's book, *War*, as well as in his documentaries *Restrepo* (2010) and *Korengal* (2014).

50. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Ostlund, 19–20 Mar 2009, p. 11.

U.S. and three Afghan soldiers.[51] The timing and location of the attack suggested collusion with local tribal leaders. The attack also confirmed that more insurgents had moved into the region, with an estimated one hundred disciplined fighters having taken part in the ambush. In response, battalion and brigade leaders planned to withdraw to a more defensible position closer to the 2d Battalion's headquarters at Camp Blessing. Negotiations began that fall to establish a new outpost at the village of Wanat, roughly seven kilometers north of Blessing, although it would take nearly ten months before the move could be arranged.[52]

2008 Force Rotations

In the spring of 2008, American forces in Afghanistan experienced yet another major force rotation. At the end of their fifteen-month deployment, the soldiers of TF Fury prepared for their relief by the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Task Force Currahee) in March.[53] The incoming brigade, commanded by Col. John P. "Pete" Johnson, consisted of its six organic units: Lt. Col. Anthony G. DeMartino's 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment (Task Force Red Currahee); Lt. Col. John C. Allred's 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment (Task Force White Currahee); 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Panther) led by Lt. Col. Thomas W. O'Steen; Lt. Col. David J. Ell's 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment (Task Force Glory); Lt. Col. Anthony K. "Kirk" Whitson's 801st Support Battalion (Task Force Mountaineer); and Lt. Col. Charles D. Bradley's Special Troops Battalion (Task Force Strength). Johnson received welcome augmentation provided by TF Phoenix in the form of the Illinois Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, led by Lt. Col. Daniel J. Fuhr.[54]

The incoming brigade took over TF Fury's operational area, with Allred's TF White Currahee replacing Colonel Mennes' TF 1 Fury. The division also

---

51. Matthews, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 42.

52. The delay was due to lengthy negotiations between the U.S. Army and the local villagers over the site location and payment for the land. Moore and Fussell, *Kunar and Nuristan*, pp. 22–23; West, *The Wrong War*, pp. 25–27; Donald P. Wright et al., "A Different Kind of War II, October 2005–July 2008" (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: CSI, n.d.), p. 323; Memo, 13 Jul 2008, sub: Battle of Wanat, 13 Jul 2008 AR 15–6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

53. Unlike the soldiers of TF Spartan, who learned of their extension at the end of their tour, the soldiers in both TF Fury and TF Bayonet knew early on in their deployment that they would likely serve in Afghanistan for fifteen months. Likewise, the soldiers from TF Currahee would be deployed for up to fifteen months. Interv, Dr. Brian F. Neumann and Lt Col John M. Stark, OEF Study Group, with Lt Gen David M. Rodriguez, frmr CJTF-82 Cdr, 17 Mar 2016, pp. 23–24, Hist Files, OEF Study Group; Paul Boyce, "Army Units Announced for Afghanistan Rotation," Army.mil, 9 May 2007, https://www.army.mil/article/3040/army_units_announced_for_afghanistan_rotation, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. The 33d Infantry Brigade Combat Team was responsible for the TF Phoenix security assistance mission during this period. Colonel Fuhr's unit, normally a subordinate element of the 33d Infantry Brigade Combat Team, performed a number of missions for CJTF-101, ranging from defending combat outposts along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to providing security elements for U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams in RC East.

sent Col. Jeffrey P. Kelly's headquarters from the 101st Sustainment Brigade (Task Force Lifeliner), Col. James M. Richardson's Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Task Force Destiny), and Lt. Col. David L. Dellinger's Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Task Force Gladiator).[55] The division commander, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, assumed command of the newly named CJTF-101 in early April.[56]

Following the arrival of TF Currahee, CJTF-101 managed the arrival of additional U.S. forces into Afghanistan. In early March, the 2,500-strong 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, under Col. Peter Petronzio, deployed to RC South to serve under ISAF command in support of the British in Helmand.[57] In RC East, Col. Scott A. Spellmon's 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a newly formed unit activated at Fort Polk on 16 September 2007, took over from TF Cincinnatus in June.[58] Spellmon's brigade only brought two of its four assigned battalions to Afghanistan, with the other pair deploying to Iraq at the same time.[59]

The 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division (Task Force Duke), led by Col. John M. Spiszer, would follow in June to replace TF Bayonet in northern RC East. Spiszer's 3,000-plus task force included Lt. Col. Daniel S. Hurlbut's 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry Regiment (Task Force Ramrod); Lt. Col. Brett C. Jenkinson's 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment (Task Force Blue Spader); Lt. Col. James C. Markert's 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Raider); 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment (Task Force Centaur) led by Lt. Col. Salvatore J. Petrovia; Lt. Col. Patrick Daniel's Special Troops Battalion, 3d Brigade Combat Team (Task Force Valiant); and Lt. Col. Bradley A. White's 201st Support Battalion (Task Force Support). TF Duke also received Lt. Col. Stephen M. Radulski's 3d

---

55. TF Currahee's operational area consisted of Paktika, Paktiya, Khost, Ghazni, and Logar Provinces, but it also assumed responsibility for Wardak Province. As the Theater Tactical Force, TF Panther initially served primarily in RC South.

56. Mary L. Gonzalez, "101st Airborne Takes Over for 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan," DoD News, 10 Apr 2008, https://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=49529, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit included 1,200 combat troops along with 1,300 enablers. Randall A. Clinton, "Marines Return to Afghanistan," 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 11 Mar 2008, https://www.24thmeu.marines.mil/News/Article/Article/510989/marines-return-to-afghanistan/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. The 23d Chemical Battalion departed Afghanistan in January 2008. Because there was not a unit ready to replace it, the 101st Sustainment Brigade had to send some of its forces to backfill TF Cincinnatus until the arrival of the 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in June. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col James Bonner, frmr 23d Chemical Bn Cdr, 13 Feb 2009, pp. 15–16, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

59. The 83d Chemical Battalion and 88th Support Battalion deployed to Afghanistan, while the 46th Engineer Battalion and 519th Military Police Battalion went to Iraq. Spec Bryan Gatchell, "1st MEB Under New Command," *Fort Polk Guardian*, 18 May 2010, https://www.army.mil/article/39310/1st_meb_under_new_command, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Jeffrey Schloesser, personal files

General Schloesser (left) and Admiral Mullen visit a combat outpost in RC East.

Battalion, 103d Armored Regiment, which deployed as a maneuver force in Laghman Province.[60]

As with previous rotations, American forces existed within a bifurcated chain of command. CJTF-101 was under the operational control of ISAF in RC East. At the same time, it had Title 10 responsibilities for American forces in theater as the National Support Element under CENTCOM. As one of two U.S. major generals in Afghanistan, General Schloesser (and his staff) had a challenging relationship with the other two-star U.S. command, Maj. Gen. Robert W. Cone's CSTC-A.[61] Both reported directly to CENTCOM along the U.S. command chain, but only CJTF-101 fell under ISAF control as a regional battlespace owner.[62] Coordinating the disparate missions of

60. Despite the additional forces, TF DUKE initially deployed with 200 fewer soldiers than TF BAYONET. At its peak, TF DUKE provided command and control to more than 6,000 U.S. troops; see John M. Spiszer, Response Answers to Bde Cdr Survey, CSA OEF Study Grp, 19 Aug 2015, pp. 5–6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. In early 2009, the brigade was aided by the addition of 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry (TF CHOSIN), from 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, which returned to Afghanistan for duty in Kunar Province, where it had operated in 2006; see "32nd Infantry Regiment (United States) – History – Iraq and Afghanistan," n.d., https://www.liquisearch.com/32nd_infantry_regiment_united_states/history/iraq_and_afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

61. Cone handed over command of CSTC-A to Army Maj. Gen. Richard P. Formica in mid-December 2008.

62. CJTF-101 exercised coordinating authority with and Title 10 administrative control of CSTC-A. OPORD 01–08, HQ, CJTF-Afghanistan, 6 Dec 2007, para. 1.D.8., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The name CJTF-Afghanistan, also written as CJTF-A, represents an early effort by members of the 101st Airborne Division to dispense with the practice of renaming the CJTF during each rotation. The proposal never received widespread support and the cycle of changing the CJTF designation to reflect whichever unit took on the duty continued.

both commands was, as one staff officer phrased it, "spotty."[63] The missions that these units engaged in, however, remained relatively straightforward. As the RC East headquarters for ISAF, CJTF-101 and its subordinate units conducted full spectrum operations in support of the three standard lines of operation: security, governance, and development.[64] The security transition command, meanwhile, provided training and security force assistance for the Afghan military and police. Complicating this command and control arrangement was the counterterrorist mission pursued by American SOF, which remained largely independent of both ISAF and CSTC-A. In addition to supporting counterterrorism, SOF conducted foreign internal defense in support of the ANSF.[65]

A New Operational Focus

As the CJTF commander, Schloesser revised the Enduring Freedom operational focus while retaining its clear, hold, and build framework. For the security line of operation, he emphasized developing ANSF over securing territory or maintaining freedom of movement for coalition forces. Although earlier deployments had sought to support ANSF development through partnered operations and coordinating with the Pakistani military, General Schloesser made the ANSF the centerpiece of CJTF-101's rotation. Tactically, he expanded the definition of combat operations to include those operations "in conjunction with ANSF and [the Pakistani military]" launched to disrupt enemy support areas, interdict insurgent lines of communications along the border, and retain freedom of movement along major lines of communications within Afghanistan.[66]

The new campaign followed this changed emphasis. CJTF-101 developed a three-stage campaign built around four lines of effort: security; governance; development; and information operations, a new but long overdue line. Schloesser added the last line because he felt that insurgent propaganda had been echoed for far too long in Western and regional media without challenge. The first stage, designed to exploit successes achieved by CJTF-82, began with the transfer of authority and was to run through the fall of 2008. Decisive operations during this phase included partnering throughout the regional command. All other efforts were defined as shaping operations.[67]

The campaign's second stage, beginning in the fall of 2008 and running through early 2009, was to develop "provincial and district-level governance and development to assist in achieving [Afghan National Development

63. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Maj Francis J. Park, frmr CJTF-101 Strategic Policy Planner, 23 Nov 2010, p. 19, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

64. Ibid., p. 8.

65. OPORD, HQs, CJTF-A, CJTF-A OPORD 01–08, 6 Dec 2007, 3.B.5 and 5.A.1.A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

66. Ibid., para. 3.A.2.A.1.

67. Ibid., paras. 3.A.4.–3.A.4.E.7



Sfc. Eric Hendrix, USA

CWO Sammy Rodriguez, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, prepares a damaged vehicle for recovery in Kunar Province.

Strategy] milestones."[68] The goal was to take advantage of security gains over the summer and early fall 2008 as well as the anticipated winter lull in the fighting season to improve governance in targeted districts. If these efforts went well, the campaign would transition to the third phase, which consisted of setting conditions "for capable provincial and district governance and successful transition of security for select districts to ANSF" in the spring of 2009 while also preparing RC East for another rotation of U.S. forces.[69]

This new RC East operational approach, which made ANSF development a primary goal, was the culmination of the efforts that the U.S. and ISAF forces had made over the previous three years. However, it highlighted limitations in CJTF-82's and CJTF-101's capabilities. Even with considerable expenditures of American resources, neither task force had sufficient strength to provide localized security throughout the regional command. When asked if CJTF-101's task organization was adequate to meet its needs, one staff officer replied, "In terms of executing the full spectrum operations mission, it was barely sufficient in some places and completely insufficient in others. The fact that a company out of the division special troops battalion was being employed as foot soldiers in lieu of trained infantry was an indicator of that."[70]

68. Ibid., para. 3.A.5.A.

69. Ibid., para. 3.A.6.A.

70. Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, was a "scratch built force" pieced together with company grade officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted personnel from within the battalion. It was utilized as a maneuver force and had area ownership in parts of Parwan and Kapisa Provinces. Interv, Clay with Park, 23 Nov 2010, p. 10.

As in previous deployments, American and Afghan units could clear insurgents from a district, but they did not have enough forces to hold these areas long enough to implement meaningful economic and government-building gains. Even though the insurgents had suffered significant losses during these clearing operations, the insurgency as a whole showed no signs of abating so long as it maintained sanctuaries and a base of operations within Pakistan. Another significant (and almost insurmountable) challenge to ISAF counterinsurgency efforts was the fact that many Afghans viewed the Karzai regime as self-serving and corrupt rather than interested in their well-being. For all its proficiency in combat operations and experience with battling a diverse collection of enemies, the U.S. military was reaching the limits of its operational capability in RC East.

The Limits of Counterinsurgency

U.S. and Afghan forces in RC East's northern sector, particularly in the valleys that branched off from the Pech River Valley, faced an increasingly strained situation. The paratroopers of TF Rock had an especially trying experience. Operating out of combat outposts, firebases, and observation posts, the troops endured spartan living conditions, an often indifferent or uncooperative populace, and the country's most mountainous terrain. As their tour wound to a close in the summer of 2008, TF Rock soldiers prepared to turn over the battlespace to the incoming TF Duke. Colonel Ostlund remained particularly concerned about Combat Outpost Bella in the Waygal Valley.[71] Since the closure of Ranch House the previous October, Ostlund's staff had sought to relocate the exposed outpost closer to the battalion's headquarters at Camp Blessing. Schloesser also wanted to place units where they could most influence the population.[72] After months of negotiating for land, the Americans finally procured a local agreement to construct a vehicle patrol base in the village of Wanat. Located seven kilometers from Camp Blessing, it was home to the district governor and police chief and was accessible by road, rather than air only. From there, the battalion could hold the entrance to the Pech River Valley from the Waygal Valley.[73]

CJTF-101 approved TF Rock's realignment in the Waygal Valley in late June 2008.[74] Although TF Rock was in the final weeks of its deployment, Schloesser and his headquarters determined that the unit with the most Afghan experience should execute the operation, as opposed to assigning it to the newly arriving TF Duke. TF Rock soldiers had fought forty-eight engagements with insurgents during their fourteen-month deployment.

71. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Ostlund, 19–20 Mar 2009, p. 10.

72. Interv, Douglas R. Cubbison and William G. Robertson, CSI, with Brig Gen Mark A. Milley, frmr 101st Abn Div Asst Cdr for Opns, 18 and 20 Aug 2009, p. 17, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

73. Col Charles A. Preysler, Answers to CSI, Reference Wanat, CSI (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.), Question #10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

74. General Schloesser gave final approval for the move on 3 Jul 2008. Interv, Cubbison and Robertson with Milley, 18 and 20 Aug 2009, p. 18.

As one analysis put it, "The soldiers of TF Rock knew how the insurgents fought, they understood their tactics and how they preferred to employ their weapons, and they respected the [anti-Afghan forces] as tough, determined, committed, and skilled fighters."[75] The soldiers also understood the urgency of the movement, having suffered an attack on Combat Outpost Bella on 4 July and read reports that the insurgents were massing in anticipation of a more determined assault.[76]

The move from Combat Outpost Bella to Wanat began on 8 July. Supplies were airlifted out of Bella, and members of Company C, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, conducted a ground assault convoy from Camp Blessing to Wanat. This position would become Vehicle Patrol Base Kahler, named after one of the unit's platoon sergeants who had been killed earlier in the deployment. Over the next several days, the paratroopers worked to construct the outpost, but were hampered by delays in getting heavy equipment to the position. They established the outpost's basic perimeter, set up defensive positions, and constructed an observation post above the main base for additional protection. Given their experience over the previous year, the soldiers did not expect the insurgents to immediately launch a large attack.[77] What the Americans did not realize, however, was that the move to Wanat forestalled a massive coordinated assault against Bella organized by Mullah Maulawi Mohammed Osman.[78] Rather than abandon his plan to overrun an ISAF base, the insurgent leader simply redirected his fighters toward Wanat. Within four days, he had assembled between 120 and 300 fighters ready to attack the platoon constructing the outpost.[79]

Insurgent forces launched a blistering attack on Wanat on the night of 13 July (*Map 5.2*). The initial volley of rocket-propelled grenades targeted the base's heavy weapon systems, disabling a tube-launched, optically tracked wire-guided missile launcher and the outpost's 120-mm. mortar pit. The attackers also targeted the vulnerable observation post, which was occupied by a squad whose machine guns would be disabled over the course of the battle. The topography enabled the insurgents to approach within hand-grenade distance of the observation post before the attack, and they were able to breach its perimeter briefly during the assault. The fierce battle lasted for hours before the insurgents broke off in the face of repeated attacks by close air support and AH–64 Apaches. In total, nine Americans were killed, most either defending the observation post or trying to reinforce it, and another twenty-seven were wounded. Four of the twenty-four ANA soldiers positioned to the south were also wounded.[80]

---

75. Matthews, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 54.

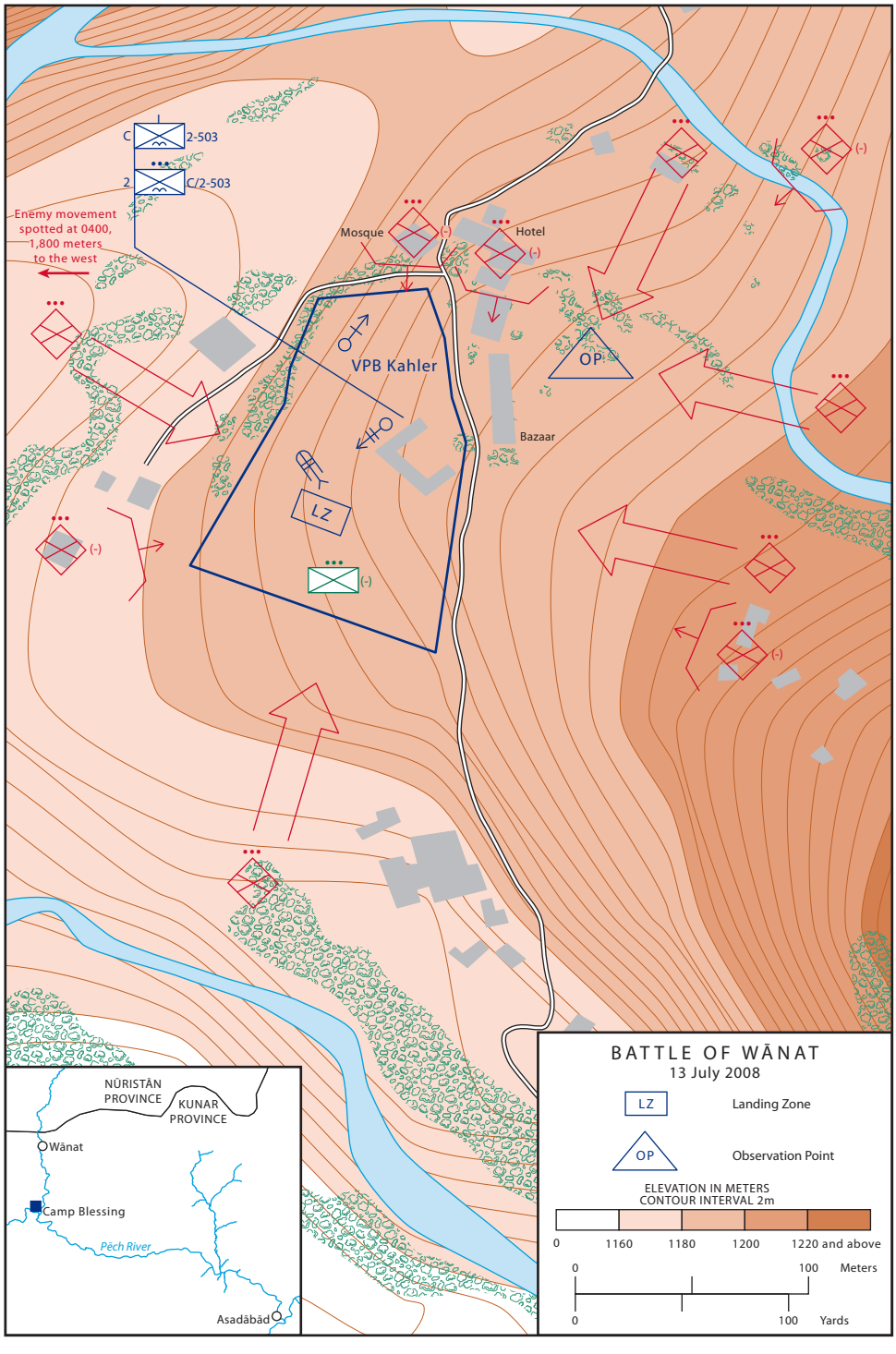
76. Ibid., pp. 52–53, 73.

77. Ibid., p. 75.

78. Zoroya, *The Chosen Few*, pp. 197, 231.

79. Matthews, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 116.

80. The American position consisted of seventy-three soldiers (forty-eight Americans, twenty-four Afghans), bringing the casualty rate of U.S. and ANA combined forces to more than fifty percent of those present. Insurgent casualties are difficult to determine, but they


C 2-503
2 C/2-503
Enemy movement spotted at 0400, 1,800 meters to the west
Mosque
Hotel
VPB Kahler
OP
Bazaar
LZ
NURISTĀN PROVINCE
KUNAR PROVINCE
Wānat
Camp Blessing
Pēch River
Asadābād
BATTLE OF WĀNAT
13 July 2008
LZ
Landing Zone
OP
Observation Point
ELEVATION IN METERS
CONTOUR INTERVAL 2m
0
1160
1180
1200
1220 and above
0
100
Meters
0
100
Yards

Map 5.2

The 13 July attack at Wanat reflected the limitations of American operations in RC East. Investigations indicated that members of the local population, including the district governor and police chief, were complicit in the attack.[81] Ostlund later contended that the Waygal Valley had been a significant challenge to his forces throughout their deployment, and stated that "no matter what we did we were just not effective."[82] Counterinsurgency operations failed when faced with an insurgent force with a strong support base across the border, an intransigent population that was hostile to any incursion into the valley by either the Americans or Afghan security forces, and terrain that made any forward position susceptible to harassing fire and coordinated attack. Schloesser determined that maintaining forces within the Waygal Valley did not justify the risks of doing so. TF Duke soon abandoned the outpost and launched patrols into the valley from the more defensible Camp Blessing.[83]

The Ongoing Fight in RC South

McNeill had originally shifted the ISAF main effort to RC East in 2007 because he wanted to free the southern portion of shadow governments and open lines of communications into the region.[84] This move, however, did not mean that the Taliban's main effort had transitioned to the region. After being battered by coalition forces in 2006, the Taliban adjusted its operational approach in RC South. It avoided massing in areas that could be cleared by large-scale coalition operations such as Medusa.[85] Instead, it worked to build its presence in northern Helmand while preparing for a more concerted effort against

---

were estimated at twenty to fifty killed and twenty to forty wounded. Matthews, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 195; Moore and Fussell, *Kunar and Nuristan*, p. 24; West, *The Wrong War*, p. 24.

81. Memo, 13 Jul 2018, sub: Battle of Wanat, 13 Jul 2008, AR 15–6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

82. Lt Col William B. Ostlund, quoted by Matthews, quoted in CSI, *Wanat*, p. 43.

83. Ibid., pp. 227–28; Preysler, Answers to Reference Wanat, CSI, question 15 and suppl question 2. The Wanat engagement touched off a major public controversy when the father of slain platoon leader Lt. Jonathan Brostrom obtained a highly critical draft account of the engagement from a contract historian working for the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The account upset Brostrom's father so much that he shared it with Senator James H. Webb (D–Va.). Webb then petitioned the DoD to investigate the Battle of Wanat. A subsequent inquiry by CENTCOM concluded that the 173d Airborne Brigade's leadership bore significant responsibility for what occurred. Formal reprimands were issued by the head of U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) General Charles Campbell to the company, battalion, and brigade commanders involved. Following an appeal by Ostlund, Campbell withdrew the reprimands after new information became available that determined CENTCOM erred in assigning fault to the unit chain of command.

84. In this instance, the "shadow" government was a network of Afghan district and province officials appointed by Karzai but subsequently coopted or coerced to do the bidding of the Taliban or other extremist groups.

85. The Taliban still sought to maintain a presence in the Zharey and Panjwa'i Districts west of Kandahar City, but the coalition conducted several operations (i.e., Operation Baaz

Kandahar City. Thus, insurgent activity in RC East remained a shaping operation designed to keep the American forces occupied and separate the region from RC South, where the Taliban sought to reestablish control.[86]

The acceleration of insurgent and terrorist activity in RC South since the beginning of the Taliban's 2006 efforts placed increasing pressure on local governments and security forces, many of which consisted primarily of local warlord forces. ISAF efforts to root out insurgent groups exposed the extent of extremist penetration. Coalition forces would need to do more than merely identify and engage with the enemy, they had to follow tactical successes with aid, jobs, governance, and rule-of-law reforms. Even if U.S. and ISAF operations managed to unveil and dislodge those in the employ of the Taliban, it still would be difficult to maintain the gains without the successful integration of Afghan governance. As a result, the intensified fighting in 2007 did not fatally wound the Taliban, and it remained a viable alternative to the Karzai administration's incomplete, underresourced, and often unpopular district governments.[87] The 2008 campaign would be the toughest and bloodiest since the conflict began, as coalition fatalities rose from 130 in 2006 to 263 in 2008. Nearly 60 percent of these casualties were caused by IEDs, showing the insurgents' increased aggressiveness and sophistication in using this tactic.[88]

Growing violence drove ISAF to focus nearly exclusively on security, even though the Taliban sought goals that were more political than military. In general, the Taliban's military operations—or the mere threat of violence—wanted to expand the group's political and economic influence, not necessarily to defeat ISAF and government forces in open battle. It was a war of wills in which ISAF, foreign leaders, nongovernmental aid organizations, and the Afghan people all were being led to the conclusion that only a settlement with the Taliban would provide peace and stability. Several polls of ordinary Afghans suggested that the Taliban and other Islamist fighters were achieving these objectives, even if the insurgency did not control entire districts or provinces.[89]

The one area where the Taliban took aggressive moves to seize territory was in northern Helmand. After negotiating a cease-fire with the British in Musa Qal'ah, the Taliban began rebuilding its operational base there. In early 2007, fully reconstituted, the insurgents seized control of Musa Qal'ah.[90] The British responded by announcing that 12 Mechanized Brigade would deploy to Helmand in April. In addition to the 6,300 troops

---

Tsuka in December 2006 and Operation Sardiq Sarbaz in September 2007) to clear them out. Teeple, *Canada in Afghanistan*, pp. 43, 52.

86. OPORD, CJTF-A, CJTF-A OPORD 01-08, 1.C.4., 6 Dec 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

87. Cordesman, *Losing the Afghan-Pakistan War?*, pp. 43, 53.

88. "Operation Enduring Freedom," www.icasualties.org, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

89. Cordesman, *Losing the Afghan-Pakistan War?*, p. 24.

90. House of Commons Def Committee, *UK Operations in Afghanistan: Thirteenth Report of Session 2006–07*, p. 11.



International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Public Affairs

British Royal Air Force personnel conduct security patrols as a U.S. C–130 Hercules aircraft takes off from Kandahar Airfield.

in the brigade, the British committed an additional 1,400 soldiers to the campaign, bringing their force level in Helmand to 7,700, doubling their initial deployment in 2006.[91] With the support of Canadian and American forces (especially TF 1 FURY operating as the ISAF Theater Tactical Force), the British launched Operation ACHILLES in April to clear the Taliban from northern Helmand.[92] Although they recaptured Musa Qal'ah in December 2007, the British still did not have sufficient forces to prevent the eventual return of the Taliban. Focusing on northern Helmand also meant that the southern half of the province lay largely unprotected, enabling the Taliban to establish a presence there.[93]

British struggles in Helmand convinced the Bush administration that it needed to aid its closest NATO ally. In January 2008, it announced that the

91. Even with the troop increases, the incoming brigade still had fewer than 2,500 combat troops available. Ibid., p. 25.

92. Ibid., p. 11; Teeple, *Canada in Afghanistan*, p. 46.

93. Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser*, p. 126; House of Commons Def Committee, *Operations in Afghanistan: Fourth Report of Session 2010–12* (London: The Stationery House Ltd., 17 Jul 2011), pp. 31–32.

U.S. Marine Corps would send Lt. Col. Richard D. Hall's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines (Reinforced), and Colonel Petronzio's 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) to Helmand in the spring. The arrival of the marines considerably increased the coalition's combat power in Helmand. The 24th consisted of a 1,200-strong reinforced infantry battalion (1st Battalion, 6th Marines), an artillery battery, six AV–8B Harrier fighter aircraft, eight AH–1W attack helicopters, and air and ground support assets. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, would serve as police trainers and mentors while the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit provided security.[94] Soon after establishing a position in southern Helmand, the marines launched an aggressive campaign to secure the Garm Ser District.[95]

The Taliban continued operations in Helmand even with additional coalition forces arrayed against them. Significant numbers of enemy fighters were sent to the province for a counteroffensive called *Operation Ebrat* (Lesson) designed to secure lines of communications, exert influence over the drug trade, and promote the Taliban's political authority in the verdant riverine communities.[96] On 11 October 2008, a Taliban force estimated at 150 to 200 fighters attacked the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah. Although more than sixty insurgents were killed in the four-hour fight, the assault proved the enemy remained capable of threatening a provincial capital. Other operations consolidated the Taliban's grip along a belt of territory stretching from Nawah-ye Barkaza'i District to Nad 'Ali District and along the Helmand River to Girishk and Sangin.[97] More importantly, the Taliban's brazenness demonstrated that the coalition and government could not keep the insurgent group from controlling huge swaths of the province.[98]

Although the fighting in Helmand was intense, it was not the main effort for the Taliban in RC South. Their primary focus was to isolate and then seize Kandahar City. Coalition troops' clearing operations interrupted the Taliban's efforts to establish shadow governments in the Zharey and Panjwa'i Districts. Although ISAF initiated these operations for good reasons, and the operations had good effects, by dedicating combat forces in these districts, ISAF was unable to maintain an effective troop presence in the province's northern regions.

---

94. The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed for six months, after which it was replaced by Col. Duffy W. White's Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Afghanistan. The latter was roughly the same size as 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and included 3d Battalion, 8th Marines; an aviation combat element; and Combat Logistics Battalion 3. Kummer, *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2001–2009*, pp. 152–53, 351–52, 380–81.

95. Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser*, pp. 119–26.

96. Taliban spokesmen announced the offensive on 27 March 2008. Jeffrey A. Dressler, *Securing Helmand: Understanding and Responding to the Enemy* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, Sep 2009), p. 11; Ibid., pp. 211–13.

97. Ibid., p. 21.

98. Toby Harnden, *Dead Men Risen: An Epic Story of War and Heroism in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery History, 2014), p. 56; West, *The Wrong War*, p. 132; Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, p. 49.

Beginning in late 2007, the Taliban sought to use the heavily vegetated Arghandab District as a base for operations throughout adjacent areas. From there, Taliban fighters infiltrated the suburbs of Kandahar City. Canadian forces, still representing the main ISAF contingent in the province, were unable to prevent this infiltration. By the end of 2008, insurgents virtually surrounded the city, controlling the northern, southern, and western districts from which they could project influence, political coercion, and military cells. To the east, Afghan Border Police Commander Abdul Raziq, with a force of about 400 followers aided by U.S. SOF based in Spin Boldak, controlled the road from the border to Kandahar City and kept the surrounding regions from falling to the Taliban. Without his presence and influence, Kandahar City would have been completely surrounded.[99]

As the Taliban advanced, the Canadians realized they needed help defending Kandahar. In January 2008, an independent Canadian government panel recommended that the nation's contribution to ISAF continue beyond its scheduled termination date in February 2009. The panel's suggestion was contingent on an additional battle group of 1,000 soldiers from NATO or another ally deploying to Kandahar.[100] A stunning example of the need for better security in Kandahar came on 13 June 2008, when a complex attack on Sarposa Prison freed some 1,000 prisoners, 400 of whom were Taliban captives, including a number of midlevel commanders.[101] Insurgents used suicide bombers to blow holes in the front and back walls of the prison before launching a ground assault and evacuating the prisoners in a disciplined fashion. Waiting buses transported the escapees out of the city. It was a spectacular propaganda coup with tangible results. Two days later, Taliban fighters surged into the Arghandab District in another sophisticated assault that cowed the local population and began a palpable turn away from the government and ISAF forces. The Taliban was now poised to recapture Kandahar City.[102]

By the end of 2008, Kandahar City and its surrounding environs had become the front line in the Taliban's war against the Karzai government and ISAF. The attack on Sarposa Prison, coupled with the Taliban's continued offensive in Arghandab, marked a critical point in the battle for Kandahar Province. With the operational initiative, the Taliban began to project military cadres into Kandahar City. A Taliban spokesman announced the deployment

---

99. Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, pp. 37–40; Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, pp. 42–44.

100. The report also called for the Canadian government to acquire medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial vehicles prior to the deadline. Hon. John Manley, P.C., et al., *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan*, Final Report, Cat. No: FR5-20/1-2008, Jan 2008, p. 38.

101. For a full analysis of the attack, see Jerry Meyerle and Carter Malkasian, *Insurgent Tactics in Southern Afghanistan, 2005–2008* (Arlington, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, 2009), pp. 68–71.

102. Silinsky, *The Taliban*, p. 121; Carlotta Gall, "Taliban Free 1,200 Inmates in Attack on Afghan Prison," *New York Times*, 14 Jun 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/14/world/asia/14kandahar.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, pp. 40–41.



M. Sgt. Jerry Morrison, USAF

General McKiernan welcomes Defense Secretary Gates to Kabul.

of the *Khalid ibn bin-Walid* suicide bombing cell to Kandahar specifically to target government leaders and police commanders. Several police districts came under direct attack, killing some officers and prompting many more to flee. This initial foray enabled the Taliban to move intelligence agents, large caches of weapons, and multiple fighting cells into the city.[103]

After the Taliban established a large vehicle-borne IED construction and staging center, their explosive devices blew up vehicles in the city center on a weekly basis. As Kandahar teetered on the brink, the United States sent additional forces to support the Canadians. In August 2008, CJTF-101 dispatched Colonel Hurlbut's 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry Regiment, from TF Duke for service under the Canadian command in Kandahar. Without ready-made positions or a logistical structure, the American battalion had to devote a considerable period of time establishing itself before conducting full-scale operations in support of its NATO ally.[104] Even with the additional support, the Canadians struggled to stabilize the city. Unable to project force everywhere, they failed to prevent the villages of Nakhune and Bilanday, near the city's southeastern suburbs, from becoming home to Taliban IED factories, safe houses, weapons caches, and field hospitals.[105]

---

103. Graeme Smith, "What Kandahar's Taliban Say," in Giustozzi, *Decoding the New Taliban*, p. 192.

104. According to Colonel Hurlbut, his unit deployed to the Maywand District west of Kandahar City along the provincial border with Helmand. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col Daniel S. Hurlbut, frmr 2d Bn, 2d Inf Cdr, 7 Feb 2011, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

105. Forsberg, *The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar*, pp. 41–43.

McKiernan Takes Command

The worsening situation around Kandahar City would become the responsibility of a new American officer as General David D. McKiernan replaced McNeill as the commander of NATO ISAF on 3 June 2008. Although known for his command of the land forces that invaded Iraq in 2003, McKiernan developed an appreciation for the situation in Kabul and in RC East while serving as commander of U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army.[106] His understanding of RCs North, West, and South was more limited, but improved as he took the opportunity to assess the situation more closely.

On the ground, RC East continued to be a hotbed of enemy activity as CJTF-101 efforts to build the ANSF and bring security to targeted districts were hampered by command and control relationships so complex and geographically stretched that they nearly brought the division to its breaking point. McKiernan recognized that CJTF-101 was operating at, or beyond, its capacity.[107] One of his first initiatives, therefore, was to bring a greater order to the overall campaign. He believed that dividing command and control for U.S. forces between U.S. and NATO command chains was unwieldy, and that the overall ISAF campaign lacked unity of effort and unity of command. As he would state, "in reality, the regional campaigns were all operating to different drumbeats, and a lot of those dictated by the drum being played back in national capitals." McKiernan was particularly concerned with RC South, where he felt "there were really four different campaigns going on."[108] He wanted to align the various efforts under a single commander who would articulate a unified strategy and vision. On the U.S. side, this meant breaking down the division between the U.S. and NATO command chains. In response, the new ISAF commander and his staff launched an initiative to create a new headquarters, known as United States Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A). Established in October 2008, the headquarters was designed as a Title 10 coordinating headquarters, not one that would give operational guidance, which McKiernan would provide.[109] In particular, USFOR-A would "coordinate the funding, resourcing, and activities on the U.S. side to meet

106. McKiernan felt that because he had not served in theater since 2004, it was "my time as a senior leader to put my name in the hat." Army Chief of Staff General George W. Casey Jr. supported the assignment. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen David K. McKiernan, frmr ISAF Cdr, 11 Mar 2015, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

107. As the National Command Element, CJTF-101 had to take command of all U.S. forces in extremis, provide military policy/strategy recommendations to higher-command headquarters, assign U.S. forces to subordinate operational and multinational organizations, and act as final authority for all sourcing requirements and requests for forces (except Special Operations). General McKiernan thought this was far too much to ask of CJTF-101 while it managed the tactical fight in RC East. Ibid., pp. 10–13.

108. Ibid., p. 11.

109. FRAGO 07–565, CENTCOM, 4 Oct 2008, sub: ESTABLISH-MENT OF USFOR-A, NARR, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

and support that one intent, that one command and one strategy."[110] The new headquarters would take a heavy burden off of the RC East commander. McKiernan would spend the rest of his command trying to align the coalition to this comprehensive approach (*Map 5.3*).

From the moment he arrived in Afghanistan, McKiernan understood that "whatever the strategy had been, was, and might be in the future, whatever azimuth changes, it was an under-resourced strategy."[111] Officials in Washington also were noting the dearth of resources available in Afghanistan and its impact on the campaign. In September 2008, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael G. Mullen told Congress that, "I would say success in Iraq means we are steadily reducing our commitment for the theater. . . . At the same time, we are able, under those circumstances, to increase our commitment and resources to Afghanistan."[112] Unfortunately for senior U.S. defense officials, increases in troops, funding, and national assets remained tied to developments in Iraq. CENTCOM had already developed a request for forces in Afghanistan, asking the joint staff for more than 3,000 personnel to assist in training Afghan security forces (primarily the police).[113] With American forces stretched to the limit between Iraq and Afghanistan, the request went unfilled.

The need for more forces in Afghanistan remained, and McKiernan continued to press for more resources. In the fall of 2008, President Bush approved an additional brigade for RC East and some additional forces for RC South.[114] McKiernan received support when a new National Security Council study on Afghanistan, directed by Army Lt. Gen. Douglas E. Lute, also recommended pursuing counterinsurgency over counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan, a modification which would entail significantly more resources. Bush, however, decided not to authorize additional forces so as to give President-elect Barack H. Obama as many options as possible when he took office in January 2009.[115]

---

110. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Brig Gen Gordon B. Davis Jr., frmr ISAF Strategic Advisory Grp Ch, 23 and 24 Nov 2010, p. 13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

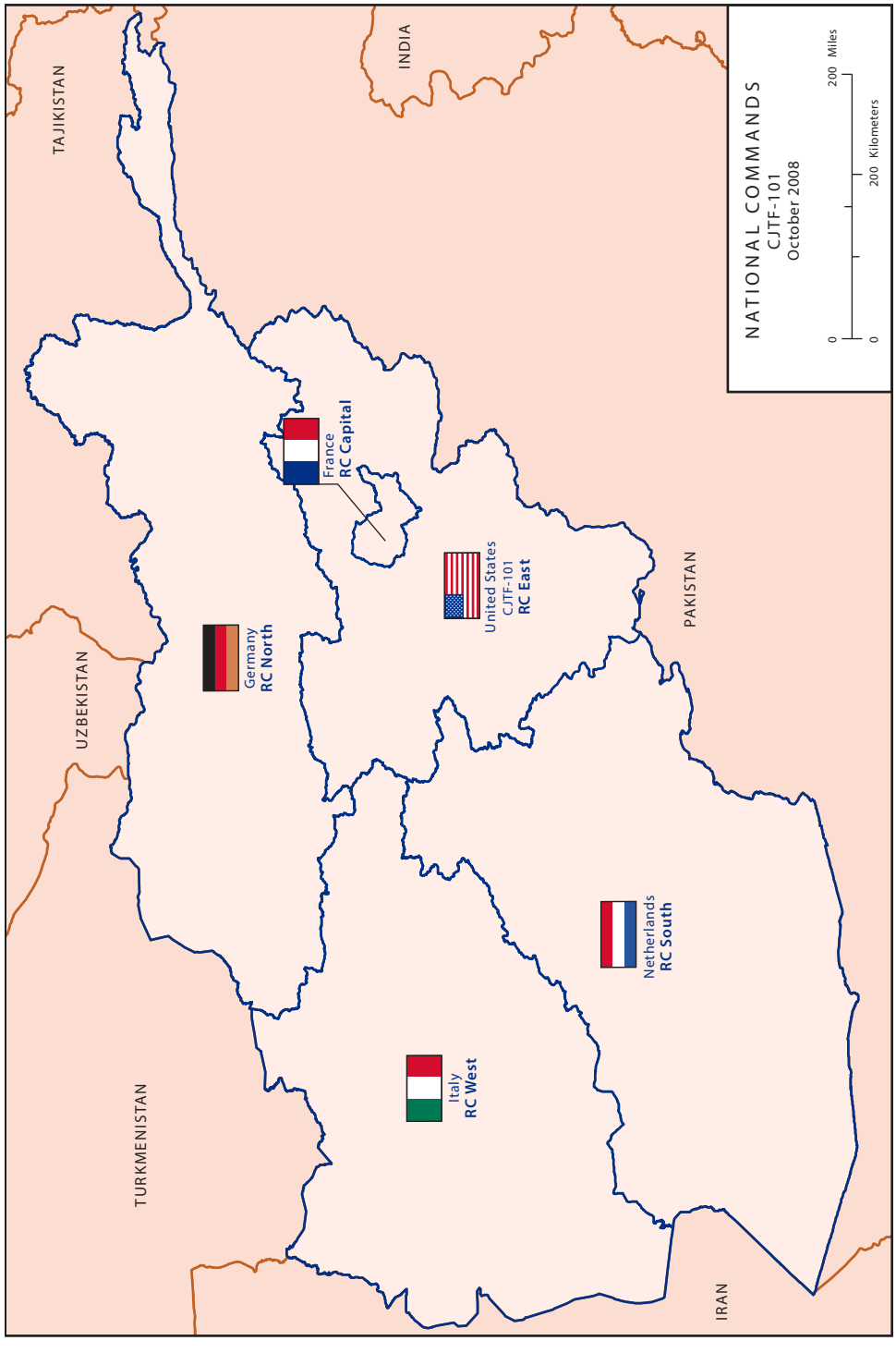
111. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 8.

112. "Admiral: Troops Alone Will Not Yield Victory in Afghanistan," CNN, 10 Sep 2008, https://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/09/10/mullen.afghanistan/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

113. Memo, CENTCOM REQUEST ISO OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) FORCES SERIAL 620 Mod 2, NARR, 2 Mar 2007, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

114. The United States sent the remainder of 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Moutain Division, back to Afghanistan in January 2009, where it would take over operations in Logar and Wardak Provinces. Sgt Amber Robinson, "10th Mountain Division Leads New Afghanistan Deployments," 28 Jan 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/16137/10th-mountain-division-leads-new-afghanistan-deployments, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Clay with Park, 23 Nov 2010, p. 13.

115. Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), p. 44; Waltz and Bergen, *Warrior Diplomat*, pp. 216–24.


TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
PAKISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
NATIONAL COMMANDS
CJTF-101
October 2008
0
200 Miles
0
200 Kilometers
France
RC Capital
United States
CJTF-101
RC East
Germany
RC North
Netherlands
RC South
Italy
RC West

Map 5.3

Troop to Task Overmatch

By the time General McKiernan took command of ISAF, U.S. and coalition forces had spent six years working to build a functioning Afghan state that had the support of the population. For the majority of that time, Americans were working to implement a counterinsurgency approach that could degrade the enemy and provide Afghans the time and space necessary to develop their own capabilities. Despite the effort expended, the goal remained elusive in large part because sufficient numbers of troops had never been allocated to achieve those objectives.

The Afghan central government needed to function well and serve the Afghan people to gain their support. Government agencies and security forces needed to develop organizations from a population that had lost human capital through more than twenty years of warfare, strife, and divisiveness. No simple solution or singular area of focus linked the people and government. It required a comprehensive approach, which was exceedingly difficult to achieve.

For the U.S. Army, success in Afghanistan remained indelibly linked to providing security, governance, and reconstruction. Between 2005 and 2008, the United States contributed considerable resources to providing security in Afghanistan and enabling Afghans to sustain that security for themselves. Progress was slow. The Afghan police, unable to enforce the law, remained years behind the Afghan Army in terms of capabilities. The Afghan legal system was even further behind and could not provide the public with a sense of fair and impartial justice in a society in which personal honor was of critical importance. The United States and the coalition needed more time and additional resources to train, advise, and assist the expanding ANSF. To that end, McKiernan requested in late 2008 that CSTC-A be doubled in size, effectively growing it to two brigades.[116]

Although the presence of more personnel would help Afghans provide for their own security, it was not the only need. Like building the ANSF, the U.S. military's approach toward reconstruction had evolved significantly from 2006 to 2008. Recognizing that many Afghans supported the Taliban out of a sheer lack of alternatives, U.S. commanders viewed economic development and reconstruction projects as important tools in their fight against the enemy. Rather than sustain past practices where local authorities had little say in reconstruction projects, Provincial Reconstruction Teams and brigade combat teams invested time and effort to ensure Afghan involvement and to counter Taliban efforts to disenfranchise tribal leaders in contested provinces. As a result, local initiatives assumed as great an importance to the overall success of the reconstruction effort as national-level projects had previously. Evolving battlefield dynamics proved the worth of the reconstruction teams while also serving to convince brigade and battalion commanders of the importance of using all available tools—including reconstruction and economic development—in the fight against the Taliban.

116. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 50.

Conclusion



Between Afghanistan's National Assembly and provincial council elections in September 2005 and the end of 2008, Operation Enduring Freedom was in a state of constant change. Throughout the three-and-a-half-year period, U.S. policymakers relegated the intervention in Afghanistan to an economy-of-force effort. Although troop commitments fluctuated, and were rising at the end of 2008, total numbers paled in comparison to those committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. With the deterioration of the situation in Iraq in 2006, the George W. Bush administration sought to transition primary responsibility for Afghanistan to NATO. However, disparate views between coalition members as to mission requirements resulted in a lack of unity of effort within ISAF and between ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom. A renewed insurgency by the Taliban and its allied organizations exacerbated this deficiency within the coalition. In effect, between 2005 and 2008 the United States and NATO ceded the operational initiative to the insurgents. As the coalition struggled with internal issues and varied approaches to Afghanistan, by 2008 the entire mission faced the possibility of strategic failure.

The primary demand on the Army during this period was the need to provide sufficient resources for simultaneous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Efforts to grow the Army—and to deal with the causes and effects of stress on the armed forces—made it possible to source and sustain a surge of troops in Iraq beginning in 2007 while maintaining a limited presence in Afghanistan. Without these initiatives, senior leaders believed the force as a whole risked being broken. Modularity was one effort to find efficiency in force structure that would enable the Army to do more with less. However, in addition to its detrimental effect on the Field Artillery, among other branches, modularity nearly eliminated the Air Defense Artillery branch. Less visible changes affected the health, discipline, accountability, training, and teamwork of the force. Fifteen-month deployments and the overuse of National Guard and Army Reserve forces were coping strategies for an Army too small for its assigned missions. Recruiting, promotion, accountability, assignment, and training shortcuts also sacrificed long-term capacities for short-term needs.

Beyond the larger problems of Army doctrine, efforts to strengthen the service's force structure, force design, readiness initiatives, and myriad smaller programs proved that the Army could be agile and adaptable to human and cultural dimensions of the fight. Army leaders inculcated the force into similar environments via new training models created at home stations and at combat training centers. To ensure that soldiers were fully prepared for their upcoming deployments, units rotating through the combat training centers were judged on unit readiness instead of the old model of leader development. Other efforts encompassed training in anthropology, languages, professional

readings, studies of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, and more. The Army established Red Team University to teach members of an organization to challenge itself by assuming an adversarial role or point of view, forcing unit leaders to think differently. All of this contributed to a better prepared and more critically thinking Army.

Even so, the growth of the Army still did not solve all readiness issues, especially in the area of training. Because of time constraints before deployment, soldier training focused intensely on counterinsurgency missions, causing proficiency in combined-arms warfare to atrophy. These skills would not fully recover until the drawdown from both Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, despite improvements, the Army would face training and personnel readiness issues for years to come.

For U.S. forces in Afghanistan, the 2005 elections marked the nominal culmination of the Bonn Process begun in 2002. The establishment of a new Afghan government under President Hamid Karzai was meant to mark the end of Taliban rule and the emergence of Afghanistan as a burgeoning democracy that would no longer support and harbor international terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda. However, the question remained open as to who would provide security as the Afghan state developed and stabilized. The ANSF was not yet ready to take on that responsibility, despite significant strides in building the ANA and the beginnings of a more comprehensive training program for the police. With its growing commitments in Iraq, the United States was incapable of providing additional military resources to adequately secure the country. Responsibility therefore fell to the NATO-resourced ISAF. NATO members saw operations in Afghanistan—the first deployment of alliance forces outside of Europe—as a means to maintain relevancy in a post–Cold War environment. Most alliance members, however, did not envision providing significant forces to establish and maintain security, but rather planned to conduct peacekeeping operations until the ANSF could stand up.

The emergence of an aggressive, multifaceted insurgency in 2006 that targeted various coalition elements fundamentally altered the operational environment in Afghanistan. American and coalition leadership had to react to the changing situation on the ground rather than initiating a more unified coalition effort. For most of 2006, Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry's CFC-A worked to finalize the transition to NATO ISAF under the command of British Lt. Gen. David J. Richards despite rising insurgent attacks, particularly in RC South. When General Dan K. McNeill took over command of ISAF in early 2007, he sought to implement a more aggressive approach to battling the growing insurgency. However, a lack of unity of effort and unity of command within NATO ISAF, as evidenced by operational restrictions dictated by national caveats, limited his effectiveness throughout his eighteen-month deployment. Inefficiencies between American forces in ISAF and Enduring Freedom, as seen with competing American command chains operating in theater, further hindered American operations. His successor, General David D. McKiernan, spent the latter half of 2008 working to unify American and coalition efforts through the establishment of USFOR-A. Although successful, the time that passed between the end of the Bonn Process and

the firm establishment of NATO ISAF under American leadership enabled the various allied insurgent groups to solidify their presence in Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces.

However, even though the Taliban in RC South and the Haqqani Network in the southern and HIG in the northern parts of RC East mounted vigorous opposition, their activity was not the key impediment to American or ISAF goals. Local counterinsurgency successes after the Bonn Process attest to the ability of Afghan, American, and ISAF forces to exert positive influence. In particular, Nangarhar Inc. and the Kapisa portion of Operation Mountain Eagle improved stability through increased security operations and economic development, while Operations Maiwand and Medusa established prototypes for effective partnered operations at the brigade level. As these operations indicate, adequate resources devoted to counterinsurgency could increase popular support for the Afghan central government. Nonetheless, insufficient resources prevented theater commanders from focusing on multiple regions at the same time while separate U.S. and ISAF decisions to expand their respective operational footprints—without effective coordination—exacerbated the overall lack of resources.

The coalition forces had good reasons to enlarge their presence in RC South and RC East. In RC South, Helmand Province was the largest source of poppy production in the world, and Kandahar City was the ancestral home of the Pashtuns, the Taliban's main base of support. RC East, the staging base for HIG and the Haqqani Network, was the primary crossing point into Pakistan where insurgent groups established their operational bases. Neither region necessarily took precedence as each was vital to coalition and Afghan long-term objectives. However, limited resources made it difficult to sustain concurrent efforts to extend coalition influence in southern and northeastern RC East, while also expanding into the rural interior of Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. Without a common enemy and conducted in separate areas, one operation could not necessarily be made to support or shape the other. Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley was forced to shift American units between the two regional commands in 2006, interrupting the implementation of his campaign plan and forcing some units to curtail their activities while the main effort resided elsewhere. A few months into his command, General McNeill sought to mitigate this problem by establishing one region as his priority, but it instead reflected a continuation of American and NATO forces having to emphasize one region over another. Successive theater commanders found ways to integrate the capabilities of member nations in an effort to align the campaigns, but were continually constrained by a lack of coalition consensus on what the problem in Afghanistan was and how best to solve it. Meanwhile, domestic extremism in Pakistan forced Islamabad to turn its attention away from Afghanistan, which undermined the work of the coalition. The continued existence of insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan enabled the enemy to sustain activities in both RC South and RC East while the coalition shifted focus between the two.

From a strategic perspective, throughout this period the United States maintained a consistent goal of creating a secure and stable Afghanistan capable of preventing the return of international terrorist groups. What

changed were the forces acting in opposition to this objective. Instability and corruption within the Karzai government, coupled with the continued division of the population along religious, ethnic, and tribal lines, undercut coalition efforts to build up popular support for the central government. The slow development of the ANSF forced the coalition to take on far greater responsibility for local and regional security than initially intended by either the United States or the troop-contributing members of NATO. As coalition forces spread out among the population to the greatest extent possible, they became wedded to the terrain they tried to hold. Company, battalion, and brigade commanders were forced to accept tactical risk to cover as much of the ground and the local population as possible, making their units more vulnerable. This increased vulnerability became an opportunity for insurgent operations, where the Taliban propaganda machine could spin any casualty-producing attack into a strategic victory regardless of the large insurgent losses.

Thus by 2008, the challenges facing Operation Enduring Freedom appeared significantly greater than they had been three years earlier. In April, an assassination attempt on President Hamid Karzai killed numerous high-level officials attending the Afghan Victory Day parade in Kabul. In June, attacks on Kandahar City culminated in a breakout at the Sarposa Prison that freed hundreds of suspected Taliban fighters. The following month, an assault on an American platoon and its ANA reinforcements at Wanat in the Waygal Valley upset the coalition's influence campaign in RC East. Meanwhile, the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Karachi signaled increasing instability in Pakistan, which required a more aggressive stance by the United States. All signs pointed to the fact that the U.S. political and military leadership faced a fundamental disconnect of ends, ways, and means in regard to Afghanistan. The deteriorating security environment prompted the Bush administration to consider McKiernan's recommendations for troop increases. With the fight in Iraq largely stabilized by the summer of 2008, the administration could undertake a comprehensive reassessment of its strategic objectives and commitment of resources in Afghanistan. The election of a new president in November, however, meant that whatever course the United States and its Army pursued would be in the hands of a new administration.

SECTION II

THE SURGE IN AFGHANISTAN


J.C. MUNTZ 2018

Section II

Introduction



President Barack H. Obama took office on 20 January 2009 having pledged to end the war in Iraq and defeat al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.[1] The two conflicts were going in opposite directions. The surge was complete in Iraq and violence was down significantly. President George W. Bush had signed a Status of Forces Agreement with the Iraqi government to withdraw the nearly 150,000 U.S. troops in country by the end of 2011. Afghanistan, meanwhile, remained an economy-of-force mission, with 30,000 troops fighting a resurgent Taliban. Although General David D. McKiernan, the senior U.S. commander in Afghanistan, had requested additional forces, President Bush only partially fulfilled the request, so as not to handicap the next administration.

Security in Afghanistan had been deteriorating since 2006.[2] The ensuing years had been the most violent for the coalition and U.S. Army since the conflict began in late 2001. In 2007, there had been 771 U.S. battle casualties of whom 78 were killed in action, and in 2008, there had been 663 total casualties including 97 killed in action. For the U.S. Army, 2007 and 2008 experienced a near doubling of the casualties from 2006 (373 casualties, 62 killed), or about two-thirds of the combined total for 2001–2005 (555 casualties, 97 killed). By late 2008, there were more IED and small-arms attacks per month in Afghanistan than in Iraq.[3] This alarming trend showed no sign of reversing, suggesting that the number of Americans killed or wounded in Afghanistan would soon surpass the number of killed or wounded in Iraq for the first time

1. Senator Barack H. Obama, "The War We Need to Win" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 1 Aug 2007), https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/277525, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Senator Barack H. Obama, "The World Beyond Iraq" (Speech, Fayetteville, N.C., 19 Mar 2008), https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/277515, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also, Senator Barack H. Obama, "A New Strategy for a New World" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 15 Jul 2008), http://www.cfr.org/iraq/barack-obamas-remarks-iraq-national-security/p16791 (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, RL33110 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 8 Dec 2014), app. A, Table A–1.

3. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 29. McKiernan points out other indicators showed that in 2008 Enduring Freedom was surpassing Iraqi Freedom in violence, although the former's casualties did not surpass those of the latter until 2009.

in 2009.[4] While the Joint Staff had begun investigating options for shifting troops from Iraq to Afghanistan as early as May 2008, prior to that date no one had suggested that the situation had reached a point at which the current national strategy in Afghanistan needed to be reexamined.[5]

That situation changed between late 2008 and 2011, during what would come to be known as the surge in Afghanistan. The surge resulted from three discrete decisions—one by Bush and two by Obama—to deploy more forces to Afghanistan. By the end of 2011, 80,000 of the 106,000 U.S. service members deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom would be Army personnel, representing more than half of the 140,000 troops deployed from all services and troop-contributing nations. For both administrations, the decision to surge came at the end of intensive and sometimes contentious strategic reviews.

This section covers the surge, focusing on RC South. It reviews the events that occurred during the successive tenures of three senior American commanders: General David D. McKiernan, June 2008–May 2009; General Stanley A. McChrystal, June 2009–May 2010; and General David H. Petraeus, May 2010–August 2011. The McKiernan section explains the decision-making process behind the surge in Afghanistan, the shift toward a counterinsurgency approach, and the abrupt end to his command. The McChrystal chapter details the campaign pursued and events experienced by McKiernan's successor, dealing specifically with how additional troops were deployed in RC South, Phase II of Operation Moshtarak (Together), and the changes McChrystal made in how the conflict was fought. The Petraeus section includes Phase III of Operation Moshtarak, fought in and around Kandahar City. The section ends with analysis of the surge, civilian participation, and contributions of Special Forces.

When General McKiernan took command of ISAF on 3 June 2008, the U.S. Army had more than 250,000 soldiers serving across the globe with more than 140,000 of those troops deployed in combat zones. Almost 25 percent of the Army's total 1,097,050 officers and enlisted personnel were serving outside the continental United States. The active component numbered 539,675, reflecting an increase of 21,982 compared to the previous year. The Army National Guard stood at 360,351, and the Army Reserve numbered 197,024, with these organizations experiencing growth of 7,644 and 7,142 personnel respectively.

The soldiers making up the Army's ranks were now far more seasoned than their Cold War–era predecessors. From 11 September 2001 to April

---

4. Dr. Michael J. Carino, Department of the Army, Surgeon Gen, *Army Casualty: Summary Statistics Overview Update 2* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Surgeon General, Jul 2015), p. 1. According to iCasualties.org, coalition fatalities totaled 191 in 2006, 232 in 2007, and 295 in 2008. iCasualities.org lists all hostile and nonhostile fatalities for all nations (excluding Afghanistan). The site also counts the American wounded from all services combined—not other nations' casualties. Killed in Action numbers include those who Died of Wounds (DOW). See http://icasualties.org/App/AfghanFatalities.

5. Msg, CJCS to Cdr, CENTCOM, 21 May 08, sub: Iraq/Afghanistan PLANORD, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2009, a million soldiers from all components completed combat tours, with almost 40 percent of active and 30 percent of reserve personnel deploying two or more times.[6] By fall 2009, soldiers accounted for 70 percent of the nearly 5,300 combat deaths.[7] Despite the high probability of a soldier seeing combat, all three components exceeded not only their recruiting goals but also their enlisted retention targets during 2008, which resulted in nearly 300,000 personnel either enlisting or choosing to remain in the military during the seventh year of the Global War on Terrorism.[8]

The Army's recruiting and retention success made it possible to begin filling the tens of thousands of additional personnel spaces approved by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates in early 2007. Many of these personnel were used to fill six new active component infantry brigade combat teams, two of which began forming in 2008. Others were allocated to eight new active component sustainment brigades, bringing the Army-wide total to 76 brigade combat teams and 225 support brigades. In addition to creating new units, the process of converting existing organizations to the new modular design continued, with 85 percent of the Army having converted by the end of 2008.[9] Considerable resources also went into managing the Army's equipment fleet, as soldiers were using tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and helicopters at a rate five times greater than programmed.[10] As a result, the Army refurbished almost 125,000 pieces of equipment and issued nearly one million new items; including 6,500 MRAP vehicles, during 2008.[11]

---

6. Institute of Medicine (U.S.) Committee on the Initial Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Military Personnel, Veterans, and Their Families, *Returning Home from Iraq and Afghanistan: Preliminary Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families* (Washington, D.C.: National Academic Press, 2010), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK220068/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Sezgin Ozcan, "Casualty Profile of the United States Army in Afghanistan and Iraq," (Student thesis, Naval Postgraduate Sch, 2012), https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/7399/12Jun_Ozcan.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Gen George W. Casey Jr., "America's Army in an Era of Persistent Conflict," in *Army 2008–2009 Green Book* (Washington, D.C.: Association of the U.S. Army, Oct 2008), p. 20; David Goldman, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2008* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2013), pp. 9–11.

9. Of the seven divisions based in the United States, only the 1st Infantry Division still had to undergo conversion. Of the three types of infantry brigade combat teams—infantry, heavy, and Stryker—thirty-one of thirty-four completed modular conversion by October 2008. In addition, all eight aviation brigades, five of six fires brigades, eight of ten sustainment brigades, and one of three maneuver enhancement brigades converted. The conversion of U.S.-based battlefield surveillance brigades and corps headquarters did not start until late 2008. Gen Charles C. Campbell, "FORSCOM: Anticipating Continued Worldwide Presence," in *Army 2008–2009 Green Book*, p. 78.

10. This trend had an especially significant impact on the Army National Guard, which saw its equipping levels drop from 70 percent in 2001 to 40 percent in 2006 as a result of combat losses, equipment left in theater, and force structure changes to include modular conversion. Lt Gen Clyde A. Vaughn, "Army National Guard: Pillars of Army Strength," in *Army 2008–2009 Green Book*, pp. 148–49.

11. Casey, "America's Army in an Era of Persistent Conflict," p. 21.

In addition to the unrelenting press of wartime operations, the Army experienced major internal turbulence as congressionally mandated Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) moves took place. Tens of thousands of soldiers and dozens of military installations at home and abroad were affected. Major relocations included the removal of two heavy divisions from Germany: the 1st Armored Division taking up residence at Fort Bliss, Texas, and the 1st Infantry Division, split between Fort Riley, Kansas, and Fort Knox, Kentucky. In addition, the 7th Special Forces Group relocated from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. None of the units taking part in the realignment process were eligible to send troops to Afghanistan or Iraq, which meant organizations unaffected by BRAC would carry the combat load.[12]

An Uncertain Way Forward

The close of the 2008 fighting season pointed to a grim future for the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan. The coalition's efforts to win the support and loyalty of the people, and eventually transfer that support to the government of Afghanistan, were only marginally more successful than they had been in 2005. The highland Pashtuns of RC East were willing to accept American money and development assistance, and even tolerated American troops in some areas, but the local population generally was not interested in and often was hostile to what coalition forces had to offer. In RC South, NATO forces were hard-pressed to secure the major population centers in the Taliban's homeland. Taliban forces enjoyed multiple secure lines of communication to safe havens in Pakistan, and the call of jihad ensured a continuous flow of motivated, trained, and experienced foreigners who could mentor and lead local insurgent groups. Lastly, the unrestricted drug industry fueled lawlessness, funded antigovernment groups, enticed government officials to look the other way in return for massive bribes, and gave local communities a stake in the Taliban's success.

Since the ISAF transition, coalition and Afghan forces had conducted hundreds of counterinsurgency missions in an effort to arrest the Taliban's momentum in RC South, block the constant stream of jihadist fighters from Pakistan in RC East, and contain the Haqqani Network. Despite killing thousands of insurgents and spending billions on reconstruction and development, ISAF could point to little tangible evidence of lasting success. In fact, the Taliban broke with previous patterns at the end of the 2008 fighting season and did not withdraw its fighting forces to Pakistan. In a surprise move, the Taliban continued *Operation Ebrat* in Helmand and

12. The first round in 1988 was authorized by the Defense Authorization Amendment and Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988, as amended, PL 100–526, Title II (1988). Additional rounds were completed in 1991, 1993, and 1995 as authorized by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended, PL 101–150, Title XXIX (1990). The most recent round, in 2005, was authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2002, PL 107–107, Title XXX (2001).

increased suicide operations in Kabul.[13] This late-season offensive threw off balance the Afghan and ISAF attempts to secure the population over the winter. In early 2009, the Taliban followed its efforts in Helmand with *Operation Nasrat* (Victory). A concentrated campaign to isolate Lashkar Gah, *Nasrat* was the Taliban's boldest move to date in the south. Although it failed to seize the provincial capital, the instability it perpetuated undercut the Karzai government's legitimacy and weakened popular support for ISAF (*Map S2.1*).[14]

Pakistan's strategic interests further complicated the situation. The government in Islamabad continued to diverge from the interests of the ISAF coalition and began to focus solely on state survival as growing civil unrest, political turmoil, and concern over India's actions diverted Pakistani security resources from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The enemy's eastern networks not only affected the Afghan insurgency, but also further destabilized Pakistan by launching offensive operations against its military deployed within the tribal areas. Capitalizing on the gains they had made in 2008, Pakistan-based extremists used the winter months to reconstitute and emerge the following year as a viable threat to Afghanistan, ISAF, and the Pakistan government.[15]

From their sanctuaries in Pakistan, al-Qaeda and local jihadist groups cooperated to plan new attacks in the name of Islam. While the Pakistani Taliban defended refugees from the Pakistani Army, presenting a clear threat to the Pakistani state and contributing to the Afghan Taliban's momentum, al-Qaeda and like-minded organizations provided money, training, materiel, and leadership to insurgents fighting on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The Afghan Taliban benefited significantly from this nexus of ideology, insurgency, and regional extremism—and even more so as it grew in importance and authority.

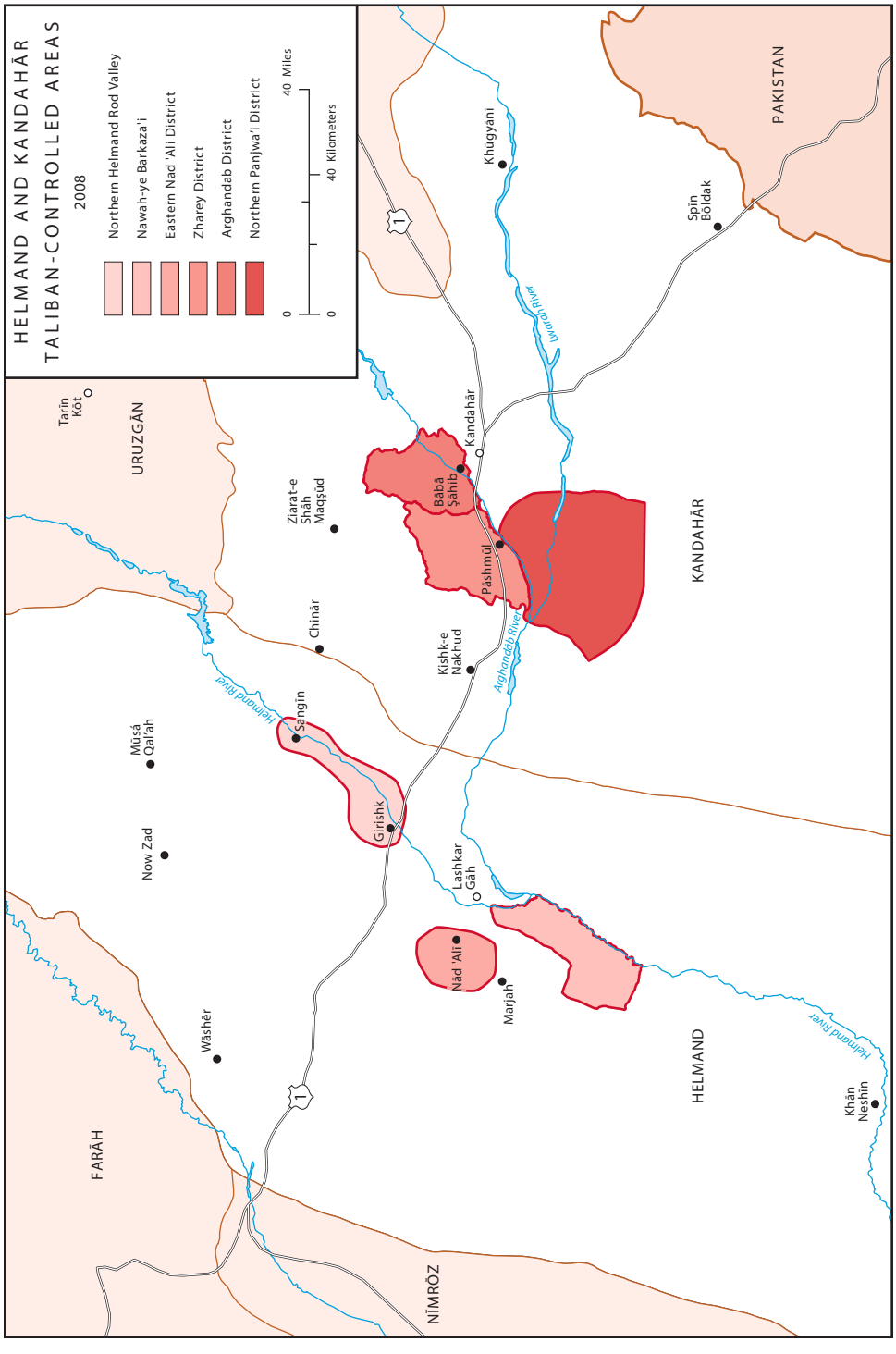
National Strategy: New Goals, New Resources

As pressure in Iraq began to ease in 2008, some members of the Bush administration expressed the opinion that the United States should refocus on Afghanistan. Addressing this concern, President Bush ordered Lt. Gen. Douglas E. Lute, the deputy national security advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan, to chair a National Security Council strategy review in early fall 2008. Lute's report recommended a better-resourced counterinsurgency approach in Afghanistan and a regional strategy that included Pakistan. Although someone in the administration leaked a draft of the report in early October, the final version would not be completed before voters chose Bush's successor. The outgoing president did not respond formally to Lute's

13. Rpt, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A), 3 Dec 2008, sub: Intelligence Summary (INTSUM), p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Dressler, *Securing Helmand*, p. 12.

15. Cordesman, *Losing the Afghan-Pakistan War?*, pp. 60–61.


HELMAND AND KANDAHĀR
TALIBAN-CONTROLLED AREAS
2008
Northern Helmand Rod Valley
Nawah-ye Barkaza'i
Eastern Nad 'Ali District
Zharey District
Arghandab District
Northern Panjwa'i District
0
40 Miles
0
40 Kilometers
PAKISTAN
Spīn Būldak
Khūgyānī
Tarīn Kōt
URUZGĀN
Kandahār
Bābā Ṣāhib
Ziarat-e Shāh Maqṣūd
Pashmūl
KANDAHĀR
Chinār
Kishk-e Nakhud
Arghandāb River
Helmand River
Sangin
Mūsá Qal'ah
Girishk
Now Zad
Lashkar Gāh
Nād 'Alī
Marjah
Helmand River
HELMAND
Khān Neshīn
Wāshēr
FARĀH
NĪMRŌZ
1
1
1

Map S2.1

findings to avoid committing the next president to implementing someone else's strategy.[16]

The election of President Obama heralded major changes to how the United States waged the conflict in Afghanistan. The Obama national security team held a pragmatic regional view, including on the core motivation of the Pakistani and Afghan governments. The White House newcomers saw Pakistan as a conflicted nation whose leaders sought to promote their nation's interests at the expense of those of the United States. They also believed Kabul's politics were so infused with graft and corruption that the Afghan people refused to show allegiance to their government. Afghanistan's endemic corruption shocked many observers; in one egregious example, the Finance Ministry collected 40 billion afghanis (roughly $800 million) in revenue between March 2007 and March 2008, even though its own calculations stated that the total should have been 120 billion afghanis (about $2.4 billion). Most people believed the disappearance of $1.6 billion—more than 66 percent of forecasted revenues—reflected unsanctioned negligence or the criminal handiwork of low-level officials.[17]

A foretaste of the new administration's views had surfaced in February 2008 when a U.S. delegation headed by then Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. visited Kabul. Biden and two other senators questioned Afghan President Hamid Karzai about corruption in his government at a state dinner. Karzai repeatedly assured Biden and his dinner companions that if any corruption in fact existed, then he should not be held responsible for it. After forty-five minutes of fruitless discussion, Biden and the other Americans abruptly left without another word to their host. Many in the new administration shared Biden's doubts. Soon after Obama's inauguration, the *New York Times* reported that "President Barack Obama said he regarded Karzai as unreliable and ineffective. Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton said he presided over a 'narco-state.' The Americans making Afghan policy, worried that the war is being lost, are vowing to bypass Karzai and deal directly with the governors in the countryside."[18]

In January 2009, now Vice President Biden delivered one of the administration's first messages to Karzai: he would not enjoy regular video teleconferences with Obama as he had with Bush, a practice Obama officials believed had undermined commanders in the field.[19] The relationship

16. Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute's fall 2008 strategic review reportedly stated, "We're not losing, but we're not winning," echoing Ambassador Neumann's cable from August 2006; see Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, pp. 43–44. For more on the review, see Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 218; Gates, *Duty*, p. 222.

17. Michael Weiss, "Why I Am Rooting Against Hamid Karzai: Afghanistan's President Has Squandered the People's Trust," *New York Daily News*, 20 Aug 2009, https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/rooting-hamid-karzai-afghanistan-president-squandered-people-trust-article-1.399754, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. Dexter Filkins, "Former Favorite, Karzai Slips from American Eye," *New York Times*, 9 Feb 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/08/world/asia/08iht-karzai.2.20013296.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, p. 67; Gates, *Duty*, pp. 337–38.

between the two administrations deteriorated further during the 2009 Afghan presidential election, in which Karzai sought his second and final five-year term in office. The new special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard C. Holbrooke, reportedly postponed the election from May 2009 to August 2009 in order to give Karzai's opponents a better chance to win, even though this delay went against the Afghan constitution.[20] He and Ambassador (Ret. Gen.) Karl W. Eikenberry then worked to bolster Karzai's opponents, including former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah and former finance minister Ashraf Ghani, so that Karzai would be forced into a run-off that he might lose.[21] This "clumsy and failed putsch," as Secretary Gates has since called it, likely incited Karzai to arrange the alleged massive voter fraud that marred the 2009 presidential election.[22]

The Obama administration's dissatisfaction with Kabul became public in early 2010 following the unauthorized release of classified State Department messages by U.S. Army Spec. Bradley E. Manning (now known as Chelsea E. Manning).[23] Manning, a disaffected soldier, had sent several hundred thousand documents containing classified information on Iraq and Afghanistan to a third party who then posted that material on the internet. Within hours, global media consumers were reading that Ambassador Eikenberry viewed Karzai "as an inadequate strategic partner." Although discomfited by the public exposure of diplomatic cables, the Obama administration did not abandon its goal of eliminating corruption in Kabul. Rather than distance itself from the outspoken former general, the administration signaled that it agreed with Eikenberry by retaining him as U.S. ambassador through July 2011.[24]

---

20. Gates, *Duty*, p. 340.

21. Ibid., pp. 358–59.

22. Quote from Gates, *Duty*, p. 358; Sabrina Tavernise and Helene Cooper, "Afghan Leader Said to Accept Runoff After Election Audit," *New York Times*, 19 Oct 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/world/asia/20afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Carlotta Gall, "Growing Accounts of Fraud Cloud Afghan Election," *New York Times*, 30 Aug 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/31/world/asia/31fraud.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Elizabeth Rubin, "Karzai in His Labyrinth," *New York Times*, 4 Aug 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/09/magazine/09Karzai-t.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Mirwais Harooni and Praveen Menon, "Thousands March Across Kabul to Protest Election Fraud," Reuters, 27 Jun 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/27/us-afghanistan-election-protests-idUSKBN0F20MH20140627, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. Chelsea Manning's former name is given here in reference to the name used by the Army during the court-martial proceedings of *United States of America v. Manning, Bradley E., PFC*, conducted in 2013. See also Ernesto Londono, "Convicted Leaker Bradley Manning Changes Legal Name to Chelsea Elizabeth Manning," *Washington Post*, 23 Apr 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/convicted-leaker-bradley-manning-changes-legal-name-to-chelsea-elizabeth-manning/2014/04/23/e2a96546-cb1c-11e3-a75e-463587891b57_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

24. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 196.

In addition to having qualms about America's Afghan partners, Obama believed that "there just didn't seem to be a clear, coherent strategy there."[25] As the incoming administration looked to rectify this problem, Obama asked Gates to remain as secretary of defense and Lute to stay on as deputy national security advisor.[26] Although Obama's defense team now included holdovers from the Bush administration, the president asked former CIA analyst Bruce O. Riedel on 30 January 2009 to review the progress of U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan.[27] As with Lute's effort, Riedel sought to answer two fundamental questions: (1) what were the United States' goals in Afghanistan, and (2) how should they resource the war.

The strategic review, which drew heavily from Riedel's work at the Brookings Institution, took two months. After Riedel finished his assessment, Obama presented its broader points to the American public in a speech on 27 March 2009. Obama reframed the war in tighter terms, focusing only on the terrorist group responsible for the September 11th attacks. He made it clear that the war's "core goal" was "to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future."[28] This new strategy departed from the Bush administration's Global War on Terrorism approach, which sought to eliminate all state-sponsored terrorism that could threaten the American way of life. Indeed, the Obama administration was hostile to the global war concept, which it saw as sanctioning endless war.[29] As the president later remarked:

> I think the most important aspect of the entire exercise with the Riedel report was making sure everybody reminded ourselves of how we got in there in the first place, which was that al-Qaeda had killed 3,000 Americans and that our goal here had to be focused on dismantling and defeating those

---

25. Interv, Bob Woodward, *Washington Post*, with Barack H. Obama, President of the United States, 10 Jul 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Gates, *Duty*, pp. 269–72; Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Lt Col John R. Stark, Gregory Roberts, and Brian F. Neumann, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen (Ret.) and frmr Ambassador Douglas E. Lute, 11 Jan 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. Jonathan Alter, *The Promise: President Obama, Year One* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), p. 132.

28. President Barack H. Obama, "A New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 27 Mar 2009), https://obamawhitehouse. archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The white paper that accompanied this speech spoke only of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qaeda safe havens in Pakistan, not Afghanistan; see White paper, "The Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," The White House, Mar 2009, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. For the administration's views, see John O. Brennan, "A New Approach to Safeguarding America" (Speech, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 6 Aug 2009) Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The administration rebranded the Global War on Terrorism as Overseas Contingency Operations; see Scott Wilson and Al Kamen, "'Global War on Terror' Is Given New Name," *Washington Post*, 25 Mar 2009, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402818.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> extremist elements in that region that could launch an attack of the U.S. homeland or our allies or our outposts.[30]

Continued interest in preventing al-Qaeda from operating with impunity in Afghanistan or Pakistan guaranteed that the approach favored by the administration included both new and familiar strategic concepts. The Obama administration rephrased the fundamental aim of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM—to deny terrorists sanctuary, implying a continuing war with the Taliban. Supporting objectives for this core goal included: (1) disrupting terrorist networks and degrading their ability to launch international attacks; (2) "promoting a more capable, accountable, and effective government . . . that serves the Afghan people and can eventually function, especially regarding internal security, with limited international support"; (3) developing Afghan security forces to lead counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations with reduced U.S. support.[31] Denying safe haven thus remained key to American counterterrorism strategy.[32] The Obama administration would stand by these objectives for the remainder of ENDURING FREEDOM.[33]

Even though Obama had abandoned the democracy-building language of the Bush administration, he still wanted an accountable and effective Afghan government. In his view, this broader goal included:

1. Executing and resourcing an integrated civilian-military counter-insurgency strategy;

---

30. President Barack H. Obama, "Remarks by the President at the National Defense University" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 23 May 2013), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. White paper, "The Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," p. 1.

32. The White House, *National Security Strategy*, Homeland Security Digital Library, May 2010, https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=24251, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington D.C.: Ofc of the Sec Def, Feb 2010), http://archive.defense.gov/qdr/QDR%20as%20of%2029JAN10%201600.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; CJCS, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership*, U.S. Army, Feb 2011, https://www.army.mil/e2/rv5_downloads/info/references/NMS_Feb2011.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; The White House, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, White House Archives, Jun 2011, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/06/29/national-strategy-counterterrorism, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; The White House, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, National Security Strategy Archive, Jan 2012, http://nssarchive.us/national-defense-strategy/defense_strategic_guidance, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington D.C.: Ofc of the Sec Def, Mar 2014), http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014_quadrennial_defense_review.pdf, Hist Files OEF Study Grp.

33. See the DoD's biannual Section 1230 reports to Congress (usually titled *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*) from June 2009, October 2009, April 2010, November 2010, April 2011, October 2011, April 2012, December 2012, July 2013, November 2013, April 2014, and October 2014, located at https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/ and Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also Ofc of the Sec State, Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy, U.S. Department of State, Feb 2010, https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/135728.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. Resourcing and prioritizing civilian assistance in Afghanistan;
3. Expanding the ANSF to 134,000 soldiers and 82,000 police over the next two years, with the potential for additional enlargements;
4. Engaging the Afghan government and bolstering its legitimacy;
5. Encouraging Afghan government efforts to integrate reconcilable insurgents;
6. Including provincial and local governments in our capacity building efforts;
7. Breaking the link between narcotics and the insurgency; and several others dealing with international support and Pakistan.[34]

The Obama administration viewed Pakistan and Afghanistan as an indivisible problem set. The overarching objective for Pakistan involved "[a]ssisting efforts to enhance civilian control and stable constitutional government . . . and a vibrant economy that provides opportunity for the people of Pakistan."[35] Other goals included building stronger relationships between the Pakistanis and Americans and also between the Afghans and Pakistanis. In addition, Riedel recommended providing the Pakistani Special Forces and Frontier Corps with the training needed to wage sustained counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.[36] The Obama administration's preferred approach to dealing with Pakistan was not a change in emphasis, but a realization that it needed a coordinated interagency approach rather than the previous ad hoc efforts.

Before Riedel had finished his review—but taking into account his input—Obama decided to fill part of General McKiernan's outstanding troop request so as to secure Afghan elections.[37] On 17 February 2009, the White House announced that the president was sending more forces to Afghanistan in time to secure its upcoming presidential election, scheduled for August 2009. The president initially believed he was approving a request for 17,000, but the Pentagon continued to revise troop numbers until the total reached 21,000. The discrepancy reflected poor staff work by military planners who had overlooked a requirement to send supporting units and trainers to build the ANSF. The shifting numbers fueled the administration's already considerable suspicions about the Pentagon's agenda.[38] With the

34. White paper, "The Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," pp. 2–6.

35. Ibid., p. 1.

36. Ibid., p. 5.

37. White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 17 Feb 2009, Statement by the President on Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. For the 13 February 2009 National Security Council meeting where Riedel—along with Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, and General Petraeus—recommended the troop increase, see Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, pp. 96–97.

38. This mindset reflected not only a keen awareness of the cutthroat nature of "inside the Beltway" power politics, but also the fact that apart from National Security Advisor James L. Jones, no one in the administration possessed extensive military experience. Alter, *The Promise*, pp. 133–34, 231, 369–70, 387–91.

adjusted 21,000 increase, the official number of U.S troops from all services committed to Afghanistan was now 68,000. President Obama also called for a "substantial increase" in the number of civilians in theater, an initiative that came to be known as the "civilian surge."[39]

The Riedel report received mixed approval from audiences outside the White House when the Obama administration released it in late March 2009. Secretary of Defense Gates recalled that he "was very disappointed in the Riedel review" mostly because it "contained no new ideas."[40] The White House planned to monitor the adjusted Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy for twelve months before revisiting potential policy and resourcing issues.[41] Holbrooke, the diplomat who had brokered the 1995 Dayton Accords to secure the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, served as a special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan to oversee the strategy. Holbrooke's mission was to coordinate diplomacy in both countries and implement the initiatives outlined in Riedel's report while working with the State Department.[42]

Counterinsurgency Redux

When President Obama took office on 20 January 2009, the Iraq surge was complete and assessed as a success. Regardless of what else had happened in 2009 (an uprising of Sunni tribes against al-Qaeda, a political reconciliation to take advantage of that situation, and more), the surge looked like a formula for winning in Afghanistan. In the words of General David H. Petraeus, who executed the Iraq strategy:

> It [counterinsurgency doctrine coupled with the surge] did prove itself in Iraq. There was no question about when you drive down the level of violence by 85 to 90 percent; I mean that is proving itself. And keep in mind of course it was sustained for a number of years after the surge . . . almost three-and-a-half

39. Obama, "A New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," 27 Mar 2009.

40. Gates, *Duty*, p. 341.

41. Interv, Woodward with Obama, 10 Jul 2010, p. 12. See also Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, p. 168.

42. George Packer, "The Last Mission: Richard Holbrooke's Plan to Avoid the Mistakes of Vietnam in Afghanistan," *The New Yorker*, 28 Sep 2009, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/09/28/the-last-mission, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Robert D. McFadden, "Strong American Voice in Diplomacy and Crisis," *New York Times*, 13 Dec 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/14/world/14holbrooke.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Vali Nsar, "The Inside Story of How the White House Let Diplomacy Fail in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, 4 Mar 2013, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/04/the-inside-story-of-how-the-white-house-let-diplomacy-fail-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Matthew Rosenberg, "Richard C. Holbrooke's Diary of Disagreement with Obama Administration," *New York Times*, 22 Apr 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/23/world/middleeast/richard-c-holbrookes-diary-of-disagreement-with-the-obama-administration.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> years until [Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-]Maliki . . . really undid what it is that we had done together.[43]

As the CENTCOM commander, General Petraeus now championed the adoption of a counterinsurgency approach in Afghanistan that required a further increase in troop numbers. He used briefing charts similar to those he had used in his congressional testimony in 2007 when he had charted the path out of the surge in Iraq just months after it had begun.[44] In this instance, Petraeus argued that the rising violence in Afghanistan could be punctuated by "Surge Offensives," eventually leading to a sharp decline in enemy attacks.

Petraeus was explicit in signaling that he wanted to apply the lessons of Iraq to Afghanistan. Comparing the rise in enemy activity in Afghanistan to what U.S. commanders in Iraq had faced in 2006, he said:

> I think, as we turn and shift our focus to Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is very important to reflect on what we learned from Iraq and to remember that you have to apply what was learned there with a very nuanced understanding, a very granular understanding of local circumstances in which those lessons are being applied . . . you have to—in Iraq—live among the people . . . you have to realize now that as you apply this in Afghanistan, that you don't live among the people in Afghanistan. First of all, there's no empty house. Second, the villages, particularly in the rural areas tend to be small. . . . You cannot clear and leave. You have to clear and hold. . . . And again, adapting this to the circumstances in Afghanistan with sufficient understanding will be critical.[45]

The mention of clear and hold is a reference to the clear, hold, and build sequencing in the Army's *Counterinsurgency* manual (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–24), released in December 2006 under Petraeus' signature.[46] Harkening back to his Iraq experience, Petraeus exhorted Congress to use all resources, government and otherwise, in a "comprehensive" strategy to defeat the enemy militarily and promote political reconciliation.[47]

Petraeus' ideas resonated with Riedel's recommendations while adding the gravitas of the fresh success. They also implied that specific

---

43. Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, frmr ISAF and CENTCOM Cdr, 29 Jan 2016, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Iraq: the Crocker-Petraeus Report," Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 11 Sep 2007 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008), https://www.loc.gov/item/2008397533, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

45. Gen David H. Petraeus, "Keynote Address" (Speech, Striking a Balance: A New American Security, Center for a New American Security Third Annual Conf, Washington, D.C., 11 Jun 2009), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. The United States Marine Corps also adopted this manual as Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3–33.5.

47. Rpt, Gen David H. Petraeus, Cdr, Multi-National Force–Iraq, to Cong., 8–9 Apr 2008, sub: Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

detailed efforts from counterinsurgency in Iraq needed to be reproduced in Afghanistan. The clearest reference to Iraq was in command structure.[48] Petraeus recognized that the existing command structure in Afghanistan lacked the mechanisms necessary to facilitate international, interservice, and interagency cooperation. Petraeus proposed adding both a tactical headquarters and a security force assistance-and-training command to the existing ISAF headquarters. More extensive changes were envisioned for U.S. Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A), including joint interagency task forces for detention operations and counternarcotics, a business and stability operations task force to aid the Afghan economy's development, a combined intelligence operations center, an information operations task force, a specialized cell to track terrorist financing, and an interagency task force to promote effective Afghan governance and combat corruption.[49]

Petraeus, convinced of the success of the Iraq surge, set out to export its "big ideas" to Afghanistan. From his position as commander of CENTCOM, he was uniquely positioned to influence the implementation of the doctrine he had coauthored at Fort Leavenworth and tested in Iraq. Although he could not know it at the time, he soon would be in a position to implement its concepts personally.[50]

The Resilient Threat, 2009

The 2008 fighting season did not taper off in winter as previous fighting seasons had. McKiernan was aware that, with elections coming in the spring of 2009, the security situation was of particular concern. The enemy showed no sign that it was preparing to rotate fighters back to Pakistan for rest and reconstitution. The constant activity reflected the Quetta Shura Taliban's secure position as the leader of armed opposition to Karzai's government and ISAF. Taliban leaders were willing to conduct sustained combat operations in order to maintain their position as the dominant faction in the loose collection of extremist groups in Central Asia. The Pakistan Taliban had also been growing in numbers and influence, although it remained focused mainly on turning Pakistan into a fundamentalist Muslim state.[51]

The Taliban leadership placed great importance on swaying local Afghan populations to its side and instructing its fighters to avoid collateral damage and unnecessary casualties. In 2006, the Quetta Shura leadership originally published a *layeha*, or code of conduct. This document, updated and reissued in 2009 and again in 2010, touched on cultural, religious, and historical themes familiar to Pashtuns, stating: "This Book of Rules is intended for the *Mujahedeen* [*sic*] who dedicate their lives to Islam and the almighty Allah.

48. Petraeus, "Keynote Address," 11 Jun 2009.

49. Rpt, Gen Stanley A. McChrystal to Sec Def Robert Gates, 30 Aug 2009, sub: COMISAF's Initial Assessment, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Interv, Degen and Stark with Petraeus, 29 Jan 2016, p. 3.

51. "Tehrik-E Taliban Pakistan (TTP)," The National Counterterrorism Center, https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/ttp.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



S. Sgt. Corey Hook, USAF

An MQ–9 Reaper, assigned to the 62d Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, taxis at Kandahar Airfield.

This is a complete guidebook for the progress of Jihad, and every *Mujahid* must keep these rules; it is the duty of every Jihadist and true believer."[52] The otherwise silent voice of Mullah Mohammed Omar figured prominently in later editions of the laheya, possibly signaling that some had lost faith in the Taliban's reclusive leader. His reemergence indicated that the Taliban was at a critical junction where internal factionalism and wanton bloodshed threatened its strategic aims.[53]

American intelligence assessments admitted that, while the core aims of the Taliban factions remained obscure, their operational goals were clear and "coming into alignment."[54] Militarily, the insurgency sought to expand its support in Afghanistan through influence and military operations in the western and northern provinces; conducting targeted operations to undermine governance, security, and economic development; inflicting casualties on ISAF and Afghan security forces; and consolidating footholds in the south and east.[55] The Taliban appeared to be making considerable geographic progress by the end of 2009. Of Afghanistan's 364 districts, 10 were assessed

52. For the Taliban code of conduct, see "A New Layeha for the Mujahideen," Oct 2006, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. For a comparison of the 2009 and 2010 *layehas*, see Thomas A. Johnson and Matthew C. Dupee, "Analysing the New Taliban Code of Conduct (Layeha): An Assessment of Changing Perspectives and Strategies of the Afghan Taliban," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (2012): 77–91.

53. Ibid., pp. 86–87.

54. Bfg, Maj Gen Michael T. Flynn, Director of Intel, ISAF, Afghanistan, 22 Dec 2009, sub: State of the Insurgency: Trends, Intentions and Objective, pp. 3–4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

55. Ibid., p. 4.

as under Taliban control. A staggering 156, most near the Pakistan border, were coded as "under Taliban influence." The American surge would attempt to remove or reduce the influence of the Taliban in these contested districts and give the Afghan government a chance to establish legitimacy.[56]

Drone Operations Reach Their Peak

One of the few bright spots of the campaign in the months leading up to the new administration taking office came out of the decision made several years earlier to take the fight into Pakistan's tribal lands. The Bush administration had some successes using drone strikes against key figures in al-Qaeda operating in Pakistan from late 2005 to the end of 2007. One of the most notable resulted in the death of Abu Hamza al Rabia, al-Qaeda's third most senior leader and chief operational planner, near Miran Shah in North Waziristan on 30 November 2005.[57] However, drone activity remained limited through 2007, as military planners were still refining effective procedures for locating, identifying, and striking targets. That process had proceeded in fits and spurts as new procedures were tried and discarded or improved. The strikes also began to generate opposition within Pakistan and the United States as increasing civilian casualties were attributed to unmanned aerial vehicles, including one incident in which missiles struck a religious school in Damadola in the northern tribal lands on 30 October 2006.[58]

In the final year of the Bush presidency, U.S. forces solved several procedural and technical challenges that had impeded the unmanned aerial vehicle program, and launched an increasing number of drone strikes within Pakistan. The increase in attacks attributed to unmanned aerial vehicles during 2008—totaling thirty-four, in comparison to an average of three to five in previous years—stimulated a commensurate increase in popular opposition to their use.[59] The first indication that the new president's views on the potential of unmanned aerial vehicles were somewhat similar to his predecessor came three days after Obama's inauguration when drones struck several targets in Waziristan.[60]

---

56. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, p. 196.

57. In addition to planning attacks on the United States, al Rabia had been involved in at least two attempts on President Pervez Musharraf's life. "Abu Hamza al Rabia," CNN, 27 Apr 2012, https://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/04/27/dead-captured-and-wanted-2/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. Numerous competing narratives sprang up around this incident. For some examples, see Salman Masood, "Pakistan Says It Killed Eighty Militants in Attack on Islamic School," *New York Times*, 31 Oct 2006, httpa://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/31/world/asia/31pakistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Chris Woods, "The Day 69 Children Died," *Express Tribune* (Karachi), 12 Aug 2011, https://tribune.com.pk/story/229844/the-day-69-children-died/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

59. Brian Glyn Williams, *Predators: The CIA's Drone War on al Qaeda* (Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books Inc., 2013), p. 65.

60. Micah Zenko, "Obama's Final Drone Strike Data," Council on Foreign Relations, 20 Jan 2017, https://www.cfr.org/blog/obamas-final-drone-strike-data, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

During Obama's first term in office, which encompassed the Afghanistan surge, drone strikes steadily rose in numbers and increased in lethality with fewer civilian casualties than before. The trend stemmed from the fielding of longer-ranging drones, which were capable of loitering over an area for hours in order to collect more detailed information, and the replacement of Hellfire antitank missile warheads by less powerful models. Although few nongovernment sources agreed on the estimated numbers, drone strikes in Pakistan numbered between 53 and 54 in 2009, 117 and 128 in 2010, 64 and 75 in 2011, and anywhere from 46 to 50 attacks in 2012. Based on the source, civilians accounted for a minimum of 2 percent and a maximum of 12 percent of the total casualties in Pakistan credited to drones during Obama's first term.[61] Obama was keenly aware that some claims of civilian casualties were derived from unverified reports.[62] However, he made his personal views clear: "This is a targeted, focused effort at people who are on a list of active terrorists who are trying to go in and harm Americans, hit American facilities and bases."[63]

Operational Overview

Each of the three operational commanders from 2009 to 2011 altered ISAF's approach to the war during his tenure. General David D. McKiernan, who commanded in a resource-constrained environment until 11 May 2009, requested to double the American force from 30,000 to more than 60,000 and attempted to unify the regional commands through coherent campaign revisions before being abruptly replaced.

Assuming command in June 2009, a month after Gates removed McKiernan, General Stanley A. McChrystal adapted and executed his predecessor's plan. Gates and Obama impressed upon McChrystal the need to reduce civilian casualties, conduct a strategic assessment of the war within sixty days, and streamline the command. McChrystal did this but then asked for even more troops. While McChrystal's request was mostly filled, he also abruptly left command after a reporter quoted his staff's disparaging remarks regarding senior leaders in the Obama White House.[64]

---

61. Ibid. Overall casualties included enemy combatant losses plus collateral casualties suffered by civilians. The total of enemy combatants killed or wounded in Pakistan by alleged drone strikes during the 2009–2012 timeframe ranges from 1,920 to 2,068 based on the previous source. Ibid.

62. At least one journalist in Pakistan has questioned the impartiality of statistics compiled by Western activist groups because their claims were derived from interviews arranged by a legal advocacy group representing people claiming to have lost loved ones or been injured by drones. See "Correction: Did a Drone Attack Malala?" *Dawn*, 16 Oct 2012, https://www.dawn.com/news/757112, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

63. President Barack H. Obama, "Your Interview with the President – 2012," Google+ Presidential Hangout, The Obama White House, video, 50:46, 30 Jan 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeTj5qMGTAI, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

64. Michael Hastings, "The Runaway General: The Profile That Brought Down McChrystal," *Rolling Stone*, 22 Jun 2010, http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-

General Petraeus relinquished his command of CENTCOM to take over ISAF in May 2010. Petraeus oversaw the Afghan surge. He sought to repeat his Iraq success in Afghanistan, accelerating offensive operations in order to make progress toward ISAF's operational objectives. The Petraeus period, during which American troop strength exceeded 100,000, ended with a transition plan for the next phase of the war to begin in summer 2011.[65]

Although the term "surge" implies a temporary increase in troops, like a tide that rises and ebbs, it was more than that. The surge in Afghanistan also entailed debates over the strategy, the evolving command structures, and the unique personalities of senior ISAF commanders. It concluded in July 2011 when reinforcing units began returning home and Afghan forces started assuming responsibility for their nation's security. Simultaneous with the start of the drawdown, President Obama announced that the American combat role would end in 2014.[66]

The Afghan surge was an attempt by American leaders to bring Enduring Freedom to a successful close. The course of this surge led to five conclusions. First, it highlighted the incongruity between the national strategic and operational levels of war, more publicly and openly than ever before. Second, it illuminated and corrected past difficulties in commanding and controlling Enduring Freedom. Third, it exposed problems in tactics, training, counterinsurgency doctrine, and force generation. Fourth, in the rush to train the ANSF, it would test the U.S. Army's resolve in dealing with difficult subjects like violations of the laws of land warfare, insider attacks, and transitioning key responsibilities from U.S. to indigenous control during combat operations.

Finally, the surge highlighted the DoD's inability to manage strategic communications effectively. This challenge began when senior administration officials replaced the incumbent ISAF commander on short notice and for reasons that were unclear to the general public. It was exacerbated by poor decision making on the part of senior personnel, which led to another ISAF commander's resignation in the wake of a damning story filed by a journalist embedded with his command group. Throughout these incidents and thereafter, information operations specialists and public affairs personnel failed to keep pace with events. As they struggled to overcome conceptual and cultural barriers, the management of the public perception of the war would become more and more central to the war in Afghanistan.

---

runaway-general-20100622, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

65. General Petraeus expressed his belief that the surge ended prematurely by noting the required number of troops for the mission were present in Afghanistan for only six to seven months before the predetermined end date triggered a withdrawal. Interv, Degen and Stark with Petraeus, 29 Jan 2016, pp. 16–17.

66. President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 22 Jun 2011), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Chapter Six

McKiernan's War Ends



Although U.S. forces had operated throughout Afghanistan since 2001, eight years later two-thirds of the 30,000 American troops committed to that conflict were concentrated in RC East. By early 2011, 106,000 American troops would be divided almost equally between RC East, RC South, and the newly formed RC Southwest. This increase and dispersion of U.S. forces led to American generals supplanting British, Canadian, and Dutch officers as commanders of RC South. By November 2010, Americans commanded three of the six regional commands (East, South, and Southwest). Even before Americans ascended to operational command, General David D. McKiernan used the pending surge to enhance unity of effort.

Unity of Effort

In early 2009, all American troops operated under CJTF-101, CSTC-A, or Special Operations commands. However, by the end of the year, they would be funneled under regional commands as part of the ISAF mandate.[1] McKiernan moved to align U.S. forces by creating a new headquarters, designated as USFOR-A, to serve as the national command element.[2] At the same time, McKiernan did not agree with the idea—favored by General David H. Petraeus at CENTCOM—of forming a similar headquarters for ISAF. While McKiernan recognized that command and control relationships were challenging for ISAF, he believed in less international command and control structure rather than more.[3]

The Campaign Plan: More Troops and Counterinsurgency

While the U.S. military sought to improve its command and control deficiencies, other issues were more pressing. Increased enemy activity had prompted McKiernan to request more forces, particularly in southern Afghanistan. He initially asked for these forces during the last months of the

1. Elements of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Infantry Division formed CJTF-101. It was the senior American headquarters in Afghanistan in early 2009, and the commander also held the position of commander of RC East.

2. Although Special Operations forces were also affected by the reorganization effort, the fact that some organizations were considered as national assets rather than dedicated theater assets resulted in a greater percentage reporting directly to ISAF.

3. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David D. McKiernan, frmr ISAF Cdr, 11 Mar 2015, p. 145, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Bush administration. As McKiernan waited for the request to be approved, he directed infrastructure to be built to support them. He also remained aware that to get approval for more forces, he needed a plan for what the requested troops would do. An update to his plan would also help get his units in step with the embassy's plan for Afghanistan and further enhance unity of effort. To this end, McKiernan drafted an updated Civil-Military Campaign Plan designed to unite the efforts of the embassy and military actors.[4]

On the military side, McKiernan believed that the regional commands were conducting independent campaigns and, even within some regional commands, national efforts were not coordinated. To establish unity of effort among the regional commands, McKiernan authorized a campaign plan known as ISAF Operation Plan 38302. After viewing the initial drafts, he added language from Field Manual 3–24 to the document. Each successive change to the order incorporated more counterinsurgency terminology. Shortly after issuing 38302, McKiernan revised his concept of operations in an ISAF operations order known as Tolo Hamkari (Dawn of Cooperation, hereafter referred to as OP [Operation] Tolo). The second version (OP Tolo 2) and third revision (referred to as Revision 3 or Rev 3) to ISAF Operation Plan 38302 made greater strides toward achieving unity of effort.

OP Tolo sought to foster "support [for] the population of Afghanistan through an ISAF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) partnership to build GIRoA capacity and credibility (legitimacy)." The campaign consisted of four lines of operation under which all subordinate efforts were to be nested. The regional commands used these lines to design their operations. The first was governance. In this line, ISAF and U.S. forces supported civilian agencies such as the State Department and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The second line was security, for which ISAF was the lead. The third line was ISAF-supported, civilian-led reconstruction and development initiatives designed to better the lives of the Afghan people. The final line of effort, information operations and strategic communications, sought to illustrate how ISAF goals were aimed at ending the violence and helping Afghans transform their embattled country into a self-sufficient member of the global community.[5]

With one exception, the lines of operation remained constant in the first three versions of OP Tolo. The only difference was that McKiernan emphasized securing the elections and characterized the enemy as an insurgency in OP Tolo 2. This order was the first official acknowledgment that an insurgency was the main threat in Afghanistan. Until this time, President Hamid Karzai had vehemently denied that an insurgency existed, noting that the term made his government appear illegitimate. Earlier versions of the order had reflected this reluctance to define the problem by inferring that only loose border security had provided the opportunities for foreign militaries to infiltrate the country. The mission before 2009 had not been about defeating an enemy, but "conducting military operations to assist" in securing the country. As

4. Ibid., pp. 70–73, 143.

5. Bfg, ISAF, CJ–5, CJTF-101, 5 Sep 2008, sub: 080905-S-ISAF-CJ5-CJTF-101 CAMPLAN, slide 20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the mission statement for Enduring Freedom since 2007 awkwardly stated, U.S. forces were to "conduct military operations in the assigned Area of Operations (AOO) to assist the Government of Afghanistan (GOA) in the establishment and maintenance of a safe and secure environment with full engagement of ANSF, in order to extend GOA authority and influence, thereby facilitating AFG's [Afghanistan's] reconstruction and enabling the GOA to control the country."[6]

For the most part, American commanders in Afghanistan accepted that they were fighting an insurgency. For years, Enduring Freedom documents had referred to the Field Manual 3–24 counterinsurgency terminology of shape, clear, hold, and build while ISAF orders focused on nation building. McKiernan insisted on adding the expression "Shape, Clear, Hold, and Build" to the OP Tolo concept of the operation, but was not successful in changing the mission statement to "conduct counterinsurgency operations." Because counterinsurgency missions frequently required heavy investments in time and resources, NATO allies were hesitant to identify the mission as a counterinsurgency in their own documents.[7]

McKiernan had misgivings about adopting the population-centric counterinsurgency approach used in Iraq. He interpreted Field Manual 3–24 as directing that he position most of his troops in urban areas and along the Ring Road (Afghanistan National Highway 1). To the ISAF commander, such a disposition was not applicable to Afghanistan, where the insurgency had its roots in rural tradition. This was a significant difference from Iraq, where the insurgency was largely an urban phenomenon. If Afghan and ISAF troops focused on the country's fourteen largest population centers, the Ring Road, and main border crossing sites, no forces would be available to drive enemy forces out of their rural enclaves. McKiernan concluded that pursuing a population-centric counterinsurgency in Afghanistan meant ceding the initiative to the enemy.[8]

Field Manual 3–24's emphasis on population-centric counterinsurgency, coupled with Afghanistan's compartmentalized terrain, created a difficult problem for McKiernan to overcome. Given the theater's limited infrastructure, large troop increases would be a cost-intensive logistics challenge. Relying on lines of communications that traversed Pakistan presented another operational problem. CJTF-101 leaders had spread their available forces over an expansive operational area. This trend led to outpost garrisons becoming increasingly smaller, which made them more vulnerable to attacks by the enemy—such as in the assault at Wanat in 2008.[9] By any definition, these battles were tactical defeats for the enemy with scores of insurgents killed. Despite this, they demonstrated that the Afghan insurgency still thrived while also using masterful strategic messaging to convince ordinary Afghans that

6. OPLAN 38302, Commander of International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF), revision 1, 8 Jan 2007, pp. 7–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, pp. 204–05.

8. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 48.

9. Ibid., pp. 177–78.

the Taliban was winning. Even after inflicting repeated tactical defeats on the enemy, American commanders began pulling forces out of exceptionally vulnerable small outposts. Thus, when President Barack H. Obama assumed office, the coalition still had not regained the initiative from the Taliban's 2006 resurgence.[10]

General McKiernan's Requests for Forces

The Pentagon had all but abandoned its system for generating forces for employment in the war on terrorism by the time McKiernan submitted a formal request for forces through CENTCOM. The Joint Operation Planning and Execution System had been a useful management tool to project which units were training, when they would be deploying, and where they would go. Now, as a result of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps being deployed nearly to full capacity, the Joint Staff required commanders to submit a detailed justification known as a Request for Forces. Although the Request for Forces process theoretically enabled commanders to request exactly what they deemed necessary, it allowed almost every agency in the approval chain to ask for additional clarifying data, which invariably resulted in lengthy delays.[11]

Part of the problem lay with the inherently ad hoc nature of the force request system. First, the granularity of detail required to obtain approval for a unit to be deployed often overwhelmed the staffs and commands tasked with generating these requests. Second, the bureaucracy at every echelon up to the National Command Authority had the opportunity to delay the request for their staffing purposes. Finally, decision makers up to the president of the United States had the ability to approve or disapprove the Request for Forces. For McKiernan, the system resembled a valve that could be opened or closed to control the flow of troops, but would be opened only if a request satisfied every decision maker in the command chain. Instead of the services or the joint forces commander managing what was needed, McKiernan felt that a team of supervisors, with their hands on the valves, micromanaged a process that should have been executed by an operational commander in an efficient manner. The process being what it was, the final hand on the valve was the president. President George W. Bush had opened the valve partially at the end of his term, and now President Obama would assume responsibility for opening it further.[12]

The 15 September 2008 Request for Forces Serial 920—known as RFF 920—stemmed from the shared assessment of the intelligence community that the enemy was moving back into RC South and that RC East needed more troops to secure Wardak and Logar Provinces, outside Kabul. McKiernan based the request strictly on his sense of where troops were needed prior to the elections. He assessed that the enemy would try to influence the Pashtun

10. Ibid., p. 69.

11. Ibid., pp. 81–83.

12. Ibid. p. 88.

vote and focused his efforts there.[13] RFF 920 justified the need for a battalion in Helmand and a battalion each in Wardak and Logar Provinces. The Bush administration approved the request, deploying a Marine Air-Ground Task Force configured around Lt. Col. David L. Odom's 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, to Helmand Province and Col. David B. Haight's 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, to RC East.[14]

McKiernan modified his force request on 24 October 2008 to address three emerging problems. First, CJTF-101 aviation assets were overwhelmed by the need to provide rotary airlift for the whole of Afghanistan. A second combat aviation brigade would cover RCs South and West and allow the aviation brigade at Bagram to focus on RCs East, Capital, and North. Second, McKiernan specifically requested a Stryker brigade combat team to reinforce RC South. He argued that the wheeled Stryker would be effective in the region's open terrain. Finally, he requested another brigade to deploy as trainers and mentors under CSTC-A. If approved, this last request would double their trainers from 3,000 to 6,000. The first two items were approved, but the request for trainers was denied, as the Bush administration wanted to let the next administration make that decision. That development left McKiernan with the belief that the Request for Forces process did not allow the deployed commander sufficient flexibility or responsiveness.[15]

The request for an additional brigade of trainers and advisers had not been denied because McKiernan's superiors felt that additional troops were not needed. Both Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael G. Mullen and General Petraeus agreed that more "boots on the ground" were necessary in Afghanistan. As violence in Iraq declined and President Obama shifted focus toward the new Afghanistan-Pakistan policy, Operation Enduring Freedom would no longer be an economy-of-force mission but rather the main effort. During a 23 March 2009 video teleconference with McKiernan, Petraeus, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mullen stated: "2009 has to be the year we throw the kitchen sink into Afghanistan. [We m]ust generate progress and some early wins there. We'll have to once again resource some of the civil surge. I need your best. [We] must arrest this thing this year. Afghanistan is highest priority."[16]

Petraeus noted Mullen's reference to the military resourcing some of the civil surge. To Petraeus, this meant that expectations for the civilian side were limited and the military could now begin brainstorming other ways to "arrest this thing." The idea of doing it all in 2009 seemed overly ambitious, given that additional resources necessary to fulfill Mullen's proclamation would

13. Ibid., pp. 70–72.

14. Ibid., pp. 68–70.

15. Ibid.; Jack D. Kem, *NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan: Perspectives on the First Two Years, 2009–2011* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Command and General Staff College, Jul 2012). See also "USFOR-A History 1 July 2010–31 December 2010 NTM-A/CSTC-A," Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Personal notebook and calendar, Gen David H. Petraeus, 23 Mar 2009, Petraeus Papers, Special Collections, National Defense University.

not be authorized for another eight months. The surge forces could not begin arriving until late 2009 and would not peak until 2011.

Although Petraeus openly agreed that the Pentagon should surge troops to Afghanistan, he saw Mullen's assessment as a way to attack as many of Afghanistan's problems as he could imagine. Soon after Mullen's suggestion about "throwing the kitchen sink" at Afghanistan, Petraeus listed twelve categories in his personal notebook:

1. Elections
2. STRATCOM/IO [strategic communications/information operations]
3. CN [counternarcotics]
4. Agricultural Development
5. Prisons
6. Rule of Law
7. Police Training
8. International Coordination
9. Counter Corruption
10. PRTs [Provincial Reconstruction Teams]
11. Health
12. Education

Petraeus noted that several of these challenging problems lined up well with actors and resources. He put those in parentheses: counternarcotics (Drug Enforcement Agency), agricultural development (Department of Agriculture), prisons (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement), rule of law (Department of Justice), and international coordination (Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke).[17] Other areas, such as countercorruption, health, and education, would require more robust support from the Afghan government because the coalition's military and political resources would not be enough to address them. Some areas, interrelated to others, required visible countercorruption initiatives by the Kabul government and an information-operations effort to begin restoring the Afghan people's faith in the election process. Petraeus thought in terms of interagency solutions and would push for those when politically opportune. Yet almost from the beginning, some of his programs were destined to achieve far less than desired because they faced resistance from the Taliban. Some also ran counter to fundamental aspects of Afghan culture or to the self-serving nature of the Karzai government.

With 21,000 additional forces authorized and the shift in priority from Iraq to Afghanistan underway, discussions at McKiernan's headquarters increasingly focused on what missions to assign to the incoming troops. For the most part, enemy activity drove the decisions. An Estonian, British, and U.S. operation in Helmand Province revealed large numbers of IEDs placed to disrupt movement around the capital of Lashkar Gah. At about the same time, the Taliban targeted the Afghan Special Counter-Narcotics Police Force in separate incidents in the district surrounding the Helmand capital.

17. Ibid.

Then, at the intersection of the Ring Road and Helmand River in the town of Girishk, home to the largest and most important bazaar in the province, a single raid netted half a ton of recently harvested opium.[18] Afghan and coalition forces interpreted the increased use of IEDs and the attacks on the counternarcotics police as an effort to protect opium production in Helmand over the next poppy-growing season.[19]

Based on this analysis, McKiernan directed a significant portion of the additional forces, primarily U.S. Marines, to combat the growing threat to stability in Helmand Province—the area at the heart of the illicit opium trade. McKiernan wanted the incoming troops to clear and hold this area until sufficient ANSF could be trained to secure the region.[20] The ANSF, aided by ISAF, could mass forces to clear specific areas but lacked the forces and the logistics necessary to hold them. Soon after clearing any area, the enemy would return. A prime example in Helmand was the village of Babaji, north of Lashkar Gah, used as a transit point for Taliban fighters. In mid-February 2009, more than 700 Afghan, British, Danish, and Canadian troops had established a police station in the area. The operation was deemed successful, but shortly after the assault force departed, the Taliban reasserted control. That development should not have come as a surprise to ISAF commanders familiar with the Taliban's tactic of falling back in the face of strength before returning when the odds were more favorable. The area had to be cleared again in June 2009.[21]

Significant Operations in RC East, Early 2009

McKiernan's justification for the surge shifted the primary effort from eastern to southern Afghanistan. RC East usually had been the American main effort since Operation Anaconda.[22] ISAF assumed responsibility for the other regional commands, but RC East remained under U.S. command. While the Marines surged into RC South in 2009–2010, RC East increased in size by one Army brigade combat team. In January 2009, Colonel Haight's 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (TF Spartan), established operations with Lt. Col. Kimo C. Gallahue's 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry (TF Catamount), in Wardak Province and Lt. Col. Daniel P. Goldthorpe's 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry (TF Titans), in Logar Province. McKiernan detached the third maneuver battalion, Lt. Col. Frederick M. McDonnell's 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry (TF Chosin), to Col. John M. Spiszer's TF Duke in Kunar Province. The rest of TF Spartan, including Lt. Col. Michael P. Gabel's 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery (TF Wolfpack); Lt. Col. Eugene A.

18. Dressler, *Securing Helmand*, p. 25.

19. Ibid., p. 11.

20. DoD, Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Rpt. to Cong., Aug 2008, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Dressler, *Securing Helmand*, p. 22.

22. Peter L. Bergen, *Manhunt: The Ten-Year Search for Bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad* (New York: Broadway Books, 2013), pp. 108–35.

Shearer's 710th Brigade Support Battalion (TF Support); and Lt. Col. Steve Pitts' Special Troops Battalion (TF Vanguard), remained with Haight. These units represented the last expansions into new battlespace in RC East under McKiernan's senior tactician in the region, CJTF-101 commander Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser.

Although the overall main effort would shift to RC South, it was vital to reinforce RC East before the marines arrived. Violence had spiked in Wardak and Logar Provinces in 2008, and these provinces controlled the southern approaches to Kabul. As Brig. Gen. Mark A. Milley, deputy commanding general for operations of RC East, explained to Brig. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, deputy commanding general for ISAF operations:

> Kabul is the political center of gravity of Afghanistan and has been for centuries. The enemy is making a conscious effort to surround Kabul and they project they can do this by end of year 2008.
>
> There are four historic approaches to Kabul. The Afghans call these the "gates to Kabul."
>
> The enemy has set up support zones and is infiltrating additional combat power into these support zones that generally align with the approaches and associated districts. From these support zones the enemy plans to launch a steady and increasingly deadly series of spectacular attacks into Kabul—that campaign has already begun. Additionally, from these support zones, the enemy plans to cut the GLOCs [ground lines of communications] (principally Ring Road but other feeder hardball roads as well) leading to Kabul and connecting Kabul to Kandahar. That campaign has also already begun in earnest.
>
> If we get an additional IBCT [Infantry Brigade Combat Team] we will have sufficient combat power to secure the high density population areas; really secure Highway 1 and associated roads; conduct aggressive offensive operations in enemy support zones; and concentrate adequate forces to interdict enemy rat lines from Pakistan border. By positioning the forces in RC-East we will have the second and third order effect of increasing the confidence of the Afghan Government, morale and skill of the ANSF, and concurrently demoralize the enemy because he will realize that his objectives are not achievable.
>
> Our estimate is that the war will be won or lost in RC-East. RC-South is important but the war will not be won or lost in that area of operations. The decisive fight is in RC-East as it has been throughout Afghan history.[23]

This statement, in advocating for forces in Wardak and Logar Provinces, revealed another idea about where the main effort should be located. While ISAF was shifting to RC South, there were those who fervently believed RC East was still the pivotal fight in Afghanistan.

---

23. Ltr, Brig Gen Mark A. Milley, Deputy Cdr for Opns, RC East, to Brig Gen Mike S. Tucker, Deputy Ch of Staff for Opns, ISAF, 26 Jul 2008, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The American Shift to Counterinsurgency Gains Traction

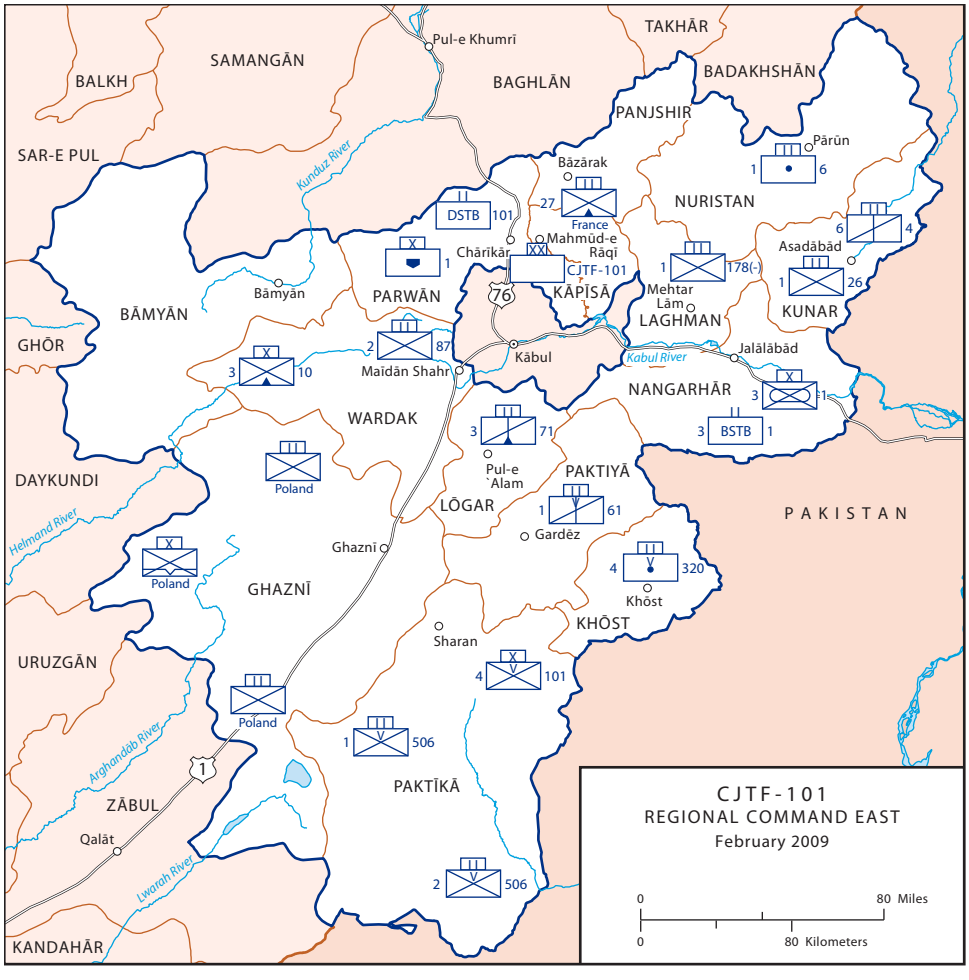
After attempts by Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry and General Dan K. McNeill to pursue enemy forces where they were strongest and McKiernan's desire to win the support of the people of Afghanistan's hinterlands, RC East was characterized by small units occupying combat outposts along regional lines of communications. Many of these outposts, which numbered 101 upon Schloesser's arrival in April 2008, were supportable only by airlift. Day-to-day operations at the tactical level included trying to reach the population to assess their needs to gain access for Afghan officials or nongovernmental organizations to provide basic services, secure elections, and gain intelligence on the enemy. As the enemy began to step up attacks on the American positions, these tactical units began to shift more toward combat missions in the form of raids, interdiction, and clearing operations. All of these often took the form of air-assault operations as mounted ground movements became more dangerous over time with the growth in size of IEDs and the limited number of trafficable roads in the restrictive, mountain terrain. These operations put a further strain on the already overworked aviation units.

With the deployment of the 3d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, to Wardak and Logar Provinces, three American infantry brigade combat teams were now in RC East. Schloesser focused these brigade combat teams in three contiguous areas. While TF Spartan covered the southern and western approaches to Kabul, TF Duke secured the four provinces of Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar, and Laghman in the northern zone. In the southern portion of Schloesser's regional command, the 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, would replace 4th Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), to secure Paktiya, Paktika, and Khost Provinces. Predictably, these border provinces endured the most enemy activity and required the most attention from the Americans. In addition to the three infantry brigades, RC East included the Polish Task Force White Eagle in Ghazni Province; Col. Scott A. Spellmon's 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (TF Warrior) in Bamyan, Parwan, and Panjshir Provinces; and the French Task Force Lafayette operating in both Kapisa Province and the Sarobi District of Kabul Province (*Map 6.1*).[24]

The addition of TF Spartan pushed the personnel strength of RC East to more than 20,000, up from approximately 15,000 one year earlier. However, RC South workforce totals surpassed RC East for the first time, reaching more than 22,000. From February 2009, RC South would grow faster than RC East. RC East would lose its status as the main effort by the end of 2009 and would have a lower troop strength than the south until the end of the subsequent surge instituted by President Obama. Although it was now a supporting effort, RC East would grow in strength by another third, maxing out at approximately 30,000 troops.[25] The reinforcement enabled ISAF to extend its reach into many small combat outposts where ISAF troops could target insurgents more effectively, even though bases located far from population

24. NATO, ISAF Placemats, 2009–2011, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato/live/107995.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. Ibid.



Map 6.1

centers provided only marginal support to counterinsurgency efforts. Initial deployments into places like the Pech River Valley led to commanders venturing into sparsely populated tributary valleys in search of an elusive enemy. Experiences like those at Combat Outposts RANCH HOUSE and BELLA, as well as Wanat in 2008, indicated that lack of adequate intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets at key times made smaller outposts vulnerable to surprise attacks. Commanders subsequently withdrew their troops from a number of isolated bases to minimize tactical risk in the face of an evolving threat while simultaneously placing more emphasis on population-centric counterinsurgency by moving displaced units closer to larger villages and towns.

In spite of these challenges, coalition forces in RC East continued to secure the area surrounding Kabul and the most contentious provinces on the Pakistan border. While other units in RC East conducted operations to disrupt the enemy, TF SPARTAN deployed into Wardak and Logar Provinces to



Sgt. Matthew C. Moeller, USA

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry (TF Duke), patrol Korangal in Kunar Province during Operation Viper Snake, April 2009.

secure roads. Afghanistan National Highway 1 (the Ring Road) approached Kabul through Wardak, and Highway 2 connected Kabul with Pakistan through Khost Province. Thus TF Spartan operations, both lethal and non-lethal, focused first on clearing and securing and then on building the roads. As Haight reflected:

> [M]y top three development priorities were roads, as number one; number two was roads; and number three was roads. And if I had a four, five, and six, they would have been roads—not literally, but I used to make a joke and say, "I like libraries, I like clinics, I like schools, and I like all those things, but I would turn them all in for one more mile of road." . . . [R]oads were the most important thing because they fix their economy.[26]

For the first half of 2009, the remaining brigades focused on "ANSF partnering and mentoring with the two Afghan major commands in RC East, the 201st Corps and 203rd Corps."[27]

Prior to this troop increase, the mission of ISAF forces in Afghanistan had always been conveyed as full spectrum operations.[28] After the initial

---

26. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col David B. Haight, frmr 3d Bde Combat Team, 10th Mtn Div Cdr, 18 Feb 2011, pp. 5–7, Hist File, OEF Study Grp.

27. DoD, Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Rpt to Cong, Oct 2009, p. 16, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/October_2009.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. As head of CFC-A, Lt. Gen. David W. Barno referred to the conflict he fought in Afghanistan from October 2003 to May 2005 as a counterinsurgency, although he used the more doctrinally-accepted "full spectrum operations" in his mission statements.

troop increases, this mission would formally change to counterinsurgency operations. The difference in the terms was subtle but important. Counterinsurgency operations indicate the presence of an enemy insurgency, whereas full spectrum operations convey a broad range of military activity from humanitarian assistance to high-intensity conflict. Counterinsurgency also came to mean coordinating efforts from outside the military as well. In any event, until April 2009, Schloesser's mission statement for RC East was:

> In conjunction with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), NATO ISAF, and the Interagency [i.e., other U.S. governmental agencies outside of DoD], RC-(E[ast])/CJTF-101 conducts full spectrum operations to develop Afghan national capability to secure its people, exercise capable governance, and develop a sustainable economy, while defeating terrorists and insurgents, in order to extend GIRoA authority and influence as the legitimate government of the Afghan people.[29]

In April 2009, following the publication of McKiernan's OP Tolo 2, the American-led RC East (but not the other regional commands) would change its mission to:

> Regional Command (East), in close coordination with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), joint, interagency, and multinational partners, conducts counter-insurgency (COIN) operations from 01 APR 09 until the continuance or transfer of constitutional power following the 2009 Afghan Presidential election, in order to improve GIRoA's capacity to provide security, exercise good governance, develop a sustainable licit economy, and improve the quality of life for the Afghan people.[30]

The success of the Iraq surge, coupled with the Riedel Report and the elevation of Petraeus to CENTCOM commander, influenced the change in the RC East mission to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Securing the elections justified additional forces for RC East. As General Milley explained to General Tucker, Kabul had to be secured for the upcoming elections to be successful.

To enable a shift to a counterinsurgency approach, McKiernan ordered CJTF-101 to relinquish National Support and Command Element responsibilities in April 2009 to USFOR-A, which had been established for exactly that purpose. This transfer allowed the leaders of RC East to focus on the tactical fight (*Map 6.2*).[31]

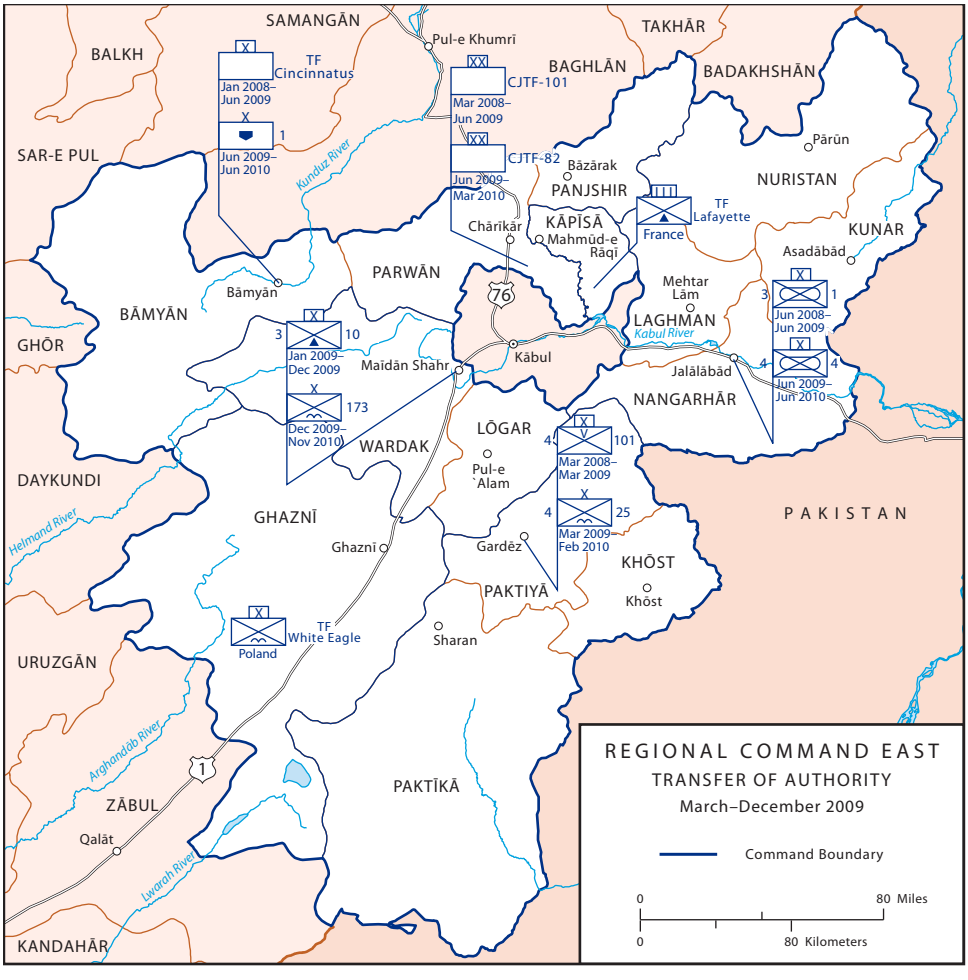
Although the upcoming elections were supposed to remain the priority for the remainder of the summer, everyone in RC East soon found themselves shifting focus for a completely different reason. At the end of June 2009,

---

29. Bfg, CJTF-101, 10 Dec 2008, sub: CAMPLAN, slide 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Ibid., slide 16.

31. FRAGO 07–565, CENTCOM, 4 Oct 2008, sub: ESTABLISHMENT OF USFOR-A, NARR, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Map 6.2

Pfc. Beaudry Robert "Bowe" Bergdahl of Lt. Col. Clinton J. Baker's 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry, disappeared from his base in Paktika Province and was seized by the Taliban. The search for Bergdahl drove operations in RC East for months to come.[32] The diversion of significant resources to that effort would have a major impact on the campaign in Afghanistan for the duration of the search.

Helicopters were in critically short supply before the deployment of a second combat aviation brigade as part of McKiernan's most recent request for forces. This scarcity increased after Bergdahl's disappearance. Almost all units in RC East began conducting additional operations—requiring rotary-wing aircraft; unmanned aerial vehicles; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets—to locate the missing soldier. The search for Bergdahl continued throughout July and into August 2009, when the main effort for

32. DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2009, p. 16.



S. Sgt. Markus Butler, USA

RC East soldiers await pick-up from a CH–47 Chinook helicopter to begin search operations.

all forces in Afghanistan returned to securing the 20 August 2009 elections.[33] These two events—the search for Bergdahl and security preparations for the elections—consumed the second half of the Afghan fighting season.

Another factor influencing operations at the time was the rapid turnover of units. Relief-in-place missions are highly disruptive to campaigns. As in previous years, most Army units deployed to Afghanistan on an annual deployment cycle. CENTCOM and providing commands staggered brigades so that they did not all change at once, which resulted in a constant churn of units coming and going. Most often, the brigades serving in Afghanistan did not serve under their normal stateside divisional headquarters, which meant that they had to take time to become familiar with command structure and practices of their newly assigned higher headquarters.

The one brigade combat team that was aligned under its stateside command—the 4th Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)—had redeployed in March 2009, leaving the rest of the units in RC East populated by soldiers from different divisions. This arrangement was indicative of how modularity supported contingency operations; brigades were supposed to be able to serve under any division headquarters. Although this state of affairs was normal in Operation Enduring Freedom, it gave the divisional team no time for team building. Units, staffs, and commanders often had to develop relationships while conducting combat missions. The Army had adopted modularity so it could "plug and play" units at the brigade combat team level, a structural change that generated flexibility, enabled independent operations, and simplified sustainment. The success of modularity appeared evident in the fact that all brigade combat teams came from different divisions, but the actual situation on the ground challenged Army leaders who were already

33. Ibid., p. 17.

struggling through a coalition environment that made it difficult to conduct coherent operations.

TF Spartan (3d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division) continued securing and clearing its new area throughout 2009 while the other task forces were relieved in place. Task Force Yukon (4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division), under the command of Col. Michael L. Howard, had relieved Col. John P. "Pete" Johnson's 4th Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), (TF Currahee) in March 2009.[34] On 3 June 2009, Maj. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti's 82d Airborne Division replaced General Schloesser's 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and reflagged as Combined Joint Task Force 82 (CJTF-82). Just after CJTF-82 arrived, Col. Randy A. George's Task Force Mountain Warrior, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, relieved Spiszer's TF Duke.[35] (*See Map 6.2.*) The high tempo of units being replaced while searching for Bergdahl and preparing for elections dominated RC East during mid-2009. After the elections, RC East units focused on partnering with and preparing ANSF for transition, and the main effort was to shift to RC South. Simultaneously, the mission changed to conducting counterinsurgency operations.

McKiernan Chooses Helmand

During the debate over whether or not to embrace population-centric counterinsurgency, some in the Obama administration began to question why so many troops had been deployed to sparsely populated Helmand Province, and why that effort rested primarily on the shoulders of the U.S. Marine Corps. Certainly, Petraeus' map of enemy activity in 2008 helped explain the choice of Helmand. General McKiernan painted a more straightforward picture of why the marines had been assigned to Helmand:

> Now despite a lot of writings and people saying they decided where they [additional forces] would go, I can categorically tell you that I personally decided where they would go and briefed that as part of the Request for Forces process—briefed it and got concurrence from the Afghan Ministry of Defense and ultimately briefed it to President Karzai . . . it was a top-

34. The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, included Lt. Col. Clinton J. Baker's 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry (TF 1 Geronimo); Lt. Col. Peter Minalga's 3d Battalion, 509th Infantry (TF 3 Geronimo); Lt. Col. Robert Campbell's 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry (TF Denali); Lt. Col. Stephen Smith's 2nd Battalion, 377th Field Artillery (TF Spartan Steel); Special Troops Battalion (TF Warrior); and the Support Battalion (TF Centurion). In addition to its organic units, Howard's brigade combat team also included Lt. Col. Matthew D. Smith's 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry (TF Dahlonega), which replaced the 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry.

35. The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, included Lt. Col. Robert B. Brown's 3d Squadron, 61st Cavalry (TF Destroyer); Lt. Col. Reik C. Andersen's 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry (TF Red Warriors); Lt. Col. Brian L. Pearl's 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry (TF Lethal Warrior); Lt. Col. Michael J. Forsythe's 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery (TF Steel); Lt. Col. Robert A. Law's Support Battalion (TF Blacksmith); and Lt. Col. Jody L. Nelson's Special Troops Battalion. However, Col. Andersen's 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, did not join the rest of the brigade in RC East; instead it relieved the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry, in RC South.

> down approach of my saying I need these additional capabilities in these particular areas, south, particularly in the Helmand River Valley.[36]

According to McKiernan's reasoning, of the two contentious areas in RC South, the smaller problem should be solved first. To provide coalition forces momentum, he sent the marines to Helmand Province. Even though Helmand had extensive poppy fields and had witnessed the most violent insurgent events in 2008, it was a barren land without the cultural and historical importance of Kandahar Province. McKiernan also believed that a long, drawn-out battle in Kandahar just before the elections would not be wise. He lobbied and vetted his proposed troop-deployment locations with the RC commanders, who all felt they would receive additional forces and deploy them as they saw fit. Most importantly, McKiernan vetted his ideas with the RC South commander, Dutch Maj. Gen. Mart de Kruif, who consented to the plan.[37]

The military command in Afghanistan delineated the plan to reinforce RC South in Operations Order 1 for 2009 (*Map 6.3*). This document orchestrated the deployment of the combat aviation brigade and Stryker brigade combat team under USFOR-A. It accepted the Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan as a voluntary national contribution to ISAF. As ISAF commander, McKiernan delegated NATO tactical command of the expeditionary brigade to RC South. This command relationship allowed de Kruif to designate local control measures and delegate tactical tasks, but prevented him from reorganizing or dividing the Marine brigade. U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command in Tampa retained operational control of the unit. To change Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan's task organization, the Marine component commander in Tampa would have to issue the necessary order.[38]

This decision conferred unprecedented authority to someone outside the authority of the joint force commander. It reflected the fact that the modern U.S. military placed as much emphasis on institutional legacy as it did on efficiency when waging war. Considering that the marines operated under similar conditions in Iraq's Al Anbar Province from March 2004 through January 2010, the decision should not have come as a surprise. Service parochialism, in addition to coalition considerations, had colored U.S. involvement in Afghanistan since the conflict began and continued to complicate the fight.[39] Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates would reflect that not breaking these institutional barriers was "my biggest mistake in

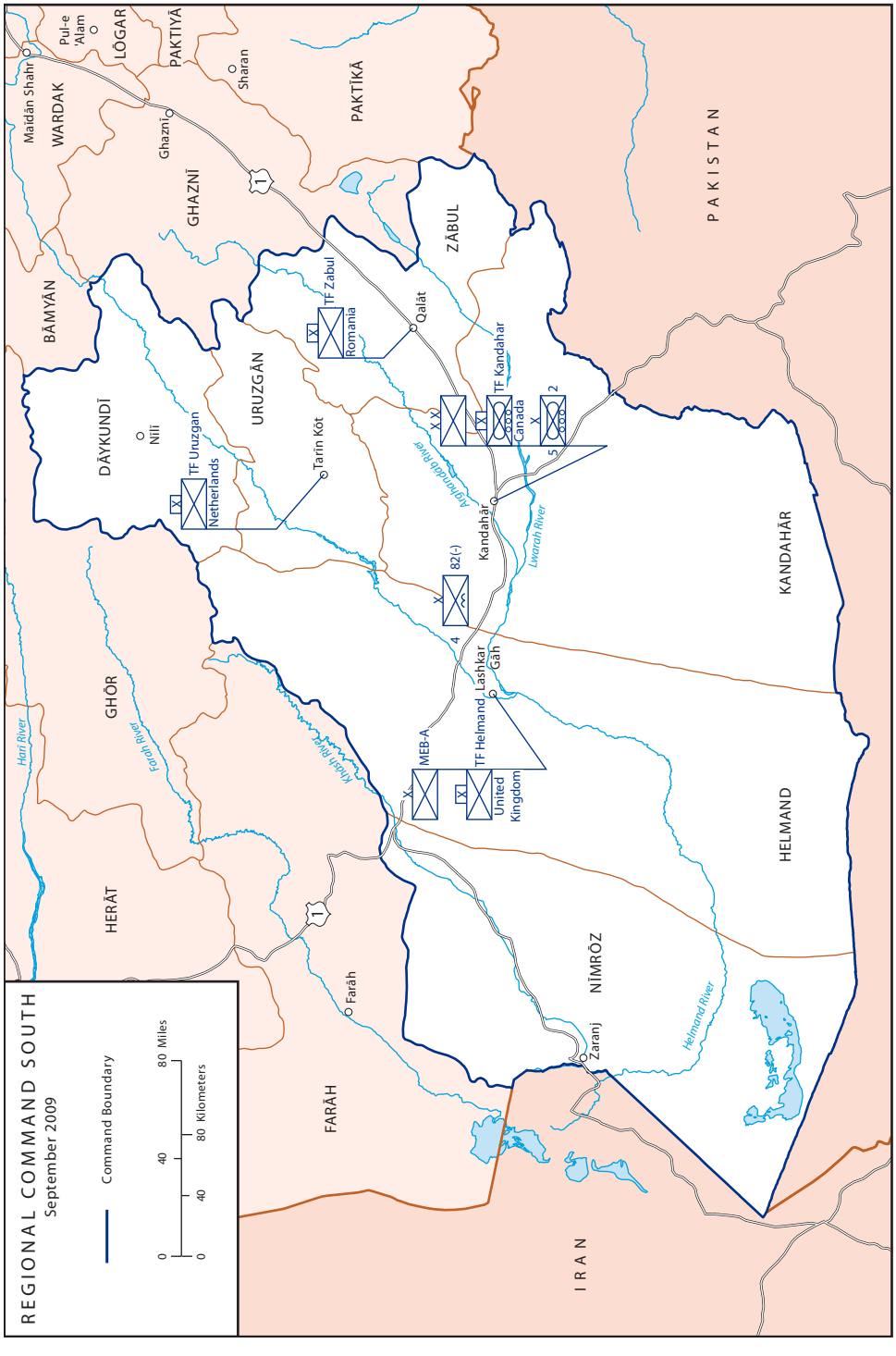
---

36. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 69.

37. Ibid., pp. 77–78.

38. OPORD 001–2009, ISAF U.S. Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A), 16 Mar 2009, sub: Force Expansion into RC-S, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Maj Matthew B. Smith, and Mark J. Reardon, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Tommy R. Franks, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 6 Dec 2015, pp. 31–32, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


REGIONAL COMMAND SOUTH
September 2009
Command Boundary
0 40 80 Miles
0 40 80 Kilometers
Maidān Shahr
Pul-e 'Alam
LŌGAR
PAKTIYĀ
Sharan
WARDAK
Ghazni
GHAZNĪ
PAKTĪKĀ
BĀMYĀN
DĀYKUNDĪ
Nili
URUZGĀN
Tarin Kot
TF Uruzgan
Netherlands
TF Zabul
Romania
Qalat
ZĀBUL
PAKISTAN
XXX
TF Kandahar
Canada
X
2
5
Arghandab River
Kandahar
Dorafshan River
Arghandab River
82(-)
4
Lashkar Gāh
TF Helmand
United Kingdom
MEB-A
GHŌR
HERĀT
Hari River
Farah River
Khash River
FARĀH
Farāh
NIMRŌZ
Zaranj
Helmand River
HELMAND
KANDAHĀR
IRAN

Map 6.3

overseeing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan."[40] In Gates' mind, service inflexibility affected the conflict in negative ways.

> We knew pretty early on—maybe a year in for me [2008]—that the command and control in Afghanistan was all screwed up—that the commander of ISAF, who was an American, did not have command of all the American troops. . . . It was really convoluted, in terms of the command authority of the Marines, because the Marines were actually under the command of a three-star in Tampa, and then back to the Pentagon.[41]

The contorted command relationship in RC South derived from Marine Corps doctrine. The standard task organization of Marine Corps forces since 1952 had been the Marine air-ground task force, consisting of a command element, ground combat element, air combat element, and a logistics combat element.[42] The task force is considered indivisible, fighting in a single battlespace. The sanctity of the U.S. Marine Corps doctrine had been a recurrent thread in previous campaigns, most recently in Operation Desert Storm where U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command retained control over its air combat element after putting up spirited opposition to the Air Force's view that all aviation in a theater should be under a single joint-force air component command.[43]

Key to the Marine Corps view of operations was the concept of "single battle." The operational commander must have the authority to use forces as necessary. Within that concept, a Marine air-ground task force commander conducts central planning and enables decentralized execution. As noted in the current version of Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–0, *Marine Corps Operations*, "a commander must view his area of operations as an indivisible entity."[44] Although Marine doctrine allows an air-ground task force to be spread over a noncontiguous area of operations, it assumes that the combat force is operating alone. As part of a larger joint ground campaign, Marine Corps forces fought within a single contiguous area, as had been the case in

---

40. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Lt Col John R. Stark, Maj Matthew B. Smith, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Robert M. Gates, frmr Sec Def, 8 Dec 2015, pp. 31–33, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; see also Gates, *Duty*, p. 340.

41. Interv, Degen, Stark, Smith, and Roberts with Gates, 8 Dec 2015, pp. 31–33.

42. HQ, United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–0, Marine Corps Operations (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001), pp. 1-4, 1-15–1-17, 3-11–3-13. A Marine Air-Ground Task Force can be tailored to suit the requirements of an operation and thus can be of various sizes, in this case a brigade—Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan. Such a structure had been further codified under Title 10 U.S. Code, Chapter 507, Section 5063 and in DoD Directive 5100.01, "Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components," dated 21 December 2010.

43. James A. Winnefeld and Dana J. Johnson, *Joint Air Operations: Pursuit of Unity of Command and Control, 1942–1991* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1993), pp. 119–20, 163–64.

44. HQ, United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–0, Marine Corps Operations, pp. 6–20.



Department of Defense

U.S. Army UH–60 helicopters airlift marines into Helmand Province, seen through night-vision goggles.

Kuwait during Desert Storm or in Al Anbar Province during Iraqi Freedom. Planners in Afghanistan, the Pentagon, and Tampa took a contiguous area of operations as an article of faith, recognizing that separating the components of Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan would have been a deal-breaker for the marines' deployment to Helmand.[45]

Counterinsurgency

The U.S. Marine Corps caveats to its deployment into RC South revealed other differences of opinion within the coalition ranks. The United States and the other ISAF nations had adopted operational language that suited their domestic audiences but was incongruous with their allies in Afghanistan. In particular, some ISAF nations disagreed with the population-centric counterinsurgency methods that Petraeus had pursued in Iraq. In early 2009, there would be no official use of the term "counterinsurgency" outside of American commands. Thus, the mission for the incoming forces was to "reinforce Coalition Forces in RC-South with an increase in enduring ground and air/aviation forces beginning no later than 31 March, 2009, in order to ensure success of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan."[46]

---

45. Ltr, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park to Lt Col John R. Stark, 7 Dec 2015, sub: Sourcing and Planning Guidance, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. It was noted that deploying Marine units to RC South under the tactical control of ISAF meant that the Marine Air-Ground Task Force subordinate elements could not be detached from their parent headquarters. The concept was not challenged. See Concept Bfg, Maj Jeff McCoy, ISAF, CJ–5, 20 Jan 2009, sub: Additional US Forces into Afghan Area of Operations, version 21, pp. 19–22, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. OPORD 001–2009, ISAF USFOR-A, 16 Mar 2009, sub: Force Expansion into RC-S.

The command of RC South rotated among Canada, Great Britain, and the Netherlands every six months. Dutch General de Kruif had been appointed in late 2008 with the agreement that his tour would last one year to provide continuity. No discussion of changing the mission statement would take place without the North Atlantic Council first agreeing to change it. To nations like the Netherlands, counterinsurgency was an operational paradigm that indicated a larger commitment than they felt was politically acceptable.[47]

McKiernan understood these political considerations. He had not yet rewritten the ISAF mission for several reasons. Neither the North Atlantic Council nor ISAF had officially recognized counterinsurgency as the mission in Afghanistan. Some key players, including Karzai, denied the existence of an insurgency. McKiernan recognized that changing the mission statement would require lobbying coalition nations individually, something he could not do as theater commander.[48] Instead, McKiernan tried to shift operational language toward counterinsurgency gradually. In June, RC South Operations Order 09–07 echoed the language of a counterinsurgency approach by stating that the mission was to neutralize the insurgency, but did not use the specific phrase "conduct counterinsurgency operations." To make matters more confusing, the order for RC South described the enemy as "a networked movement with diverse motivations aimed at the overthrow of the elected Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through the use of subversion and armed conflict in order to establish local authority in support of their aims such as the reestablishment of a Taliban government."[49] Thus, the order employed a classic Western definition of an insurgency without calling it as such. In the same vein, it labeled the enemy's most dangerous course of action as coordinated attacks to disrupt the upcoming Afghan elections. The order predicted that opposing forces would most likely continue their disjointed and unpredictable attacks on soft vehicle targets to "dissuade contractors and the local populous [*sic*] from supporting ISAF/GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] operations" and to steal voter registration materials. In either case, the tactics employed would be those used by insurgents working to overthrow a legitimate government.[50]

McKiernan's careful use of language indicated that the term "counterinsurgency" was still controversial to coalition members, who regarded their role in Afghanistan largely as part of a stabilization and reconstruction mission, not as combatants in a protracted war. At the same time, the Americans had been conducting counterinsurgency operations (since 2002, according to some) and, as the lead nation in ISAF, began to infuse counterinsurgency methods and terminology into ISAF language and

47. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Mart de Kruif, frmr ISAF RC South Cdr, 14 Oct 2015, pp. 12, 25, 58, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. NATO Press Conf, NATO Sec Gen Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 23 Oct 2009, sub: following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Defense Ministers session in Bratislava, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_58469.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. OPORD 09–07, RC South, 1 Jun 2009, pp. 1–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Ibid.

orders.[51] McKiernan was able to integrate counterinsurgency doctrine into ISAF Order 001-2009, which was synonymous with the USFOR-A order. This change was a shift in thinking and a significant movement toward unity of effort.[52]

The American forces may have regarded counterinsurgency as relatively benign in comparison to high-intensity combat operations against a conventional regional foe, but several ISAF member nations had far different perspectives on their own activities in Afghanistan. In the past, these countries had used morally questionable methods against insurgents seeking to gain independence from European rule, and they were not inclined to repeat this approach in their current military ventures. A few nations, most notably Germany, faced legal constraints to their use of military power abroad. Although European parliamentary members and their constituents were willing to support sustained peace-enforcement operations in conflicts like that in the Balkans, they would not countenance aggressive combat operations that caused either friendly or civilian casualties. The Americans, by contrast, had first entered Afghanistan in response to the September 11th terrorist attacks, and were much more willing to model their counterinsurgency approach after their successful experiences in Iraq during the 2007–2009 timeframe.[53]

Change of Command

Thousands of troops began to arrive in RC South, prepared to carry out the counterinsurgency mission that the Obama administration hoped would provide greater security and stability to Afghanistan and its beleaguered central government. Even as the new forces began deploying in April 2009, Gates felt that he needed to solve another problem important to both Karzai and Obama: civilian casualties. He agonized over how to make the necessary corrections: "I don't believe any military force ever worked harder to avoid innocent victims, but it seemed like every incident was a strategic defeat and we needed to take dramatic action."[54]

Gates and Mullen thought the problem was partly the command structure that left the ISAF commander having to coordinate the regional commands while simultaneously dealing with diplomatic and political duties.[55] Gates, Mullen, and Petraeus preferred separating responsibilities into a four-star command overseeing diplomatic, political, and strategic considerations, and a subordinate three-star headquarters focused on the operational level.

---

51. Interv, Col Bryan R. Gibby, Brian F. Neumann, and Colin J. Williams, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) John R. Abizaid, frmr CENTCOM Cdr, 10 Feb 2016, pp. 41–42.

52. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, pp. 160–61.

53. Interv, Gibby, Neumann, and Williams with Abizaid, 10 Feb 2016; Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015.

54. Gates, *Duty*, p. 345.

55. Interv, Degen, Stark, Smith, and Roberts with Gates, 8 Dec 2015, pp. 23–24; Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, frmr ISAF and CENTCOM Cdr, 29 Jan 2016, pp. 4–8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

According to Gates, McKiernan "strongly resisted such a change."[56] Even though Gates, Mullen, and Petraeus endorsed the new model, McKiernan stood by his assessment that direct control of the regional commands streamlined ISAF's input to a necessary, decentralized fight.[57]

McKiernan's resistance to a new command and control model—combined with some unease with the general—led Gates to consider if McKiernan was the best choice to command ISAF. McKiernan had been selected at the recommendation of the military's highest authorities and was well-respected within the Army; nonetheless, the secretary felt he was not the best officer available: "I told Mullen, 'I've got kids out there dying, and if I don't have confidence I have the very best commander, I couldn't live with myself.'"[58]

At the time, Admiral Mullen was looking to change the trajectory of the war. He ordered CENTCOM and the Joint Staff to assess the strategy in Afghanistan and the overall CENTCOM area of responsibility. One result of this assessment was the Afghan Hands program, later called AfPak Hands. Brig. Gen. Austin S. "Scott" Miller and Brig. Gen. Michael T. Flynn created the program to subject the best officers from all services to intense culture and language training to generate expertise and a continuous knowledge base. The AfPak Hands were to be assigned to mentor Afghan leaders in the region for one year, return stateside for a year, and then deploy again to the region on a regular basis. In theory, the program looked promising, but in the end, many of the services' best and brightest did not participate because they were reluctant to venture off proven career tracks. Indeed, it is not apparent if those that did were rewarded with promotion and opportunity. Even before the AfPak Hands initiative, the Joint Staff, led by its then director Lt. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, had shifted its focus from Iraq to Afghanistan and Pakistan.[59] It was during this period that McChrystal emerged as the "heir apparent" for Afghanistan.[60]

The U.S. Army's decision to accept a counterinsurgency framework in Afghanistan did not quell fighting in RC South. More troops were still needed, but unbeknownst to McKiernan, he would retire before the forces he had requested were fully deployed. The first inkling that his command was in jeopardy emerged in March 2009, when Chief of Staff of the Army General George W. Casey Jr. asked McKiernan if he had a good relationship with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. McKiernan replied, "Yeah, I think so," before realizing something was awry.[61] A month after Casey talked with McKiernan, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle A.

---

56. Gates, *Duty*, p. 345.

57. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 148.

58. Gates, *Duty*, p. 345.

59. General Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin, 2013), pp. 280, 307.

60. McChrystal gave Admiral Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, daily updates on Enduring Freedom developments while serving as director of the Joint Staff. Interv, Degen and Stark with Petraeus, 29 Jan 2016, p. 8.

61. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, pp. 138–40.

Flournoy visited Afghanistan. When she returned, Flournoy told Gates that McKiernan might not be the best man for the job. The specific concerns she raised paralleled his own.[62]

Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates had come to agree with Petraeus that the United States needed a three-star operational headquarters between ISAF and the regional commands. McKiernan's resistance to changing the ISAF command structure continued to irritate the Pentagon's two senior leaders. Putting a layer of command between him and the troops seemed unnatural to McKiernan, and he candidly made his thinking known. By his own admission, McKiernan spent most of his time and energy working laterally and down, not higher.[63] It was a noble sentiment, but it did not endear him to political leaders who had banked their reputations—and their country's—on the outcome of the prioritized operations in Afghanistan in April.

The discussion in Washington, D.C., came to a head when Mullen sought to convince McKiernan to retire of his own accord. Taken aback, McKiernan told Mullen that he had promised the Afghans and others that he would command at least until 2010, and if he and the secretary wanted to replace him, they would have to fire him. Gates spoke to Obama "on several occasions privately," and the president backed recommendations from Gates, Petraeus, and Mullen to replace McKiernan with McChrystal. Notably, Casey opposed the move, calling it a "rotten thing to do."[64]

In the end, the decision was Obama's, and despite the "political ruckus caused by firing the senior commander in the war . . . he was willing to make the change." On 6 May 2009, Gates flew to Kabul and informed the ISAF commander who "acceded with extraordinary dignity and class." According to Gates, "Relieving McKiernan of command was one of the hardest decisions I ever made. He had made no egregious mistake and was deeply respected throughout the Army."[65] The official record notes that the secretary of defense accepted McKiernan's resignation on 11 May 2009. In reality, McKiernan had been fired.

Despite rumors that he was too conventionally minded for the complex environment of post-Taliban Afghanistan, McKiernan had accomplished a great deal. His initiatives included many things later attributed to others. He had simplified command and control by standing up USFOR-A to relieve CJTF-101 of extraneous Title 10 (i.e., Army support to all services in the Afghan theater) responsibilities. He had developed the basing and reception initiatives needed to enable the surge. He had piloted the Afghan Public Protection Program, which morphed into the Afghan Local Police in Logar

62. Interv, Degen, Stark, Smith, and Roberts with Gates, 8 Dec 2015; Gates, *Duty,* pp. 345–50.

63. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, pp. 138–40.

64. Gates, Duty, pp. 345–46; 25. Interv, Bob Woodward, Washington Post, with Barack H. Obama, President of the United States, 10 Jul 2010, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Degen and Stark with Petraeus, 29 Jan 2016, p. 8. General Petraeus saw McChrystal as the "heir apparent" even before the suggestion by Mullen.

65. Gates, *Duty*, p. 345.

and Wardak Provinces.[66] McKiernan also initiated the first Civil-Military Campaign Plan. Signed by McChrystal in August 2009, the document presented a request to surge some 2,000 civilian governance and development experts to Afghanistan so as to accelerate reconstruction efforts.[67]

In a 2015 interview, McKiernan reflected on lessons drawn from his experience as the Enduring Freedom commander. Chief among them was the need for campaign planning to harness all elements of national power into the overall strategy. McKiernan also felt that America's NATO allies had been drawn into Afghanistan too quickly and given far too much to do. The coalition, including the United States, lacked understanding of Afghanistan and the region. Its inadequate ways to deal with enemy sanctuaries proved impossible to remedy. Additionally, the Americans' tendency to speak with Karzai through multiple voices—the ISAF commander, Ambassador Holbrooke, other ambassadors, congressional delegations, and the like—distracted from strategic and diplomatic coherence. Finally, McKiernan believed that there was not enough time to build institutions that would last long enough to resonate with Afghans.[68]

General McKiernan noted that American and allied solutions for Afghan problems were inadequate because top-down, international initiatives outweighed bottom-up, Afghan-centric approaches like the Public Protection Program and Local Police. A key example was the constant focus on the size of the Afghan National Security Forces. While quantity was important, McKiernan felt that the quality of leadership was more important and time would be required before a solid cadre of officers could be developed.[69] Even with McKiernan's abrupt departure, the campaign plan had been developed and postured to attain its strategic objectives. Regardless of which person was in command, the multiyear campaign plan would continue to shape U.S. and ISAF operations in Afghanistan.

66. Because of its success in harnessing local resistance to the insurgency, this program for local defense forces became one of the enemy's top targets.

67. Interv, Neumann and Stark with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 84.

68. Ibid., pp. 14–18.

69. Ibid.

Chapter Seven

McChrystal's War

On 11 May 2009, General David D. McKiernan left Afghanistan. His replacement, General Stanley A. McChrystal, would not arrive in country until 15 June. McChrystal had served as Admiral Michael G. Mullen's director of the Joint Staff, responsible for briefing the chairman on developments in Afghanistan on a daily basis in addition to his many other duties.[1] Despite the five-week gap between McKiernan's departure and his successor's arrival, ISAF published Operations Plan 38302 Revision 3 on 1 June 2009 with McKiernan's signature in absentia. These revisions incorporated the shape, clear, hold, and build language of *Counterinsurgency* (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–24) in its execution paragraphs, but stopped short of changing the mission statement to "conduct counterinsurgency operations."[2]

McChrystal's Assessment and Opening Moves

McKiernan's relief changed ISAF's conduct of the war. McChrystal's first task upon arriving in Afghanistan was to assemble the people he needed to assess the situation on the ground. The officer in charge of the ISAF commander's critical Strategic Advisory Group, Col. Gordon B. "Skip" Davis, had already selected qualified military officers and credentialed scholars to guide the assessment. However, McChrystal preferred U.S. Army officers with Afghanistan experience with whom he had previously served. Davis was replaced by Col. Kevin C. Owens, who had commanded the 173d Airborne Brigade in a previous tour of duty. Col. Christopher D. Kolenda, who had commanded a battalion in Nuristan in 2007, joined Owens. Owens and Kolenda began framing McChrystal's assessment with members of McKiernan's remaining staff. Colonel Owens noted the tension:

> When I came over here [to ISAF headquarters], there was some scar tissue in the force—in the headquarters particularly—but also in the force. Maybe [there was] some resentment in the change [due to] personal loyalty, and that [is] always going to happen . . . the "old team" felt like it was part of the problem. There was also this perception that this "A team" of handpicked guys was here to take over. I've never considered myself a "handpicked" guy. Plus it was a U.S.-only team. This created a palpable resentment when

1. Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker, "Commander's Ouster Is Tied to Shift in Afghan War," *New York Times,* 11 May 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/12/world/asia/12military.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. OPLAN 38302, COMISAF, revision 3, 1 Jun 2009, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> we came on board, and frankly, we probably reinforced it at times, whether consciously or otherwise.[3]

Whereas McKiernan had been hamstrung by an awkward relationship with General David H. Petraeus (who had been his subordinate years before), a resistance to changing the command structure, and a lack of resources, McChrystal enjoyed a stellar reputation from his previous work in the special operations community and as director of the Joint Staff.[4] He had a positive relationship both with Mullen and with Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, who believed McChrystal would bring synergy to the fight.[5] It also helped that the additional troops McKiernan had requested were arriving. McChrystal planned a listening tour, or battlefield circulation, of Afghanistan beginning on 18 June, before he formally received the orders to begin his assessment.[6] The week-long tour included visits to every regional command headquarters and selected lower-echelon locations. Both the assessment team in Kabul and McChrystal's traveling entourage focused on three basic questions: Can the mission be achieved? If so, how should ISAF accomplish it? Finally, what is required to achieve the mission?[7]

The initial findings were disquieting. It seemed to McChrystal that there were different wars being fought against different insurgencies in Afghanistan.[8] The Taliban had taken advantage of local grievances and broken government promises to maintain and strengthen their presence on the ground. McChrystal saw this perceived enemy strength as a weakness to exploit. He believed that effective local governments that relied on and were strengthened by a strong national government would be more effective than firepower when it came to defeating the enemies of Afghanistan. He expressed this same belief in his memoirs: "The introduction of minimally decent and competent governance could cause the local resistance to wilt."[9]

Although this emphasis on governance was not new, McChrystal's determination to devote more attention to protecting the populace than finding and killing the enemy was a notable shift in the American operational approach. As McChrystal knew, reducing violence would limit collateral damage. After seeing how Afghan populations responded to civilian casualties from an errant airstrike, he realized that "the instinctive way we reacted to

---

3. Interv, Col Matthew C. Brand with Col Kevin Owens, 28 Oct 2009, quoted in Matthew C. Brand, "General McChrystal's Strategic Assessment: Evaluating the Operating Environment in Afghanistan in the Summer of 2009" (Montgomery, Ala.: Air Force University Press, Jul 2011), p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Interv, Brian F. Neumann and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David D. McKiernan, frmr ISAF Cdr, 11 Mar 2015, p. 152.

5. Gates, *Duty*, p. 346.

6. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 300.

7. Rpt, Gen Stanley A. McChrystal to Sec Def Robert M. Gates, 30 Aug 2009, sub: COMISAF's Initial Assessment, p. I, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 308.

9. Ibid., p. 310.



M. Sgt Chris Haylett, USAF

General McChrystal accepts the ISAF standard from German General Ramms during a June 2009 ceremony.

alleged incidents made it worse . . . Afghans viewed our skepticism about the validity of their claims as obfuscation, even if we followed our comments with thorough investigations."[10]

The listening tour predated McChrystal's formal instructions from the Pentagon. On 26 June, Secretary Gates directed CENTCOM commander Petraeus to order McChrystal to conduct an assessment within sixty days upon his assumption of command. On 1 July, NATO issued similar instructions to McChrystal from both Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Bantz J. Craddock. On 2 July, McChrystal received the written order from CENTCOM for the same purpose.[11]

McChrystal wasted no time, immediately implementing a new tactical directive and issuing guidance to reduce civilian casualties. He also began to establish the three-star headquarters desired by Petraeus and Gates. The new command was called ISAF Joint Command (IJC) under American Lt. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, who had served under Mullen on the Joint Staff before taking on this assignment. In November, McChrystal also created NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A) under American Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV to unify NATO and U.S. efforts in building Afghan security forces. Caldwell would continue to command CSTC-A as the U.S. training headquarters. McChrystal utilized his expertise in special operations to

10. Ibid., p. 311.

11. Gates, *Duty*, p. 348.

initiate changes to first American and then coalition special operations so as to unify their command structures.[12]

McChrystal ordered Revision 4 of COMISAF (Commander ISAF) Operations Plan 38302 to change the mission statement to "conduct population-centric counterinsurgency operations." It would take several months for this alteration to be approved, as NATO political realities continued to impede American attempts to change the direction of the conflict. Revision 4 adjusted the concept of McKiernan's four lines of operation, removing information operations and dividing security into three separate lines: protect the population, enable ANSF, and neutralize malign influence. The updated lines of operation now consisted of:

1. Protect the population
2. Enable Afghan National Security Forces
3. Neutralize malign influence
4. Support governance
5. Support development

The new order needed North Atlantic Council approval, which would not be granted until McChrystal completed his strategic assessment. Because the new ISAF commander had started the assessment while serving as the director of the Joint Staff, he was armed with a perspective that others may not have had—namely, an understanding of the issues that most concerned the political leadership in Washington.[13] McChrystal requested directives from NATO and CENTCOM to unify the command structure and make his mandate clear: as commander of all U.S. and ISAF forces, he would assess the situation and recommend a way to achieve end-state goals for Afghanistan. Even before he finished his assessment, McChrystal realized that the situation was worse than he thought when he had worked at the Pentagon. Gates learned of this new appraisal when Mullen returned from a trip to Afghanistan in mid-August 2009 and warned the secretary that there would likely be a request for up to 40,000 more troops above the 68,000 already authorized. In response, Gates stated, "I nearly fell off my chair."[14] Although the secretary could not imagine what all those troops would do, McChrystal could. With nearly half of Helmand's districts under Taliban control, elections postponed until the fall, and casualty rates accelerating, McChrystal perceived the need for a major shift in both strategy and resources. Even before he submitted his official assessment, he began changing the course of the war.[15]

On 6 July, McChrystal implemented changes to reverse Afghan impressions about the degree to which ISAF cared about civilian casualties. He

---

12. Ronald M. Johnson, "Command and Control of Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan: Is Unity of Effort Good Enough?" (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 2009), pp. 1–19.

13. COMISAF OPLAN 38302, Rev. 4, 25 Sep 2009, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Gates, *Duty*, pp. 352–53.

15. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, pp. 308–15.

coined the term "courageous restraint" while personally authoring parts of a new tactical directive. Key sentences from the document summarized his intent and provided insight as to what his assessment recommended:

> We will not win based on the number of Taliban we kill, but instead on our ability to separate insurgents from the center of gravity—the people. That means we must respect and protect the population from coercion and violence—and operate in a manner which will win their support. . . . We must avoid the trap of winning tactical victories—but suffering strategic defeats—by causing civilian casualties or excessive damage and thus alienating the people.[16]

From McChrystal's perspective, commanders would need to exercise "courageous restraint" when they weighed the possible gains of using close air support and other weapon systems to attack enemy fighters against the likelihood that such methods would harm civilians and further damage Afghan support for the ISAF mission. In a counterinsurgency campaign, as one NATO press statement read, "sometimes the most effective bullet is the bullet not fired."[17]

McChrystal formally transmitted his assessment to CENTCOM on 30 August 2009. It began by acknowledging that coalition forces aimed to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al-Qaeda and prevent its return to Afghanistan. In addition, it pointed out the need to prevent the Taliban from returning to power lest Afghanistan once again became a terrorist haven. The assessment called for an overarching civil-military counterinsurgency strategy based on a population-centric counterinsurgency approach to be fostered by ISAF.[18] The report caused some friction, as the counterinsurgency terminology, while palatable in Washington in 2009, meant different things to different people given their familiarity with the basic concept. To some European members of ISAF, counterinsurgency was an escalation away from the stability and reconstruction missions that their people and political leadership were willing to support. To be effective on the battlefield, warfighters needed a clear understanding of how the strategy

16. Memo, HQ ISAF, 6 Jul 2009, sub: Tactical Directive, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The assertion that the populace represents the center of gravity was drawn from recent experience in Iraq, where U.S. troops came to be seen as protectors in a vicious sectarian conflict taking place within a violent insurgency. The circumstances in Afghanistan were far different, notably in the lack of a sectarian conflict similar to that in Iraq. In addition, Iraqis were more supportive of the al-Maliki regime after it made concessions to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. The Karzai government did not make similar concessions, as it did not face the same level of threat as the Iraqi government did in 2006–2008.

17. NATO Press Release, "Honoring Courageous Restraint," 2010, http://www.rs.nato.int/article/caat-anaysis-news/honoring-courageous-restraint.html (page discontinued), quoted in Joseph H. Felter and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Limiting Civilian Casualties as Part of a Winning Strategy: The Case of Courageous Restraint," *Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 146, no. 1 (2017): 47.

18. Rpt, McChrystal to Gates, 30 Aug 2009, sub: COMISAF's Initial Assessment.

chosen by their superiors was supposed to drive operations; using the term "counterinsurgency" to define both the strategy and the operational method militated against this clarity.

Terminology aside, the assessment determined that ISAF was not executing its mission properly and needed a new operational culture. McChrystal was best known for his work in the Special Operations community and considered himself a student of counterinsurgency from his time in Special Forces.[19] However, he had never been an architect of counterinsurgency doctrine. Although he had studied irregular warfare, all of his operational experience was in counterterrorism. McChrystal's improvements in information flow had turned Special Operations raids into an efficient approach to eliminating al-Qaeda fighters and supporters. He was now being called upon to lead a counterinsurgency in an environment that NATO treated primarily as a reconstruction project, a mission for which his prior operational experience had not prepared him.

McChrystal's proposal called for ISAF to shift to a counterinsurgency strategy based upon four pillars:

1. Improved effectiveness through greater radically improved partnering with the Afghan military at every level in order to prepare them to take the lead in security operations.
2. A series of kinetic operations early in the fighting season to gain the initiative and reverse the insurgency's momentum.
3. A program to prioritize responsive and accountable governance at all levels, from national to local.
4. The prioritization of resources to those critical areas where vulnerable populations are most threatened—specifically the eastern border region and the southeastern provinces.[20]

McChrystal specified a "properly-resourced" strategy, meaning enough resources to accomplish the mission with acceptable risk based on the theater commander's assessment, as opposed to a "fully resourced" strategy, which was untenable and defined differently at every level of command.[21] The assessment explained that civilian as well as military resources needed to be applied to problems in Afghanistan. It called on the Departments of State and Justice, as well as other interagency partners, to participate.

McChrystal suggested investing additional resources in Afghanistan, but only after deciding on a new strategy.[22] He feared that numbers would be mistaken for strategy when, instead, they should be the outcome of objective analysis:

---

19. Interv, Col Adrian Donahoe, Maj Matthew B. Smith, and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen Stanley A. McChrystal, frmr ISAF Cdr, 3 Nov 2015, p. 13, Hist File, OEF Study Grp.

20. Rpt, McChrystal to Gates, 30 Aug 2009, sub: COMISAF's Initial Assessment, pp. 1-1, 1-2.

21. Ibid., pp. 2–20.

22. Ibid.

> General Rodriguez and I did not come over here expecting to ask for more forces. Of course we spent so much time together in the Pentagon talking about it; prepping after the day they directed us to do it [the assessment]. We actually thought we didn't need any more forces. It was only the analysis that pulled us toward that, and we were actually a little bit surprised by it. But we talked every day during that process, often just one-on-one. We let the analysis pull us where it did. We made decisions based on that. We didn't just start with a pre-conceived notion.[23]

Shortly after McChrystal delivered his assessment, the *Washington Post* received a leaked copy of the document, and published a slightly redacted version a few days later. The leak put President Barack H. Obama in the unenviable position of deciding whether to accept the advice of the military or repudiate it. A pervasive belief that the military was trying to box the president into a single solution complicated his staff's response to the request, with the result that McChrystal had to wait three months for an answer. The situation increased the friction between military and civilian leadership within the Obama administration.[24]

A Disconnect between Ends, Ways, and Means

In a public television interview midway through his assessment, McChrystal articulated what he believed was President Obama's strategy on Afghanistan:

> Well, I think the decision [as] he described it in that strategy was to do a fully resourced counterinsurgency strategy, to focus on first preventing Al-Qaeda['s] return to safe havens—it had been here before 9/11—but then also to review the way we fought. And I think that the fully resourced part—that we were going to provide enough forces to do what we felt we had to do—was a major change.[25]

McChrystal's understanding that the president had already approved a fully resourced counterinsurgency was reasonable but premature and ultimately incorrect. The president intended to see how well the 21,000 additional troops he had ordered to Afghanistan in February were securing the fall elections before making further deployment decisions. Based on his own experience and the Riedel Report, McChrystal assumed that population-centric counterinsurgency was already being implemented.[26]

---

23. Brand, "General McChrystal's Strategic Assessment," p. 23.

24. Interv, E. J. Degen, Mark Reardon, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Bob Woodward, *Washington Post*, 3 Feb 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Woodward stated that the leak did not come from the military.

25. Interv, PBS Frontline with Gen Stanley A. McChrystal, 1 Aug 2009, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/obamaswar/interviews/mcchrystal.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Ibid.

While waiting for White House approval, McChrystal took a cue from Gates and NATO secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen and changed the ISAF mission to "conduct population-centric counterinsurgency operations" by publishing Operations Plan 38302 Revision 4 in September 2009.[27] When the president formally announced his decision, the national security memo specifically stated that the strategy was *not* fully resourced, population-centric counterinsurgency.[28] It never had been and indeed never would be.

The ratio of security forces to population drove calculations of how many troops were needed. The accepted wisdom had been that for every 1,000 inhabitants, an intervening force needed twenty troops (a ratio of 50:1) to secure an area with an insurgency.[29] Never did anyone suggest deploying enough foreign troops to approach the 50:1 figure for the entire country, which would have been prohibitively expensive. Most arguments rested upon the assumption that the 50:1 ratio was only necessary in the worst areas and would always be achieved by adding ISAF and ANSF numbers together.[30] McChrystal and Petraeus thought that victory would be achievable with fewer troops than this ratio dictated as long as there was a surge force large enough to clear regions sequentially and enough trained ANSF to hold them once surge forces had shifted to new areas.[31] In the meantime, the surge troops already in country began setting conditions for decisive operations in RC South—namely Operation Moshtarak—to be conducted if the second increment of surge units should be approved.

While awaiting a response from the White House, McChrystal and his staff reviewed their options for what to do with the different troop numbers the president could authorize. Recognizing that ISAF would never be able to train enough ANSF or deploy enough of its own forces to obtain the recommended ratio of security forces to population nationwide, McChrystal's staff looked at what could be achieved by focusing incoming reinforcements on the most volatile areas. This approach appealed to McChrystal, who thought that sequencing could compensate for troop strength. Instead of distributing reinforcements across the theater, he would send them first to Helmand Province, then to Kandahar Province, and finally to selected

27. Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, p. 186; NATO Press Conf, NATO Sec Gen Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 23 Oct 2009, sub: following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Defense Ministers session in Bratislava, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_58469.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Memo, James L. Jones for National Security Council Principals, 29 Nov 2009, sub: Afghanistan Pakistan Strategy, reprinted in Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, p. 387.

29. James T. Quinlivan, "Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations," *RAND Review* 27, no. 2 (2003): 28–29, https://www.rand.org/pubs/periodicals/rand-review/issues/summer2003/burden.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. David E. Johnson, "What Are You Prepared to Do? NATO and the Strategic Mismatch Between Ends, Ways and Means in Afghanistan—and in the Future," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 5 (2011): 389.

31. Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, frmr ISAF and CENTCOM Cdr, 29 Jan 2016, p. 31, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

areas of RC East.[32] This concept depended on the ability of the combined training command to deploy enough ANSF to hold areas cleared by coalition forces. It also assumed that insurgents would not launch offensives in areas of Afghanistan not reinforced by surge forces. Although this approach may have judged the Quetta Shura Taliban's intentions correctly, it misjudged the strength that sanctuary in Pakistan gave the Taliban and its influence over HIG and other allies.

McChrystal's Changes in the Command Structure

When McChrystal arrived in June 2009, he began to implement the change in command structure desired by Gates. The incoming commander had the support of Petraeus at CENTCOM, who felt strongly that Operation Enduring Freedom never had the right command structure and needed it now.[33] McChrystal was changing that command structure with the creation of the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan and the IJC. To give the IJC maximum authority, he recommended granting it operational control of all deployed SOF.[34]

McChrystal stood up the three-star IJC between the four-star ISAF headquarters and the two-star regional commands in September 2009. The new headquarters mirrored the command structure in Iraq in many ways.[35] McChrystal had selected General Rodriguez as his deputy commander for USFOR-A with the understanding that, after NATO's approval, he would become the inaugural IJC commander. Making Rodriguez both the IJC commander and the USFOR-A deputy commander was a political stretch for NATO; nonetheless, the alliance agreed because it saw value in merging the missions.

Creating a new headquarters came at a cost. The IJC required more than 1,000 coalition staff members just to perform its basic functions. Given the zero-sum approach to troop levels, any increase in staff officers and headquarters personnel invariably led to a commensurate reduction in the number of troops available for many other missions required in the theater. It took all summer and into the fall to fill the new headquarters, with the result that it was not fully operational until 12 November 2009.[36]

Despite the draw on the available workforce, the IJC fostered greater unity of effort among ISAF partners.[37] Although establishing IJC enhanced unity of command, the relationship of specific nations to the overall mission

---

32. Daniel P. Bolger, *Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 2014), p. 320.

33. Interv, Degen and Stark with Petraeus, 29 Jan 2016.

34. OPLAN 38302, COMISAF, revision 4, 25 Sep 2009.

35. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 294.

36. NATO Press Conf, NATO Sec Gen Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, 12 Jun 2009, www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-DB30D745-DEB726B1/natolive/opinions_55630.htm, as cited in Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, pp. 178–79.

37. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 343.



S. Sgt. Brandon Pomrenke, USA

General Rodriguez, seen here as the first IJC commander.

remained complex. Even with the United States in command, every nation still had veto power over implementing any aspect of the U.S.-led strategy. The U.S. and ISAF missions could never be merged fully.

Other factors limited the IJC's ability to influence the fight. After the 2009 Strasbourg Summit, during which NATO heads of state and government discussed the alliance's strategy for Afghanistan, NATO issued a statement recognizing that "extremists in Pakistan especially in western areas and insurgency in Afghanistan undermine security and stability in both countries and that the problems are deeply intertwined." The declaration listed many items to which NATO already had agreed, but mentioned Pakistan only once more by noting NATO's desire to "encourage and support the strengthening of Afghan and Pakistani government cooperation; and build a broader political and practical relationship between NATO and Pakistan."[38] In reality, the only tangible effect of this relationship was that "NATO offered a few training courses for Pakistani officers and emergency relief on occasion." NATO never really intended to contribute to counterinsurgency operations in Pakistan in any substantive measure.[39]

Although Obama felt that Pakistan held strategic importance to the United States, Bruce O. Riedel's recommendation to conduct a counterinsurgency

38. NATO Press Release, "Summit Declaration on Afghanistan," 4 Apr 2009, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52836.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 179.

campaign was an operational pathway that the political leadership of the NATO forces under American command would not fully accept.[40] NATO, even under American leadership, did not accept Pakistan as part of the mandate. NATO had never been willing to accept counterterrorism as the mission, nor did it acknowledge counterinsurgency until October 2009. At times, various ISAF nations and even President Hamid Karzai denied the existence of the insurgency itself.[41] As a result, the IJC's influence stopped at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Lacking NATO support, the United States attempted to work with Pakistan bilaterally. Under an agreement reached in late 2008, SOF stood up a Special Operations command in Pakistan to control Special Forces, civil affairs, and psychological operations units training and advising the Pakistani Frontier Corps. Political considerations constrained the activities and operational areas of this small force, under the command of Col. Kurt L. Sonntag, but its personnel aided the Pakistani military forces who belatedly acknowledged their own growing insurgency.[42]

The Americans got part of what they wanted when NATO approved the establishment of the IJC. Nonetheless, the benefit gained from merging the U.S. and ISAF missions remained elusive. Although both special operations and drone strikes in Pakistan were part of the campaign run by American officers who also held NATO positions, other NATO nations provided little support for these efforts. These limitations aside, the headquarters created efficiencies for ISAF nations and regional commanders. More importantly, it streamlined the chain of command of joint ground forces as U.S. troops in Afghanistan were poised to reach peak levels.

McChrystal wasted no time in refocusing the ISAF staff. A key component was his selection of Maj. Gen. Michael T. Flynn as his chief intelligence officer or J2. Flynn quickly and correctly assessed that the intelligence infrastructure in Afghanistan was built to support tactical operations and did little to support operational and strategic objectives. In Flynn's own words:

> Eight years into the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. intelligence community is only marginally relevant to the overall strategy. Having focused the overwhelming majority of its collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups, the vast intelligence apparatus is unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade. Ignorant of local economics and landowners, hazy about who the powerbrokers are and how they might be influenced, incurious about the correlations between various development projects and the levels of cooperation among villagers, and disengaged from people in the best position to find answers—whether aid workers or Afghan soldiers—U.S. intelligence officers and analysts

40. Ibid., pp. 178–79.

41. Interv, Donahoe, Smith, and Stark with McChrystal, 3 Nov 2015, p. 38.

42. Eric Schmitt and Jane Perlez, "Distrust Slows U.S. Training of Pakistanis," *New York Times*, 11 Jul 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/12/world/asia/12training.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> can do little but shrug in response to high level decision-makers seeking the knowledge, analysis, and information they need to wage a successful counterinsurgency.[43]

To achieve the objectives outlined by the Obama administration, the intelligence community would need to make changes in how it conducted daily operations. The U.S. military as a whole would also need to make a huge investment in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment. Flynn thus faced an almost insurmountable challenge as he sought to reorient and restructure intelligence operations in Afghanistan in time to have a tangible impact on the campaign envisioned by McChrystal.

RC South Becomes the Main Effort

The majority of the reinforcements approved by President George W. Bush in late 2008 and by President Obama in February 2009 were committed to executing McKiernan's plan for RC South. Most of the troops were American—even though command of RC South had rotated through British, Canadian, and Dutch leadership—because the other nations could not generate sufficient domestic political support for deploying the troops necessary for this dangerous work.

The United States faced resource limitations as well. The Marines and Army were deployed to maximum capacity in Iraq and Afghanistan, and also were occupied with training requirements. Even approved requests for forces took time to fill and deploy to theater. Knowing that the Marine Corps had immediately available units, Pentagon leaders chose them to secure Helmand Province. It helped that the Marines wanted their own battlespace and that Helmand provided a relatively uncongested airspace for their fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.[44] In the end, increased enemy activity made the most pressing argument for committing troops in Helmand.

The legitimacy of the Afghan presidential and provincial council elections planned for 2009 would be heavily dependent on the Pashtun population. Since Pashtuns were concentrated in the south (and east) of Afghanistan, McKiernan had planned to expand security in the south before the elections. The former ISAF commander had requested reinforcements of 21,000 troops from the Bush administration for this purpose, and Obama had approved the request. Kandahar, the largest population center in the south, seemed the logical place to receive the influx. However, the British government had lobbied for help in neighboring Helmand, and the U.S. Marines, available

---

43. Maj Gen Michael T. Flynn, Capt Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, CNAS Voices from the Field (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 4 Jan 2010), p. 7, https://www.cnas.org/press/press-release/fixing-intel-a-blueprint-for-making-intelligence-relevant-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Richard P. Mills, frmr I Marine Expeditionary Force Cdr, 5 Aug 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

first, preferred to operate there. McKiernan agreed that Kandahar, although more important, was the less prudent choice in an election year.[45]

The Marine Corps formed Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan specifically for Helmand. In mid-2009, Marine forces flooded into southern Helmand to seize control of the logistical lines providing the Taliban's lifeblood: opium outward bound, money and manpower inward bound. As expressed by a Marine officer, "Helmand is the Taliban's Ruhr Valley—its industrial base," likening it to the western German industrial region that had supplied the German armies in both of the twentieth century's world wars.[46] Even though that opinion could be seen as somewhat exaggerated, considering that Pakistan's tribal areas were the primary source of personnel, training bases, and equipment depots for the Taliban, Helmand Province was a key component in the financial network funding the insurgency. Not only had Helmand Province become the source of 45 percent of the world's illegal opium, its population was 92 percent Pashtun. In addition, the British were unable to operate in large, unoccupied swathes of terrain by themselves.

Marine commanders recognized that the decisive showdown would take place in the population clusters surrounding the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah and the district centers of Nawah-ye Barkaza'i, Marjah, Nad 'Ali, Sangin, Now Zad, and Girishk. Taliban cells effectively ruled in these districts and towns, often coordinating their activities with sympathetic tribal elders, poppy farmers, and drug lords. In addition to harassing ISAF patrols, insurgent groups massed to attack coalition bases and police checkpoints, pinning down the security forces while advertising Taliban supremacy in the region.[47] One marine officer summed up the dilemma affecting ISAF efforts to bring government presence and security to Helmand: "The local cops and the farmers know who the Taliban are. We're the ones in the dark."[48] The marines were determined to regain the initiative by extensive and aggressive patrolling, always in conjunction with a like number of Afghan police or soldiers. They sought to secure key towns in the Helmand River Valley, starting near Lashkar Gah, and in critical districts such as Sangin.

A surprise air assault into Nawah-ye Barkaza'i gave the marines a solid base from which to operate. Units quickly pushed south toward Garm Ser, Khan Neshin, and even to Bahram Chah, a border town with a lawless reputation. The Taliban responded to the sudden vigor of ISAF activity by boxing the marines in with IEDs, forcing them to allot more troops to force protection and more surveillance assets to monitor busy transit routes and points. When outgunned, local Taliban kept a few steps ahead of the marine wave, side-stepping or even relocating in Pakistan. The marines could claim to have cleared a vast swath of the Helmand River Valley, but the extent of their actual control of the valley remained in question.[49]

---

45. Interv, Stark and Neumann with McKiernan, 11 Mar 2015, p. 70.

46. West, *The Wrong War*, p. 195.

47. Dressler, *Securing Helmand*, p. 25.

48. West, *The Wrong War*, p. 136.

49. Dressler, *Securing Helmand*, pp. 38–40.

In early 2010, the marines focused their operations on the nearby town of Marjah in southern Nad 'Ali District, only twenty-five kilometers southwest of Lashkar Gah. Its population consisted mostly of transplanted Pashtuns who had little loyalty to anyone outside their own village. One of the largest known Taliban sanctuaries in Afghanistan, Marjah was a nexus for insurgents reaping economic gain from Helmand's poppy industry and a base from which they launched attacks into Helmand's capital.[50] The Taliban found easy refuge here and adequate support for their reemergence in Helmand in 2006–2008. Local farmers growing poppy readily teamed with Taliban cells to protect their fields from government-sponsored eradication efforts. This relationship allowed both the Taliban and narcotics traffickers to operate freely in the populated areas.[51]

Even though ISAF had launched major operations in and around Marjah since the summer of 2009, it had failed to break the Taliban's hold on the region. Many insurgents simply avoided coalition sweeps, leaving behind hundreds of IEDs and occasionally snipers to distract and weaken ISAF forces. At the same time, enemy commanders called for reinforcements from Pakistan, showing the Taliban's willingness to fight for Marjah and its surrounding communities.[52] Consequently, Taliban fighters avoided contact when they wanted to and flowed into vacated areas when they came under pressure from ground operations.[53]

Special operations raids into Marjah during 2009 increased pressure on Taliban leaders and gained critical intelligence for the plan developed by RC South commander British Maj. Gen. Nicholas P. "Nick" Carter. Intelligence analysts estimated as many as 1,000 fighters were dug in amid hundreds of IEDs.[54] The town's buildings and canals provided opportunities for IED and mine strikes, ambushes, and sniper attacks, as the Taliban drove ISAF forces into kill-zones. Evidence suggested that these Taliban fighters were more experienced and tactically proficient than usual, and may have included foreign fighters trained in Pakistan.[55]

The persistent threat of Taliban actions against civilians in the form of IED attacks, night letters (unsigned intimidating messages from the Taliban, warning locals that they would face reprisal for cooperating with foreign forces), and assassinations undermined the promise of the coalition: side with the government, and the government will protect you. McChrystal and Carter recognized this obstacle and were determined to make Helmand a successful example of how to conduct counterinsurgency operations. McChrystal also recognized that legitimate elections were critical to maintaining a viable

50. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 240.

51. Dressler, *Securing Helmand*, pp. 18–19; West, *The Wrong War*, pp. 193–95.

52. Harnden, *Dead Men Risen*, p. 139; Jeffrey A. Dressler, "Operation Moshtarak: Takingand Holding Marjah," Backgrounder, Institute for the Study of War (2 Mar 2010), p. 2, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07873, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

53. Harnden, *Dead Men Risen*, pp. 289, 423.

54. Dressler, "Operation Moshtarak," p. 3.

55. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, pp. 368–69.



LCpl. Bryan Nygaard, British Army

Soldiers from A Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, pack together in a HC–2 Chinook helicopter en route to Helmand Province.

partnership with the Afghan government. Otherwise, the military campaign would have no end.[56]

Marjah had been a known Taliban stronghold for months. McKiernan and his RC South commander had known that the town had to be cleared and secured, but wanted to wait until after the elections before initiating what likely would become a bloody battle. Everyone involved believed the effort would require U.S. air assets and troops. These would become available at almost the exact moment that McChrystal arrived in Afghanistan.

Shaping Operations

Even before ANSF units had been designated for the mission to hold RC South, U.S. forces began clearing operations in the region. By summer 2009, time was running short as the new date of the elections was set for 20 August.[57] McChrystal knew his strategy and the additional troops approved in February needed to show progress quickly. He understood that early success would improve the chance that the National Security Council would approve his recommendations in the strategic assessment. With the Marines already clearing villages in the Helmand River Valley, McChrystal wanted to use ISAF's success in securing the elections as proof that his campaign was progressing.[58]

56. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 136–47; West, *The Wrong War*, p. 177.

57. The elections were delayed, contrary to the Afghan Constitution, by several months.

58. Telephone Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Gen Larry D. Nicholson, frmr Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan Cdr, 22 Jul 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

With additional forces still arriving into RC South and only two months until ballots were to be cast, ISAF conducted one of the largest operations of the war. On 19 June 2009, British, Danish, and Afghan troops launched Operation Panchai Palang (Panther's Claw) to secure portions of the Helmand River Valley near the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah. The mission had varied results. ISAF troops suffered several casualties from IEDs, including a British infantry battalion commander. Intelligence confirmed Marjah as the main enemy stronghold. Panchai Palang eliminated the Taliban fighters caught between the attacking units, but it did nothing to reduce the enemy operating just outside the area secured by ISAF troops.[59]

On 2 July 2009, more than 4,000 marines of Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan and 650 Afghan soldiers launched a sequel to Panchai Palang called Operation Khanjar (Strike of the Sword) in the Helmand River Valley (*Map 7.1*). Although marines had been fighting in Afghanistan since 2002, Khanjar was the largest helicopter insertion conducted by the U.S. Marine Corps since the Vietnam conflict. Lt. Col. William F. McCullough's 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and Lt. Col. Christian G. Cabaniss' 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, assaulted into Nawah-ye Barkaza'i and Garm Ser Districts respectively, courtesy of the U.S. Army's 82d Combat Aviation Brigade.[60] British, Estonian, and other coalition forces followed to establish security. Initially successful, the Marines reported problems getting local leaders to support operations in Helmand. When possible, marines asked elders for support before missions so as to prevent collateral damage and civilian casualties. Elders in the hamlets of Helmand responded that they had seen similar, smaller operations for each of the past four summers, and told the marines that the Taliban had returned after these previous operations to retaliate against those who had aided coalition troops.[61]

In early August, Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan continued clearing operations in Helmand with Operation Eastern Resolve II. In bazaar raids south of Garm Ser, near Khan Neshin, the brigade seized over fourteen tons of raw opium and a plethora of IED-making materials, along with other weapons. Despite local skepticism, the three operations had secured Helmand Province temporarily for the upcoming elections. While the decrease in violence provided more Afghans with the opportunity to vote, the local populace's Pashtun sympathies, coupled with long-standing discontent with the Kabul government, did not guarantee a large turnout at the polls.[62]

Operation Khanjar could now be seen as a rehearsal for the larger Operation Moshtarak, which would clear Marjah in early 2010. The methods and tactics used in Khanjar were employed again in Moshtarak the following

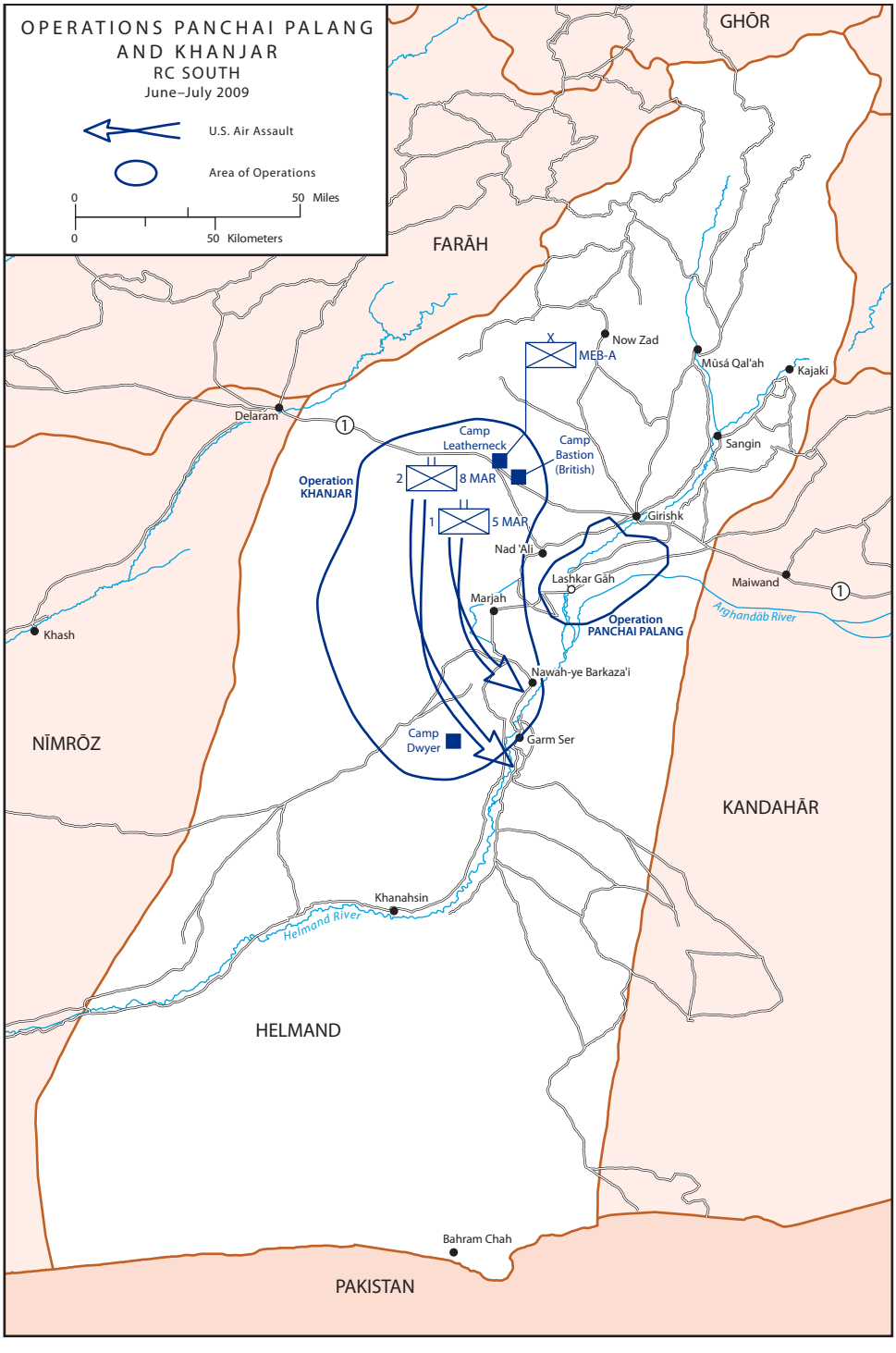
---

59. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 318.

60. Ltr, Col (Ret.) William "Preston" McLaughlin, frmr Ch of Staff, 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan, to Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, 15 Jul 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

61. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 322.

62. Ibid., p. 336.


OPERATIONS PANCHAI PALANG
AND KHANJAR
RC SOUTH
June–July 2009
U.S. Air Assault
Area of Operations
0
50 Miles
0
50 Kilometers
GHŌR
FARĀH
NĪMRŌZ
HELMAND
KANDAHĀR
PAKISTAN
Now Zad
MEB-A
Mūsá Qal'ah
Kajaki
Delaram
Camp
Leatherneck
Camp
Bastion
(British)
Operation
KHANJAR
2
8 MAR
1
5 MAR
Sangin
Girishk
Nad 'Ali
Lashkar Gāh
Maiwand
Marjah
Operation
PANCHAI PALANG
Arghandāb River
Khash
Nawah-ye Barkaza'i
Camp
Dwyer
Garm Ser
Khanahsin
Helmand River
Bahram Chah

Map 7.1

year. While Khanjar was underway, U.S. Army units were starting to arrive in Kandahar, where they began their own shaping operations.

Strykers in Kandahar Highlight the Friction of Counterinsurgency

In July 2009, just a month before the Afghan national elections, the 5th Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, arrived from Fort Lewis, Washington, to fill McKiernan's 2008 request for a Stryker brigade for Kandahar.[63] The 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, would soon follow with the mission to partner with Afghan Army units. One battalion would partner with Afghan forces in RC West, and the remainder would work in RC South. The Stryker brigade's deployment differed from those of other U.S. Army units for several reasons. First, the 5th Stryker Brigade (as it would be known) was the only Army brigade in Operation Enduring Freedom to serve its entire tour as a battlespace-owning unit under the command of a non-U.S. general. Second, they were the first U.S. Army brigade deployed to RC South for the surge. The unit featured the M1126 Stryker, a wheeled combat vehicle with advanced digital technology. No other command in Afghanistan was built around this system. The Kandahar mission would be the 5th Stryker Brigade's first combat deployment since its activation.

The deployment of the 5th Stryker Brigade to Afghanistan is critical to understanding Operation Enduring Freedom during the initial troop increases authorized by the Bush administration. The ways in which the unit interpreted its mission, understood its enemy, and reacted to the enemy sanctuary in Kandahar were notably different than the mindset and actions of other units deployed at the same time. Friction quickly developed between the brigade commander and the ISAF-appointed RC South commander over the unit tactics involved in a counterinsurgency fight. The deployment of the 5th Stryker Brigade culminated not only in battles that killed hundreds of insurgents but also in war crimes that killed several innocent civilians. The brigade's leadership suffered negatively from these events and the unit's legacy would be tarnished for years to come.

To understand the problems surrounding the 5th Stryker Brigade's time in Afghanistan, it is worth taking a closer look at the circumstances of its training and assignment. In February 2009, in preparation for a long-anticipated deployment to Iraq, the brigade was conducting its mission-readiness exercise at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. On 21 February 2009, the brigade commander, Col. Harry D. Tunnell IV, interrupted the exercise to inform his brigade that it was now going to deploy

63. Activated at Fort Lewis, Washington, in May 2007, the 2d Infantry Division's 5th Brigade Combat Team consisted of the brigade headquarters company; Lt. Col. William Clark's 8th Squadron, 1st Cavalry; Lt. Col. Jonathan A. Neumann's 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry; Lt. Col. Burton K. Shields' 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry; Lt. Col. Jeffrey W. French's 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry; Lt. Col. Dennis Smith's 3d Battalion, 17th Field Artillery; Lt. Col. Steven L. Allen's 402d Brigade Support Battalion; and Lt. Col. Patrick Gaydon's Special Troops Battalion.

to Afghanistan.[64] The fact that the 2d Infantry Division's 5th Stryker Brigade would be sent to Afghanistan instead of Iraq was neither ideal nor unique. Other units, such as the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, in Wardak and Logar Provinces, had received the same change of mission. However, preparation for the two conflicts differed greatly. For example, the brigade had trained about 120 soldiers to speak Arabic, which would now be largely unhelpful as Arabic is not widely spoken in Afghanistan.[65] Although the unit wore the patch of the 2d Infantry Division, the division was headquartered in Korea and not responsible for preparing the brigade to deploy. Therefore, the I Corps assumed this role.[66] The I Corps and FORSCOM approved a letter delineating the training for the brigade that Tunnell wrote using CENTCOM's prescribed training matrix for deploying forces. This matrix referred to *Counterguerrilla Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual 90–8), but not *Counterinsurgency* (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–24).[67] As a result, the 5th Stryker Brigade's training focused on a different doctrine than the one that McChrystal intended to employ for U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

The 5th Stryker Brigade's mission rehearsal exercise showed the friction between the training design and the mission that the unit would assume in Iraq and subsequently Afghanistan. Colonel Tunnell wanted his unit trained in high-intensity battle, the worst-case scenario of any combat action, at a time when the Army's training centers had switched to providing more discreet scenarios resembling their interpretation of conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although Tunnell was aware that the National Training Center had switched emphasis from its previous focus on high-intensity combat, he was disappointed that his formal request for such training could not be accommodated. Tunnell was sure that the National Training Center's leadership was misinterpreting the fight his brigade might

---

64. Memo, Col Harry Tunnell, 21 Feb 09, sub: 5-2 SBCT Deployment, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

65. Afghans speak many languages. Official government business is conducted in Dari. Pashto is the vernacular of the largely Pashtun RC South area of operations.

66. This situation reinforces the point made by critics of modular force structure, who maintain that divisional identity is not confined to the patch worn by soldiers. Brigade commanders are in need of mentorship as much as their subordinates. Although the I Corps commander delegated oversight of Tunnell's predeployment preparations to his deputy (as the corps itself prepared to deploy to Iraq), a division commander mentoring Tunnell might have led the brigade training program on a path more consistent with the latest counterinsurgency doctrine.

67. See OPORD 06–007, U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), 18 Jul 2007, sub: ARFOR Execution Instructions, encl 1 (Task Matrix), tab B (Training Guidance), app. 17 (Training), an. C (Operations), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Later, Colonel Tunnell would be accused of using doctrine that had been superseded by Field Manual 3−24. This is not the case, as the 2006 version of Field Manual 3–24 repeatedly referenced Field Manual 90–8 Counterguerrilla Operations. See HQDA FM 3–24, Counterinsurgency (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 24 Jun 2006) and HQDA FM 90–8, Counterguerrilla Operations (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 29 Aug 1986).

face in Afghanistan.[68] After arriving at Fort Irwin, the Stryker brigade commander did not endear himself to the trainers by insisting on using more counterguerrilla doctrine rather than population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine to guide his unit's operations.[69]

Tunnell disagreed not only with the National Training Center and CENTCOM on the nature of the fight, but also with the U.S. and ISAF mission concepts. The current mission in the NATO-led RC South, where 5th Stryker Brigade would operate, was not the same as the American-led RC East mission. The mission in RC East was to "conduct full-spectrum operations" through 2008 and then changed to "conduct counterinsurgency operations" in April 2009. In RC South, the term "conduct counterinsurgency" was not yet included in the mission statement. The paragraph in the operations order describing the enemy situation in RC South began:

> On 10MAR09, the Insurgent Syndicate (INS) initiated a "Tet-like" [surprise] offensive in RC-South starting with a major attack in Kandahar Province followed a few days later with another large-scale attack in Helmand Province. INS forces in RC-South are now equipped with more sophisticated air defense and anti-armor weapons systems. Enemy main effort remains in Kandahar Province to fix coalition forces allowing the INS freedom of maneuver.[70]

Despite the word "insurgent" in the order, the then RC South commander, Maj. Gen. Mart de Kruif, had avoided the term counterinsurgency, preferring a mission statement that read:

> RC South partnered with ANSF neutralizes insurgent syndicate influence and secures critical areas in order to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment that extends government authority and influence facilitating Afghanistan's reconstruction and enabling the GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] to exercise its sovereignty throughout the country.[71]

---

68. Sworn statement of Maj Eric H. Haas, S–2X, 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div, 28 Oct 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The National Training Center scenarios were in a transitional phase during this period. Their focus on urban combat at that time reflected past events in Helmand Province, where small British units defended village outposts against Taliban attacks on a daily basis. The training scenarios at Fort Irwin were constantly updated and expanded based on evolving battlefield conditions, and included experiences with IEDs, rocket attacks, interaction with Afghan security forces, humanitarian missions, and other tasks. Alan Taylor, "A Replica of Afghanistan in the Mojave," *The Atlantic*, 18 Sep 2013, https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2013/09/a-replica-of-afghanistan-in-the-mojave/100593/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

69. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Harry D. Tunnell IV, frmr 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div Cdr, 1 Dec 2010, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

70. OPORD 09–07, RC South, 1 Jun 2009, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

71. Ibid., p. 5.

Although the RC South operations order did not state "conduct counterinsurgency operations," it did include counterinsurgency doctrinal language. The paragraph on commander's intent even gave a nod to the term "population-centric."

> **Commander's Intent.** In partnership with ANSF we will concentrate our resources to SHAPE, CLEAR, HOLD and BUILD [emphasis in original] critical areas in order to enable GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] to deliver improved Governance, Security and Development within the framework of our 'population-centric' regional plans. We will continue to operate in partnership with the ANSF and the International Community (IC) to synchronize our efforts across all LOEs [lines of effort] and bring greater coherence to operations in Southern Afghanistan. The Operational Center of Gravity in RC-South is the population's support of the provincial governments and ANSF. This will deny the insurgent syndicate (INS) access to the population and serve to separate the INS from Afghan citizens both morally and physically.[72]

The campaign plan for RC South consisted of three lines of operations: security, governance, and development. This approach was not called counterinsurgency, but it closely resembled the definition in Field Manual 3–24. Tunnell deployed his brigade with the understanding that it would serve as a clear-and-hold force, which would indicate a more offensive mission oriented on security rather than the other two lines of operations.[73] Indeed, the RC South operations order defined the operation as offensive, continuing to describe how offensive operations would neutralize the insurgency:

> Decisive to this operation is RC-South's ability to neutralize the INS [insurgent syndicate] and maintain the lines of communication in our AOR [Area of Responsibility]. Upon completion of the attacks on OBJs [Objectives] Cobra and Viper, RC-South resumes civil security throughout the AOR to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment that extends government authority and influence facilitating Afghanistan's reconstruction and enabling the GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] to exercise its sovereignty throughout the country.[74]

From the outset, General de Kruif and his staff had reservations about how the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team would achieve this. While Tunnell understood that RC South's mission was to neutralize the enemy, he chose "defeat" as the core mission for his own unit: in essence, to temporarily or permanently destroy the enemy's physical ability or will to fight, whether by using or threatening the use of force. When Tunnell explained his

72. Ibid., p. 4.

73. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark with Col (Ret.) Harry D. Tunnell IV, frmr 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div Cdr, 24 Nov 2015, p. 65, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

74. OPORD 09–07, RC South, 1 Jun 2009, p. 5.

U.S. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1–02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, presents key definitions, meanings, and implications for specific tactical tasks in military doctrine. The definitions for the following tasks are relevant in the context of the U.S. approach to counterinsurgency described in this chapter:

NEUTRALIZE	A tactical mission task that results in rendering enemy personnel or materiel incapable of interfering with a particular operation.
DEFEAT	A tactical mission task that occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. The defeated force's commander is unwilling or unable to pursue his adopted course of action, thereby yielding to the friendly commander's will, and can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use.
INTERDICT	A tactical mission task where the commander prevents, disrupts, or delays the enemy's use of an area or route.
CLEAR	A tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area.

For more information, see the glossary of military terminology in Appendix A.

Source: HQDA, ADRP 1–02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, November 2016.

Figure 7.1. Note on U.S. Military Tactical Terminology

understanding of his mission and key tasks at the commander's backbrief, de Kruif disagreed. The American colonel had used the terms "interdict" and "clear" to describe specified tasks from RC South for his unit, indicating that he saw his mission from a more offensive perspective, in which he and his unit would eliminate enemy fighters and organized resistance within their assigned area (*Figure 7.1*). De Kruif stopped the briefing and expressed concern that this was not what he wanted. He did not think interdicting was a brigade-level task, and he disagreed with Tunnell's choice of that term. The Dutch general clearly thought Tunnell was too offensively focused.[75] American Brig. Gen. John W. "Mick" Nicholson Jr., serving as RC South deputy commanding general for stability, was not present at the backbrief but later attempted to mediate the misunderstanding by restraining Tunnell from conducting offensive clearing operations.

Tunnell disagreed with his superiors on the interpretation of his mission. To him, "neutralize insurgents" implied offensive military force used to clear and hold terrain, in order to prevent enemy fighters from operating

75. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Mart de Kruif, frmr ISAF RC South Cdr, 14 Oct 2015, pp. 27–28, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

in the area. McKiernan had requested the Stryker brigade specifically for its unique capabilities. De Kruif wanted to use nonlethal methods and operations, such as reconstruction and development projects, to achieve the effect "neutralize," which he thought more appropriate for the build phase of counterinsurgency. The higher standard of defeat was Tunnell's own doctrinal interpretation. As long as he was defeating the enemy forces, he was also neutralizing them as the higher order directed. Other ISAF commanders, however, regarded Tunnell's emphasis on a more offensive approach with skepticism, and sought to remind him that nonlethal effects were just as important or even preferred in the counterinsurgency environment being established in Afghanistan. These differences of opinion magnified the long-standing friction within ISAF about how to interpret and implement counterinsurgency doctrine.[76]

Despite misgivings about Tunnell's views of tactical priorities, de Kruif recognized that the Strykers had capabilities that would prove useful in RC South.[77] Just before the August 2009 national elections, de Kruif tasked Tunnell's brigade with securing parts of Kandahar and Zabul Provinces known to harbor Taliban fighters. On 18 August, two days before Afghans went to the polls, the enemy attacked a Stryker in Lt. Col. Jonathan A. Neumann's 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry, with an IED. The damage to the vehicle was so severe that one soldier could not be found or identified. When Tunnell requested additional assets to search for the missing soldier, de Kruif directed all forces under his command to support every Stryker brigade request as much as possible. During the search, another soldier was reported missing following a second massive IED blast. It took two days of intense fighting to locate the remains of both soldiers, during which time six more soldiers were wounded. Ten enemy fighters were confirmed killed and an unknown number wounded.[78]

Enemy contact increased whenever Strykers approached the area near the river in Arghandab District known as "the Green Zone." Because of its dense vegetation and lack of intensive patrolling, the enemy had chosen Arghandab as its home. The Canadians had not been able to hold the Arghandab District after Operation Medusa in 2006, and so it and the neighboring districts of Maywand, Zharey, and Panjwa'i had become insurgent bases.[79] This was not a place insurgents came to train and store weapons, nor was it a transitory

76. Interv, Stark with Tunnell, 24 Nov 2015, pp. 26–45.

77. Ibid., pp. 25–70; Interv, Stark with de Kruif, 14 Oct 2015, p. 41.

78. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 164–66.

79. Interv, Clay with Tunnell, 1 Dec 2010, p. 5. The Canadians had operated in the districts, but they had insufficient resources to alter security through a sustained presence, and the Taliban had taken advantage of the situation. Tunnell noted the Canadians often asked for American resources and troops to conduct missions in the area, and he felt his unit was paying the price for that now. A liaison officer from the U.S. brigade that replaced the Strykers offered a different viewpoint, noting the Canadians were worried they would have to send troops to extricate aggressive Americans from an unforeseen tactical emergency. Stephen G. Hummel, *Strike: A Firsthand Account of the Largest Operation of the Afghan War* (New York: The Montauk Company, 2015), p. 139.



Sgt. Matt Young, USA

A Stryker combat vehicle operates in RC South.

safe haven. The Arghandab District was where the enemy lived: he would stand and fight for this terrain. An assault on it would be exactly the high-intensity fight for which the Strykers had trained. Tunnell was determined to neutralize the district.

Intelligence estimated thirty to forty enemy fighters in the entire area of the Arghandab, but future operations would show that that estimate was far too low.[80] Tunnell directed a deliberate attack, Operation Opportunity Hold, to seize a foothold in the Arghandab from which the brigade could conduct subsequent clearing operations. Nine days after the elections, 5th Stryker attacked. In the IED-laden Arghandab, the clearing operation required the brigade to breach multiple belts of obstacles that the enemy had laid throughout the terrain. The Stryker was fast, quiet, and able to carry an infantry squad and its equipment over long distances, which made it ideal for surveillance missions, but unlike the MRAP vehicle with its V-shaped hull, it was vulnerable to mine strikes. To address this deficiency, troops cleared the area on foot with Strykers in support-by-fire positions.

Operation Opportunity Hold lasted an entire month and was immediately followed with Operations Focus Hold and Sustain Hold.[81] These operations lasted until November 2009 and generated the majority of 5th Stryker Brigade's own casualties: 35 killed in action and 239 wounded.[82] In Arghandab, the

80. Interv, Clay with Tunnell, 1 Dec 2010, p. 11.

81. Sean Naylor, "Stryker Soldiers Say Commanders Failed Them," *Army Times*, 21 Dec 2009, http://archive.armytimes.com/article/20091221/NEWS/912210313/Stryker-soldiers-say-commanders-failed-them (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

82. 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, was later reflagged as 2d Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division; see Don Kramer, "5-2 Stryker Brigade Reflagged as 2-2," Northwest Military, 1 Sep 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. A 2016 email from retired

Stryker brigade killed fifty insurgents and wounded a sizeable but unknown number as well.[83] During Opportunity Hold, it became clear that the new estimate of 200 insurgents was still too low. Instead, a battalion-sized unit of 300–400 Taliban fighters operated from the Green Zone of Arghandab. The fighting continued as the enemy-controlled area gradually shrank. Although the Stryker soldiers were making progress, each victory came at a cost of more killed and wounded. Each casualty report generated renewed discussion of Tunnell's methods among military leaders in Afghanistan. The IJC commander, General Rodriguez, wondered if the casualties could be attributed to Tunnell's tactics, rather than considered as the price of having left the enemy to his own devices in and around the Arghandab for years.[84] Yet even with these concerns about the 5th Stryker Brigade's use of counterguerrilla tactics during the clear phase of their operations, Tunnell and his solders also implemented counterinsurgency tactics in the hold and build phases. The unit aggressively applied nonlethal means as well, dispersing millions of dollars from the Commander's Emergency Response Program—54 percent of the total for RC South during this period—toward urgent civilian needs even before clearance operations were complete.[85]

In the first months of its deployment, the 5th Stryker Brigade had helped secure the elections. However, its aggressive tactics gave it a reputation among the new RC South leadership, one that was not necessarily beneficial for the brigade or its commander. Tunnell had received mentorship from the I Corps deputy commander at home station, but his unit was now part of a larger U.S. division deployment in which the senior leaders were not necessarily focused on the same training objectives. Although mentoring offered part of the answer, the U.S. Army was still grappling with understanding its own newly devised counterinsurgency doctrine and allies who had a totally different interpretation. Tunnell's experience was brought on by his and his unit's own doing, but was amplified exponentially under NATO command.

Unexpected Developments in RC East

The most obvious example of how important elections were to McChrystal came in Nuristan Province, where he imposed a moratorium on realigning or closing coalition bases until votes had been counted.[86] Small outposts in remote locations had been attacked previously and were still vulnerable. A 3 October 2009 attack on one of the bases that had been kept open for

---

Colonel Tunnell revised the initial figure of thirty-seven soldiers killed in action to thirty-five because the original figure of thirty-seven included nonhostile deaths. See E-mail, Col (Ret.) Harry D. Tunnell IV, to Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, 26 Feb 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

83. Naylor, "Stryker Soldier Say Commanders Failed Them."

84. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, p. 168.

85. See CERP Expenditures in RC(S), USFOR-A(S) Fiscal Year 2010 Checkbook, in Task Force Stryker, 24 Apr 2010, sub: GR&D Then and Now Brief, slide 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

86. Interv, Donahoe, Smith, and Stark with McChrystal, 3 Nov 2015, pp. 29–31.

the elections became the most telling and important event in RC East—and perhaps the entire theater. The assault on Combat Outpost Keating, as in earlier instances, resulted in devastating losses for the attackers, with U.S. forces weathering the storm albeit with numerous casualties. Although the attackers would have preferred to achieve an unequivocal victory by overrunning their objective and eliminating the defending American and Afghan troops, the Taliban and their allies were just as willing to trade lives for the sustained global media coverage that invariably accompanied every dramatic turn of events on Afghan battlefields. The strategic messaging effect was worth the loss of fighters to the Taliban.

Combat Outpost Keating

The events before the assault on Keating illustrate both the potential and the pitfalls of counterinsurgency theory. Lt. Col. Joseph M. Fenty's 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry, from the 10th Mountain Division's 3d Brigade Combat Team, originally established then Camp Keating in 2006 to secure the local road networks and to provide a secure location from which the Kamdesh Provincial Reconstruction Team could expand economic opportunity and promote local governance in eastern Nuristan Province. It was also the one location where U.S. forces could interdict road traffic from Barg-e Matal, an insurgent base area on the Pakistan border. Although ideally suited for these campaign-related priorities, the outpost was poorly situated from a tactical perspective. It stood at the bottom of a valley surrounded by towering mountains, linked to the outside world by a single unimproved road.

In 2007, Lt. Col. Christopher D. Kolenda's 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry, which replaced the 3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry, began to comprehend the situational reality in Kamdesh District. Fighting was seasonal, with hardened cadres flowing in from Pakistan during the late spring and early summer to reinforce local insurgents who knew the terrain and people. During the fighting season, local power brokers refused to meet with Americans, and fewer young men were available for projects. These details indicated that a popular insurrection was forming around isolated Keating at the apex of the valley.[87] Successive troop and company commanders followed the counterinsurgency template and at times appeared to be making progress using money and words instead of bombs and bullets. The results, though, were personality-dependent and therefore transitory and not exportable. Throughout Combat Outpost Keating's lifespan, the incontrovertible evidence was that the locals, even when protected and financially supported by the Americans, did not accept the presence of the newcomers. No amount of aid would suffice to convince them to accept the authority of the government in distant Kabul or tolerate the presence of uninvited foreigners.[88]

S. Sgt. Clinton L. Romesha, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the 3 October engagement, later described Keating as

87. Tapper, *The Outpost*, pp. 298–99.

88. Ibid., pp. 307, 332, 367, 389, 402, 414–15.

"tactically indefensible."[89] Unfortunately for successor units, the original decision to spread security forces across the region from 2006 and beyond did not envision the enemy massing against the isolated posts. As a result, force protection was accorded a lesser priority, as counterinsurgency doctrine suggested it might. Initial operations confirmed the wisdom of taking this tactical risk, but progress was slow over the next few years. Police, government officials, and tribal leaders who had been working with the Americans in the area had faced a mounting insurgent backlash, causing the populace to back away from American and Afghan government assistance. Taliban fighters maintained the initiative, eventually closing the one road connecting Keating and the Kamdesh Provincial Reconstruction Team with other coalition units. Lack of additional resources meant that security remained too frail to enable a build phase, and the area around Keating had yet to be fully cleared. The original rationale for establishing the position was increasingly irrelevant.[90]

While preparing to deploy to Afghanistan, the commander of 3d Squadron, 61st Cavalry, Lt. Col. Robert B."Brad" Brown, and his brigade commander, Col. Randy A. George of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, planned to close Combat Outpost Keating. They believed the outpost's remote location made it unimportant to the counterinsurgency campaign as the resources it absorbed could be spent more profitably elsewhere. In the past three years, U.S. forces at the outpost had not expanded the Afghan government's reach, and the scarce resources meant that progress in the area would remain far below expectations for the foreseeable future.[91]

Before deploying in spring 2009, Brown and George briefed their plan for the outpost to the CJTF-82 commander, Maj. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, who agreed but never approved the extensive resources needed to execute the closure mission.[92] Therefore, Brown's troopers occupied Keating with the intent to shutter it as quickly as possible. Their logic reflected McChrystal's focus on the population centers, which Keating was not. Proximity to population centers was not a new criterion in deciding where to position

89. Jake Tapper, "Defending the 'Indefensible': Inside One of Afghanistan's Deadliest Battles," *Security Clearance* blog, CNN, 5 Feb 2013, http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2013/02/05/defending-the-indefensible-inside-the-deadly-cop-keating-battle/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

90. Tapper, *The Outpost*, pp. 125, 135–36, 168–71.

91. Ibid., p. 437.

92. Closing an outpost meant much more than just walking away. Given the undeveloped roads in the region, virtually all of the equipment, ammunition, and personnel had to be extracted by rotary-wing aircraft. The more helicopters available, the more quickly the operation could be concluded and preempt an attempt by the Taliban to mass heavy weapons around Keating in a bid to shoot down U.S. or coalition rotary-wing aircraft. The extraction had to occur at night to limit risk of enemy fire. Reliance on helicopters meant weather conditions and moonlight also significantly influenced the timing of the effort. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, Lt Col Matthew B. Smith, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Brig Gen Randy George, frmr 4th Bde, 4th Inf Div Cdr, 20 Sep 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, Lt Col Matthew B. Smith, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Gen Curtis M. Scaparrotti, frmr CJTF-82 Cdr, 20 Oct 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

forces, but it trumped competing concerns in RC East after the Battle of Wanat in 2008.

During a routine battlefield circulation, McChrystal visited Forward Operating Base Bostick where Brown presented his case for realigning forces, which included closing Keating and other isolated posts within six weeks. The tactical commanders knew that closing any outpost required airlift assets, which were scarce and needed to be allocated. Brown pitched the closures to McChrystal during his visit so as to alert him that this request would be forthcoming. Brown believed "the presence of the camps had actually worsened the security situation in Nuristan."[93] But even though McChrystal agreed with the logic of closing bases, he had strategic concerns. Karzai feared that any realignment or closure would be interpreted as a withdrawal: a sign that the American military lacked faith in the Afghan government. This visible retreat would deter turnout in the national election, especially among Karzai supporters. McChrystal wanted to be seen as supporting Karzai, yet at the same time he wanted to avoid the perception in Washington that he was acting in advance of a decision on his strategic assessment. "I don't want to get ahead of the president," he told George. McChrystal understood that any realignment could be seen as pulling out troops and could appear as if some bold decision had been made.[94]

Another factor emerged just before the elections. Pfc. Beaudry R. "Bowe" Bergdahl had left his small outpost near Forward Operating Base Sharana in Paktika on 30 June 2009, and nearly every unit in RC East made his recovery a priority. In addition to conventional units already operating there, Special Operations elements with responsibility for missions across the entire breadth of Afghanistan refocused their efforts on RC East. Every bit of information on Bergdahl's location, regardless of its plausibility, had to be verified by sending soldiers to the location in question. Troops were shuttled from location to location via helicopter in quick succession in an attempt to catch the Taliban as they shifted their captive from one location to another. The constant movement of troops, combined with their attendant logistical needs, overwhelmed RC East's already overtasked helicopter fleet. With the search area expanding in scope as time passed, the committed airlift would not be available for other missions until long after the elections.[95]

As if to emphasize McChrystal's point about perceptions during the election, Karzai asked him for help in the town of Barg-e Matal in northern Nuristan. This town was within George's boundaries, but it had never been cleared by conventional troops. Karzai was concerned with a recent Taliban takeover, which he needed to reverse before the election. Barg-e Matal, being

93. Tapper, *The Outpost*, p. 446.

94. Ibid., p. 447.

95. Michael Hastings, "Bowe Bergdahl: America's Last Prisoner of War," *Rolling Stone*, 7 Jun 2012, https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/bowe-bergdahl-americas-last-prisoner-of-war-189891, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Maj Matthew B. Smith and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen William C. Mayville, frmr Deputy Cdr, 82d Abn Div, and frmr Commanding General (CG), 1st Inf Div and RC East, 16 Apr 2015, p. 34, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

even more remote than Keating, was difficult to reach and would be even more difficult to hold. Keating was the closest U.S. outpost with a helicopter landing pad. ISAF, IJC, and some on the RC East planning staff saw it as a forward arming and refueling point for operations in Barg-e Matal. Brown and others in his command informed the planning staff that the landing zone at Keating was a tiny flat space in a creek bed, which supported only one aircraft at a time and was safe only at night. Nonetheless, RC East and ISAF staff planners continued to believe that Keating could support operations in Barg-e Matal.[96]

A combination of unforeseen factors, including the Bergdahl search and the Barg-e Matal mission, delayed the closure of Keating for almost two months. During that period, Colonel Brown ordered his troops to ship out of Keating everything deemed nonessential to the outpost's defense, in order to close Keating quickly once they received approval to withdraw. (This common practice is referred to as "getting light.") They did not, however, remove items needed for force protection, because the Taliban often sent small detachments to test the Keating defenses. These incidents had occurred almost weekly since early 2008, and as the combined U.S.-Afghan garrison prepared to shut down the outpost they did not feel that these relatively minor Taliban incursions warranted them spending additional time and resources to improve their defenses.[97]

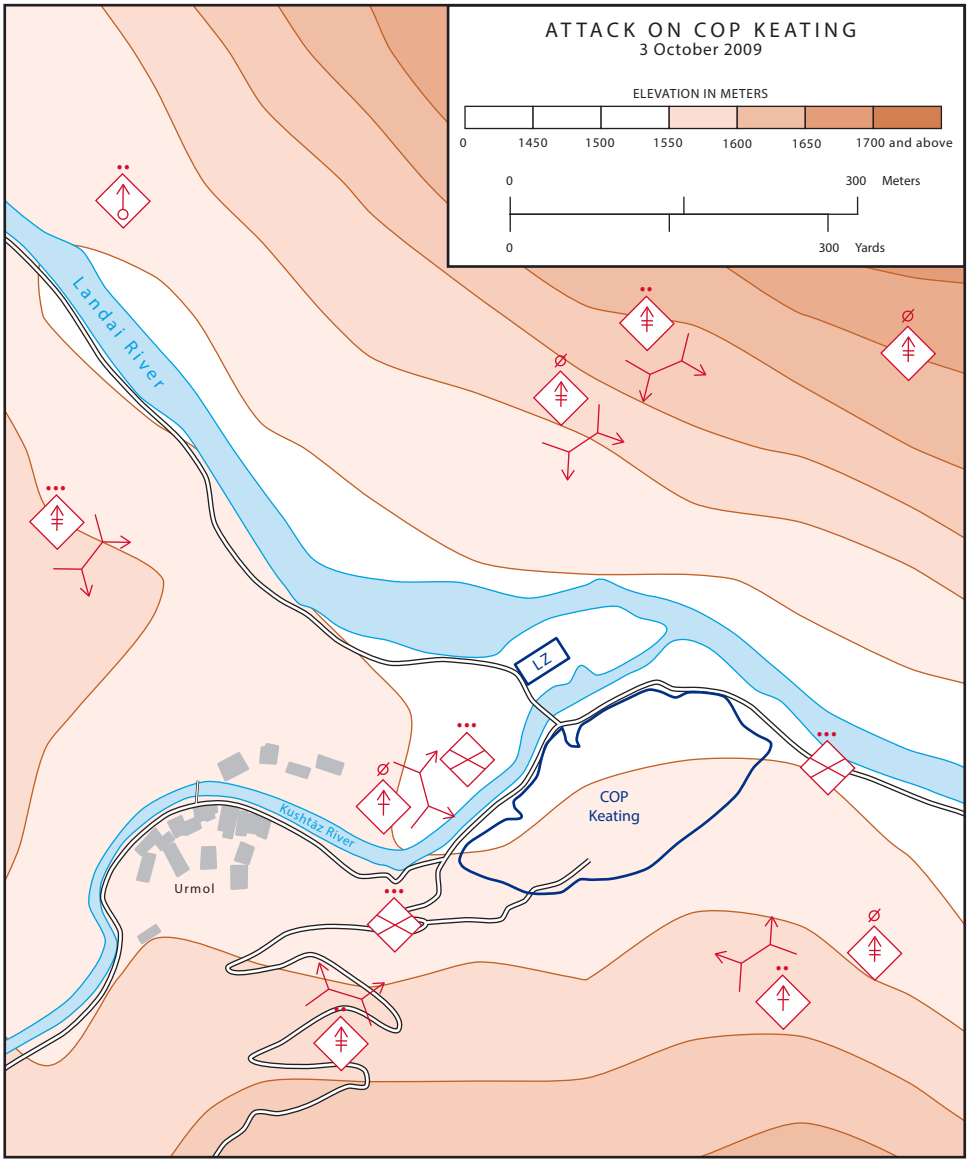
At 0558 on 3 October, the Taliban attacked Keating in strength (*Map 7.2*). The attackers were able to mass undetected because the available unmanned aerial vehicles could not monitor the surrounding area on a regular basis. The assault opened with a bombardment by rocket-propelled grenades and numerous automatic weapons directing fire at the heaviest weapons available to the garrison. The incoming fire pinned down U.S. and ANA mortar crews, inflicted casualties, and suppressed all vehicle-mounted heavy weapons. As soon as the opening barrage ended, the attackers breached the perimeter section held by the ANA. After killing or wounding all of the Afghan soldiers who did not flee, the Taliban attempted to penetrate the U.S. portion of the outpost. In a grueling, close-range firefight, the Americans overcame the attackers, killing or driving out all of the Taliban who had managed to breach the Keating perimeter.[98]

---

96. Wesley Morgan, "How Bowe Bergdahl's Disappearance Created Ripple Effects in the Afghanistan War," *Washington Post*, 13 Jan 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/01/13/how-bowe-bergdahls-disappearance-created-ripple-effects-in-the-afghanistan-war/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

97. In 2011, CENTCOM released numerous documents related to Combat Outpost Keating in response to a Freedom of Information Act request; see, for instance, AAR, 3–61 Cav Cdr, 9 Oct 2009, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

98. There are many accounts of the engagement. In addition to Jake Tapper's book *The Outpost*, see Mark Seavey, "The Battle for COP Keating," *The American Legion*, 22 Apr 2013, https://www.legion.org/magazine/214892/battle-cop-keating, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; and Thomas E. Ricks, "The Battle of COP Keating: An Earwitness Account," *Foreign Policy*, 10 Oct 2009, https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/10/the-battle-of-cop-keating-an-earwitness-account/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Map 7.2

It took almost thirty minutes for helicopter gunships to be launched in support of the beleaguered outpost. Close air support by a pair of F–15E Strike Eagle fighters began orbiting above KEATING forty-one minutes after the assault began. At 0648, the fighters began making strafing runs and dropping bombs on enemy positions overlooking the outpost. Fifteen minutes later, the first team of AH–64 Apache gunships arrived. Although their appearance meant the defenders now had a decisive advantage in firepower, the Taliban continued the fight. Medical evacuation helicopters made several attempts to lift the wounded out of KEATING, but heavy incoming fire forced them all to turn back. Worn down by an unrelenting aerial assault, the enemy retreated

as U.S. ground reinforcements neared Keating. The battle had lasted nine hours from start to finish. Eight U.S. and three Afghan soldiers, as well as dozens of their assailants, died during the engagement, while numerous enemy fighters, twenty-two U.S. soldiers, and five Afghan soldiers were wounded.[99]

Folding up Valley Outposts in Kunar and Nuristan

Insurgents portrayed the American withdrawal from Keating as a significant victory. This claim is not entirely accurate, as the redeployment was driven less by enemy pressure and more by the fact that the outpost had little to no impact on the counterinsurgency campaign. In political terms, the local population had learned a hard lesson about staying power. An insurgent cadre with guns in a mountainside cache could outlast an American platoon backed by artillery and air support. Insurgent leaders could call upon dozens or even hundreds of fighters to descend on small mountain communities whenever it suited them. As retired Lt. Gen. Douglas E. Lute, former deputy national security advisor, recalled General John P. Abizaid saying, "Our presence itself, when it is sustained, in countries and cultures like in Iraq and Afghanistan creates anti-bodies against our presence itself."[100]

The battle at Combat Outpost Keating exemplified the limits of Field Manual 3–24 *Counterinsurgency* and McChrystal's tactical directive. Although Keating's location, geography, and history made it a unique example, it was also emblematic of larger issues. Tactical commanders up to the brigade level had struggled with the outpost's location, task, and purpose from its establishment in March 2006, but it was only in 2009 that officers seriously considered closing Keating.[101] Just weeks before Keating would be attacked by hundreds of enemy fighters, McChrystal visited the brigade area, but not Keating itself. Commanders up to the RC East level believed McChrystal wanted to delay the closure of Keating, but McChrystal had not intended to give that impression.[102]

A January 2009 DoD report to Congress singled out RC East as an example of how counterinsurgency should work. "Our COIN [counterinsurgency] approach is effective in areas such as RC-East where the U.S. and ISAF are able to concentrate sufficient forces (partnered with ANSF), development resources, and civilian expertise. This successful COIN approach integrates

---

99. AH–64 Apache gunships from 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry, departed Forward Operating Base Fenty at 0620, taking up station over Keating fifty minutes later at 0710. Battles at COP Keating and OP Fritsche, 23 Jun 2011, Cryptome Archive, https://cryptome.org/eyeball/keating/keating-battle.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

100. Interv, Richard Hooker and Joseph Collins with frmr Ambasssador Douglas E. Lute, 10 Apr 2015, p.2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

101. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Mark J. Reardon, and Dr. Colin J. Williams with Maj Gen (Ret.) Jeffrey J. Schloesser, frmr CJTF-101 and RC East Cdr, 7 Jun 2017, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

102. Interv, Donahoe, Smith, and Stark with McChrystal, 3 Nov 2015, p. 31. McChrystal denied prohibiting the closure of Keating.

military and civilian resources to create a stable and secure environment."[103] This optimistic interpretation rested on an uncertain tactical foundation. Combat Outpost Keating, along with many other outposts, was an outgrowth of the wide dispersion of U.S. forces over vast areas of Afghanistan. New units arrived with fewer soldiers, which meant fewer patrols, as the reduced workforce was tied to base security requirements. As roads became more dangerous, units increasingly relied on aerial resupply, which had its own set of logistical and tactical vulnerabilities.

In the aftermath of Keating, the Army conducted a detailed investigation of the attack. Noting that the 3d Squadron, 61st Cavalry, after-action report identified force-protection shortcomings at Keating as a contributing factor, the investigation concluded the unit chain of command had been negligent by failing to correct those problems. The findings resulted in letters of reprimand for the entire chain of command at the tactical level. Yet because the investigation focused on the actions of American leaders, it did not account for the ANA role in the battle, including the fact that the enemy penetrated the Afghan portion of the perimeter rather than the section held by U.S. forces.

Some of the investigation's conclusions were contradictory. It found simultaneously that the perimeter of Keating was both too large to be defended by the number of troops available and too small to include the helicopter landing zone.[104] These were among the criteria Colonel Brown used in the argument for closing Keating in the first place. Although most portrayals of the incident directly linked the assault on the outpost to McChrystal telling George and Brown not to close it, the reality was more nuanced. McChrystal never vetoed the plan to close Keating, and George admitted this. Instead, each request for the helicopters needed for the complex operation was denied, not out of the desire to keep Keating open, but because the equipment was being used for higher-priority missions, such as the search for Bergdahl and operations at Barg-e Matal.[105]

The analysis of the attack on Combat Outpost Keating was problematic in other ways. In particular, it did not consider fully the counterinsurgency principles laid out in Field Manual 3–24 and highlighted in McChrystal's tactical directive. The investigation found the leaders of 3d Squadron, 61st Cavalry, negligent because they stopped improving the outpost defenses once they knew that Keating was due to be closed. However, that assessment did not account for the inability of the intelligence system to predict a large-scale attack. In fact, numerous unsubstantiated and erroneous reports of the enemy massing near Keating before 3 October played a part in the

---

103. DoD, Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Rpt to Cong, Jan 2009, p. 8, https:// dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/OCTOBER_1230_FINAL.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

104. Maj Gen Guy C. Swan III, Combat Outpost Keating–Redacted Exhibits 1–13, CENTCOM, https://www3.centcom/mil/foia_rr/FOIA_RR.asp?Path=/5%20USC%20552%28a%29%282%29%28D%29Records&Folder=COP%20Keating, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

105. Interv, Donahoe, Smith, and Stark with McChrystal, 3 Nov 2015, p. 31.



Sgt. Matthew Moeller, USA

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, fire 120-mm. mortars at enemy combatants in support of operations in RC East.

squadron's decision to defer force-protection improvements.[106] As a result, the final determination relied more on the apparent clarity of hindsight than on the more concrete factors of the situation: intelligence shortcomings, the tactical friction of pairing U.S. and Afghan units, and the subtly corrosive nature of an economy-of-force campaign in which units often made do with far less than their counterparts in Iraq.

The investigation's findings also did not consider fully that the mission at Keating involved both conducting operations against the enemy and interacting with the local civilian population, requiring the outpost's command staff to weigh the careful balance between security and accessibility. Field Manual 3–24 and McChrystal's tactical directive emphasized the need for the commanders to have the authority and flexibility to determine appropriate force protection measures for each area of operations. The U.S. Army had built Keating in a valley so it could protect the local Provincial Reconstruction Team and the area's road network. Therefore, the outpost could not have been reinforced as the impregnable fortress needed on 3 October 2009 without inhibiting the counterinsurgency missions of both the soldiers and the team they were supporting. Considering how little the occupying units at Keating had changed the outpost's design and structure in the three years since the Army had built it, the risk levels in the vicinity appeared to be within acceptable limits. Even when the new leadership recommended closing this outpost, noting that population outreach efforts had made little progress in the local situation and that the shift from geographic to population-centric

106. Executive Sum, 3 Oct 2009, sub: AR 15-6 Investigation re: Complex Attack on COP Keating - 3 Oct 09, http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/AR15-6Sum.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

counterinsurgency had made Keating more of a liability than an asset, the Army had delayed the request because other missions took priority.

The investigation had used strong terminology in assigning blame to tactical leaders. "The commander's plan to abandon COP [Combat Outpost] Keating inadvertently undermined the focus on current base defense and preparedness."[107] It found no fault in operational decisions by general officers, nor did it comment on the larger issues of counterinsurgency doctrine, the tactical directive, or McChrystal's visit. In fact, it found "no specific responsibility or accountability for inadequate base defense at Keating above the brigade level."[108] It mentioned neither the importance of the outpost to the forthcoming elections nor the reasoning behind delaying its closure a few months before the battle. The findings noted the overall approach: the U.S. Army "dedicates the appropriate level of resources and attention to trying to determine what happened and more importantly, to garner lessons learned so that [the] same mistake is not repeated."[109] On the whole, though, the investigation did not seem to match the doctrine being employed in Afghanistan at that time.

McChrystal determined that the reprimands would remain "locally filed," meaning that as long as they had no further negative actions against them, the reprimands would not be in their permanent records. In the end, the talent and quality of those leaders shone through, as they continued to excel and receive promotion. Later, the investigating officer acknowledged that "the unit probably never should have occupied Combat Outpost Keating. It should have been closed upon departure of the previous unit."[110] The reasons for keeping Keating open were never compelling. Much later, American commanders realized that one of the original reasons for keeping Keating open was a moot point. Even after U.S. forces closed nearly all outposts in the area, including Keating, troops "were able to still reach into Barg-e-Matal and [beyond] as late as 2010–2011."[111]

The Afghan Presidential Election: August–November 2009

The American strategic review concluded shortly before Afghans went to the polls to elect a new president. Beginning with the Riedel Report, the Obama administration had actively sought to improve Afghan governance, strengthen links between Kabul and remote provinces, and sever ties between Karzai and Afghan drug lords. The concern with governance reflected the corrosive effects of high-level graft and an earnest desire to undercut support

107. Swan, Combat Outpost Keating–Redacted Exhibits 1–13.

108. Ibid. The request to close Keating was delayed above brigade level.

109. Ibid.

110. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen (Ret.) Guy C. Swan III, Combat Outpost Keating Investigating Ofcr, Pentagon, 28 Sep 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

111. Interv, Smith and Stark with Mayville, 16 Apr 2015, p. 34.

for the Taliban among ordinary Afghans. Rather than take drastic and possibly counterproductive measures, the Obama administration sought to install a chief executive officer to relieve the Afghan president of the bulk of his administrative responsibilities. Karzai would not agree to that plan.[112]

The United States, and many ISAF nations, therefore came to view the August 2009 elections as an opportunity to replace Karzai with someone more capable of banishing corruption in the Afghan government. Many candidates actively opposed Karzai's bid for reelection, but only two were palatable to Western governments. One was Abdullah Abdullah, who had served as foreign minister of the Afghan Transitional Authority for a year after Karzai's election in 2005. The second candidate, a Western-educated Afghan intellectual named Ashraf Ghani, had been the Obama administration's favorite. Unfortunately for U.S. intentions, preelection polls indicated that Ghani, who had spent most of his life outside Afghanistan, stood little chance of winning the popular vote. Nonetheless, a number of U.S. officials, including Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard C. Holbrooke and Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry, openly associated with Ghani during the preelection campaign.

ISAF efforts to secure the August elections met with mixed results. Coordinated assaults, rockets, and IED attacks killed twenty-six people, including nine civilians, nine police, and eight Afghan soldiers. The Taliban also succeeded in shooting down a Royal Air Force CH–47 helicopter in a well-planned aerial ambush near Sangin.[113] While the death toll remained fairly low, UN observers calculated that only 10 percent of eligible voters went to the polls in the Pashtun south. Although voter turnout was lower than desired, President Obama proclaimed, "We had what appears to be a successful election in Afghanistan despite the Taliban's efforts to disrupt it." NATO Secretary General Rasmussen observed, "Seen from a security point of view, the election has been a success. It has been conducted effectively." CENTCOM commander Petraeus told reporters that the elections went "reasonably well," while cautioning that more time would be needed to assess the results.[114]

Petraeus' words proved prescient as developments continued to unfold. Unofficial results announced on 16 September showed Karzai garnered 54.6 percent of the ballots cast, with Abdullah's 27.8 percent placing him solidly in second place. The candidate preferred by the Americans, Ashraf

---

112. Ewan MacAskill, "Obama Administration to Continue to Push for Chief Executive in Afghanistan," *Guardian*, 19 Aug 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/19/obama-chief-executive-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

113. Thomas Harding and John Bingham, "Taliban Destroy Chinook in Attempted Election 'Spectacular,'" *Telegraph*, 20 Aug 2009, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6062278/Taliban-destroy-Chinook-in-attempted-election-spectacular.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

114. Ben Farmer and David Blair, "Afghan Elections: Low Turnout as Voters Fear Taliban Attacks," *Telegraph*, 20 Aug 2009, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6062344/Afghanistan-election-low-turnout-as-voters-fear-Taliban-attacks.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Ghani, came in fourth. However, verified reports of Karzai supporters stuffing ballot boxes dominated both U.S. and international news. On 11 October, the top UN official in Kabul, Kai Eide, confirmed that widespread voter fraud had taken place. As a result, the UN would oversee the audit of 358 ballot boxes by a five-member Afghan electoral committee. Eide explained that if the committee determined that the total number of votes cast for Karzai fell below 50 percent, a nationwide runoff election would have to be held.[115]

Karzai responded to Eide's remarks by denouncing what he characterized as unwarranted foreign interference in Afghan affairs. Western officials, including Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton, Richard Holbrooke, Robert Gates, and British prime minister Gordon Brown, publicly encouraged Karzai to accept the audit results. The potential for an equally inconclusive runoff election spurred renewed U.S. efforts to insert a chief executive officer between the Afghan head of state and provincial governors. One suggestion was for Karzai to form a unity government with another candidate. A Karzai spokesman denied that the Afghan president would reject the audit's findings, though he noted that the electoral process seemed in danger of being "overshadowed by political discussions."[116]

On 2 November 2009, Afghan officials declared incumbent Karzai the winner of another term in office following the previous day's announcement that Abdullah Abdullah had withdrawn his candidacy. UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon, who arrived in Kabul that day, issued a statement renewing his commitment to backing the democratically elected government in Kabul. In Washington, Obama told White House reporters that, after congratulating Karzai during a telephone conversation, he had informed his Afghan counterpart that "this has to be a point in time in which we begin to write a new chapter based 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."[117]

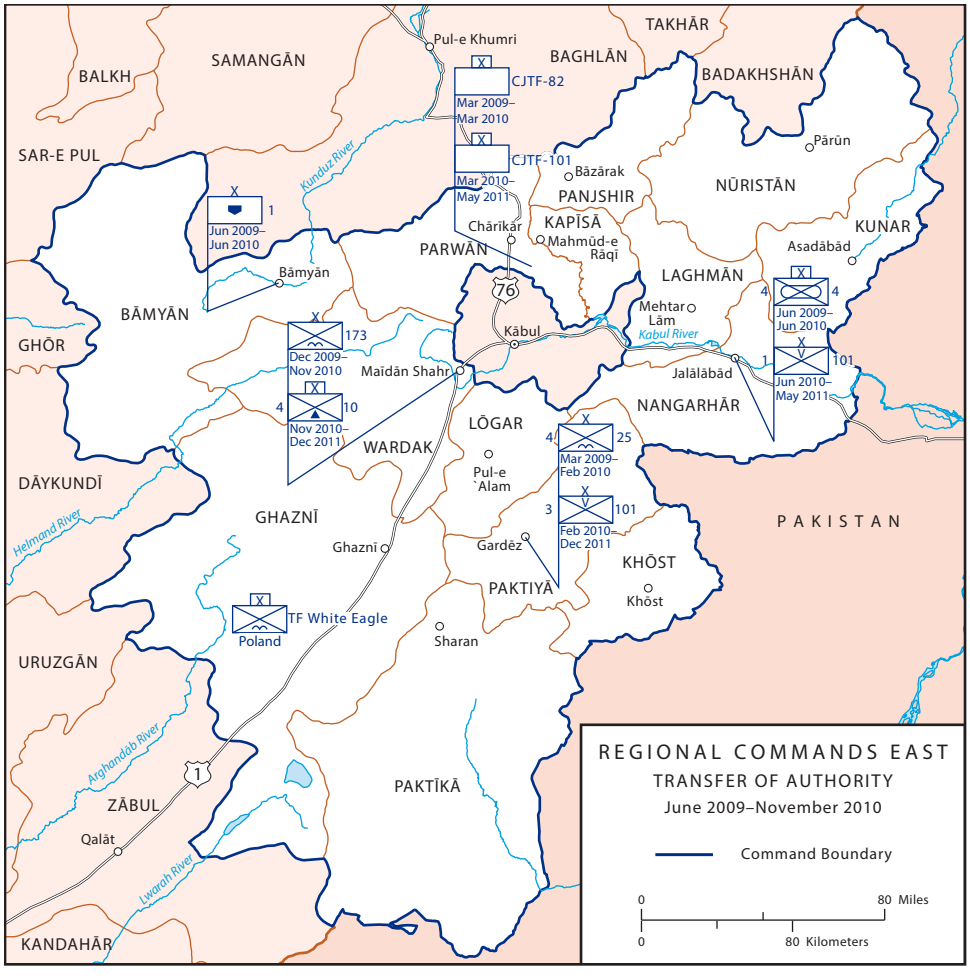
Although the election appeared to suggest that the Afghan people renewed Karzai's mandate, low voter turnout in many areas, coupled with ballot stuffing by the Afghan president's proxies, eroded support for Karzai within the international community. Postelection tensions between Karzai and the international community were rising, fueled by the fact that he was limited to two terms in office by law and exacerbated by Karzai's attempts to appoint Ghani as chief executive officer. None of this boded well for ISAF. Rather than continue playing the part of staunch ally, Karzai lashed out at those who doubted his legitimacy. One of the earliest examples of that political

---

115. Sabrina Tavernise and Abdul Waheed Wafa, "U.N. Official Acknowledges 'Widespread Fraud' in Afghan Election," *New York Times*, 11 Oct 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/12/world/asia/12afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

116. Sabrina Tavernise and Mark Landler, "Allies Press Karzai to Accept Election Audit Results," *New York Times*, 17 Oct 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/18/world/asia/18afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

117. "Karzai Declared Elected President of Afghanistan," CNN, 2 Nov 2009, http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/11/02/afghanistan.election.runoff/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Map 7.3

metamorphosis occurred at a January 2010 London conference when Karzai demanded all discussion on important strategic issues be deferred until the Kabul summit scheduled for that summer. The NATO Senior Civilian Representative, British diplomat Mark P. Sedwill, agreed to the request by deferring major strategic questions, such as how the transition to Afghan governance would take place and when Western troops would depart, to the Kabul summit scheduled for the summer.[118]

The Afghan elections coincided with the change in ISAF leadership and the new command structures, and set the stage for the implementation of counterinsurgency methods (*Map 7.3*). The increases in force levels helped with the process of taking a counterinsurgency approach, but ISAF clearly could not control all of Afghanistan with the approved force levels alone—particularly when U.S. and ISAF interpretations of counterinsurgency doctrines differed to the point at which they caused significant friction within

118. Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 196.

the coalition. Yet the entire counterinsurgency mission would soon come into question, as the U.S. political and military leadership reviewed their approaches in Afghanistan and prepared to make some changes that would have far-reaching effects on the conflict.

Chapter Eight

Exit McChrystal, Enter Petraeus



When President Barack H. Obama took office in January 2009, he and his administration were determined to reevaluate the strategic vision of their predecessors. In a dramatic departure from the accelerated process originally adopted by the Bush administration, the Obama White House devoted considerable time and thought to the reassessment effort that led to the Riedel Report. Rather than passively accepting an updated concept provided by the Pentagon, the National Security Council thoroughly overhauled the existing approach, first by redefining the threat and then by reexamining what the United States sought to accomplish and how success would be defined.

The Results of the Strategy Review

Competing viewpoints soon surfaced, with Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. preferring a counterterrorism option while others supported population-centric counterinsurgency. As the administration discussed the pros and cons of different approaches, counterinsurgency emerged as a favorite even in light of concerns about whether the Afghan government was a worthy strategic partner. In the midst of this process, the Pentagon sought permission for the newly appointed ISAF commander, General Stanley A. McChrystal, to conduct a strategic assessment of his own. The White House initially viewed that prospect as a potential source of friction should McChrystal arrive at a different conclusion than the National Security Council. In the end, however, the president approved the request.[1]

The White House's concern about contradictory statements was prescient. General McChrystal's assessment, leaked to the media just before the August 2009 elections in Afghanistan, stressed "the criticality of time" while raising the specter of mission failure: "Failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near-term (next 12 months)—while Afghan security capacity matures—risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible."[2] Troop levels became the lead story, with news outlets indicating that McChrystal was preparing to ask for a significant troop increase.[3] A series of public statements by McChrystal, General

1. Alter, *The Promise*, pp. 371–76.

2. Rpt, Gen Stanley A. McChrystal to Sec Def Robert Gates, 30 Aug 2009, sub: COMISAF's Initial Assessment, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.; Gates, *Duty*, pp. 367–70.

3. Gates, *Duty*, p. 364; Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "McChrystal Preparing New Afghan War Strategy," *Washington Post*, 31 Jul 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/30/AR2009073003948.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

David H. Petraeus, and Admiral Michael G. Mullen not only supported this perception, but also fed anxiety within the White House that military leaders intended to hijack the strategic decision-making process.[4] McChrystal had not helped his case when the three troop options he presented to Obama—increases of 11,000, 40,000, or 85,000—made it abundantly clear that he wanted 40,000 more troops. Military planners never seriously explored McChrystal's first and third options.[5] These developments fueled suspicions between the military and White House staff that would color future debates over Afghanistan policy.[6]

The National Security Council debated McChrystal's assessment for nearly three months, near the end of which Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry felt it necessary to question the counterinsurgency and any potential surge. His concerns in a cable sent directly to Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton were leaked to the media, which further escalated tensions within the administration just before the president's 1 December decision on McChrystal's recommendations. Eikenberry identified six problems with the proposed counterinsurgency strategy:

1. President Hamid Karzai is not an adequate strategic partner.
2. We overestimate the ability of Afghan security forces to take over.
3. We underestimate the length of time it will take to restore or establish civilian government.
4. The proposed strategy does not remedy an inadequate civilian structure.
5. The proposed strategy may not be cost-effective.
6. More troops won't end the insurgency as long as Pakistan sanctuaries remain.[7]

Eikenberry blunted his arguments by calling for "a comprehensive, deliberate and interdisciplinary re-examination of our strategic options" at a juncture where little support existed within the administration for another

4. Alter, *The Promise*, pp. 367, 376–78.

5. Interv, Bob Woodward, *Washington Post*, with Barack H. Obama, President of the United States, 10 Jul 2010, pp. 24–30, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The president asked the Pentagon for more options with specific details. According to Obama, they kept coming back in the 30,000–40,000 range. This frustrated him, but in the end he accepted that this was the number the military (meaning the ISAF and CENTCOM commanders, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretary of defense) felt to be an appropriate level of risk.

6. Interv, Col E. J. Degen, Lt Col John R. Stark, Gregory Roberts, and Brian F. Neumann, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen (Ret.) and Ambassador Douglas E. Lute, 11 Jan 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, "Ambassador Karl Eikenberry's Cables on U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 6 Nov 2009, http://documents.nytimes.com/eikenberry-s-memos-on-the-strategy-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The original documents were classified as Secret but leaked and published within days of being sent.

strategic review.[8] However, his concerns about the Afghan government and the insurgency's safe havens in Pakistan were well-founded.[9]

By late November, McChrystal's assessment was almost three months old. Petraeus took strong exception to Eikenberry's critique, noting that the ambassador had not offered any substantive objections prior to sending the cable to Clinton. Petraeus later observed that "we're now at the point where literally the president is going to announce his decision and this is on the table waiting for us. And it just comes in out of left field. It wasn't coordinated with General McChrystal."[10] The lack of coordination between the embassy and the military was unintentional but consequential. Even though the military had the advantage of having a retired general as ambassador to Afghanistan, Eikenberry and McChrystal had significantly different interpretations of the situation. The resultant disagreement led McChrystal to reflect on the disparity between State Department and Pentagon views:

> In retrospect, it would have been valuable if the U.S. embassy had also been directed to conduct a parallel analysis. Although we coordinated our review with the embassy staff, the failure to clearly identify and bring to the fore any differing assessments proved to be [a] problem during the White House's subsequent decision-making process on our ISAF strategy and troop request.[11]

Eventually, the president accepted the 40,000 troop increase, but stated that it would consist of 30,000 Americans, with 3,000 more at the discretion of Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, and 10,000 more from other ISAF nations. Before announcing his decision, Obama met in the Oval Office with Gates and Petraeus and then video teleconferenced with Eikenberry and McChrystal.[12] He asked each of them if a twenty-one month surge of 30,000 American forces and 10,000 more from ISAF troop-contributing nations would be acceptable.[13] All agreed. McChrystal noted that although the president did not offer enough time, which was itself a critical resource, he decided to give his consent. McChrystal said in an interview that he thought that "it was better to try than not to try at that point." He then added, "You know, I'll spend a lot of time for the rest of my life, wondering if I should have said all stop, wait a minute, I don't think that's a good plan."[14] That decision

---

8. Ibid.

9. Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan: The Other Side of the COIN," *Foreign Affairs* (Sep-Oct 2013): 59–74.

10. Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Group, with Gen (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, frmr ISAF and CENTCOM Cdr, 29 Jan 2016, p. 23, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp,.

11. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 305.

12. Interv, Degen and Stark with Petraeus, 29 Jan 2016, p. 32.

13. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 357.

14. Interv, Col Adrian Donahoe, Maj Matthew B. Smith and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen Stanley A. McChrystal, frmr ISAF Cdr, 3 Nov 2015, p. 20, Hist Files, OEF

to try would significantly change the scope and character of Operation Enduring Freedom over its remaining five years.

The White House's second strategic review concluded in November after nine or ten National Security Council meetings that totaled roughly twenty-five hours.[15] At first glance, the new review did not seem to alter U.S. strategic goals significantly. The revised strategy retained the core goal of disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qaeda, and set out two supporting goals: (1) "deny safe haven to al-Qaeda" and (2) "deny the Taliban the ability to overthrow the Afghan government."[16] The first goal had been in place since the autumn of 2001, and defending the central government from overthrow had been policy since July 2003. However, President Obama's revised Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy significantly limited U.S. strategic goals. The new strategy no longer considered it necessary, or even possible, to defeat the insurgency. By doing just enough to keep the Taliban out of power, the Obama administration believed it could deny al-Qaeda sanctuary in its former home.

Thus, the new strategic concept called for the United States "to degrade the Taliban insurgency while building sufficient Afghan capacity to secure and govern their country, creating conditions for the United States to begin reducing its forces by July 2011."[17] A major goal was to reconcile the Taliban with the Afghan government through peace negotiations, which the Obama administration saw as the only feasible way to stabilize Afghanistan. The second important change in strategic goals focused on building the capacity of select Afghan ministries, primarily defense and interior.[18] No longer would the U.S. government pursue a capacity-building strategy across the whole of the Afghan government. Rather than seeking to shape a moderate, democratic government capable of exercising full sovereignty, as in Bush-era strategies, the Obama administration would selectively build government capacity, with an emphasis on security institutions. The new policy explicitly stated that the strategy was not "nation building"—a shift that reflected the White House's growing disillusionment with "the profound problems of legitimacy and effectiveness with the Karzai government." The Obama administration recognized that it would not be feasible to build a stable democracy in Afghanistan, yet believed it could make the ANSF strong enough to secure the country against the Taliban and ultimately al-Qaeda.[19] The question became: what resources would be necessary to achieve these goals?

After speaking with Karzai and the new Pakistani president Asif Ali Zadari via teleconference, as well as key NATO leaders, Obama announced

---

Study Grp.

15. Vali Nasr, "The Inside Story of How the White House Let Diplomacy Fail in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, 4 Mar 2013, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/04/the-inside-story-of-how-the-white-house-let-diplomacy-fail-in-afghanistan/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.; Gates, *Duty*, p. 367.

16. Memo, James L. Jones for National Security Counsel Principals, 29 Nov 2009, sub: Afghanistan Pakistan Strategy, reprinted in Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, p. 385.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 386.

19. Ibid., pp. 386–87.

the troop increase in a speech at the United States Military Academy West Point, New York, on 1 December 2009.[20] The 30,000 American troops plus 10,000 coalition troops option, which had been proposed by Secretary Gates, was a compromise between the military's counterinsurgency approach and the less resource-intensive counterterrorism advocated by Biden and others in the White House. Although the final summary of the president's decision, called a "terms sheet," spoke of denying the Taliban access to the population—language that reflected the tenets of counterinsurgency doctrine—it also stated that the strategy was "not fully resourced counterinsurgency."[21] Obama had approved a partially resourced political and military compromise to buy time for Afghan security forces to grow and mature.

The surge was a compromise in both resources and time, specifically projected to last eighteen to twenty-one months as opposed to an indeterminate length of time required to meet the objectives and desired end conditions.[22] Surge forces were to arrive in the first half of 2010 and begin redeploying in July 2011, as President Obama made public in his West Point speech.[23] The president believed he was balancing opportunity costs. He quoted President Dwight D. Eisenhower as stating that national security proposals "must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs."[24] In light of the 2008 economic crisis and the nearly $1 trillion cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama opposed dramatic or open-ended escalation.[25] The surge would bring U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan to more than 100,000 by early 2011 at enormous cost to the U.S. Treasury, to say nothing of the human costs. Officially, the force cap was set at 98,000 U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines at any one time, with the caveat that 5 to 10 percent over that cap was acceptable to accommodate relief-in-place operations for rotating forces.

Senior policy and military leaders critical of Obama's decisions pointed out that this seemingly arbitrary deadline signaled to the Afghans, the enemy, and regional actors that they should prepare for an American departure. The Obama administration hoped to bring the Taliban to the bargaining table on

---

20. President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Speech, West Point, N.Y., 1 Dec 2009), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, p. 387.

22. Although critics made much of the president announcing in advance when the surge would end, the White House made it clear—to both the Afghan government and Pentagon officials—that the United States committed to send more troops for only a finite period. Alter, *The Promise*, pp. 387–90.

23. Ibid.; Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Speech, West Point, N.Y., 1 Dec 2009).

24. Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Military-Industrial Complex" (Speech, The White House, 17 Jan 1961), The Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Speech, West Point, N.Y., 1 Dec 2009).

favorable terms, but the Taliban now had strong reason to believe that it had the easier task—to survive and wait for the coalition to leave. However, as one senior Army leader later noted, "if we don't put markers on the table, then things have a tendency to languish on, without clear goals or objectives and from the very start, our goal was to ensure that at some point the Afghans would be able to do this for themselves. We can't stay there forever."[26]

Operation Moshtarak

Now that the presidential and provincial council elections were over, the next priority for ISAF was to eliminate Taliban enclaves in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. With the Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan already engaged in clearing the Helmand River Valley, McChrystal felt that expanding that effort would be an opportunity to demonstrate visible progress. McChrystal also wanted to prove the applicability of the principles he had espoused in his assessment, the changes in command structure he had initiated in theater, and the tactical directive he had issued to his troops.[27] McChrystal's vision, dubbed Operation Moshtarak, provided a chance to demonstrate that combining increased troop strength with counterinsurgency techniques could clear, hold, and build pro–central government strength in an enemy-held region. The commander of RC South, British General Nicholas P. "Nick" Carter, would be responsible for executing Operation Moshtarak in accordance with McChrystal's directive. Although Moshtarak was supposed to begin soon after the Afghan elections, logistical issues and the delayed deployment timelines of surge forces would delay it until 2010.

McChrystal and Carter envisioned Moshtarak as a three-phase operation to expand the authority of the Afghan government in RC South by protecting the population, separating insurgents from innocents, and partnering with ANSF at all levels. Committed forces included three brigades of the ANA's 205th Corps supported by British and U.S. troops. Describing American involvement using the term "supported" understated the fact that the Marine Expeditionary Brigade would deploy thousands of marines into the region encompassing Helmand and Nimroz Provinces. The sheer number of ISAF troops involved, coupled with the ambitious scope of the effort, led to the three provinces being split off from RC South to become RC Southwest in June. Phase I consisted of the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team conducting freedom-of-movement operations (clearing routes and roads) to enable other

26. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen Lloyd F. Austin III, CENTCOM Cdr, 9 Apr 2015, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. Telephone Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Gen Larry D. Nicholson, frmr Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan Cdr, 22 Jul 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. General Nicholson stated the details of Operation Moshtarak and the role of the Marine Corps units. Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan consisted of 10,732 marines with ground and air mobility, but not tanks—much to the chagrin of then Brig. Gen. Nicholson. However, the Danish forces and the marines later would use tanks. The Marine brigade did feature the new Assault Breach Vehicle—designed to breach minefields—used in fields planted with IEDs found in Helmand.

units to reach the population.[28] Phase II centered on clearing operations in Nad 'Ali District, particularly Marjah, which became the perceived focus of Moshtarak. That impression arose because prominent Afghan officials and ISAF leaders invested considerable time and effort in describing what would happen in Marjah after the Taliban was driven out. In reality, Marjah was one of several second-phase goals of Moshtarak.

The final phase focused on central Kandahar. The directive for this phase emphasized the need for stable political conditions and the arrival of the surge forces as preconditions for its execution. The Army units allocated to this phase—Lt. Col. John M. Paganini's 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry; followed by Col. Arthur A. Kandarian's 2d Brigade Combat Team (Combined Task Force Strike), 101st Airborne Division; and Col. James D. Edwards' 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade—had been identified well in advance and were soon to arrive. The incoming U.S. units would partner with ANSF immediately after arriving in Afghanistan.[29]

Moshtarak Phase I, Shaping Operations

The 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team provided the main effort in the initial phase of Moshtarak. The aggressive attitude of Col. Harry D. Tunnell IV caused friction between him and General Carter soon after the latter took command of RC South. The tension resulted in part from differing visions of how to achieve success. Carter believed Tunnell focused too much on engaging the enemy and too little on the population-centric counterinsurgency approach espoused by McChrystal, stating afterward, "Harry Tunnell was an impediment to the 4-star commander's intent."[30] Carter, however, made no effort to impart his intentions or otherwise connect with subordinate commanders by continuing General Mart de Kruif's practice of visiting or patrolling with frontline units. The same could be said of Tunnell, who apparently made no heartfelt attempt to embrace or otherwise accommodate Carter's vision.

Thirty days after taking command, Carter changed the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team's mission to route security. The RC South commander wanted to ensure freedom of movement for the populace as well as ISAF and Afghan forces. Carter chose Tunnell's brigade because it had a large number

---

28. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Apr 2010, amended 21 May 2010, p. 31, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Report_Final_SecDef_04_26_10.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. Ibid. In addition to its organic units—including Lt. Col. Casimir "Casey" Carey III's 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, Lt. Col. Anthony R. Hale's 519th Military Intelligence Battalion, and Lt. Col. James Gaylord's 1st Squadron, 38th Cavalry—the 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade received augmentation in the form of Lt. Col. Andrew Green's 4th Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

30. Interv, OEF Study Grp, with Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, frmr RC South Cdr, 21 Jan 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

of light, armored vehicles suitable for covering long distances quickly.[31] The new mission parameters specified by RC South, however, did not authorize the Stryker soldiers to operate more than two kilometers from the routes they were tasked to clear.[32] As a result, units in the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team were confined to mounted patrols and key leader engagements with local officials in the villages sited on the tasked routes.[33] Carter was trying to find the best way to employ the Stryker unit's unique capabilities while harnessing its aggressive brigade commander's mindset to McChrystal's operational intent.

The new mission forced most of the 5th Brigade's subordinate elements to relocate. Lt. Col. Jeffrey W. French's 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, was the sole exception, remaining along the Ring Road in Panjwa'i and Maywand Districts (*Map 8.1*). This rearrangement of geographic responsibilities left the Arghandab River Valley vulnerable at almost the exact moment that 5th Stryker Brigade leaders felt they were gaining strength against the enemy. The lost opportunity for tactical success caused friction between Carter and Tunnell, as the latter felt the new directive relied on information crafted months before the current state of affairs, which now clearly showed the Arghandab River Valley as an enemy sanctuary.[34]

Tunnell disagreed with Carter's approach because intelligence indicated that the IEDs being used on the routes his brigade was supposed to secure were being manufactured in the Arghandab District. Colonel Tunnell did not see the sense in committing troops to dealing with IEDs one at a time for hundreds of kilometers when he believed that he could strike the Taliban strongholds that were making them. Tunnell insisted his units were better suited for clearing operations than light infantry because they had more foot soldiers whose actions could be synchronized through the brigade's unparalleled digital command and control network. However, Tunnell did not accept alternative solutions, including the use of other units to perform the mission he sought. In fact, Special Operations units were conducting "an aggressive but carefully orchestrated campaign of precision strike operations" to degrade insurgent strength and undermine insurgent confidence across the area of operations.[35] Their precision-strike operations removed key insurgent leaders whose responsibilities included deciding where to mass IEDs.

Colonel Tunnell also had problems with the nebulous language that General Carter used in the task and purpose for the route-security operation, which were to "discombobulate" the enemy so as to "place him on the horns

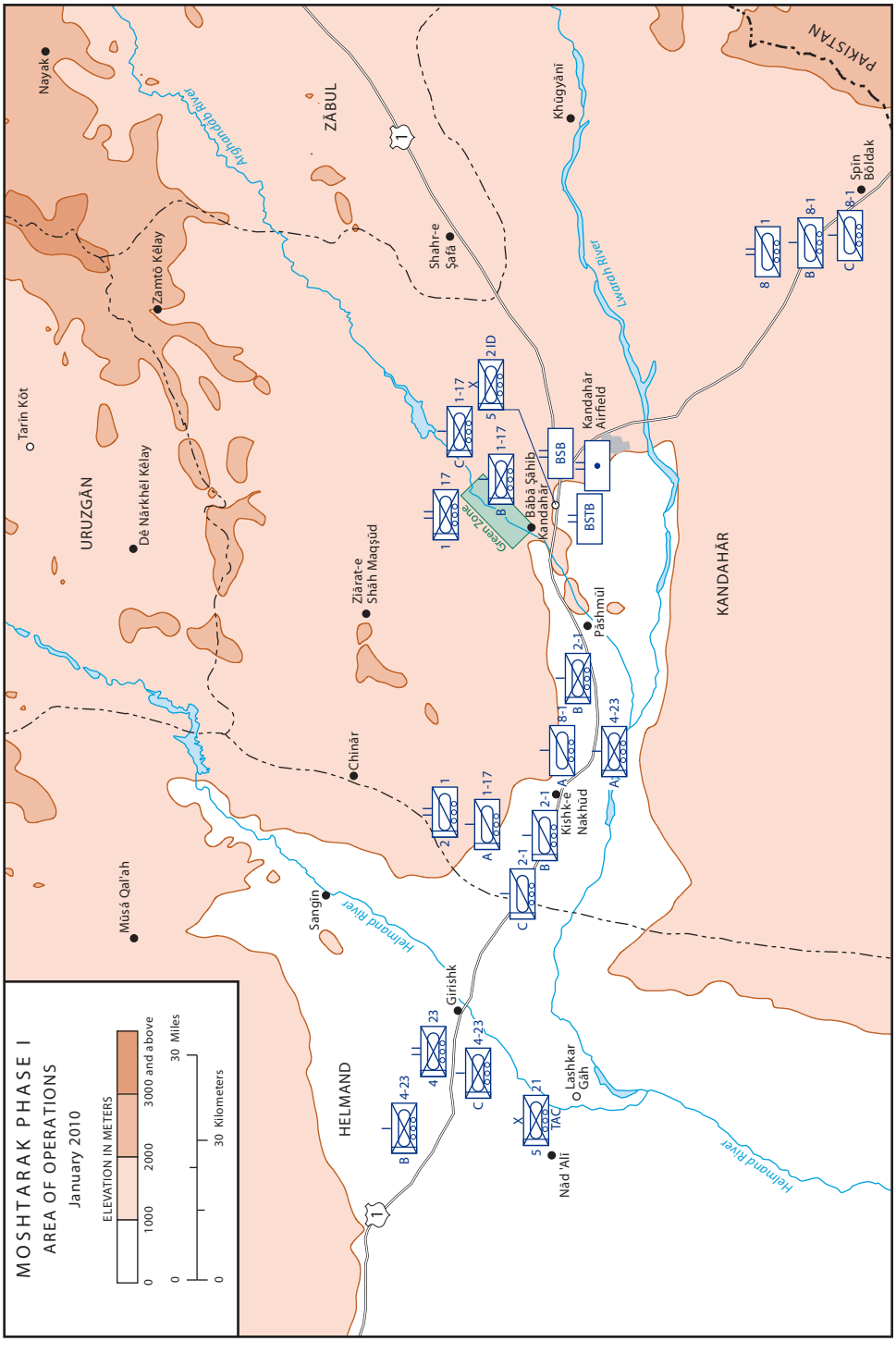
31. Ibid.

32. Memo, Brig Gen Stephen M. Twitty, 17 Nov 2010, sub: AR 15-6 Investigation on 5-2 SBCT, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Col Harry D. Tunnell IV, frmr 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div Cdr, 1 Dec 2010, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Ibid., p. 9.

35. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 366.


MOSHTARAK PHASE I
AREA OF OPERATIONS
January 2010
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
1000
2000
3000 and above
0
30 Miles
0
30 Kilometers
PAKISTAN
ZĀBUL
URUZGĀN
HELMAND
KANDAHĀR
Nayak
Tarīn Kōt
Dē Nārkhēl Kēlay
Zamtō Kēlay
Müsá Qal'ah
Sangin
Girishk
Chinār
Ziārat-e Shāh Maqsūd
Shahr-e Şafā
Khūgyānī
Spīn Bōldak
Kandahār Airfield
Bābā Şāhib Kandahār
Pāshmūl
Kishk-e Nakhūd
Lashkar Gāh
Nād 'Alī
Arghandab River
Helmand River
Lwarai River
Green Zone
BSB
BSTB
TAC
2 ID
1-17
4-23
2-1
8-1

Map 8.1

of a dilemma."[36] Tunnell bristled at receiving directives containing such nondoctrinal terminology, particularly as they also failed to assign sufficient importance to defeating the enemy after seizing the tactical initiative. He felt that Carter had oversimplified the problem and was unable to articulate the mission in achievable doctrinal terms.[37]

Carter fully disclosed his reasons for using the Strykers as route security to Tunnell. In focusing on roads, this first phase of Moshtarak also served as a deception. Most of the supplies allocated to Moshtarak would be carried by ground convoys that required route security, but the key maneuver elements of Phase II would travel not by road, but by air. By focusing enemy attention on the region's road networks rather than aviation avenues of approach, Carter and McChrystal sought to gain the time they needed to set up the second critical phase in the struggle for RC South.[38]

Nearly simultaneous with the change in mission, a controversy emerged inside the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The *Army Times* published an article alleging that Capt. Max Hanlin was replacing Capt. Joel R. Kassulke as commander of Company C, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry, because the outgoing commander had philosophical differences with Tunnell. The article quoted soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and junior officers who believed that the brigade's techniques for clearing operations were too enemy-focused and hence antithetical to McChrystal's tactical directive.[39] Kassulke did not confirm or deny the implied rift between Tunnell and himself. Instead, the article highlighted how his soldiers were surprised by Kassulke's sudden departure, as well as the unexpected order from RC South to switch from clearing operations to route security in another sector. The soldiers assumed both developments were due to mission failure on their part.[40] Getting units

---

36. Memo, Col Harry D. Tunnell IV to Hon. John McHugh, Sec Army, 20 Aug 2010, sub: Open Door Policy—Report from a Tactical Commander, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark with Col (Ret.) Harry D. Tunnell IV, frmr 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div Cdr, 24 Nov 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

38. Interv, Anthony E. Carlson and Kevin Hymel, CSI, with Lt Gen Nicholas P. Carter, 3 May 2012, p. 3, Hist File, OEF Study Grp.

39. The article states, "1-17 soldiers said that a major factor behind the battalion's difficulties in the Arghandab was the failure of their battalion and brigade commanders to adhere to McChrystal's published counterinsurgency guidance, which states up front: 'Protecting the people is the mission. The conflict will not be won by destroying the enemy.' Soldiers in 1-17 say that while the battalion's junior leaders have embraced these principles, Lt. Col. Jon A. Neumann and Tunnell—whose brigade's motto is 'Strike—Destroy'—have not. 'There's definitely a disconnect between the platoon and company level and the battalion and brigade level,' said a Charlie Company soldier in a leadership position, who requested he remain anonymous." Sean Naylor, "Stryker Soldiers Say Commanders Failed Them," *Army Times*, 21 Dec 2009, http://archive.armytimes.com/article/20091221/NEWS/912210313/Stryker-soldiers-say-commanders-failed-them (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. The article noted that "the final blow to the company's morale was still to come: the new RC-South commander British Maj. Gen. Nick Carter chose to pull Charlie Company and the rest of 1-17 out of the Arghandab permanently and replace them with elements of the 82nd Airborne Division's 4th Brigade. Carter had a new mission for Tunnell's brigade: ensuring freedom of movement along the major highways in his area of operations. . . .

at all echelons in step with a population-centric counterinsurgency plan was proving more difficult than predicted. In this case, tension arose within an American brigade because junior officers interpreted the ISAF commander's vision in literal terms, while senior leaders viewed McChrystal's guidance as more nuanced.

Moshtarak Phase II, Operations in Central Helmand

McChrystal wanted Phase II to be a truly new and distinct milestone for Operation Enduring Freedom. He wanted to convince Karzai that the south needed to be cleared, but was not sure how to do so. In seeking a way to approach the Afghan president, McChrystal took advice from former Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann, who stated that Karzai "trusts individuals, not reports and frequently told me so."[41] Neumann elaborated that "Karzai is completely tactical. . . . you cannot be too detailed with Karzai . . . show him a map and walk him through terrain. . . . illustrate what you mean."[42]

On 12 February 2010, McChrystal visited the presidential palace in Kabul to gain Karzai's approval for Phase II of Operation Moshtarak. McChrystal made it a point to ask for permission to execute the operation, even though preparation for Moshtarak, and even announcements of its goals, had been known for weeks. According to McChrystal, Karzai paused and said, "General McChrystal, you'll have to forgive me. I've never been asked to approve this kind of operation before."[43] After specific questions, Karzai gave his approval.

The most controversial part of the second phase of Operation Moshtarak was the idea that a "government in a box"—meaning a prepared governmental presence with resources and personnel—would immediately link disaffected residents in a former Taliban stronghold with their provincial and national governments. Building these ties between the population and the government proved harder to execute than to conceptualize. McChrystal later acknowledged that the term "government in a box" was a "superficial description we'd mistakenly coined" and that it "distracted from the serious effort to bring Afghan governance into what had been enemy territory."[44]

Brig. Gen. Larry D. Nicholson, commander of Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan, felt the same way. He recognized in retrospect that finding the right people to lead the Marjah government was his greatest obstacle. Past attempts by previous Afghan governments to irrigate, modern-

---

Soldiers in both Bravo and Charlie companies said the order to pull out felt like 'a defeat.' Carter disagreed, saying the 1-17 soldiers 'created the conditions to hand over the Arghandab in much better condition than it was two months ago, to another unit, thus releasing [the 1-17] to go on to what is a much higher priority task, and a task which is much better suited for [the 1-17's] capability.'" Ibid.

41. Ltr, frmr Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann to Col Gregory M. Douquet, Cmd Grp Strategic Advisory Grp, 19 May 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Ibid.

43. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, pp. 364–65.

44. Ibid., p. 368.

ize, and populate the area with tribes from outside Helmand had created demographic chaos, leaving Marjah without a true native population base that could provide a foundation for a strong local government. Sixty years earlier, a U.S. Agency for International Development program had created an irrigation system that was now being used for poppy production, adding to the problems in the region.[45] The Afghans chosen for the government in a box were not from Helmand Province and their American counterparts could not provide the impetus to enable the government to have its promised immediate impact.[46] In spite of these obstacles, the operation went forward.

With more than 3,000 U.S. marines and 4,400 Afghan troops in the assault force, Phase II of Operation Moshtarak involved around 15,000 troops in all roles, making it the largest Enduring Freedom operation to date.[47] It would be the first operation in which each U.S. battalion would pair with an ANSF battalion.[48] ISAF announced the operation a few weeks in advance to generate enemy activity and give civilians a chance to leave, which they did in great numbers.[49] Prior to Phase II, elders from the region urged the marines to start the operation as soon as possible, but the flood of people fleeing Marjah was so unmanageable that the elders began asking for time to evacuate more innocents and persuade the enemy to surrender.[50] The marines granted a one-day delay after cutting off all avenues in and out of the town.

On 13 February, 900 British troops and their partnered Afghan forces air-assaulted into Nad 'Ali to the west of Lashkar Gah, while 1,420 U.S. marines and their partnered Afghan forces air-assaulted into Marjah (*Map 8.2*).[51] The idea was to avoid getting bogged down fighting through the IED belts protecting the ground approaches to Marjah.[52] While massive helicopter lifts of up to sixty rotary-wing aircraft transported part of the attack force, others still had to move by indirect ground routes. Capt. John A. Moder's Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, received the unenviable mission of clearing

---

45. Telephone Interv, Stark with Nicholson, 22 Jul 2015.

46. "We're past the B Team," said Marc Chretien, a senior State Department official in Helmand. "We're at C Team." Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 179–81.

47. Jeffrey A. Dressler, "Operation Moshtarak: Taking and Holding Marjah," Backgrounder, Institute for the Study of War (2 Mar 2010), p. 2, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07873, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

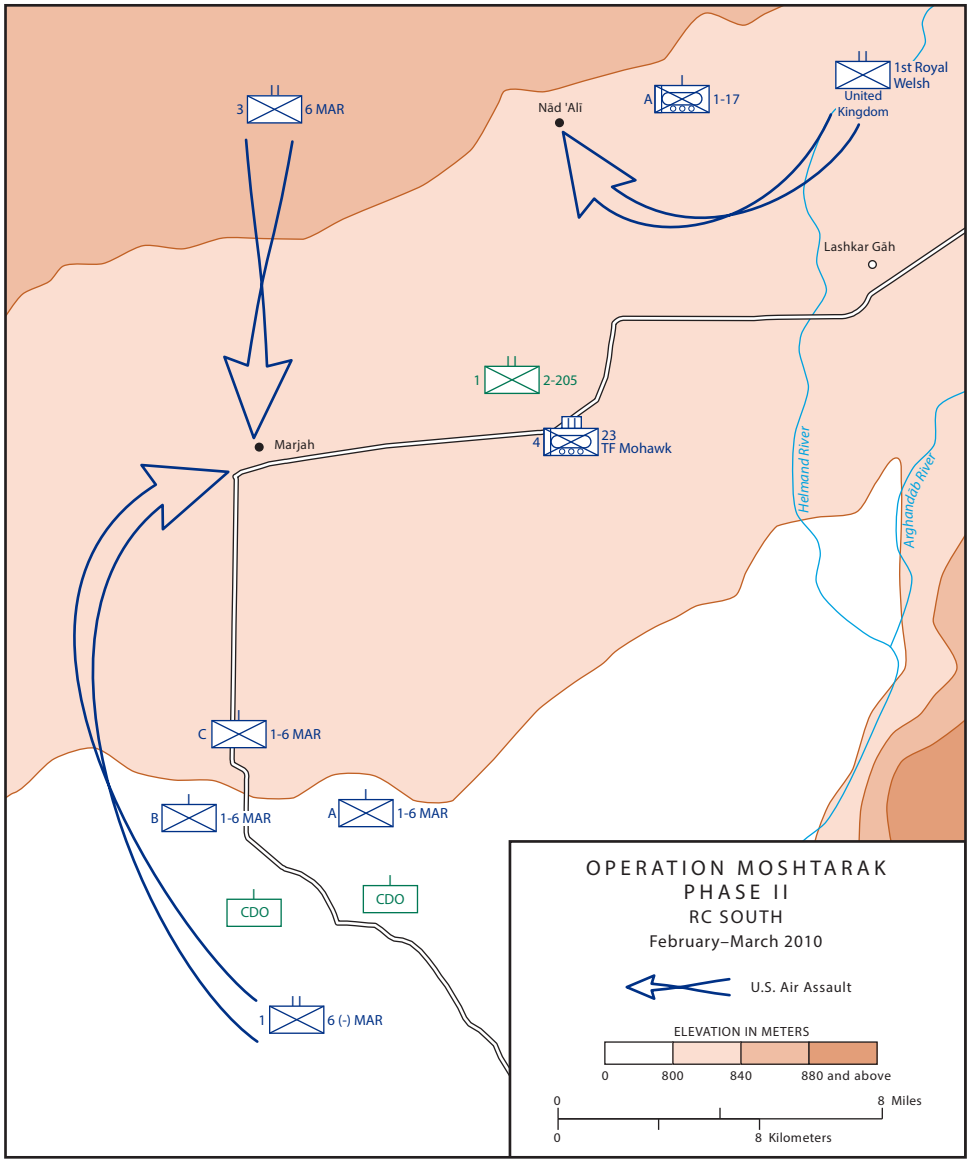
48. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Marines Plan Joint Mission to Eject Insurgents from Last Helmand Stronghold," *Washington Post*, 10 Feb 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/09/AR2010020903511.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. Christopher Torchia and Noor Khan, "Afghan Elders Plea for Quick Attack on Marjah," *Associated Press*, 12 Feb 2010, https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-afghan-elders-plea-for-quick-attack-on-marjah-2010feb12-story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. More than 2,700 people reportedly fled to the provincial capital just miles northeast of Marjah.

50. Dexter Filkins, "Afghans Try to Reassure Tribal Elders on Offensive," *New York Times*, 11 Feb 2010, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/2010/02/12/world/asia/12afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

51. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Apr 2010, as amended 21 May 10, p. 31.

52. Dressler, "Operation Moshtarak," pp. 1–3.



Map 8.2

routes into Marjah so as to meet the assault forces and open sustained lines of communications. Knowing that IEDs had been emplaced on the obvious approaches, Moder's company used a circuitous route that avoided roads and crossed water obstacles without using bridges in order to link up first with its battalion command element and subsequently with Capt. Carl A. Havens' Company A in the center of Marjah. Company C took no casualties but



S. Sgt. Mark Jones, British Army

The 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh (Royal Welch Fusiliers, 23rd Regiment of Foot) and assigned units, including ANA, ANP, and Estonian and French forces, in training and preparation for Operation Moshtarak in Helmand Province.

received sporadic gunfire and found dozens of IEDs, which they detonated harmlessly. Marjah now belonged to the U.S. Marines and Afghan Army.[53]

This overwhelming success pleased General Nicholson, who entered Marjah to see firsthand how the situation was developing. Upon arrival, he noted that Lt. Col. Calvert L. Worth Jr., the commander of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, was speaking to men in black turbans. Worth was telling them that U.S. and Afghan forces were there to install civilian government, protect the population, and help reestablish public services. One of the men stood, gestured to the group, and said, "I am Taliban. We are all Taliban. But we agree and we trust you. But if you lie to us or do not do as you say, I will come back here and kill you and your marines."[54] For the moment, Marjah remained quiet.

Task Force Mohawk, formed around Lt. Col. Burton K. Shields' 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, was a late addition to the assault on Marjah. In mid-January, Colonel Tunnell notified the unit that it would be attached to Marine Regimental Combat Team 7 for Operation Helmand Spider, a supporting effort to Phase II of Moshtarak. Company A, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry—attached by Tunnell to Shields' battalion—would operate in Nad 'Ali while the remainder of TF Mohawk partnered with 1st Kandak, 2d Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army Corps. Their mission was to seize crossing points

53. Daniel P. Bolger, *Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Mariner Books, 2015) pp. 331–33.

54. Telephone Interv, Stark with Nicholson, 22 Jul 2015.

over the Trikh Zabur Canal to deny the enemy freedom of movement between Sayyidabad and Marjah and disrupt any enemy counterattacks.[55]

Col. Paul W. Bricker's 3,200-soldier 82d Combat Aviation Brigade, organized with five battalions equipped with 155 cargo, utility, reconnaissance, attack, and medical evacuation helicopters, doubled the rotary-wing platforms taking part in Operation Moshtarak. By ferrying units by air, Bricker's brigade enabled the high operational tempo sought by Carter in Phase II by preventing the Taliban from canalizing ISAF troops into IED belts. The 82d Combat Aviation Brigade not only transported Army, Marine Corps, and Afghan infantry, but also provided British forces with reconnaissance, aerial fire support, cargo lift, and medical evacuation assets. The Army's UH–60 Black Hawks and CH–47s Chinooks played a prominent role in the opening days due to the Marines' decision to dedicate their MV–22 Osprey tilt-rotor lift aircraft to supporting a quick-reaction force.[56]

Although the assault on Marjah was successful, it identified ways in which joint operations in Afghanistan needed to improve. Notably, improperly planned logistics left Stryker units short of lodging and maintenance support. Working with the ANA stretched both Army and Marine leaders who were unprepared for the low level of proficiency of many of their Afghan counterparts. Language barriers between Afghans and Americans made rehearsals even more important than anticipated and quadrupled the time necessary to conduct such events.[57]

The enemy remained in Marjah during the operation but did not fight. Marine General Nicholson believed his opposition had made that decision after so many coalition forces had arrived in the center of Marjah and the key areas that surrounded it. The citizens of Marjah were aware that the enemy had decided not to fight, as evidenced by their return en masse only eight days after the air assault.[58] A few weeks later, the area was deemed safe enough for Karzai to attend a local shura and discuss the new situation with elders. The locals made known their concerns about those chosen to lead the district. Karzai assuaged their concerns, and the locals agreed to give the new government a chance.[59]

The seizure of Marjah was the decisive point of Operation Moshtarak, but it did not mark the end of hostilities in Helmand Province. To the contrary, it marked the beginning of frustration for the Marines and

---

55. MFR, Lt Col Burton K. Shields, 4th Bn, 23d Inf Reg, 10 Mar 2010, sub: After Action Review – Operation HELMAND SPIDER/Operation MOSTARAK, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Christian Lowe, "Osprey Used in Marine Force Recon Raid," 19 Feb 2010, https://www.military.com/kitup/2010/02/osprey-used-in-marine-force-recon-raid.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. Memo, Lt Col Burton K. Shields, 4th Bn, 23d Inf Reg, 10 Mar 2010, sub: After Action Review – Operation HELMAND SPIDER/Operation MOSTARAK; MFR, Sgt. Christopher T. Rice, 4th Bn, 23d Inf Reg, 8 Mar 2010, sub: Biometric Operations in Support of Operation HELMAND SPIDER, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. Telephone Interv, Stark with Nicholson, 22 Jul 2015.

59. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, pp. 372–75.

their Afghan partners as well as for McChrystal. Although the Taliban's initial reluctance to become entangled in a major engagement meant that U.S. forces were able to net large caches of weapons, drugs, and explosive materials, civil government was not progressing with the same rapidity. In a May 2010 visit to the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, McChrystal exhorted the unit commander, Lt. Col. Brian S. Christmas, to help representatives of the Afghan government achieve more progress. Christmas replied that doing so required far more time than the ninety days his marines had already spent in Marjah. McChrystal then asked how many days Christmas believed it would take and how many days Washington might give them. When Christmas replied that he did not know, McChrystal responded, "[W]e don't have as many days as we'd like."[60]

These situational factors meant that clearing operations in Helmand were characterized by a mix of tactical gains and strategic stalemates. Although the Marines achieved all of their tactical and operational objectives, the province had yet to heed to the dictates of the Karzai government and remained an insurgent base. Afghan government and ISAF claims that reconstruction efforts would begin immediately and that Kabul would reach out to the province's inhabitants after the Taliban departed rang hollow, in large part because Afghan and American interagency participation fell far short of the Marines' effort. In fact, Helmandis perceived Operation Moshtarak in a negative light precisely because they saw only armed troops, not aid officials, construction crews, or earnest Afghan administrators.[61]

In March, the International Council on Security and Development, a European think tank, interviewed 427 local Afghans in Lashkar Gah District to capture their opinion on recent security measures and the motivations of the Taliban. Two-thirds of respondents characterized ISAF operations in Marjah as "bad." About the same number said they would not support ISAF forces in their province, and even more felt that NATO troops should leave Afghanistan and believed the Taliban would return.[62] Oddly enough, two-thirds also answered "yes" to the question: "Should the international and government forces now 'clean [clear] the road from Lashkar Gah to Kandahar to Kabul' and start a similar operation in Kandahar or other regions?"[63]

Although Marjah produced relatively little in the way of casualties or results, it still could be considered a showcase operation. However, similar operations in nearby districts such as Sangin and Nad 'Ali proved more irritating and produced the bulk of the casualties for the U.S. Marine Corps during this period. Just as British troops discovered earlier, the marines found that the enemy had cunningly and effectively employed IEDs throughout the area. Of the 14,803 U.S. marines killed or wounded in all theaters of war since

60. Jack Fairweather, *The Good War: Why We Couldn't Win the War or the Peace in Afghanistan* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), p. 308.

61. Ibid., pp. 16–18.

62. International Council on Security and Development, "Operation Moshtarak: Lessons Learned," *Small Wars Journal* (Mar 2010): 2, https://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/moshtarak1.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

63. Ibid., p. 18.



MCS1 Chad McNeely, USN

General Mills (left) talks with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen during the latter's visit to Afghanistan in December 2010.

2001, 5,324 of these casualties—more than a third—occurred in Afghanistan. More than 80 percent (287 killed, 3,953 wounded) of those losses occurred in Helmand from 2009 to 2011.[64]

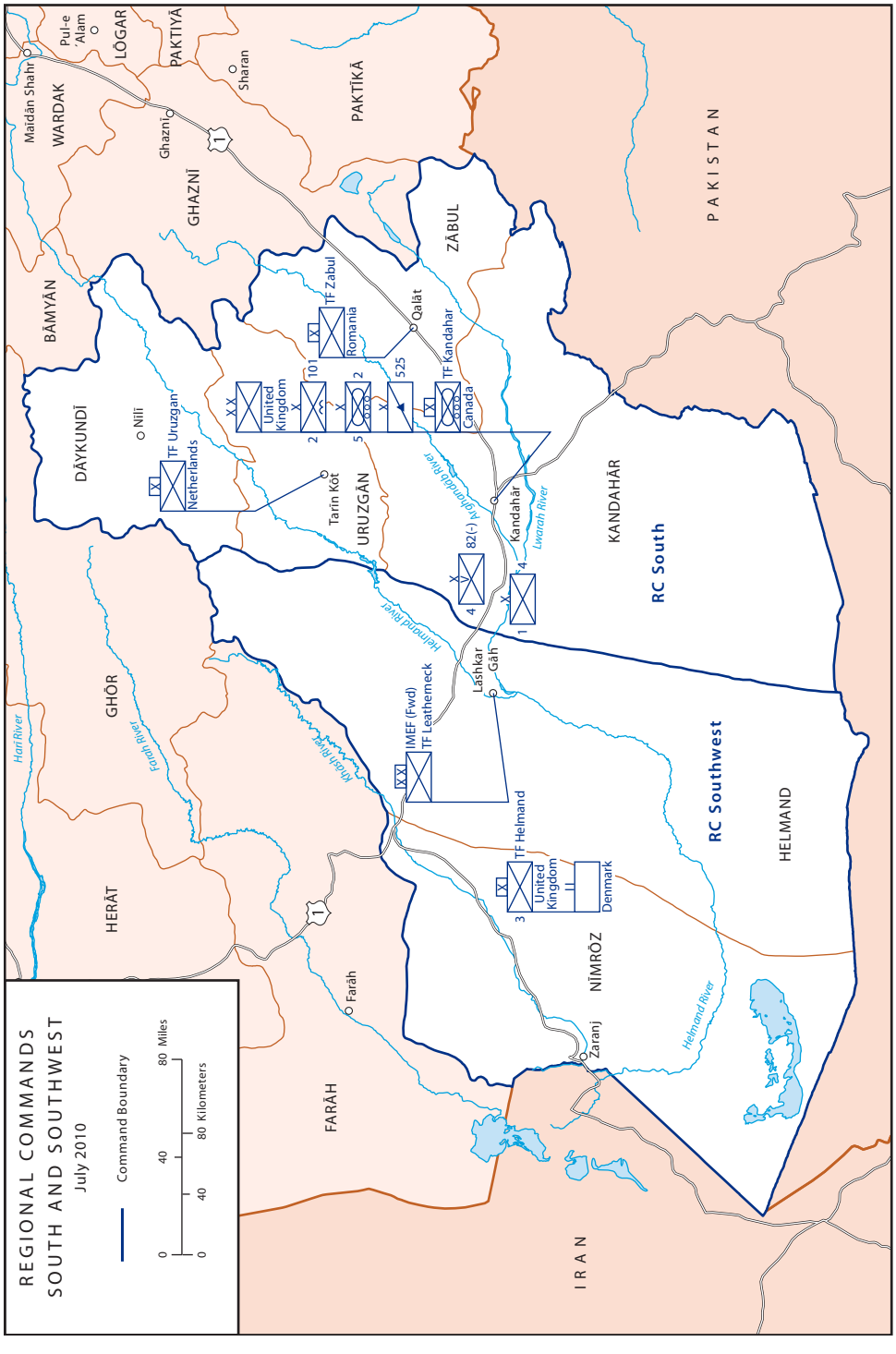
The assignment of Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan to Helmand under operational command of Marine Central Command limited the flexibility of the tactical commander. Although RC South sent TF MOHAWK and the 82d Combat Aviation Brigade to Helmand to support the Marines in Phase II of Operation MOSHTARAK, marines contributed far fewer assets in support of operations in other regional commands. The doctrine that deploys a Marine Air-Ground Task Force prevented the Marine brigade from being parceled out to support other operations, which meant that ISAF could not extract the marines from Helmand to augment other major operations. McChrystal conceivably could have requested a boundary change so marines could fight outside of Helmand Province, or he could have requested a change in the command and control arrangements, but he did neither.[65]

In July, General Nicholson's Marine Expeditionary Brigade was replaced by a much larger force, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) commanded by Maj. Gen. Richard P. Mills. The arrival of Mills' command doubled the U.S. Marine Corps commitment in Helmand Province, which now stood at 20,000.[66] With the number of troops in Helmand equaling

64. Dr. Michael J. Carino, Department of the Army, Surgeon Gen, *Army Casualty: Summary Statistics Overview* (Washington, D.C.: Ofc of the Surgeon Gen, Mar 2016), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

65. Telephone Interv, Stark with Nicholson, 22 Jul 2015.

66. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Nov 2010, p. 47, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/November_1230_Report_FINAL.pdf, Hist Files, OEF


REGIONAL COMMANDS
SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST
July 2010
Command Boundary
0 40 80 Miles
0 40 80 Kilometers
RC South
RC Southwest
HERĀT
GHŌR
BĀMYĀN
WARDAK
LŌGAR
PAKTIYĀ
GHAZNĪ
DĀYKUNDĪ
URUZGĀN
ZĀBUL
PAKTĪKĀ
KANDAHĀR
HELMAND
NĪMRŌZ
FARĀH
PAKISTAN
IRAN
Maidān Shahr
Pul-e 'Alam
Sharan
Ghazni
Nili
Tarin Kōt
Qalat
Kandahār
Lashkar Gāh
Farāh
Zaranj
Hari River
Farah River
Khāsh River
Helmand River
Arghandab River
Arghandab River
TF Uruzgan
Netherlands
XXX
United Kingdom
X
2
101
X
2
Canada
5
X
525
XX
TF Kandahar
Canada
TF Zabul
Romania
X
IMEF (Fwd)
TF Leathemeck
XX
TF Helmand
3
United Kingdom
Denmark
II
82(-)
4
X
V
4
X
1

Map 8.3

that in other regional commands and with a two-star general in command, IJC decided to create RC Southwest, consisting of Helmand and Nimroz Provinces. RC South retained responsibility for Kandahar, Uruzgan, Daykundi, and Zabul Provinces (*Map 8.3*).

Mills' marines began operating as a self-contained regional command in May 2010 during what ISAF termed as an "assessment phase."[67] By the end of May, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) reported to IJC that it was capable of operating as an independent regional command. On 28 May, the North Atlantic Council officially recognized the establishment of RC Southwest, with IJC doing likewise on 14 June 2010.[68] With the creation of a sixth regional command, command and control arrangements, which had evolved significantly during the past year and a half, were set for the remainder of the surge.

Some irony could be derived from the events that resulted in the U.S. Marine Corps, sent to reinforce the British contingent in Helmand Province two years earlier, gaining command and control over the bulk of British forces in Afghanistan while the majority of the troops reporting to British General Carter in RC South were supplied by the U.S. Army.[69] Carter's predecessor, General de Kruif, had opposed the division of RC South into two regional commands. He believed such an initiative would be detrimental to the overall coalition unity of effort in the Pashtun heartland, which he insisted represented one battlespace. Thus, in response to the "single battle" doctrine espoused by the Marines, McChrystal had divided what preceding leaders originally considered an indivisible battlespace.[70]

The changes taking place in southern Afghanistan initially resulted in more than 10,000 U.S. marines, or about 10 percent of U.S. forces in the country, operating in remote parts of Helmand to secure only 1 percent of the Afghan population, while the British continued to secure the more populated capital of Lashkar Gah. When the marines in RC Southwest doubled to more than 20,000, now about 20 percent of U.S. forces in country, their new area of operations encompassed about 5 percent of the Afghan population. Arguments about insurgent density or poppy production were used to justify those decisions, but some U.S. officials questioned whether ISAF understood the precepts of counterinsurgency by sending so many troops to secure so few civilians.[71] Regardless of any lingering skepticism about ISAF's warfighting approach, the marines were successful in shaping, clearing, and holding remote areas of Helmand Province. Like their U.S. Army counterparts in

---

Study Grp.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Richard P. Mills, frmr I Marine Expeditionary Force Cdr, 5 Aug 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

70. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Mart de Kruif, frmr ISAF RC South Cdr, 14 Oct 2015, p. 43, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

71. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 333–50.

other contentious areas of Afghanistan, however, the U.S. Marine Corps found the build and Afghan-lead phases more difficult to achieve.

The Stryker Finale

A preemptive strike against insurgents massing in Shah Wali Kot by the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team in the waning months of its deployment indicated that ISAF could seize the initiative given the right tactical conditions. In May 2010, Lt. Col. Jonathan A. Neumann, commander of 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry, in northern Kandahar Province, did just that. His units had learned of an imminent massing of Taliban fighters for an attack, likely against ISAF forces near Shah Wali Kot. Being cautious in the last weeks of the brigade's tour, Tunnell reinforced Neumann with a company from 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, before taking further action.[72]

When Lt. Col. Karl E. Slaugenhaupt, the deputy brigade commander, recommended attacking the Taliban in Neumann's area of operations, Tunnell agreed on a series of company-sized operations aimed at destroying the enemy force.[73] Tunnell used companies because Carter still wanted him to focus on maintaining route security until the Stryker brigade left Afghanistan in July 2010. Over the next several days, Colonel Neumann's task force killed or wounded an estimated one hundred insurgents belonging to the group gathering near Shah Wali Kot.[74]

During the same period, ISAF authorities were searching all personally owned computers in the brigade for photographs or videos showing Afghans being killed by U.S. forces. The images violated standing military policy prohibiting soldiers in a war zone from photographing or filming dead enemy personnel. The hunt for the illicit images began in spring 2010 after their existence became known outside of the brigade. The Army, concerned that some of Tunnell's soldiers also had sent images to stateside recipients, ordered its own Criminal Investigation Command to perform similar searches of computers belonging to the relatives of soldiers.[75] The search for photos would lead to findings even more atrocious than simply recording the deaths of enemy combatants.

When Army investigators discovered photographs of dead Afghans on laptop computers belonging to soldiers in the Stryker brigade, the initial suspicions of wrongdoing sparked a further investigation. The expanded investigation over the period of many months revealed that four soldiers of a platoon from Company B, 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, had committed murders

---

72. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col Jonathan A. Neumann, frmr Cdr, 1st Bn, 17th Inf, 3 Feb 2011, p. 12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

73. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt Col Karl E. Slaugenhaupt, frmr Deputy Cdr, 5th Stryker Bde, 2d Inf Div, 3 May 2011, p. 9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 34–35.

74. Chandrasekaren, *Little America*, pp. 34–35.

75. Mark Boal, "The Kill Team: How U.S. Soldiers in Afghanistan Murdered Innocent Civilians," *Rolling Stone*, 27 Mar 2011, https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-kill-team-20110327, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

while in Afghanistan. Led by S. Sgt. Calvin R. Gibbs, the group orchestrated situations in which they could kill civilians, whom they framed as insurgents. This was not the first time Gibbs had been implicated in illegal actions; earlier in the deployment, he had been relieved of his duties in the brigade command post after receiving nonjudicial punishment for stealing. The actions of Gibbs and several other individuals came to the chain of command's attention when peers reported them for smoking hashish and telling incriminating stories. Once Tunnell learned all of the details, he immediately referred this case to the Army's Criminal Investigation Command. The ensuing formal investigation revealed that the soldiers had carried out three staged killings, each falsely reported as a legitimate enemy engagement.

The mentality, methods, and attitude of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, had always been a concern of Tunnell's. The colonel had worried about the unit long before it arrived in Afghanistan because he felt its former commander had allowed discipline to erode to a dangerous level. As a result, after Tunnell considered formally relieving Lt. Col. Richard A. Demaree of command, he instead cut short the officer's tour of duty before the deployment.[76] Before Tunnell departed Fort Lewis in 2009, he informed that officer's replacement, Colonel French, that the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry's collective discipline had deteriorated to a point where the performance of individual soldiers in combat could be affected.[77]

It was becoming clear that the reputation of the 5th Stryker was now in question. The first inkling that the 5th Stryker Brigade had fallen into official disfavor emerged when the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry's recommendation for a Presidential Unit Citation successfully made its way through the chain of command while similar awards for all other 5th Stryker Brigade units were returned without action.[78] When Tunnell's inquiries about the awards went unaddressed by the U.S. chain of command, he sent a memorandum titled "Subject: Open Door Policy—Report from a Tactical Commander" to Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh in August 2010.[79] Tunnell's memorandum went far beyond the subject of lost awards. In it, he stated that

---

76. Curtailment Counseling Packet, 2d Bn, 1st Inf, 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div, 30 Oct 2008, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. According to the document, the battalion had serious morale problems during the predeployment timeframe, and in more than one instance the outgoing commander had directly disobeyed lawful orders. See Interv, Stark with Tunnell, 24 Nov 2015, p. 56; Interv, E. J. Degen, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., frmr I Corps Cdr, 15 Nov 2017, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. General Jacoby states that neither a packet requesting relief nor word of the pending request ever reached him as the convening authority for the action. In fact, General Jacoby and his staff were preparing to deploy to Iraq with a number of subordinate brigades located on Fort Lewis during this same period, and he personally relieved a battalion commander before deploying for that mission.

77. Interv, Stark with Tunnell, 24 Nov 2015, pp. 48–59.

78. Unit award citations, 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 2d Inf Div, n.d., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

79. Memo, Tunnell to McHugh, 20 Aug 2010, sub: Open Door Policy – Report from a Tactical Commander.

his unit had been denied live-fire training, constrained to policing roads after Carter had assumed command, and forced to share precious resources with allies, all of which amounted to what he called professional malfeasance.[80] The U.S. Army did not take any immediate action, and McHugh released no response.

On 18 October 2010, newly assigned I Corps and Fort Lewis commander Lt. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti appointed Brig. Gen. Stephen M. Twitty to investigate the command climate in Tunnell's brigade. Officially, he initiated the investigation because of administrative problems associated with submitting awards and officer evaluations.[81] The investigation also looked for any possible connection between the brigade's overall command climate and the murders committed by Sergeant Gibbs and his associates.[82] Twitty's investigation found no link between the illegal killings and the command climate. However, Twitty recommended that Tunnell be reprimanded and retired at lieutenant colonel, blaming the poor administration of the unit. A board of officers that convened to discuss the investigation's findings did not find cause to demote Tunnell, who retained the rank of colonel when he later retired from the Army.[83]

Although the friction between General Carter and the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team's commander did not figure prominently in the investigation, Tunnell's memorandum had spread word of his dissatisfaction well beyond the confines of Fort Lewis. Although part of the problem could be attributed to a clash of personalities, it also reflected that counterinsurgency was neither uniformly understood nor implemented in Afghanistan. Tunnell incorrectly interpreted the main problem with the doctrine as stemming from its "assumption" that the population represented the center of gravity. That was true at the time in Afghanistan, but only because of the ISAF commander's personal interpretation of doctrine. Both McChrystal and Tunnell may have been correct to a degree, but their respective approaches suffered from a single-mindedness that failed to account for all of the variables present on a complex battlefield. McChrystal overemphasized courageous restraint—to the point where his soldiers felt they were being put unnecessarily at risk—even as Colonel Tunnell placed overriding faith in more aggressive counterguerrilla tactics.

---

80. Ibid.

81. Interv, Lt Col John R. Stark, Lt Col Matthew B. Smith, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Gen Curtis M. Scaparrotti, frmr I Corps Cdr, 20 Oct 2016, pp. 31–33, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

82. Memo, Lt Gen Curtis M. Scaparrotti for Cdr, U.S. Army Accessions Cmd and Fort Knox, 18 Oct 2010, sub: AR-15-6 Investigation on 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

83. The investigating officer never contacted Col. Patrick Gaydon, the Special Troops Battalion commander, during the deployment regarding awards or evaluations. Gaydon's best recollection was that this was never an issue, although USFOR-A (South) acknowledged that it had lost accountability of the 5th Brigade's administrative paperwork. The tracking system for most of those documents proves that to be true. See Cmd Rpt, 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team, 5th Stryker Bde Combat Team Rpts, n.d., Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



ISAF Public Affairs Office

General McChrystal talks to soldiers about his counterinsurgency strategy.

Tunnell's Stryker brigade successfully executed its transfer of authority with the 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker) in July 2010. Under the command of Col. James R. Blackburn Jr., the 2d Cavalry would assume more of a security force assistance mission by more closely partnering with Afghan Army units in RC South. Although the 5th Stryker Brigade was now back at home station in Fort Lewis, its legacy would continue to be marred in the public forum and the press. In March 2011, *Rolling Stone* magazine published an article about the brigade titled "The Kill Team: How U.S. Soldiers in Afghanistan Murdered Innocent Civilians for Sport." The story discussed the investigation into the pictures of dead Afghans and the illegal actions of Gibbs and his accomplices. For the military, the *Rolling Stone* piece was an information operations disaster because the article claimed that the Army had attempted to keep both the illicit photographs and murders secret. *Rolling Stone* also suggested that Tunnell, which it described as a commander who "openly mocked the military's approach to counterinsurgency," had fostered a toxic climate within the brigade by constantly exhorting his men to relentlessly pursue the Taliban.[84] Tunnell had wanted the legacy of his unit's deployment to be its success at exploiting information dominance to defeat the enemy. Instead, the 5th Stryker Brigade would be remembered as the "Kill Team," a black mark on the record of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.

84. The *Rolling Stone* article noted that Gibbs had served on Tunnell's personal security detail before being reassigned to Company B. The Army found Gibbs guilty of murdering three Afghans and sentenced him to life in prison. One of Gibbs' main co-conspirators received a 24-year prison term. Other soldiers agreed to accept lesser sentences in exchange for testifying for the prosecution. Boal, "The Kill Team."

General McChrystal's Exit

In April 2010, McChrystal was traveling from Europe to Afghanistan when he received an email from S. Sgt. Israel Arroyo. Six weeks earlier he had patrolled with Arroyo's squad from Lt. Col. Reik C. Andersen's 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. Arroyo wrote now inviting McChrystal to a memorial for Cpl. Michael K. Ingram, a team leader in his squad, who died as a result of an IED attack on 17 April, not far from where McChrystal accompanied the patrol. McChrystal accepted the invitation and traveled to Zharey District with personal staff and *Rolling Stone* reporter Michael M. Hastings.

Following the memorial service, McChrystal spoke with the fallen service member's platoon and discussed the challenges of focusing on protecting the civilian population to defeat the insurgency. The soldiers did not respond positively to his remarks. Although McChrystal's staff tried to explain to Hastings that such a reaction was normal, an article published in mid-June reflected the platoon's skepticism. "The session ends with no clapping, and no real resolution. McChrystal may have sold President Obama on counterinsurgency, but many of his own men aren't buying it."[85] Hastings had intended to highlight the widening disconnect between the counterinsurgency theory espoused by senior leaders and the growing frustration experienced by soldiers fighting a tenacious foe. However, the article also recounted unprofessional and demeaning remarks made by McChrystal's staff about Vice President Biden, others in the administration, and American allies. In fact, McChrystal's apparent insubordination seemed to be the central theme of the article, with the title of "The Runaway General" drawing even more attention. The article had been slated for release on 22 June 2010, but an advance copy leaked to senior administration officials and to the press. The article went viral, and senior leaders at multiple levels quickly tried to control the damage.[86]

On 21 June 2010, President Obama summoned McChrystal to the White House. Before arriving, General McChrystal issued a written statement:

> I extend my sincerest apology for this profile. It was a mistake reflecting poor judgment and should never have happened. Throughout my career, I have lived by the principles of personal honor and professional integrity. What is reflected in this article falls far short of that standard. I have enormous respect for President Obama and his national security team, and for the civilian leaders and the troops fighting this war and I remain committed to ensuring its successful outcome.[87]

---

85. Michael Hastings, "The Runaway General," *Rolling Stone* 1108/1109 (8–22 Jul 2010): 90–97, 120–21, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

86. For more on the controversy, see Michael Hastings, *The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2012); McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*.

87. Peter Spiegel, "McChrystal on Defensive for Remarks," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 Jun 2010, http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2010/06/21/mcchrystals-next-offensive/, Hist Files, OEF

On 23 June, less than a year after replacing McKiernan, Obama accepted the resignation of McChrystal. The ISAF deputy commander, British Lt. Gen. Nicholas R. Parker, assumed McChrystal's duties until the appointment of a successor. The ISAF Web site posted the following announcement from McChrystal:

> This morning the President accepted my resignation as Commander of U.S. and NATO Coalition Forces in Afghanistan. I strongly support the President's strategy in Afghanistan and am deeply committed to our coalition forces, our partner nations, and the Afghan people. It was out of respect for this commitment and a desire to see the mission succeed—that I tendered my resignation. It has been my privilege and honor to lead our nation's finest.[88]

Before McChrystal's resignation, and with the support of Vice President Biden, Gates had tried to mediate the situation. However, when Gates asked McChrystal for his explanation, the only response he received was, "No excuse, sir"—the standard line expected from a new cadet at West Point. Gates, lamenting that McChrystal had given him nothing to work with, approached the president, who now seemed determined to take a stand against what he saw as a trend of insubordinate behavior by senior officers, including Petraeus, Admiral Mullen, and McChrystal. Gates told Obama, "If you lose McChrystal, I believe we lose the war in Afghanistan." Gates cited the gains made in the relationship with Karzai and the length of time that might be needed to get someone else approved. "And without hesitation Obama says, 'How about Petraeus?'"[89]

Enter Petraeus

General Petraeus took over as ISAF commanding general on 4 July 2010.[90] The selection of Petraeus to replace McChrystal surprised those who saw the change of assignment as a downward move in the profession of a respected and well-known senior commander. Nonetheless, Petraeus' selection reassured allies of America's commitment even after two senior American generals had been replaced in two years. The fact that the Obama administration could not easily afford to replace a third senior commander in Afghanistan granted Petraeus greater influence in Washington, D.C., circles than his immediate predecessors had had.

Study Grp.

88. Gen Stanley McChrystal, "Statement by General Stanley McChrystal," ISAF HQ, http://www.rs.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/statement-by-general-stanley-mchrystal (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

89. Interv, Col E.J. Degen, Lt Col John R. Stark, Maj Matthew B. Smith, and Gregory Roberts, OEF Study Grp, with Robert M. Gates, frmr Sec Def, 8 Dec 2015, pp. 35–37, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

90. "Gen Petraeus Formally Takes Over Afghanistan Campaign," BBC News South Asia, 4 Jul 2010, https://www.bbc.com/news/10500419, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



S. Sgt. Bradley Lail, USAF

General Petraeus, ISAF commander, is pictured here (left) with General Carter, RC South commander.

Petraeus immediately updated the Civil-Military Campaign Plan and published Operation Plan 38302 Revision 5.[91] Both documents continued to reflect selected elements of McChrystal's vision, with the exception that they permitted more aggressive execution in order to meet the White House's goal of buying time and space for the development of Afghan National Security Forces. Revision 5 adapted the existing campaign plan to six lines of operation:

1. Protect the Population
2. Neutralize Insurgent Networks
3. Support Development of ANSF
4. Neutralize Criminal Patronage Networks
5. Support Development of Legitimate Governance
6. Support Sustainable Socio-Economic Development

The overriding goal still was to protect the population, but the new ISAF commander would employ more aggressive methods to accomplish that task. Prioritizing the neutralization of insurgent networks over supporting ANSF development reflected Petraeus' belief that both of those tasks were interrelated, but the former rated a higher priority because it also supported protecting the population by degrading the enemy's capability to intimidate innocents. Yet Petraeus' priorities also mirrored the Obama administration's concerns

91. OPLAN 38302, COMISAF, revision 5, 31 Dec 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Apr 2010, as amended 21 May 10, pp. 12–13; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt, Oct 2011, p. 7, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/October_2011_Section_1230_Report.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

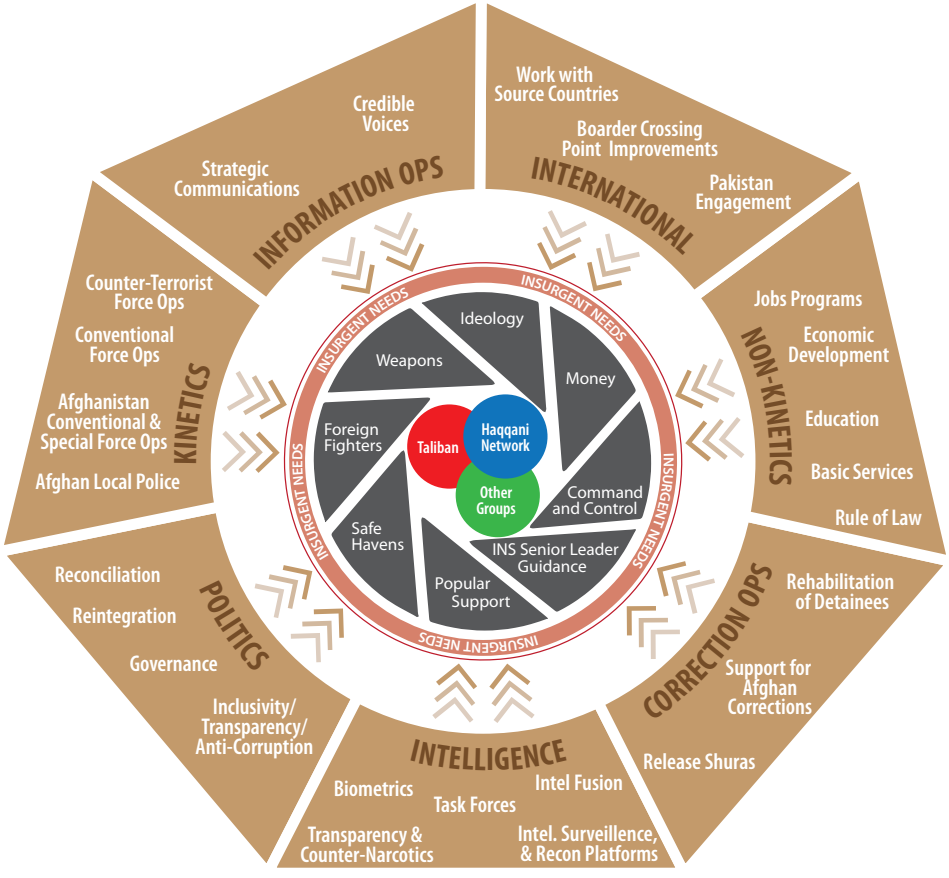


Figure 8.1. Anaconda Strategy in Afghanistan

about the Kabul government; the last three lines of operation concentrated on reform within Afghanistan rather than eliminating the enemy.

Building upon all of the troops and structure changes begun by McKiernan and McChrystal, Petraeus adapted to evolving battlefield dynamics by altering the trajectory of the surge to the degree necessary to achieve the goals sought by the White House, and monitored its progress. Under Petraeus, RC South completed Operation Moshtarak, and IJC oversaw the Afghan-designed Operation Naweed (Good News). Petraeus' efforts produced a timeline and plan for transition, with 2014 identified as the tentative completion year.[92]

Petraeus: Counterinsurgency Legacy and the Iraq Effect

With General Petraeus in command in Afghanistan, ISAF adopted a nuanced counterinsurgency approach, dubbed the Anaconda Strategy, that blended elements of the population-centric version advocated by McChrystal with the more kinetic aspects favored by McKiernan and his predecessors. To explain the numerous facets of the new approach to his superiors, allies, and

92. OPLAN 38302, COMISAF, revision 5, 31 Dec 2010.

subordinates, Petraeus prepared a visual aid modified from the same slide he used in Iraq to display his tailored amalgamation of theory, doctrine, and operational method (*Figure 8.1*).

While the Anaconda Strategy sought to reduce the visual representation of counterinsurgency to a single page, the number of items in the graphic overwhelmed the senses of many who viewed it. The graphic gave the impression that the enemy was surrounded by programs and efforts—some violent—aimed at suffocating him. This portrayal belied the fact that the thinly spread coalition forces often were the ones surrounded and outnumbered. Still, Petraeus believed the Anaconda Strategy made it easier for multiple audiences to visualize his approach, albeit with the risk that some might confuse aspirations with capabilities. The Anaconda Strategy slide sought to simplify the complicated nature of counterinsurgency; if nothing else, it convinced decision-makers that the general who created it had mastered its complexities.[93] Given the dramatic downturn in sectarian and insurgent violence in Iraq following the arrival of sufficient U.S. troops to simultaneously protect the people and take the fight to the enemy, few could argue that the surge had not been an effective approach. However, several unacknowledged factors played a part in that success. First, the insurgents had located their primary operating bases within Iraq, not in neighboring Iran and Syria. Thus, they had no enabling sanctuaries similar to those used by the Taliban in Pakistan. In addition, the Iraqi government implemented sweeping (albeit temporary) concessions to the Sunni minority during the surge that contributed to the drop in violence. A similar compromise between Karzai and the Taliban seemed all but impossible. Finally, American troops in Iraq had protected civilians of all ethnicities from sectarian death squads, earning first their trust and then their support. Although the Taliban had been guilty of similar crimes during its conflict with the United Front, Mullah Mohammed Omar's followers had not committed those deeds as part of a systematic ethnic cleansing program.

Operation Moshtarak Phase III and Operation Hamkari

The first operation conducted under General Patraeus' leadership was Phase III of Operation Moshtarak. As Americans surged into Helmand Province, the Taliban responded in Kandahar Province, Kabul, and elsewhere in eastern

93. Ibid. The Anaconda title echoed President Abraham Lincoln's similarly named strategy from the Civil War, which used naval blockades and land advances to cut off the Confederacy from outside aid. However, both the Bush and Obama administrations were unable to replicate this idea in Afghanistan because the insurgents were never deprived of outside aid through Pakistan. In addition, portions of the Afghan population continued to support the Taliban because they never accepted the Karzai administration as legitimate. Consequently, two of the three key conditions for a successful counterinsurgency effort according to FM 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*—no external sanctuary and an acceptable host nation government—were never fully realized. Although the Afghanistan surge met the third condition—fielding sufficient security forces—it did little but mask the overarching problems within Afghanistan and the region. Interv, Degen and Stark with Patraeus, 29 Jan 2016, p. 87.

Afghanistan. In the south, ISAF documented the increasing toll suffered by Afghan civilians caught in the crossfire or deliberately targeted by insurgent IEDs, suicide-bombings, and assassinations. The first five months of 2010 were deadlier than the first six months of 2009.[94] The new Taliban commander in the south was the 37-year-old Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir. Zakir was competent, charismatic, and a veteran military commander who recognized the value of IEDs and suicide operations. Like Mullah Dadullah Akhund, he had gained a reputation for extreme and uncompromising views.[95]

During the previous summer, the Taliban had conducted intimidation operations in and around Kandahar City by assassinating key officials. The Afghan government managed to keep power in the provincial capital but was unable to prevent Taliban attacks. These killings continued through Phase II of Moshtarak. During 2010, a media source in the city documented almost 400 assassinations between June and September.[96] While the Taliban in Kandahar City carried out some of these attacks, the majority were launched from strongholds in the outlying districts of Arghandab, Zharey, and Panjwa'i.[97]

The Taliban recognized that, after Marjah, the next logical target for ISAF was Kandahar Province, a vital nerve center for the southern insurgency. The insurgents placed a high priority on defending their most important political and military stronghold, which promised to turn the struggle for Kandahar Province into a decisive engagement. The Taliban knew ISAF intended to increase its security forces in Kandahar and countered by importing volunteers from Pakistani madrassas and recruiting from the surrounding villages. The enemy fighters massing around Kandahar did not affect the ISAF deployment or subsequent operations materially, but they did make it more likely that innocents would be caught between the warring factions.[98]

Phase II of Operation Moshtarak in Helmand Province had been highly publicized and quick. Phase III, redesignated as Operation Hamkari, was designed to achieve dominance over the Taliban in three subphases. The first was to secure Kandahar City. The second subphase was to expand the security zone around Kandahar City and clear the Arghandab District to the northwest. The third and final subphase was to clear the Zharey and Panjwa'i Districts to the west and southwest.[99] Upon completion of the final phase, it would be up to Afghan forces to hold the gained ground and

---

94. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, p. 386.

95. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 286–90.

96. Kevin Brulliard and Greg Jaffe, "U.S. Led Troops Push into Rural Kandahar," *Washington Post*, 18 Sep 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/2010/09/18/AR201009182889.html (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

97. Carl Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar: Evaluating the 2010 Hamkari Campaign*, Afghanistan Rpt 7 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, Dec 2010), p. 12, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Afghanistan%20Report%207_16Dec. pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

98. Ibid., pp. 14–15.

99. NATO Press Bfg, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, 7 Sep 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar*, p. 16; Brian Hutchinson, "As Offensive Intensifies,

maintain security. Hamkari was also an attempt to persuade Pashtun tribes maintaining grudges against Karzai's allies in Kandahar to support the central government. The fact that these tribes were culturally, socially, and religiously inclined to align with the Taliban made that goal problematic.[100]

The preparation for Hamkari was more deliberate than that for Moshtarak because ISAF officers knew the Taliban would commit to defending Kandahar Province. The terrain made the operation forbidding as most residents lived along riverbeds cut by canals. Living compounds were walled, with many roads flanked on both sides by hedgerow-like vines and hundreds of stone and masonry green houses. These features concealed movement and canalized routes, driving forces into choke points that made for optimal ambush sites. Shaping operations for Phase III were to be conducted by units already in Afghanistan as well as those that had not yet arrived. These units were to partner with ANSF upon arrival and gradually disperse throughout the province.

Four months seemed like such a long time to wait for Hamkari to begin, and locals began circulating rumors that major coalition operations would not take place in Kandahar. A Marjah-style air assault into the middle of a Taliban stronghold was anticipated by the locals for several reasons. First, Kandahar City was not in the hands of the Taliban. Second, ANSF and ISAF had been operating in or nearby the city since 2001. The area had simply been falling under greater Taliban influence. Without reason to trust ISAF's announced intentions, Hamkari would surprise the population with its size and intensity.[101]

Hamkari Overview

Prior to Operation Hamkari 2,000 Canadians had worked to control the approximately 1.2 million Pashtuns living in Kandahar Province. ISAF forces had now swelled to 24,000 soldiers and police before the attack; ANA force levels were tripled, and the Afghan police saw a five-fold increase in the province.[102] For the first time, ISAF devoted enough forces to clear and hold Kandahar City's outlying districts while simultaneously interdicting infiltration routes from Pakistan. ISAF commanders ratcheted up the pressure on Taliban leaders before the operation by increasing Special Operations raids. Despite making their own preparations, Taliban fighting cells were unable to stem ISAF's growing influence in the region.

Hamkari Phase I. Securing the city of Kandahar was never a matter of attacking to clear it, as there were no known enemy strongholds to eliminate. Instead, the first order of business was to increase ANSF presence in the city.

Villagers Take Flight," *National Post*, 27 Aug 10, http://afghanistan.nationalpost.com/as-offensive-intensifies-villagers-take-flight/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

100. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, p. 228; McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, pp. 377–79.

101. Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar*, pp. 9–13.

102. NATO ISAF Placemats, Jan–Dec 2010, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/107995.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Afghan security forces constructed and staffed sixteen checkpoints in and around the city. American Military Police assisted both the Afghan National Police and Civil Order Police in opening substations at each checkpoint. In sharp contrast to the Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams or Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams that commuted to work from an ISAF base, the Americans partnering with the Afghan police in Kandahar were collocated with their counterparts. By ensuring partnered units spent more time together, ISAF sought to increase the professionalism of the indigenous police in the shortest time possible. The checkpoints prevented enemy materiel and personnel from entering the city, and the basic plan paid quick dividends as violence within the city decreased dramatically.[103]

Phase I initially involved establishing a loose cordon around Kandahar using troops siphoned from Col. Brian M. Drinkwine's 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division (TF Fury) of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Originally earmarked to provide security force assistance in RC West and RC South, Drinkwine's unit was called upon to maintain a presence in the Arghandab, following the departure of the Stryker brigade, and to assume initial responsibility for Kandahar. The paratroopers were replaced in late June 2010 by Col. Jeffrey R. Martindale's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division (TF Raider), of Fort Carson, Colorado, which served as part of the surge forces.[104]

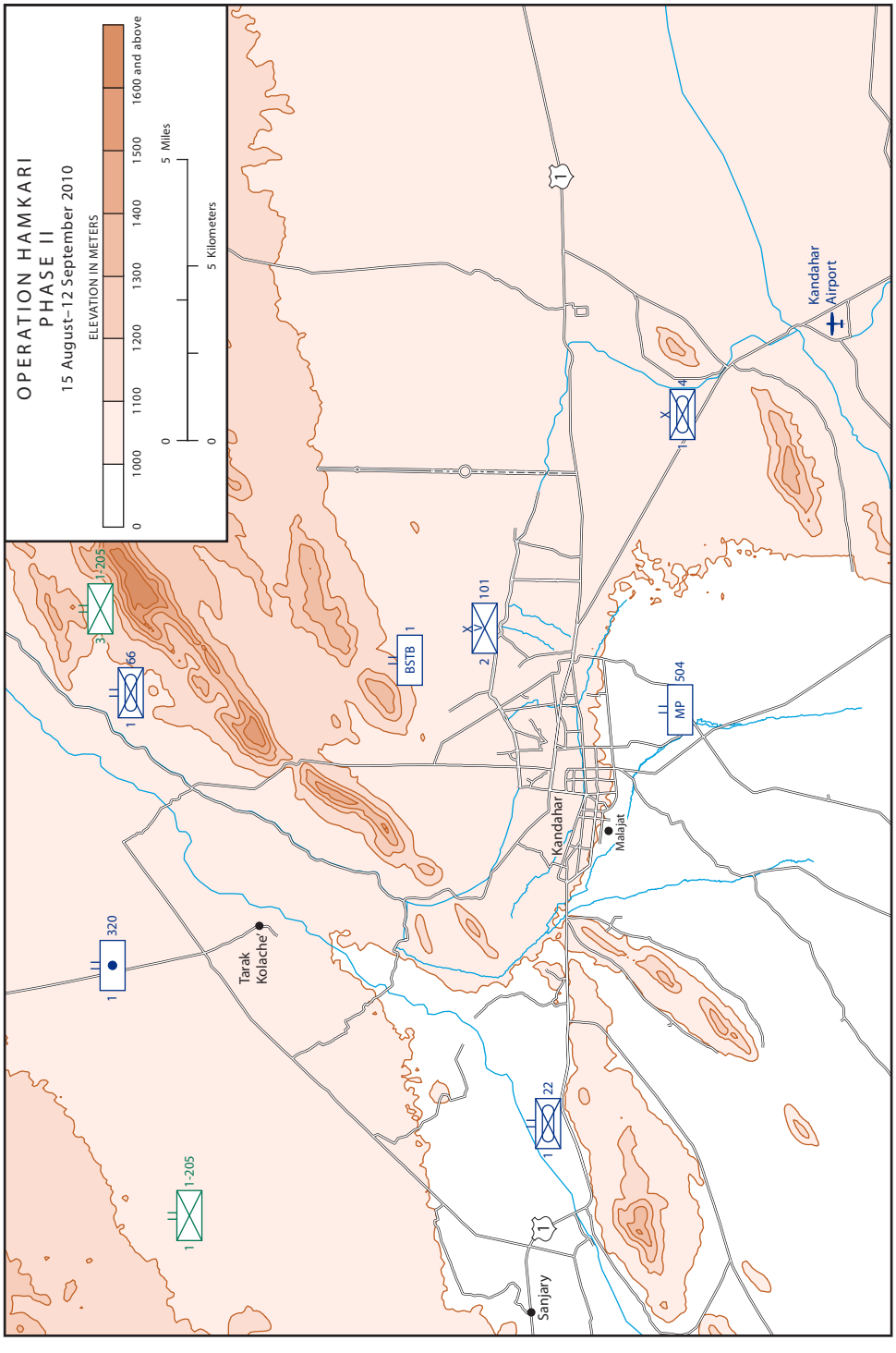
Martindale's TF Raider consisted of Lt. Col. Charles Mitchell's 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry; Lt. Col. Clay Padgett's 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry; Lt. Col. Rodger Lemon's 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment; and Lt. Col. Craig Berryman's 4th Battalion, 42d Field Artillery. Mitchell's reconnaissance squadron and Berryman's field artillery battalion replaced their counterparts from Drinkwine's brigade in RC West rather than accompany the remainder of their parent unit to Kandahar. The remaining elements of Martindale's brigade, which also included Lt. Col. Christopher G. Beck's 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion and Lt. Col. Gregory S. Applegate's 4th Brigade Support Battalion, were positioned within Kandahar or just north of the city. In addition to his own troops, Colonel Martindale received welcome assistance from Lt. Col. John G. Voorhees' American 504th Military Police Battalion; Lt. Col. Conrad J. Mialkowski's 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment; and Lt. Col. John M. Paganini's 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry, a U.S. unit operating with Canadian Brig. Gen. Jonathan H. Vance's Task Force Kandahar.

Hamkari Phase II. The critical district of Arghandab abuts Kandahar City to the north and west. It was here, during the 2001 invasion, that Karzai

---

103. Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar*, p. 16.

104. The brigade's reconnaissance and surveillance force, Lt. Col. Michael Wawrzyniak's 4th Squadron, 73d Cavalry, as well as Lt. Col. William Huff's 2d Battalion, 321st Field Artillery, were sent to RC West. Lt. Col. Frank Jenio's 2d Battalion, 508th Infantry (later commanded by Lt. Col. Guy Jones from January 2010 until the end of the deployment), was retasked to assume responsibility for the northern Arghandab area. Lt. Col. David Oclander's 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry, was responsible for Zabul Province, northwest of Kandahar. Lt. Col. Stephen C. Sears' Special Troops Battalion and Lt. Col. Patrick W. Picardo's Support Battalion were initially positioned near Kandahar, but the former later relocated to Zabul.


OPERATION HAMKARI
PHASE II
15 August–12 September 2010
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
1000
1100
1200
1300
1400
1500
1600 and above
5 Miles
0
5 Kilometers
0
Kandahar Airport
1
Kandahar
Malajat
Tarak Kolache'
Sanjary
1-205
320
66
BSTB
101
MP
504
22

Map 8.4

negotiated with major tribes to secure their support against the Taliban.[105] In 2004 and 2005, U.S. units sought to keep the Taliban out of the region by building a road through the district. The handover to ISAF during the following year, in which a smaller Canadian force replaced a larger American one, changed the tactical balance. With the exception of Operation MEDUSA in September 2006, the initiative had swung to the Taliban by the time Colonel Tunnell's 5th Stryker Brigade arrived in 2009. The 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team believed it had begun to loosen the Taliban's control before it was replaced by the 2d Battalion, 508th Infantry, from the 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division. To the residents of the Arghandab River Valley, the absence of a substantial coalition presence and the lack of progress by the Afghan government symbolized the apathy or incompetence of both outside parties. General Carter understood that this perception was the key "terrain" to clear and hold during HAMKARI (*Map 8.4*).[106]

The 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (TF STRIKE), under the command of Colonel Kandarian assumed responsibility for the Arghandab from the 2d Battalion, 508th Infantry, just prior to the execution of phase two. The incoming brigade combat team initially occupied forward operating bases located north of Kandahar as it prepared to mount successive operations in the northern and southern Arghandab. Kandarian's formation included the 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry, under Lt. Col. Johnny K. Davis; the 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry, under Lt. Col. Peter N. Benchoff; 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry, with Lt. Col. Thomas N. McFayden commanding; and Lt. Col. David S. Flynn's 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery. Lt. Col. Thomas M. Spenard's Support Battalion and Lt. Col. Alan R. Preble's Special Troops Battalion rounded out the brigade combat team. In addition to his organic units, Colonel Kandarian received tactical control of Colonel Lemon's 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, and 3d Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment, under Lt. Col. Bryan E. Denny.

TF STRIKE, along with other forces, cleared the Arghandab and Panjwa'i Districts in HAMKARI Phase II. RC South brought more combat power and combat multipliers to bear in the region than at any time before. Petraeus recognized that previous attempts to reduce civilian casualties, although successful, had been so stifling that offensive operations against the enemy had become less effective. He let it be known that he wanted to increase lethal operations against the insurgency.[107] As Petraeus told Kandarian, "You know you're the main effort of the world, right?" He then worked to get everything Kandarian asked for, including interpreters, mine-clearing equipment, military working dogs, and MRAPs.[108] Although many of these shortages had been identified long before the current operation, most of them were not solved until Petraeus took a personal interest in the mission. From

105. Fairweather, *The Good War*, p. 36.

106. NATO Press Bfg, Carter, 7 Sep 2010.

107. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, pp. 364–65.

108. Interv, Lt Col Greg McCarthy and Lt Col Butch Welch, USFOR-A, with Col Arthur A. Kandarian, 2d Bde, 101st Abn Div Cdr, 5 Oct 2010, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Sean Patrick Casey, USA

A soldier patrols through a field, moving toward a village, as part of expanded security in RC South.

September to December, Kandarian received an infantry battalion from RC East in the form of 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, under the command of Lt. Col. Robert J. Harmon Jr. With all the forces at his disposal, Kandarian quickly overwhelmed enemy resistance.

In September 2010, the border police commander from Spin Boldak, Abdul Raziq, approached SOF operating in northern Kandahar Province and offered his assistance. Raziq had conducted previous operations with coalition forces; nonetheless, he was controversial among ISAF staffers due to alleged criminal activity.[109] Despite his poor reputation, Raziq was an able tactician, and was popular with the people of Kandahar for his previous contributions to their safety and security. His methods proved devastating to the Taliban, who feared and loathed him. When Raziq offered to clear Arghandab District—which the Taliban had repopulated since the departure of Tunnell's units—special operators agreed and accompanied his men. On the first day, Raziq's men removed more than one hundred IEDs and captured dozens of Taliban fighters with hardly any casualties.[110] The speed and ease with which Raziq and his men cleared Arghandab—equipped with Toyota pickup trucks and armed with little more than AK47s and a few rocket-propelled grenades—amazed the special operators and impressed RC South leaders. The police commander from Spin Boldak eventually would be appointed chief of police for all of Kandahar Province and promoted

109. Matthieu Aikins, "Our Man in Kandahar," *The Atlantic*, Nov 2011, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/11/our-man-in-kandahar/308653, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

110. Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, pp. 42–43.

to brigadier general. As Raziq's forces cleared IEDs from roads, they also gathered valuable and actionable intelligence.[111]

Raziq's success did not end the fight for Arghandab District. Kandarian needed to be able to hold all the terrain secured by Raziq's unconventional methods. The American commander felt he needed a minimum of twelve battalions to accomplish that task. Assigned only three organic maneuver battalions, two attached battalions, and six Afghan kandaks, Kandarian needed one more battalion. Before deploying, he had ordered Colonel Flynn's 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, to train as provisional infantry.[112] This battalion, aided by Lemon's dismounted tankers, routed the Taliban remnants ensconced in northern Arghandab District.

Intelligence provided by Raziq proved exceptionally useful for TF Strike. With mine-clearing equipment, the newly acquired MRAP vehicles, and dismounted patrolling, Flynn's Task Force Top Guns truly cleared the Green Zone of Arghandab for the first time. In the process, they discovered that the villages of Tarok Kolache and Khosrow Sofla were devoid of inhabitants and full of explosives; they had been transformed into IED factories. Using 500-pound bombs and twenty-four tons of artillery munitions, TF Top Guns destroyed all structures, enabling the villages to be rebuilt safely.[113]

The tone of the latest fight for the Arghandab reflected Petraeus' adjusted campaign trajectory. Carter subsequently described the 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery's reduction of the Taliban enclave in northwestern Arghandab as "the greatest achievement of my command."[114] Over a ninety-day period, Kandarian's brigade expended 2,035 rounds of 155-mm. artillery, 2,952 mortar rounds, 60 guided rockets, 266 aerial bombs, 19 Hellfire missiles, and uncounted thousands of 30-mm. rounds delivered by A–10 attack aircraft or AH–64 Apache helicopter gunships.[115] The shift to highly kinetic operations did not indicate that Carter had significantly changed his vision of the fight so much as it reflected his willingness to reduce enemy enclaves when suitable assets became available.

The efforts of Kandarian's brigade combat team were consistent with the ISAF commanding general's guidance. All told, TF Strike killed hundreds of Taliban fighters at the cost of 65 killed and 426 wounded. Although the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team had garnered a reputation for unnecessarily heavy casualties, with 37 killed and 239 wounded while fighting the Taliban in that same region, those losses occurred under a different ISAF chain of command that had placed a higher priority on protecting the population than on eliminating the enemy deep in the Arghandab.[116] Whereas Tunnell's methods had caused friction with his superiors, Kandarian's simi-

---

111. Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar*, p. 36.

112. Interv, McCarthy and Welch with Kandarian, 5 Oct 2010, p. 11.

113. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, p. 363.

114. Ibid., p. 364.

115. Ibid., pp. 363–64.

116. Don Kramer, "5-2 Stryker Brigade Reflagged as 2-2," Northwest Military, 1 Sep 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

larly unrelenting emphasis on taking the fight to the Taliban met with his superiors' approval.

Hamkari Phase III. ISAF renamed Hamkari Phase III Operation Dragon Strike before its execution. As the last large-scale operation in Operation Enduring Freedom, clearing Zharey and then Panjwa'i Districts would mark the turning point in the surge (*Map 8.5.*). From September to October 2010, Operation Dragon Strike featured three battalions of U.S. infantry simultaneously clearing eastern, central, and western Zharey with partnered kandaks. Both of Kandarian's organic infantry battalions attacked southward through the objective area while the attached 3d Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment blocked enemy escape to the west. In the finale, Colonel Harmon's 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, on loan from RC East; SOF; and three Afghan kandaks cleared the horn of Panjwa'i in a two-day operation that began on 15 October. Harmon had expected to be tested by stiff enemy resistance in this last Taliban enclave, but the enemy leadership fled for the city of Kandahar where they melted into the population rather than fight to the death.[117]

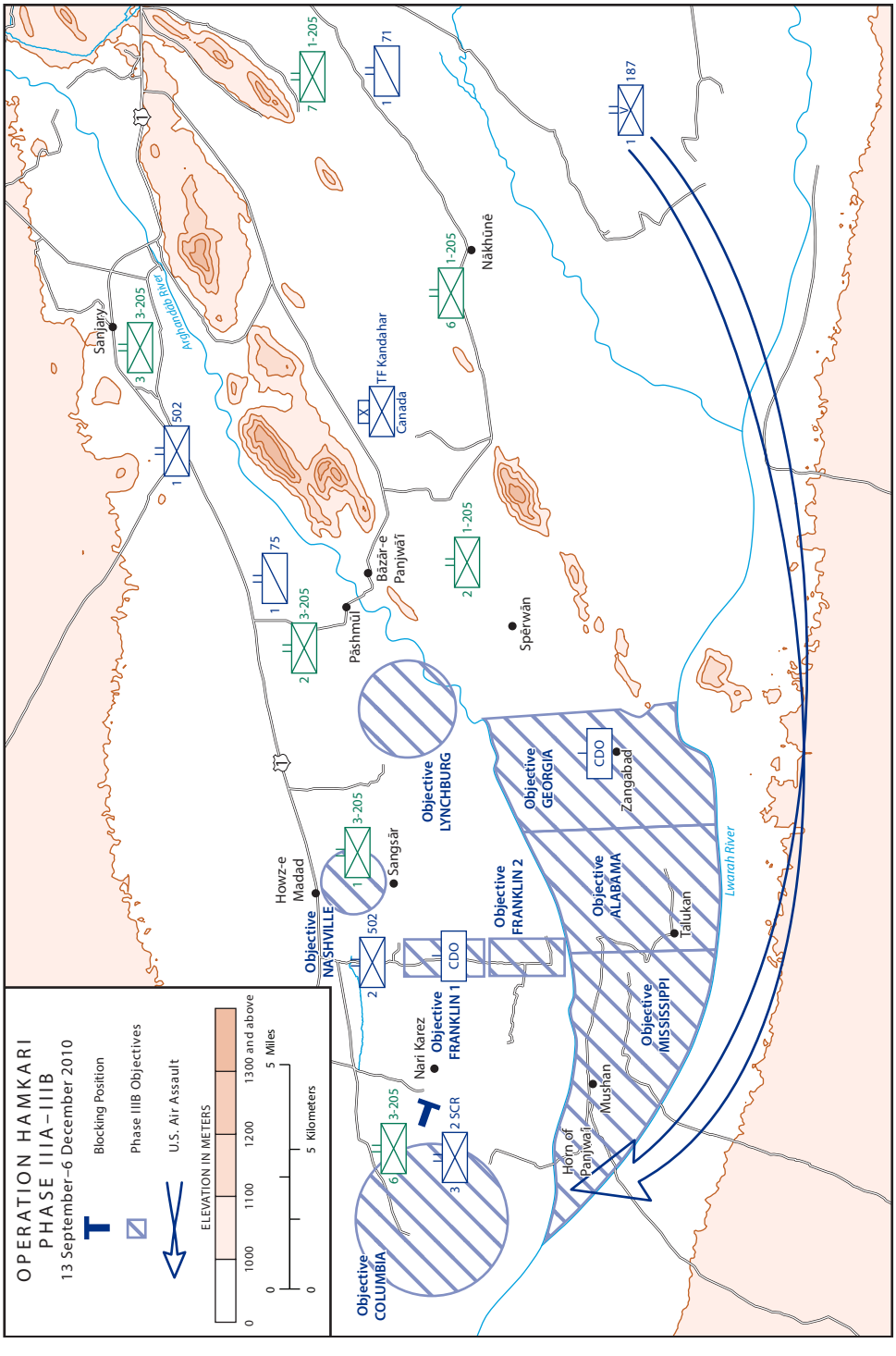
Despite launching violent clearing operations around Kandahar, Hamkari was not a "gloves off" approach to counterinsurgency. The rules of engagement for RC South were in some ways more restrictive than ever. Operational implications meant that leaders had to take even more care and time to prepare for missions. Before, during, and after each patrol, Kandarian's troops had to answer fourteen questions:

1. Did the mission include Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police?
2. Were there any civilians killed or wounded?
3. Was the local civil leadership notified ahead of time?
4. Did they agree?
5. Were bombs dropped, attack helicopters used, artillery delivered, or mortars fired?
6. Did the enemy present an imminent threat?
7. Were any houses entered without invitation?
8. Did the Afghan forces do the home entries?
9. Did any element enter a mosque?
10. Were any civilians searched?
11. Did the unit search the objective to locate enemy and civilian casualties and material damage?
12. Were there any unobserved fires?
13. Had any escalation of force incidents occurred?
14. Were the Afghan or Western media informed?[118]

This checklist ensured that organic units and those attached to TF Strike employed artillery and airstrikes only when necessary. Each question sought

117. Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar*, p. 33.

118. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, p. 365.


OPERATION HAMKARI
PHASE IIIA–IIIB
13 September–6 December 2010
Blocking Position
Phase IIIB Objectives
U.S. Air Assault
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
1000
1100
1200
1300 and above
0
5 Miles
0
5 Kilometers
Sanjary
Arghandāb River
Nākhūnē
Bāzār-e Panjwāī
Pāshmūl
Sperwān
Howz-e Madad
Sangsār
Nari Karez
Zangābād
Talukān
Lwarah River
Horn of Panjwāī
Mushān
TF Kandahar
Canada
Objective NASHVILLE
Objective LYNCHBURG
Objective GEORGIA
Objective ALABAMA
Objective MISSISSIPPI
Objective FRANKLIN 1
Objective FRANKLIN 2
Objective COLUMBIA
CDO
2 SCR
1-205
3-205
502
75
71
187

Map 8.5

to protect troops from violating the laws of armed conflict and the theater-prescribed rules of engagement. Many military leaders complained about the questions, but they established control measures necessary to preventing and minimizing civilian casualties.

Other kinetic and lethal operations, such as the intelligence-driven night raids by SOF, spiked in frequency after Petraeus assumed command. These raids inflicted unprecedented losses on the Taliban. As soon as an insurgent leader rose to a command position, he became a high-value target whose life expectancy was measured in days, not months. The tempo and scale of these operations made life exceedingly difficult for the enemy, regardless of the support that the Taliban continued to enjoy among portions of the local populace.[119] Over a thirty-day period in the summer of 2010, Afghan and ISAF forces eliminated most high-level Taliban leaders in southern Afghanistan; in September, SOF captured twenty-one Taliban fighters in Kandahar City alone. The visiting head of the Virginia-based Joint Forces Command, Marine General James N. Mattis, was so impressed that he told reporters, "Taliban commanders shouldn't invest in 401(k)s."[120]

By November 2010, Afghan and ISAF forces had eliminated the Taliban as major players in the provincial capital of Kandahar and its outlying districts. That effort had required more than 24,000 troops, police, and other security forces. After clearing western Kandahar Province, most of the conventional units in Afghanistan pursued hold and build operations. This transition meant that, while some battalion-sized operations still took place, most missions were company-sized or smaller. The enemy was still present, though not in strength. Fighting remained dangerous at the platoon level during these small-scale operations, but there would be no further large-scale clearing operations after the surge peaked in March 2011.

By 2011, Kandahar had moved fully from the clear phase into the hold phase. Unfortunately for the coalition, their efforts stalled here. Afghan civilians in several key regions did not support ANSF in great numbers despite the promise of economic development and improved governance in exchange for withholding support for the Taliban. For the most part, locals never really turned away from the Taliban to support ISAF or the Afghan government. Even though the Taliban had lost many leaders, its fighters continued attacking with suicide bombers, IEDs, and other small-scale operations. When civilians were caught in the crossfire, these events undermined trust in the Afghan government, not the insurgency. One Taliban supporter who eventually became a suicide bomber in Panjwa'i declared, "It [violent resistance] will not stop; this will continue until the day of judgment."[121] Statements such as these indicated that even though the counterinsurgency campaign could produce tactical victories and some measurable operational progress, there would be little progress at the strategic level so long as the

119. Forsberg, *Counterinsurgency in Kandahar*, pp. 15–16.

120. West, *The Wrong War*, p. 226.

121. Gall, *The Wrong Enemy*, pp. 142–43, 158–59.



Sgt. Shawn Coolman, USA

Vice Admiral Harward, commanding officer of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, speaks to an Afghan official during his visit to Zaranj.

influence of the radical ideology nurtured within the sanctuary of Pakistan went unchecked.

Surge Detentions

In 2009, General Petraeus, while commanding CENTCOM, dispatched Marine Maj. Gen. Douglas M. Stone to Afghanistan to evaluate the ISAF detention system. Stone had successfully reformed detention operations in Iraq following the Abu Ghraib scandal, and so Petraeus selected him to review the status of detainees in Afghanistan's Law of Armed Conflict detention facilities, which were designed to hold those captured on the battlefield.[122] During his tenure in Iraq, Stone learned that detention facilities were serving as recruiting centers for the enemy, and he knew this was likely the case in Afghanistan as well. He confirmed those suspicions in what came to be known as the Stone Report, a comprehensive interagency examination of detentions in Afghanistan. Stone's revelations led to a new detention facility being built at Parwan, adjacent to Bagram Air Base. This not only consolidated detainees in one modern facility, but also brought together the entire spectrum of critical functions, including incarceration, interrogation, skills training for moderate detainees (who were now held separately from those identified as extremists), and even access to legal services to review the

122. Detainees in these facilities did not include common criminals who were processed under Afghan law.

cases of detainees. Stone also recommended the immediate release of 400 to 600 detainees who had no ties to the insurgency and posed no real threat.[123]

On 9 July 2009, just a few weeks after arriving in Afghanistan, McChrystal requested to establish Joint Task Force 435 (later Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435) to command Law of Armed Conflict detentions operations. McChrystal's request was approved, and the task force stood up on 24 September 2009, although it did not reach fully operational capability until January 2010. Initially commanded by V. Adm. Robert S. Harward and later by Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber, the unit reported to USFOR-A, not ISAF, so as to maintain a U.S. chain of command. This was possible since most coalition nations preferred to turn their detainees over to nascent Afghan legal authorities for prosecution and detention.[124]

The new headquarters was not established just to detain and hold enemy combatants. Joint Task Force 435 had a robust military interrogation organization that could rapidly and effectively collect and discern actionable intelligence that was fed back to the battlespace owners and SOF for future operations. The information collected in these interrogations was also critical for discerning real, long-term threats versus what was termed the "$10-a-day Taliban"—those detainees who merely fought on occasion to put food on the table.

Changes to the detention process were well timed. Predictably, incarcerations by U.S forces rose dramatically during the surge, doubling the number of detainees by 2010 and again by the end of 2011. During 2010, U.S. forces took 6,439 individuals into custody, of whom 1,359 (21 percent) were transferred to Parwan for long-term detention. Since 2001, 3,599 of the 6,006 detainees to pass through the U.S. detention facilities in Afghanistan had been released, and 54 individuals had been recaptured while fighting for the insurgency, for a 1.5 percent recidivism rate. About a third of all detainees held during all of Operation Enduring Freedom up to this point were detained during the surge.

Recognizing that it could not oversee detentions indefinitely, the U.S. military sought to turn that responsibility over to the Kabul government. Joint Task Force 435 managed that transition. The first step was to reevaluate all detainees to determine which could be released, which should be turned over to the Afghans, which non-Afghan citizens should be transferred to other countries, and which still had intelligence value and warranted continued detention. During 2010, U.S. forces conducted 2,342 detention review boards—the legal process that discerned the category to which a detainee belonged. About 1,450 Afghan community members and Afghan government officials participated in the hearings at Parwan. They also provided testimony via video, telephone, letters, and other written material. In roughly 75 percent of the boards, representatives from coalition forces outlined the factual basis

123. Tom Bowman, "General Advises Releasing Afghan Detainees," NPR, 20 Aug 2009, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112041053, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

124. Lt Col John H. Modinger and Joseph T. Bartlett, *A History of Detainee Operations in Afghanistan: How Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 Came to Be and What It Has Done* (Kabul: Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, 2012), p. 25, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

for capture by appearing in person, participating via video, or submitting written correspondence; at times, they even spoke on behalf of the detainee. Following the review boards, the detainees faced four options: release, continued internment, referral for prosecution by the Afghan government, or transfer to their country of origin. By the end of the year, 10 percent of the detainees were released, along with another 9 percent who met the criteria for continued detention but were released via reintegration recommendations. A further 58 percent remained in internment, which meant that they continued to have intelligence value or were considered too dangerous to be released. Finally, 21 percent were referred for prosecution by the Afghan government, and 2 percent were transferred to their country of origin.[125]

In 2011, U.S. forces captured more than 9,000 enemy combatants, a 35 percent increase from the preceding year. Of that total, more than 2,000 were transferred to Parwan. The results were 4 percent released; 2 percent met criteria, but were released via reintegration recommended; 76 percent continued internment; and 18 percent referred to the Afghan government for prosecution. The increased inflow, coupled with less-frequent releases by review boards, doubled the overall detainee population for a second year in a row. This growth triggered discussions about housing capacity, which led to a plan to increase capacity by more than 2,100 beds.[126]

Joint Task Force 435 also worked to increase the ANA's ability to assume the Law of Armed Conflict detention mission when the time came to transition the function to the Afghan Ministry of Defense. An ANA military police brigade worked side by side with its U.S. counterparts to learn all facets of military detention. The Parwan facility eventually was successfully transferred to Afghan control. ISAF then mandated that Joint Task Force 435 partner with and mentor the Afghan Central Prisons Directorate to increase the capacity of the Afghans to detain their civilian criminal population at acceptable international standards. Although efforts in this vein were often lethargic, progress was made and measureable in this critical area. Both the military and civilian detention missions amplified the importance of building the capabilities and capacity of host-nation entities to ensure long-term stability.[127]

The surge period was marked by an increase in operations on the ground and an uptick in number of detainees. However, with this renewed push came the knowledge that the U.S. and ISAF missions were operating under a deadline. Extensive operations like Moshtarak and Hamkari demonstrated that counterinsurgency techniques could produce positive results, but only the increased capacity of the Afghan security forces would be able to extend and maintain the security reach of the coalition. As the Afghan government continued to expand its area of control over the country and reduce the insurgent threat, the focus of U.S. and ISAF efforts would turn to preparing the Afghan forces to take control of the fight.

---

125. Ibid., pp. 37–38.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid., p. 16.

Chapter Nine

Preparing the Afghans to Take Over the Fight



At the beginning of the surge, it was apparent to senior American and ISAF officials that it would be impossible to stabilize Afghanistan without indigenous governance and security capacity.[1] The commander of the United States' CSTC-A was responsible for training the ANSF, developing ministries, and funding security assistance under Title 22 of the U.S. Code. In April 2009, President Barack H. Obama pressed for NATO leaders to adopt the recommendations of the Riedel Report during a conference held to observe NATO's sixtieth anniversary at Strasbourg, France. One of the top recommendations involved creating a new organization to oversee the training and equipping of the ANSF. A multinational approach would allow member states to contribute as they saw fit to the Afghan security sector. The North Atlantic Council formally approved the concepts discussed at Strasbourg on 12 June 2009.[2]

The Pivotal Role of the NATO Training Mission, 2009–2011

CTSC-A formed the core of the new organization, designated as NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan, which also replaced the ISAF Directorate of Afghan National Army Training and Equipping.[3] Giving the same officer command of both the new organization and its American counterpart provided both the unity of effort and the unity of command absent from previous efforts to develop the Afghan security forces. The commander would remain a U.S. officer to ensure the legal spending of American funds designated for the mission, and also would be the commander of the NATO element. Yet even though the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan was to be a focal point for all security sector reforms, ministerial development

1. U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services, 111th Cong., 1st sess., date (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 2009), p. 7.

2. NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A) for *STAND-TO!*, "NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan," 28 Jan 2010, https://www.army.mil/article/33702/nato_training_mission_afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

3. VTC, Brig Gen Kurt B. Pedersen, Director, Dir for ANA Training and Equipment Support, 22 Nov 2007, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/speech/2007/sp071122a.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Kem, *NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan*, p. 26.

remained conspicuously absent from the alliance's agenda. That critical task would remain solely an American effort.[4]

The designated commander of the NATO Training Mission, American Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, received guidance from Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates before departing the United States. During one meeting, Gates told Caldwell, "Look, when you get over there what I need you to tell us [is:] 'Is this mission even doable?' And, if it is doable, [to] what level can we realistically expect to be able to grow the Afghan National Security Force?"[5] Gates' concerns stemmed from the fact that previous efforts to increase the size of the ANSF had been negated by attrition and inadequate recruiting. The secretary of defense expected Caldwell not only to integrate current U.S. efforts with NATO programs but also to make the combined ANSF development effort more productive and efficient.

General Caldwell departed for his new assignment accompanied by two members of his personal staff. Because the U.S. Congress did not confirm Caldwell's promotion until three days before he left the United States, he landed in Kabul without any preparatory training or structural reorganization having taken place. In addition, he had to sort through evolving internal responsibilities generated by an ongoing reorganization. With the exception of twenty to thirty individuals, Americans filled all billets in Caldwell's headquarters. Just two countries—the United States and Italy—were the inaugural members.[6] Caldwell later reflected, "[T]here was really just three [*sic*] nations when we stood up the training mission that had forces on the ground that were ready to be a part of and contribute to that mission; with promises of more coming in all ready at that point. . . . Almost all funding for [NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan] also came from the United States."[7]

The change of command between Caldwell and outgoing CTSC-A commander Maj. Gen. Richard P. Formica took place at Camp Eggers in Kabul on 21 November 2009.[8] Not only did Caldwell have to deal with bureaucratic turbulence upon his arrival, but one of the first ISAF directives he received mandated that NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan transfer 10 percent of its end strength to the newly created IJC headquarters.[9] General Stanley A. McChrystal's well-intentioned but ill-timed effort to bolster IJC resulted in the secretary of defense diverting the 10th Mountain Division's 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, to Caldwell's unit in December 2009 to alleviate his

4. Interv, Diane R. Walker, CSI, with Lt Gen William B. Caldwell IV and Col (Ret.) Daniel Klippstein, frmr Cdr NTM-A and frmr Director NTM-A Cdrs Action Grp, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan," 4 Apr 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_52802.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, p. 7.

6. Kem, *NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan*, p. 27.

7. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, p. 7.

8. CSTC-A Public Affairs Ofc, "New NATO Command Activated in Kabul; Continues Afghan Training," NTM-A News, 21 Nov 2009, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/41861/new-nato-command-activated-kabul-continues-afghan-training, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, pp. 7–8.



S. Sgt Sarah Brown, USAF

General Caldwell briefs Ambassador Eikenberry at NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan headquarters located at Camp Eggers, June 2010.

personnel shortfalls.[10] Although the arrival of an infantry battalion provided relief, the command faced personnel shortfalls for the first two years of its existence. The training mission ostensibly was a top priority in Afghanistan, but it comprised only 3 percent of ISAF's total workforce. The average trainer-to-trainee ratio was 1 trainer per 79 trainees; some locations had a better ratio, while other training sites had only 1 trainer per 466 trainees. When Caldwell took over NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan, he counted one soldier on hand for every four authorized positions. Although more personnel were forthcoming, his command rarely averaged more than 60 percent for the first two years of its existence.[11]

Caldwell intended to ensure that Afghans were capable of conducting operations without considerable coalition assistance for an entire campaign. He sought to create an ANSF that could prevail in battle and also demonstrate the durability to sustain efforts. Maintaining a purely tactical approach to developing the ANSF would have made it impossible to accomplish this goal. In the American view, growing Afghanistan's security forces included professionalizing its training, educational, and recruiting programs and developing self-sufficient defense and interior ministries.[12] It focused more on building and supporting the institutions as a whole, as opposed to just training the frontline forces. It was no accident that the

10. Ibid., p. 5.

11. Written questions for interv with Lt Gen Caldwell, CSI, 19 Feb 2013, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. Written responses to interv questions, Lt. Gen. Caldwell and Col. Klippstein, in preparation for interv with Diane Walker, CSI, 19 Feb 2013, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

NATO Training Mission adopted as its motto the Dari phrase *shona ba shona*, meaning shoulder-to-shoulder. From its modest beginnings in 2002 with a 600-person kandak, the ANSF grew until it could fight alongside other coalition forces. This progress addressed one of the most fundamental goals for the success of counterinsurgency: creating a self-sufficient, capable, and sustainable ANSF.[13]

The Building Blocks of Professionalism

Before Caldwell assumed command, he met with Richard C. Holbrooke. Holbrooke told the general, "You're really going to have to take on the illiteracy issue." Caldwell answered by explaining, "Ambassador, with all due respect I'm a soldier, I don't do literacy training." Less than two weeks after arriving, the new NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan commander realized just how uninformed he had been on that topic. As he later reflected:

> About 14 percent of the recruits coming in had some level of literacy—14 percent. That meant 86 percent of the recruits coming in could not read, write, or even count. They had no capability. I've been in a lot of places over my career. I had never seen the level of illiteracy or failed to recognize the dramatic impact that that has when you're trying to build a sustaining, enduring kind of capability.[14]

In early spring 2010, Caldwell decided to mandate literacy training for ANSF personnel. It took almost half a year for him to obtain funding, acquire materials, develop courses, hire teachers, and send them to Afghan bases. Caldwell later acknowledged, "Dr. Jack Kem led that effort . . . and he did an incredible job of making that happen."[15] NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan sought support from the Afghan government and NATO. Literacy lesson plans, for example, required Ministry of Education approval. Caldwell also championed a NATO educational trust fund so that member nations that did not want to send personnel to Afghanistan could contribute to the literacy program. When soliciting Western support for this program, training mission representatives argued that "a literate workforce is more likely to observe, understand, and report corrupt behavior. Additionally, a literate workforce is less susceptible to radicalization as they can self-educate

---

13. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, pp. 6–9.

14. Ibid., pp. 17–19. The literacy rate mentioned by Caldwell reflected a tremendous decrease since 2002 (when it hovered around 40 percent) rather than an unavoidable societal issue. The falling literacy rate reflected the fact that the ANA increasingly drew volunteers from the lower strata of Afghan society, not least because the Taliban and U.S. SOF paid far higher wages to their fighters. The problems associated with low rates of literacy were first raised by General (Ret.) Barry McCaffrey following a visit in 2006. See "Summary of Afghan National Army," Program for Cultural & Conflict Studies, Naval Postgraduate Sch, Monterey, Calif., n.d., https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/Afghan+National+Army+Summary.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, pp. 6–9.

and 'cross-check' the 'truth' being proffered by radical leaders."[16] Caldwell did not feel that he could pursue the state-building goals sought by the Obama administration without teaching Afghanistan's soldiers and policemen how to read.[17]

The literacy program had to instruct new inductees, enlisted soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and commissioned officers. Recruits received lessons covering the most common and basic military terms during their eight weeks of initial entry training, while leaders were expected to gain even higher levels of proficiency by attending specialty schools or professional development courses. Instructing soldiers already in the operational force on the front lines presented the greatest challenge. Out of 88,000 ANSF attending literacy training during 2010–2011, only 33,000 received instruction during initial entry or professional development training. The remaining 55,000 received the training while serving in police and army units. The literacy program had to expand every time more local security organizations or ANSF units were generated. Although the literacy program may have made it easier to train soldiers, its impact on ANSF combat effectiveness remained to be seen.[18]

Improvements in literacy proficiency within ANSF ranks did produce near-term benefits by facilitating a nationwide inventory of weapons, communications equipment, and vehicles by Afghan security forces. Although eight months elapsed between the introduction of literacy training and the start of the inventory, Caldwell tolerated the delay because the end state—an account of all the equipment provided to the Afghans since 2002—was only worthwhile if it proved accurate. The inventory took place incrementally, focusing successively on vehicles, weapons, and then communications equipment. The inventory determined what units owned and provided a baseline for identifying the future needs of an expanding ANSF. It helped develop Afghan security forces by demonstrating the value of equipment accountability and the way to conduct a nationwide inventory.[19]

Caldwell also sought to synchronize ANSF concepts of waging war with those practiced by Western troops. He recognized that following a counterinsurgency approach based on U.S. doctrine would be far less effective if ISAF's Afghan partners did not follow its precepts. Since the best way to instruct Afghan units was through partnering with coalition forces, the training mission commander pushed to have deploying units train in the Dari and Pashto languages as well as cultural sensitivity and religious awareness. This would facilitate a better understanding and working relationship between the partners, exponentially increasing both the efficiency and the effectiveness of the partnership.[20]

---

16. Kem, *NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan*, pp. 104, 107.

17. Ibid., pp. 16–23.

18. Ibid., pp. 102–03.

19. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, pp. 19–20.

20. Ibid., p. 7.

NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan devised an ANSF counterinsurgency training model that combined Western and Afghan concepts. This model included more than a refresher on counterguerrilla tactics by introducing students to the economic, political, and military aspects of the warfighting approach. It consisted of three components featuring both individual and collective training approaches. The first component focused on the professional development of noncommissioned and commissioned officers by sending them to an Afghan-led counterinsurgency academy. The second component consisted of rotating kandaks from the operational force through a counterinsurgency-oriented training center. Mobile training teams that deployed to kandaks unable to attend the collective training center were the final component of the Afghan counterinsurgency triad.[21]

ANSF Expansion

The surge in Afghanistan was not just an American or coalition effort. Although American forces in Afghanistan increased from 28,000 in 2008 to more than 100,000 in 2011, and the contributions of other nations grew from 32,000 to nearly 50,000 during the same period, population-centric counterinsurgency could not be pursued in the country unless comparable increases were made in Afghan security forces. ISAF's efforts to develop the ANSF had initially stressed numbers over quality. Unit partnering then provided ANSF units the opportunity to develop competence and confidence while executing the security mission. The idea was that once fully formed in 2012, the ANSF could address shortfalls in equipment, logistics, personnel, and leadership. After 2012, ISAF shifted focus to enabling the ANSF and professionalizing its units before ISAF combat operations ended in 2014.[22]

At its inception, the NATO Training Mission inherited the Combined Security Training Command's goal of growing the ANSF to 195,000 (100,000 in the ANA, 95,000 in the ANP). By March 2011, ANSF authorizations had grown to 276,000, increasing even further to 330,000 in March 2012. By September 2011, the ANSF finally started to approach its expanded authorizations. As the surge recovery began and coalition forces started departing Afghanistan, the Afghan Army and Air Force had 170,781 soldiers and airmen, with another 136,122 in the national police for a total of 306,903.[23]

The NATO Training Mission needed to increase its trainers quickly in order to keep up with the growing ANSF numbers. At its founding in November 2009, Caldwell's organization had 3,000 members, of which only thirty were from coalition nations. By November 2010, it had more than doubled in strength to 6,497, with slightly more than 1,000 international

21. Kem, *NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan*, p. 131.

22. Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr., USFOR-A Cdr, statement before U.S. House of Representatives, House Appropriations Committee for Defense on the Situation in Afghanistan, 2013, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. Kem, NATO *Training Mission–Afghanistan*, pp. 48–50. The Afghan National Army Air Force was renamed the Afghan Air Force by direction of President Hamid Karzai in June 2010, although it remained subordinate to the ANA for funding and institutional direction.



PO Michael James, USN

ANA recruits fire .50 caliber machine guns at Camp Julien's Infantry Branch School.

trainers from 37 different troop-contributing nations. By the end of 2011, the number of international trainers reached 1,600 with another 700 pledged. Although the mission had grown substantially, it was still 460 trainers short of its authorized level of 2,760. As the organization's commander, Caldwell tried to convince ambassadors to maximize their nations' participation in the training mission.[24]

At the May 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago, ISAF troop-contributing nations agreed to decrease the ANSF end strength to a "sustainable level," with the goal of Afghanistan being able to fund its security forces by 2024.[25] As the ANSF increased from 330,000 to 352,000 personnel, with an additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police, it became obvious that the Kabul government could not financially maintain a force of that size without international assistance. The dependence on U.S. and ISAF tactical support was particularly critical for Afghan special operations and aviation units.[26] The Afghan security ministries were equally dependent on coalition assistance in planning and sustaining extended campaigns. The premise upon which ISAF had defended building the ANSF to almost 400,000 personnel was that

24. Ibid.

25. NATO, "Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan: Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)," 21 May 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87595.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Austin Long et al., *Building Special Operations Partnerships in Afghanistan and Beyond: Challenges and Best Practices from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Colombia* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2015), p. 35.

an aggressive expansion would beget security gains impossible to reverse by the time Afghan security forces would have to reduce to a sustainable level.[27]

ISAF established Operational Coordination Centers to interact with ANSF components regionally and provincially. At the regional level, coordination occurred among the Afghan Army, National Police, and Border Police. At the provincial level, Afghan Army brigades coordinated with provincial chiefs of police and the nearest Border Police brigade. Local police secured areas outside those of conventional ANSF units, in addition to providing early warning to the other Afghan security forces.[28]

An urgent need to overhaul the police training managed by the U.S. State Department soon surfaced as one of Caldwell's top priorities. As one member of Caldwell's command noted, the police training effort experienced major problems with the manner in which contracts were written, as well as the fact that "contractors . . . had no incentive to work themselves out of a job [by teaching] the Afghans to [train] themselves."[29] Rather than scrap the existing program, Caldwell directed the current contract be amended. As the revision neared completion in March 2010, it encountered a legal challenge in U.S. courts. Faced with at least a twelve-month delay, Caldwell turned to NATO for assistance.

Recognizing that European law enforcement organizations with paramilitary skills possessed the best qualifications to teach these skills to Afghan police, Caldwell's staff began soliciting trainers from NATO members that had national paramilitary police forces, such as Romania, France, and Italy. However, NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan acknowledged that it would never acquire enough NATO trainers to replace contractors; therefore, recruits would have to receive instruction from contractors until the legal challenges to the new contract could be resolved. Lacking more NATO police trainers, Caldwell focused incoming NATO assets at installations and facilities his planners deemed most critical to the overall effort. The training programs at installations lacking full-time NATO representation were revised once the legal challenges to the new contract were resolved.[30]

Special Operations and Local Security Forces

Numerous programs and initiatives arose throughout the duration of the U.S. mission to establish local police forces that better understood the environment and the populations where they served. With the completion of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, but with ANA capacity still lacking, tribal elders called upon ISAF, U.S. forces, and President Hamid Karzai's government to support forming local militia

27. Jonathan Schroden et al., *Were the Afghan National Security Forces Successful in 2013?* (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, Jan 2014), pp. 8–10.

28. DoD, Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Rpt to Cong., Jul 2013, pp. 13–14, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_July_2013.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. Interv, Walker with Caldwell and Klippstein, 20 and 27 Feb 2013, pp. 10–11.

30. Ibid., p. 10.

formations known as *arbakai*.[31] Fearing a return to warlord militias, the Karzai government instead agreed with a Combined Security Training Command and Ministry of Interior initiative known as the Afghan National Auxiliary Police. Instituted in late 2006 with the support of Ambassador Neumann and General Eikenberry, the program would recruit a community policing force from the local populace. Those selected would receive uniforms, weapons, eighty hours of training, and approximately $70 a month in salary.[32]

Although the program called for more than 10,000 auxiliary police, it had come under scrutiny by May 2008 because of inadequate vetting, poor accountability, unclear lines of command and control, and inadequate logistical support.[33] The effort ended in failure, and the units were disbanded. Some auxiliary police were absorbed into the Afghan Uniformed Police, Border Police, or recruited into the Afghan National Civil Order Police upon the program's termination in September 2008. However, the poor literacy rates and lack of competency of those auxiliary police that transferred to national police units adversely affected the quality of the gaining units. The failure of the Afghan National Auxiliary Police program also had a measurable, negative impact on police recruitment across the nation.[34]

By 2010, after lengthy negotiations with the IJC, the Karzai government again agreed to establish local security forces in remote provinces. Their creation involved identifying areas that wanted the security, vetting those able to provide the security, empowering and minimally resourcing those willing to provide volunteers, and then supporting the organizations with ANSF assistance and guidance. This process would be the model for what would become the Afghan Local Police. The new program would get off to a slow start, as numerous organizations had large roles in the planning, including the Afghan Ministry of Interior, ISAF, and Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, all of which actually would execute the program.[35]

Decentralizing Security: Afghan Public Protection Program

In January 2009, ISAF created a new one-star Special Operations headquarters to provide an operational-level command and control headquarters for NATO forces. Army Brig. Gen. Edward M. Reeder Jr. took charge of the new organization, designated Combined Forces Special Operations Component

31. Soroya Sarhaddi Nelson, "Arbakai Aim to Protect Their Villages in Afghanistan," NPR World, 7 Feb 2008, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18754057, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. PO1 Scott Cohen, "Auxiliary Police Train in Afghanistan," DoD News, 8 Dec 2006, http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=2356, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. International Crisis Group, "Policing in Afghanistan: Still Searching for a Strategy," Asia Bfg. 85 (Kabul/Brussels: 18 Dec 2008), pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Anthony H. Cordesman, Adam Mausner, and David Kasten, *Winning in Afghanistan: Creating Effective Afghan Security Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2009), p. 136.

35. Ibid., p. 164.

Command–Afghanistan. Although this new command continued to develop the Afghan special operations kandaks and brigades, and conducted counterterrorism operations against mid-level Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership, it sought to place more emphasis on local security initiatives. Reeder soon discovered that General David D. McKiernan agreed with that approach and had already implemented an experimental program along these lines, the Afghan Public Protection Program, in Wardak Province.[36]

Recruiting for the program, overseen by a Special Forces company led by Maj. Bradley D. Moses, began immediately after Reeder's arrival. Rather than create a Western-style paramilitary organization, the program drew inspiration from the accepted practice of establishing arbakai. The arbakai differed from previous militias because they formed only when tribal elders determined a need for collective security against external threats. The program sought to correct earlier failures by recruiting only motivated individuals; providing the proper equipment, training, and salaries; and bringing in Ministry of Interior police from district offices to mentor the units. Although the training regimen was shorter than that of a conventional Afghan police recruit, it was conducted at an established police training facility in Mehtar Lam, Laghman Province, and overseen by the same SOF that would later mentor the police in Wardak.[37]

The first forces trained and equipped by the program completed their training in March. The forces were to be employed by the Ministry of Interior in conjunction with McKiernan's Focused District Development program. By tying the local police initiative to Focused District Development, the coalition and Afghan government alike hoped to reward increased security through additional infrastructure improvements and in turn provide enhanced security for those same projects.[38] Based on the initial success of the program, Reeder pushed to expand the Afghan Public Protection Program throughout the country, and put his staff to work developing an approach focused on internal motivation and Afghan-sponsored solutions. Expanding the program required the support of the ISAF commander, the State Department, and, most importantly, the Afghan government.

The approval process began anew when McChrystal replaced McKiernan.[39] McChrystal approved Reeder's plan to begin trial runs for six months while attempts were made to subordinate the program to the Ministry of Interior. Labeled the Community Defense Initiative, McChrystal's idea was distinct from the Afghan Public Protection Program in that locals would volunteer to participate in the initiative to resist the Taliban, request permission to form security forces, provide their own weapons, and receive no salary. Afghan government support would be limited to ammunition, communications equipment, food, and training. Although there were a few

36. Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, pp. 14–15.

37. Cordesman, Mausner, and Kasten, *Winning in Afghanistan*, p. 139.

38. Ibid.

39. Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, pp. 15–17.

Community Defense Initiative success stories, the program never received Karzai's endorsement.[40]

Adding to the difficulties of gaining a viable local security program was the deterioration of the Afghan Public Protection Program by early 2010. The program faltered as it handed over vetting, partnering, and mentorship responsibilities to unprepared and underresourced conventional battlespace owners. It could not overcome a drastic shift in mission from point defense of the local populace and infrastructure to that of mounted highway patrol. It was further weakened when local political leaders tried to install men with questionable motives as unit commanders and unquestionable loyalty to the politician.[41] Seeking to correct these deficiencies, the coalition Special Operations command renamed the program the Local Defense Initiative but still faced challenges from within the coalition and resistance from the U.S. Embassy.[42]

In March 2010, Brig. Gen. Austin S. "Scott" Miller assumed command of the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan and, in April 2010, USFOR-A gained operational control of the headquarters. Miller embraced the program and made it his primary focus.[43] Following the path forged by Reeder and foundations established by 3d and 7th Special Forces Groups, his command began addressing obstacles to community defense at both the operational and tactical (or local) levels. Seeking to flatten his organization, optimize assets in theater, and integrate his plans into Afghan government efforts, Miller called on the new commander of CJSOTF-Afghanistan, Col. Donald C. Bolduc, to overhaul the Local Defense Initiative.

In May 2010, Miller provided a new blueprint now known as Village Stability Operations. Pentagon officials described Village Stability Operations as "a bottom-up counterinsurgency initiative" designed to promote local governance and development by creating secure rural villages. A twelve-man SOF team conducted each operation, establishing itself within selected villages to engage regularly with locals and gauge whether the program would succeed in the area. Village Stability Operations teams linked to district and provincial augmentation teams, as well as Provincial Reconstruction Teams, through Village Stability Platforms that house security and stability assets.[44]

Village Stability Platforms required a self-nominated village, an embedded SOF team, ANSF battlespace owners, participation by district and provincial

---

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Greg Jaffe and Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "U.S. Ambassador Puts Brakes on Plan to Utilize Afghan Militias Against Taliban," *Washington Post*, 22 Jan 2010, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/21/AR2010012101926.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

43. Col Donald C. Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan," *Special Warfare* 24, no. 4 (Oct-Dec 2011): 24.

44. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Oct 2011, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/October_2011_Section_1230_Report.pdf, p. 67, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

governments, and Ministry of Interior approval and resourcing. Most Village Stability Platforms would request and develop their own Afghan Local Police forces monitored and supported by the district and provincial Afghan National Police commanders. The Afghan government and ISAF enabled the effort through village stability coordination centers where district and provincial augmentation teams received infrastructure improvement projects funded by Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Using the combined joint special operations task force's extensive analysis from August 2009 through February 2010 and interviews with local, district, and provincial leaders, the Village Stability Operations pilot program began in five districts in May 2010. In acknowledgment of their success, Karzai signed a presidential decree in August 2010 officially integrating the Afghan Local Police into the Ministry of Interior.[45] Connecting district and provincial governance to national leaders and ministries, mentorship and support from ANSF units, and joint oversight between ISAF and the Afghan government had provided enough layering to satisfy all interested parties.

American SOF units supporting the growing Village Stability program were called upon to employ infantry and Commando kandaks to targeted districts. In many cases, a preliminary clearing operation was required. SOF partnered with the ANA to conduct clearing operations, and then remained on site to serve as civil affairs and military information support teams to publicize opportunities for the Village Stability Operations. In the arbakai tradition, and with prior coordination of the district and provincial governance, embedded SOF, ANA, and ANP units would promote shuras leading to a *jirga* (larger tribal assembly) and the appointment of volunteers to form Afghan Local Police. Embedded SOF and ANA personnel would vet the nominees through Ministry of Interior, National Directorate of Security, and ISAF security organizations. The new Afghan Local Police unit received training, uniforms, weapons, communications equipment, and vehicles but was not granted the authority to arrest anyone. With local security established, the villages became more resistant to Taliban influence, allowing the coalition military commander, reconstruction teams, nongovernmental organizations, and Afghan government to pursue infrastructure development and other quality of life initiatives.[46]

The Village Stability Operations soon expanded to twenty-three sites, and the appetite for the program began to exceed available SOF teams. The model relied on competent and relatively uncorrupt district and provincial leaders in both the government and police.[47] Those areas supported by district augmentation teams and Provincial Reconstruction Teams were able to mentor these leaders or advocate for the removal of poor leaders. Additionally, resourcing these efforts required close coordination with the Afghan Ministry of Interior, the U.S. State Department, and the NATO Training Mission.

45. Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan.

46. Ibid.

47. Mark Moyar, Village Stability Operations aind the Afghan Local Police, Joint Special Operations University Rpt 14-7 (Tampa, Fla.: The Joint Special Operations University Press, Oct 2014), p. 11, https://jsou.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=5739850, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Daniel P. Shook, USA

Afghan Commandos with the ANA's 3d Commando Kandak shield their faces from flying debris after loading a wounded comrade on a U.S. Army UH–60 Black Hawk helicopter during a village-clearing operation in Zharey District, Kandahar Province.

However, not all village stability sites succeeded in forming Afghan Local Police, and not all Village Stability Operations efforts were initially successful.[48]

As Village Stability Operations proliferated, Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan and ISAF Special Operations Command realized the resources required to train and support their foreign internal defense programs, including Village Stability Operations, resided in the NATO Training Mission. Seeking to synchronize both efforts, U.S. Special Operations Command commander Admiral Eric T. Olson and McChrystal agreed to assign an assistant commander for Special Operations to the NATO training organization. General David H. Petraeus supported McChrystal's decision after the latter's departure, with the result that Brig. Gen. James B. Linder arrived in October 2011 to oversee the Afghan Special Forces, special police, and Village Stability Operations initiatives. By integrating Village Stability Operations into IJC's Operational Plan, Omid 1390, and the ISAF commander's 2011 campaign plan, Linder synchronized all special operations efforts in Afghanistan. Although it was difficult to coordinate the layered security involving a multitude of Afghan security entities, strong leadership and aggressive mentorship overcame these challenges. The many efforts began to coalesce in early 2012.[49]

The success of Village Stability Operations produced unexpected challenges. While Karzai officially validated the program by inducting units into the Ministry of Interior in 2010, he simultaneously outlawed private

48. Ibid., p. 11.

49. Interv, Diane Walker, CSI, with Brig Gen James B. Linder, frmr NTM-A Asst Ch of Staff for Special Operations Forces (SOF), 7 Dec 2012, p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

security forces. Although he initially required all private security forces to disband by 1 January 2011, he later allowed them to remain until 20 March 2012. Beyond this date, a limited number of formerly Afghan-licensed companies were absorbed into the Ministry of Interior under the newly reestablished Afghan Public Protection Force.[50] Yet Karzai's decree posed a challenge for conventional American units, which had begun to mimic the Village Stability Operations concept by creating ad hoc local security units. Using Commander's Emergency Response Program funds to resource community-based security solutions, conventional forces had hired locals to provide security for remote bases and small-scale reconstruction projects. As IJC's executive agent, Miller's headquarters provided guidance for integrating these security forces into planned or existing Ministry of Interior–approved village stability sites. All of these efforts needed support from the Afghan government or risked being dissolved when coalition conventional forces departed Afghanistan.

By September 2011, Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, now commanded by Brig. Gen. Christopher K. Haas had expanded Village Stability Operations to seventy-six sites, forcing Haas and the Ministry of Interior to cap Afghan Local Police based on available special operations teams, projected surge reductions, and resource sustainability. The determined maximum became ninety-nine villages, with each program to last no longer than five years and the forces themselves being disbanded or absorbed into the ANSF by 2016.

Efforts in Development and Governance, 2009–2011

Even though the U.S. Embassy and the military often generated bureaucratic friction rather than results when they made efforts to work together, cooperation between the DoD and the State Department generally remained positive when it came to Provincial Reconstruction Teams. During the surge, reconstruction team efforts benefited significantly from decisions made before the additional troops arrived. Owing to McKiernan's estimate that 2,100 civilian positions were needed and Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry's push to improve governance and development, more than 1,000 additional civilian positions were filled during the surge.

The Civilian Surge

Although Eikenberry took pride in quadrupling the number of civilian personnel in provincial positions, a typical reconstruction team in 2009

50. Paul Tait, "Afghanistan Orders Ban on Private Security Firms," Reuters World Edition, 17 Aug 2010, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-security/afghanistan-orders-ban-on-private-security-firms-idUSTRE67G1ZP20100817, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Heidi Vogt, "Afghan Private Security Handover Looking Messy," *Washington Times*, 12 Feb 2012, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/feb/12/kabul-afghanistan-the-push-by-afghanistans-preside/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

included just three civilians and between sixty-three and ninety-nine military personnel. An average of thirty-five civilians from the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture thus were assigned to reconstruction teams nationwide. This number was dwarfed by the funding they managed, which exceeded $600 million.[51] Increases in personnel and funding were managed by the Regional Command's new senior civilian representative, giving the civilian side its own chain of responsibility.[52] Although more civilian expertise had become available, it fell short of what military commanders wanted and desperately needed.[53] Over time, the civilian staffing issues would improve, but in many cases there simply were not enough people on hand to complete the massive amount of work that was necessary.

During the surge, Americans sought to focus their available resources in geographical areas chosen by the Afghan government. The newly formed Afghan Independent Directorate of Local Governance selected the areas. At the successive requests of McChrystal, Petraeus, and Eikenberry, Afghans identified eighty key-terrain districts and forty-one area-of-interest districts. These districts were mostly along the Ring Road and near border crossings, with approximate locations in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces, and in the most dangerous districts and provinces of RC East that ISAF already had designated for the military surge (*Maps 9.1, 9.2*).

Admiral Mullen's decision to "throw the kitchen sink" at Afghanistan in 2009 permitted new ideas to be tried. New organizations stood up under the ISAF umbrella to aid in accelerating governance and development. Through these organizations, McChrystal and Petraeus aggressively began pursuing solutions to problems identified years earlier.[54] The key-terrain district concept proved important in focusing the additional resources during 2010–2011. However, when the Afghans and IJC added three more key-terrain districts to the list in mid-2011, before any were considered ready to move to the build phase, interest in the program diminished rapidly. Attention swiftly turned from key-terrain districts to the five tranches—the NATO term designating the selected parts of Afghanistan that would be transitioned to Afghan authority by 2014.[55] Now, rather than try to build Afghan governmental

---

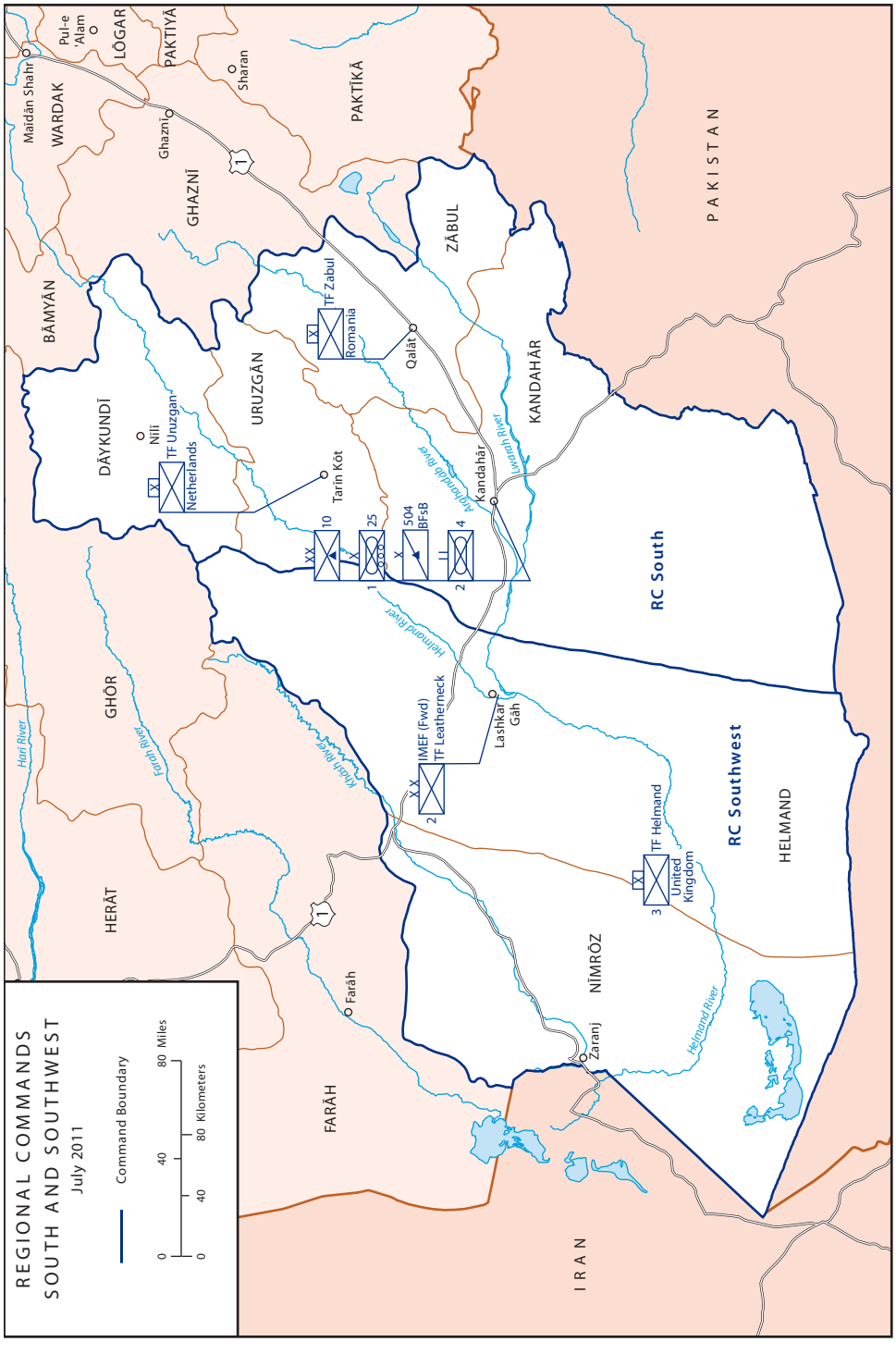
51. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Oct 2011, p. 36. Over half of the dollars spent by Provincial Reconstruction Teams were military Commander's Emergency Response Program funds. The rest came from other sources.

52. Ibid., p. 35.

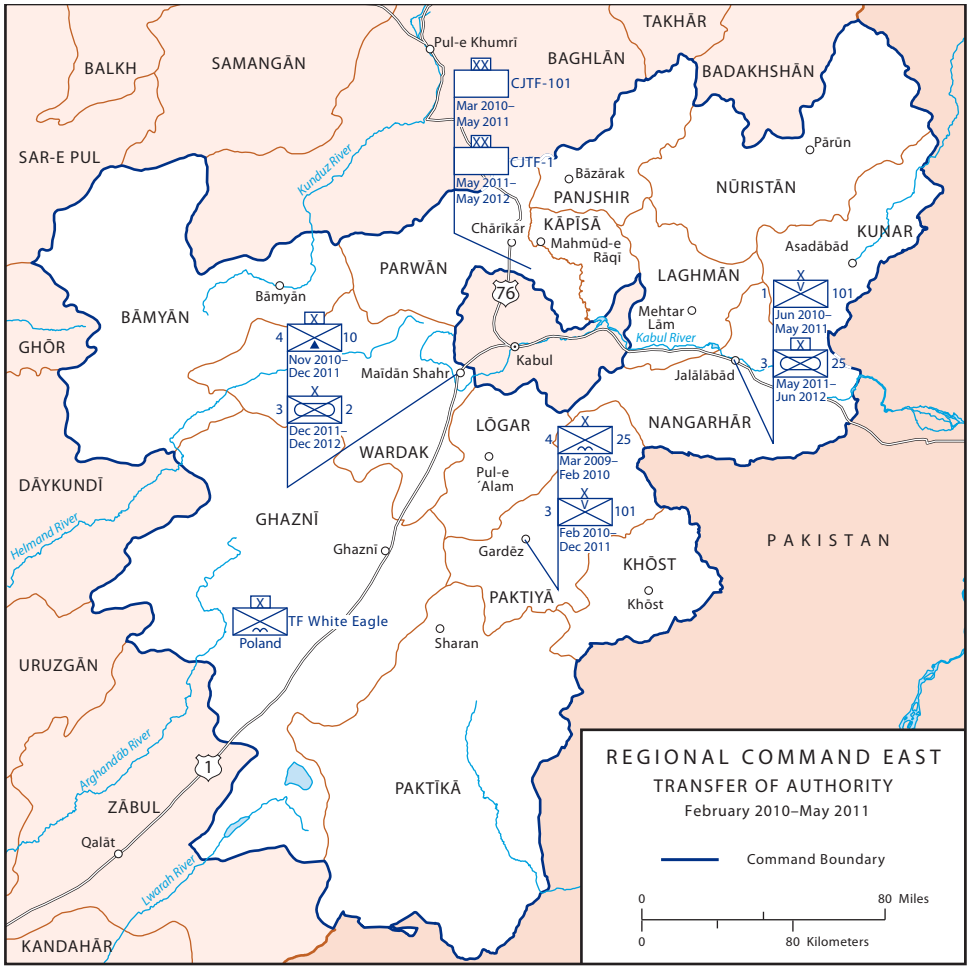
53. Interv, Donald P. Wright, CSI, with Lt Gen (Ret.) Karl W. Eikenberry, frmr U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, 30 Apr 2012, p. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Personal notebook and calendar, Gen David H. Petraeus, 23 Mar 2009, Petraeus Papers, Special Collections, National Defense University, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

55. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Apr 2010,pp. 31, 51, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Report_Final_SecDef_04_26_10.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Nov 2010, p. 75, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/November_1230_Report_FINAL.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. With the increase in number of key-terrain districts after two years of the surge, the idea looked


REGIONAL COMMANDS
SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST
July 2011
Command Boundary
0 40 80 Miles
0 40 80 Kilometers
Maidān Shahr
WARDAK
Pul-e 'Alam
LŌGAR
PAKTIYĀ
Sharan
Ghazni
GHAZNĪ
PAKTĪKĀ
ZĀBUL
PAKISTAN
BĀMYĀN
DĀYKUNDĪ
Nīli
TF Uruzgan
Netherlands
URUZGĀN
TF Zabul
Romania
Qalāt
KANDAHĀR
Tarin Kōt
Arghandab River
Arghandab River
Kandahār
XX 10
X 25
X 504 BfSB
II 4
1
2
RC South
GHŌR
Helmand River
IMEF (Fwd)
TF Leatherneck
XX 2
Lashkar Gāh
Han River
Farah River
Khash River
HERĀT
RC Southwest
HELMAND
TF Helmand
United Kingdom
X 3
Farāh
NĪMRŌZ
Helmand River
Zaranj
FARĀH
IRAN

Map 9.1



Map 9.2

capacity one key district at a time and then transition it to Afghan control, the plan was to transition control in large swaths.

CORRUPTION AND THE RULE OF LAW

On 1 July 2010, Brig. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster stood up Task Force SHAFAFIYAT (Transparency) in Afghanistan. Its mission was to foster a common understanding of the corruption problem, plan and implement ISAF anticorruption efforts, and integrate activities in support of an active and

more like an approved method for the Afghan government, and in some cases particular officials, to lobby for assistance for particular districts. An example is the District Delivery Plan, which was supposed to help pay new Afghan government officials a premium to work in the more dangerous and remote key-terrain districts. Instead, most plan officials complained of implementation problems, with money being lost at the provincial level. The program lost steam and funding within eighteen months.

honest Afghan administration. It was an unprecedented effort for a foreign military to take such a broad stance on dealing with a host nation's internal corruption problems. Starting with just three senior personnel, McMaster's means and results were modest; nonetheless, it showed the extent to which the U.S. military was willing to attempt innovative solutions to old problems during the surge.[56] As McMaster brought more people and assets to support his task force, its results improved over time, but corruption was an issue that would take generations to fix.

Eliminating corruption was not limited to Afghan practices. With billions of dollars spent annually in Afghanistan, American leaders were concerned that contract prices in the country had become inflated. Some inflation came from legitimate security charges that contractors incurred, but often these charges were protection money paid to warlords, Taliban, militias, and even Afghan police. These payments sparked inflation and created an artificial and unsustainable economy in some areas. In response to those concerns, USFOR-A and ISAF created Task Force 2010 in June 2010. Under the command of U.S. Navy R. Adm. Kathleen M. Dussault, the task force mirrored and supervised the U.S. Army's Task Force Spotlight, commanded by Army Brig. Gen. Margaret W. Boor. Both organizations focused on identifying and eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse within the contracting processes supporting coalition operations. They tracked contracting funds from allocation to commitment and through the delivery of the services purchased. Task Forces 2010 and Spotlight discovered that considerable funds were being used for unintended purposes, and the task forces became a viable means of ensuring that this problem did not continue.[57]

Although several NATO nations supported the reform of Afghanistan's legal institutions, few were willing to send experts to aid in the effort. In a prime example, in September 2010 the United States created the Rule of Law Field Force–Afghanistan, which brought in military lawyers, engineers, police, and others to support civilian efforts in bolstering rule of law in Afghanistan. The organization had become necessary when it became clear that the civilian surge would be insufficient to push judicial reform and infrastructure down to the local levels. It was also critical in Afghanistan to provide the population a responsive and fair recourse in a court of law, as opposed to deferring to traditional sharia law, the preferred Taliban method. Under the command of the U.S. Army's Brig. Gen. Mark A. Martins, this headquarters eventually also would command NATO's Rule of Law Field Support Mission–Afghanistan. The decision to add the NATO title was intended to encourage contributions from coalition partners, but it was largely unsuccessful. Experts from outside the United States did not enthusiastically support American military designs for innovation, even if they had been approved by the North Atlantic Council. The U.S. Army filled 80 percent of these billets;

---

56. Interv, Col Clifford Silsby and Keith Warman, CALL, with Brig Gen Herbert R. McMaster, TF Shafafiyat Cdr, 27 Jan 2012, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. Spencer Ackerman, "9 Years In, U.S. Finally Tries to Get a Grip on Warzone Contractors," *Wired*, 28 Jun 2010, https://www.wired.com/2010/06/9-years-in-u-s-finally-tries-to-get-a-grip-on-warzone-contractors/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

other branches of the U.S. military filled most of the remainder.[58] The effort achieved much in terms of pushing the rule of law from the Afghan national government down through the provinces and to the districts. However, the end of the surge greatly hindered the rule of law effort, as it would take more than two years to institute legal reforms of such magnitude in an environment such as Afghanistan.

Special Operations Command and Control

For nearly seven years, CJSOTF-Afghanistan had been the Special Operations Command element in Afghanistan. The overall operational dynamic began changing just before the start of the surge as Afghan SOF improved in proficiency, adding complexity to partnered operations. At the same time, U.S. and ISAF SOF in Afghanistan oversaw the formation and training of progovernment militias. The new missions, which were added to other critical tasks such as attacking threat networks and Taliban leadership, took a heavy toll on task force resources, which had been focused on managing operational and tactical integration with the conventional and international forces.

Based on recommendations from Admiral Olson and General McKiernan, CENTCOM originally created a new Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan to relieve the SOF task force's operational-level burdens. Many viewed the creation of the new headquarters as layering more bureaucracy onto the existing force structure, but the structure under Reeder allowed CJSOTF-Afghanistan to focus on its tactical-level command and advisory requirements (*Figure 9.1*).

In addition to gaining operational control of CJSOTF-Afghanistan, Reeder's headquarters sought to establish a greater unity of effort among U.S. and ISAF Special Operations contingents, as well as the dedicated U.S. counterterrorism forces in Afghanistan. That goal could be achieved only through integrating Special Operations plans within the overall ISAF campaign plan. Although Reeder had no command authority over either ISAF SOF or the counterterrorism task forces, he dedicated considerable time throughout the surge to synchronizing their efforts.

In 2009, recognizing that SOF unity of effort would be almost impossible to achieve under the existing command and control structure, McChrystal proposed changes to CENTCOM that would unify the separate SOF entities. With CENTCOM's approval, IJC published Fragmentary Order 408 directing that operational control of the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan be transferred to NATO by spring 2010. The Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan provided overall direction to its subordinate units while ensuring they coordinated their activities with regional commands. Fragmentary Order 408 instructed the international SOF contingent to provide command and control elements to the ISAF SOF headquarters and

58. Rule of Law Field Force–Afghanistan, Rule of Law Field Support Officers Deskbook, *Guidelines and Lessons Learned for Military Support to Justice Sector Development in Afghanistan* (Jun 2012), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

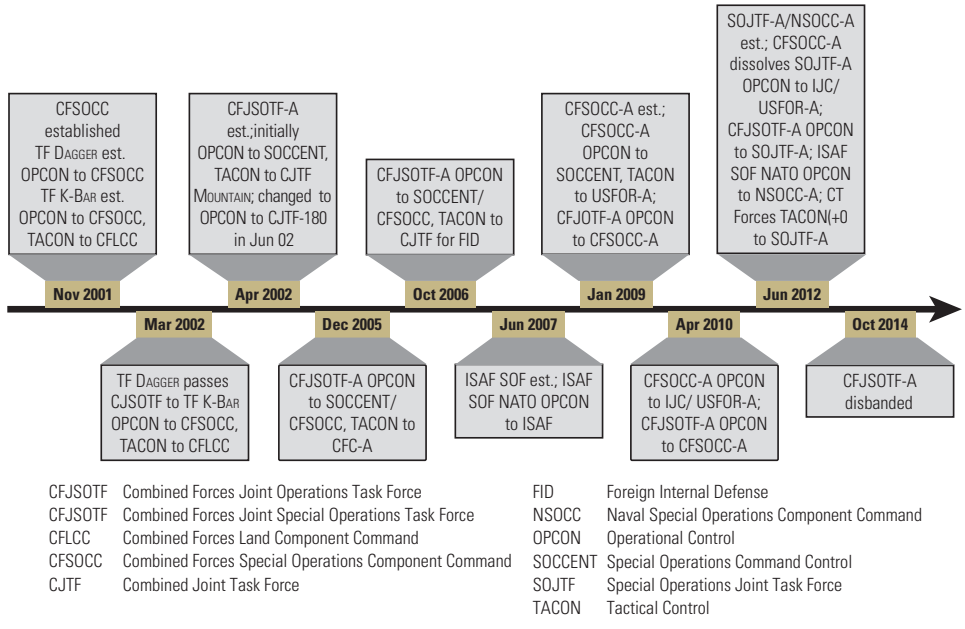


Figure 9.1. Evolution of Special Operations Command and Control

send liaisons to each regional command. The counterterrorism task forces remained under CENTCOM control, but they were directed to provide liaisons to ISAF, USFOR-A, and CJSOTF-Afghanistan.[59]

Special Operations in Afghanistan Receives More Resources

While the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan now exercised operational control of both ANA Commando units and CJSOTF-Afghanistan, the changes listed in Fragmentary Order 408 did not provide the forces required to address an expanding range of missions. As Col. Gus Benton II prepared to take command of the task force in January 2009, his 3d Special Forces Group staff had to make do with inadequate resources caused by outdated plans. Rather than utilize augmentees provided by other units before deployment, Benton's group would have to cull from its own ranks to meet increased liaison requirements levied by the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan.

Although Benton would receive some assistance from Naval Special Warfare Task Units and Marine Special Operations companies, as well as Special Operations contingents furnished by Canada, Great Britain, France, and the United Arab Emirates, 3d Group found itself hard-pressed to fulfill the demands placed upon CJSOTF-Afghanistan by Fragmentary Order 408. All of these forces and more were essential, as the task force's operational

59. Michael E. Krivido, "Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan: A Short History, 2002–2014," Veritas: Journal of Special Operations History 12, no. 2 (2016), https://www.soc.mil/ARSOF_History/articles/v12n2_cjsotf_page_1.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

requirements were increasing with its foreign internal defense efforts. Benton and his organization continued the development of the ANA Commandos, formalized partnerships with conventional ANA units, and experimented with local constabulary-like forces in remote locations. Colonel Benton's boss, General Reeder, grew more convinced that the last initiative, when combined with the other foreign internal defense programs, would be the key to improving security within Afghanistan.

By May 2009, there were five fully operational Commando kandaks supporting the regional commands, with a sixth kandak nearing the end of its training and preparation for employment, along with a brigade headquarters. Partnered forces raided mid-level enemy leadership and networks, conducted reconnaissance in support of conventional operations, provided regional quick response capabilities, and were publicized as the new face of Afghan Army professionalism through a concentrated information campaign.[60] Commando kandaks had the highest retention rates in the ANA because of their regularly scheduled leave, higher pay, continuous indoctrination and training cycles, predictable deployment cycles, and esprit de corps.[61] As the Commandos increased in capability and capacity, CJSOTF-Afghanistan and the Ministry of Defense began focusing them (with their advisers) on specific areas.

SOF had long supported conventional ANA units by operating in areas of RC West and RC South that lacked ISAF presence. In addition to this informal arrangement, Reeder's teams sought to develop local security in remote districts and in conjunction with Afghan conventional forces. Increased numbers of SOF personnel were needed to turn this vision into reality if the surge was to produce the outcomes sought by the Obama administration.

The Special Operation Surge Begins

As the conventional forces began increasing in numbers in early 2009, SOF also was preparing to surge operations in Afghanistan. To increase available personnel, all Special Forces Groups activated a fourth battalion, and the 75th Ranger Regiment added a fourth company to each of its three battalions. Similar initiatives had occurred over the past several years within the other services. As a result of these force structure increases, Col. James E. Kraft of the 7th Special Forces Group arrived in Afghanistan in July 2009 with three Special Forces battalions and significantly more Marine and Naval Special Warfare augmentation. The additional manpower permitted the

60. Evidence of Information Operations efforts can be found in several news articles. See, for instance, Pfc Roy Mercon, "Afghan Commandos Perform Aerial Presence Missions," CJTF-82 Public Affairs Ofc, 21 Mar 2010, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/46966/afghan-commandos-perform-aerial-presence-missions, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

61. Although the Commandos boasted higher retention rates, retention rates in ANA conventional units rarely exceeded 35 percent. The Commandos were paid more and U.S. Special Forces personnel monitored their welfare more closely, which reduced corruption and mismanagement. Sfc Matthew Chlosta, "ANA Commandos First on the Ground in Marjah," ISAF HQ Public Affairs Ofc, 4 Apr 2010, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

group commander to work with ISAF regional commanders and establish partnerships with ANA corps. In addition, Kraft now had enough resources to support small Afghan units in areas where international forces did not maintain a presence.

Kraft distributed his available resources so they could partner with the ANA's 201st, 203d, 205th, 207th, and 209th Corps. He left the sixth Commando kandak uncommitted to allow it to meet short-notice requirements such as counterterrorism operations, deploying a quick-reaction force, or relieving other Commando kandaks. In addition to the kandak partnerships, Special Operations detachments were allocated to twelve areas where community defense initiatives were being implemented. In addition to Kraft's efforts, SOF resources under the control of Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan supported McChrystal's population-centric counterinsurgency through a combination of foreign internal defense operations and robust counterterrorism.

At the same time, a growing number of dedicated counterterrorism resources and personnel based in the United States were being diverted from Iraq to increase pressure on enemy logistical networks in Afghanistan. The 75th Ranger Regiment dedicated nearly a full battalion to command and support these assets while Navy Special Warfare elements, the 160th Aviation Regiment (Special Operations), and other Army forces provided assistance.[62] The increased raids and attacks on enemy networks were unfortunately accompanied by increased danger as nineteen special operators were killed in action during the latter half of 2009. Noncombat fatalities and the loss of specialized aircraft proved as harmful to the mission as lost service members. On 28 October, low visibility caused an CH–47 Chinook helicopter to crash in Badghis, killing seven military personnel and three Drug Enforcement Agency civilians on a counternarcotics raid. With limited numbers of Special Operations aircraft available in theater, the loss of every airframe and every highly skilled pilot dealt a serious blow to the entire force.

Special Operations Presence

When Colonel Benton returned with 3d Special Forces Group to relieve the 7th Group and assume command of CJSOTF-Afghanistan in January 2010, he knew that his tour would be shorter than normal. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission had removed the 7th Special Forces Group from the Afghan rotation cycle so it could relocate from Fort. Bragg, North Carolina, to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The move would take fourteen months to complete. Rather than commit another group to cover the gap, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command sent Benton to Afghanistan for ninety days before replacing his command with an ad hoc headquarters. Benton thus turned over his command to Colonel Bolduc in April 2010.[63]

---

62. E-mail, Steven Cages, historian, Center for Counter Terrorism Studies, to Col Adrian Donahoe, OEF Study Grp, 9 Mar 2016, sub: SOF Surge, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

63. The first round in 1988 was authorized by the *Defense Authorization Amendment and Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988*, as amended, PL 100–526, Title II (1988). Additional

Unlike units in earlier rotations, Bolduc's unit arrived knowing it would remain in Afghanistan until the 7th Special Forces Group resumed operational status in March 2011 and would be available for deployment. Bolduc's staff was made up of part of the 3d Group headquarters augmented by individuals from a number of organizations, including many drawn from his subordinate elements. The 2d Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, which formed the core of Special Operations Task Force 12, supported RC South. Responsibility for RC North and RC West fell to Special Operations Task Force 81, which included the first battalion-level Marine Special Operations Command unit in Afghanistan. The 3d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group provided the core of Special Operations Task Force 33 supporting RC East.

The handover between Benton and Bolduc also signaled the introduction of the "flag-forward" concept designed to provide greater continuity over time to high-priority projects. This concept involved splitting operational detachments into two halves, each of which was brought back up to full strength by individual replacements. Splitting the teams enabled commanders to send one element to Afghanistan for a specific mission before replacing it with the second half of the split team. It also maintained a single higher headquarters in country for longer periods of time. Allowing for some overlap during changeover, the arrangement allowed commanders to commit an operational detachment to a specific mission for a period greatly exceeding a normal tour of duty, lending tremendous continuity to the effort. Reeder applied "flag forward" to his top priorities: Village Stability Operations and Commando kandaks aligned with ANA Corps.

That decision proved timely as SOF and the conventional forces increasingly needed Afghans in the lead to compensate for restrictions on the use of force mandated by ISAF. Between 2008 and 2010, airstrikes, aerial interdiction, and night raids caused a marked increase in civilian casualties. McChrystal personally intervened by issuing his "Tactical Directive" on 1 July 2009 as well as a "Night Raids Tactical Directive" on 23 January 2010. Both documents were intended to reinforce the tenet of "courageous restraint" introduced by McChrystal as ISAF sought to minimize collateral civilian casualties and placate cultural sensitivities. The directives were well intended, but the Taliban was quick to recognize and take advantage of the revised rules of engagement. As a result, the policy met with mounting disfavor among American and ISAF combat troops who believed McChrystal's approach placed their own lives at risk by ceding the tactical initiative to their opponents.[64]

---

rounds were completed in 1991, 1993, and 1995 as authorized by the *Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990*, as amended, PL 101–150, Title XXIX (1990). The most recent round, in 2005, was authorized by the *National Defense Authorization Act of 2002*, PL 107–107, Title XXX (2001).

64. One ISAF officer in Helmand remarked, "Thank God we have the ANA (Afghan National Army) here because they have different rules of engagement to us and can smash the enemy." Thomas Harding, "'Courageous Restraint' Putting Troops Lives at Risk," *Telegraph*, 6 Jul 2010, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7874950/Courageous-restraint-putting-troops-lives-at-risk.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Two incidents of special operations units inflicting casualties on Afghan civilians following the introduction of "courageous restraint" called attention to the need for even more deliberate procedures. The reaction to each event illustrated how strongly all parties felt about the accidental targeting of innocents. The first incident, which highlighted the increased activity of counterterrorism units in Afghanistan, took place when troops from the 75th Ranger Regiment raided Khatabah, near Gardez, on 12 February 2010. The operation resulted in the death of five Afghan civilians while provoking accusations from Karzai of an ISAF cover-up. As a testament to the special operations community's willingness to back McChrystal, Navy V. Adm. William H. McRaven, flew from MacDill Air Base in Florida to the Khatabah to apologize formally for the deaths.[65]

The second incident occurred in Uruzgan Province nine days later, when CJSOTF-Afghanistan authorized a Scout Weapons Team to engage a suspected enemy convoy detected by an unmanned aerial vehicle operator. Events began with a SOF element receiving reports of a potential attack on its position following a night raid. The unmanned aerial vehicle operator who initially detected an approaching convoy chose to discount subsequent analysis indicating that the vehicles contained women and children. Based on the flawed analysis, the SOF task force authorized OH–58 Kiowa pilots to engage the convoy. The strike took place approximately twelve kilometers from friendly forces and clear of populated areas. Once the special operations element reached the destroyed convoy, it discovered that the occupants were unarmed civilians. A total of twenty-seven Afghans, including four women and one child, were killed while numerous others were wounded. The chief investigator subsequently recommended reprimands for the commanders of CJSOTF-Afghanistan and the Special Operations Task Force for failing to report the incident in a timely fashion. He further recommended reprimands for the unmanned aerial vehicle crew for ignoring analysis that indicated a civilian presence.[66] Both incidents served as cautionary indicators for SOF units whose unparalleled ability to connect with a wide range of Afghan tribes and communities was critical to their overall tactical effectiveness.

Special Operations Continues to Evolve, 2010–2011

Reeder passed command of Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan to General Miller in March 2010.

---

65. In a display of cultural sensitivity, McRaven's visit to the village involved a respectful traditional act, in which "three Afghan soldiers pinned down a sheep and held a blade to its throat in a traditional Afghan gesture seeking clemency" before an elder invited McRaven in to offer his condolences. See Julius Cavendish, "US Military Offers Sheep in Apology for Afghanistan Deaths," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 Apr 2010, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0408/US-military-offers-sheep-in-apology-for-Afghanistan-deaths, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

66. Memo, USFOR-A for Cdr, USFOR-A/COMISAF, 21 Feb 2010, sub: Executive Summary for AR 15-6 Investigation, 21 Feb 2010, CIVCAS incident in Uruzgan Province, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Russell Gilchrist, USAF

ANA and U.S. soldiers are airlifted out after completing combined operations against Taliban fighters in northern Afghanistan.

Some leaders worried that Miller's previous assignments with Ranger and dedicated counterterrorism units would lead him to abandon the less-direct approaches championed by Reeder and Bolduc. To the command's relief, Miller immediately recognized the importance of local defense initiatives such as the Village Stability Operations program. Acknowledging its importance to the ISAF counterinsurgency effort, Miller promoted layered security for towns and villages.

As Miller's staff refined its approach to local security, counterterrorism forces increased the tempo and precision of their operations. McChrystal, lacking a direct command and control relationship with the counterterrorism task forces, relied on personal relationships with their commanders to redirect their focus toward mid-level networks and leadership. As operations in Iraq ended, counterterrorism resources shifted to Afghanistan. With the increased headquarters, reconnaissance and surveillance, airlift, and fire support assets flowing into theater, counterterrorism missions grew by 200 percent in 2009 before doubling again in 2010. By February 2011, counterterrorism forces led by and consisting primarily of 75th Ranger elements were partnering with Afghan Special Operations units to conduct more than 200 operations a month. Significantly, 90 percent of these missions were conducted without a shot being fired.[67]

Pressuring the enemy's mid-level networks, combined with the conventional force surge, improvements in local security, and increased infrastructure expenditures began to pay dividends for Afghanistan. Success came at a cost, however. The elevated operational tempo resulted in the loss of an Air Force Special Operations MV–22 Osprey in Zabul Province on 9 April

67. E-mail, Cages to Donahoe, 9 Mar 2016, sub: SOF Surge.

2010, killing two U.S. Air Force airmen and one Army Ranger. Less than two weeks later, on 21 September 2010 an MH–60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Daychopan District, also in Zabul Province, killing nine special operators.

As special operations elements increased efforts in Afghanistan, the complementary foreign internal defense initiative in neighboring Pakistan drew to a close. Although the Special Operations Command (Forward)–Pakistan felt that it had been successful within the scope of its authorities, it suffered a series of setbacks, including the loss of three personnel in an IED attack in February 2010 and increasing Pakistani restrictions resulting from border disputes and cross-border incursions by ISAF and ANSF personnel.[68] The initiative ended in 2011 after Pakistan refused to renew the visas of Americans training the Frontier Corps and other Pakistani counterterrorism units.

Taking on the Northern Insurgency

While the Americans remained focused on RC East throughout 2009, shifting to RC South and RC Southwest from 2009 to 2011, the enemy quietly opened a new front in the country's northeastern provinces bordering Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These militants had two objectives. The first was to launch high-visibility attacks that were guaranteed to generate Western media reports and create the perception of a nationwide uprising beyond the southern Pashtun regions. The second objective was to seize criminal enterprises such as drug and weapons trafficking in order to garner the profits to support their future endeavors. Conditions in the northern provinces, including the Afghan government's inability to overcome Tajik and Uzbek warlords, political marginalization of Pashtun minorities comprising one-third of the region's population, and inadequate ISAF and Afghan security personnel offered fertile ground for this latest Taliban effort. Kunduz Province soon emerged as a stronghold for insurgent operations, giving the Taliban and other extremist groups access to Pashtun communities in the north.[69]

The insurgency spread to nearby Takhar and Baghlan Provinces, upsetting efforts by the German Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Kunduz to project the Kabul government's authority in the region. German troops operated under severe political constraints that limited their ability to confront the insurgency. One particular restriction prevented their forces from conducting night operations. Meanwhile, the disparate insurgent groups now flourishing in the north, including the Quetta Shura Taliban, HIG, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, were building popular support and cooperating with each other. With increasing frequency, militants launched attacks against ISAF troops and Afghan government targets. IEDs and suicide attacks limited ISAF freedom of movement while increasing the casualties

68. CBS News, "3 U.S. Troops Killed in Pakistan Blast," CBS News/Associated Press, 3 Feb 2010, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/3-us-troops-killed-in-pakistan-blast/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

69. Anthony Bell, David Witter, and Michael Whittaker, *Reversing the Northeastern Insurgency* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2011), p. 9.

suffered by German and ANSF units in a pattern strongly reminiscent of the British experience in Helmand. Neither the 1,200 Germans nor the ANSF had adequate numbers to confront the burgeoning Taliban threat.[70]

As Operation Hamkari reached a climax in late fall 2010, U.S. troops from 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry (Task Force Summit), began clearing operations in Kunduz Province with German and ANSF elements. These operations killed or captured dozens of militants and disrupted several Taliban and Uzbek militant networks. One incident revealed evidence of Taliban-Uzbek militant collaboration. A late December raid killed Maulawi Bahadur, a senior Taliban commander with strong links to cells in neighboring Balkh and Baghlan Provinces. He was responsible for IED facilitation and distribution in the region, and had been linked to prominent members of the Uzbek Islamist movement. These connections may have been crucial to several successful suicide bombings. In these attacks, the Uzbek militants likely acted as the conduit for bombers, much as the Haqqanis supported similar operations in southeastern Afghanistan.[71]

The insurgents responded by attacking Afghan security forces and government officials. Suicide bombings struck at the ANA headquarters and targeted the district governor in Chahar Darah District, Kunduz Province, in mid-December. A more brash assault occurred on 19 December 2010, when four attackers outfitted with suicide vests and automatic weapons opened fire on the ANA recruiting center in the city of Kunduz. The attackers killed eight Afghan soldiers and police at the cost of their own lives, and communicated the message that even government centers remained vulnerable. Intelligence pointed to the Gor Teppah area, just south of the city, as the likely staging ground. ISAF responded with SOF raids that killed foreign fighters while destroying an IED factory and capturing an imam suspected of planning the attack.[72]

Although subsequent raids by special operators met with similar success, they failed to quell insurgent activity among Pashtun communities in the north. The first two months of 2011 were particularly active, with insurgent attacks against ANSF and government leaders succeeding in coercing large segments of the population to remain neutral if not actively supporting the Taliban cadres. When American pressure grew too strong, insurgent leaders moved to regions that had fewer ISAF troops. Although results indicated the success of the ISAF and ANSF efforts, many districts in Afghanistan's northeast corner had not been completely cleared. An uneasy stalemate arose as northern Pashtuns waited to see who would hold military and political superiority.[73]

70. Ibid., pp. 10–13.

71. Ibid., p. 13.

72. Ibid., p. 14.

73. Ibid., pp. 20–22.

The Death of Osama bin Laden

On 2 May 2011, American SOF conducted the raid that would begin to close a chapter of the Global War on Terrorism that had opened on 11 September 2001. The overnight attack against Osama bin Laden's home in Abbottabad, Pakistan, combined perceptive intelligence analysis, operational boldness, and good luck. Although bin Laden's death coincided neatly with the beginning of transition to Afghan control, it had little effect on the war itself. Mullah Mohammed Omar remained central to the Taliban's identity. As one insurgent commander said, "We are fighting for Mullah Muhammad Omar [*sic*]. He is our *amir* [ruler, chief, or commander]. We have never fought for Osama bin Laden. His death does not matter to us. We will continue with our struggle."[74]

74. Quoted in Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban–Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 4.

Conclusion



Although the 2009 Bush troop increases to support the Afghan elections, followed by the Obama surge in 2010–2011, bore some resemblance to the surge in Iraq, the similarities between them did not stem from deliberate design, but rather from a misinterpretation of strategic objectives. Upon taking office in January 2009, President Barack H. Obama received three assessments on strategy and operations in Afghanistan. Because these assessments had been conducted under President George W. Bush, Obama directed another strategic assessment, referred to as the Riedel Report. Recognizing that the United States could no longer afford to deal with Pakistan and Afghanistan separately, the Riedel Report noted that a military defeat of the Taliban remained unlikely as long as Pakistan offered sanctuary to Afghan insurgents. Rather than accept an indefinite stalemate, the report recommended transitioning security responsibilities to the Afghans once their army and police forces had improved to the point at which they could check Taliban attempts to overthrow the Kabul government. That course of action, however, also involved degrading Taliban capabilities enough so that the transition could begin. To hand over control of the conflict to the Afghans, the United States would have to provide resources for this transition and devote more effort to neutralizing or eliminating extremist groups in the region that posed a potential threat to the American homeland.[1]

When General Stanley A. McChrystal replaced General David D. McKiernan in mid-2009, the incoming commander's view of his new responsibilities was influenced by early interpretations of why the surge in Iraq had worked. Proponents of population-centric counterinsurgency loudly proclaimed that the Iraq surge had been successful because it used U.S. troops to protect ethnic communities ravaged by sectarian civil war. These same counterinsurgency advocates paid less attention, however, to the fact that American troops had waged an intensive kinetic campaign against insurgent strongholds within Iraq both before and during the surge. In addition, most accounts ignored the key role played by the Iraqi Army in maintaining order and contributing to the fight against local insurgents.

Upon assuming his responsibilities at ISAF, McChrystal conducted his own assessment. As it was based on recent interpretations of the Iraq surge, it determined that a population-centric counterinsurgency approach would be successful in Afghanistan.[2] However, the Iraq model could not be duplicated

1. Chandrasekaran, *Little America*, pp. 50–53.

2. There is good reason to believe that General McChrystal did not unilaterally adopt a population-centric approach. One account of White House decision-making during that period characterizes President Obama's thoughts as, "There would be no nationwide COIN

in its entirety in Afghanistan, most notably because population-centric counterinsurgency did not directly support the strategic goals articulated in the Riedel Report. President Bush originally approved the Iraq surge in an effort to end sectarian violence and defeat the insurgency, whereas President Obama sought to buy time and space for the Afghan army and police to improve by employing more U.S. troops against the Taliban. Obama's plan focused on both the enemy and the capacity of the Afghan government to control its country. McChrystal realized from the outset that even though he had been asked to undertake a virtually identical operational approach to that of the Iraq surge, he would not receive the same level of resources for his mission. As he said to an aide, "They [the U.S. government] did not give me enough [troops] to win outright." He also recognized that unlike the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of Iraq, Karzai's government was "not going to win the battle of legitimacy" by making significant policy changes because the Taliban insurgency was not strong enough to pose a direct threat to the Afghan government's immediate existence. McChrystal had to adjust the campaign to fit these limitations.[3]

Confusion ensued as some of McChrystal's subordinates sided with the approach articulated in the Riedel Report while others embraced the Iraq version of counterinsurgency as they understood it. On the ground, tactical commanders independently developed their own views on how to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency, creating additional friction along the chain of command. That friction had been less of a problem in Iraq, where some commanders were able to focus on the far less ambiguous mission of eliminating enemy strongholds. To further complicate matters, a number of allied nations viewed any and all types of counterinsurgency differently than their American counterparts. This created more problems in Afghanistan than in Iraq because the Iraq surge involved primarily U.S. troops while the Afghanistan surge incorporated both U.S. and ISAF personnel. Finally, matters worsened when ISAF issued the "courageous restraint" directive, fostering significant resentment among combat troops who faced an adaptive enemy that took advantage of the new rules of engagement.

The population-centric approach, while admirable from a moral perspective in its desire to limit collateral civilian casualties, did not materially contribute to ongoing efforts to improve Afghan security forces. According to one Strategic Studies Institute analysis published in 2007, counterinsurgency strategies of the kind that McChrystal would later apply in Afghanistan cede the initiative to the insurgents.[4] Although the vagaries of Army doctrine played no part in General David H. Petraeus' subsequent appointment as ISAF commander, McChrystal's successor leveraged his firsthand experience with

---

[counterinsurgency]; the Pentagon was to present a 'targeted' plan for protecting population centers, training Afghan security forces, and beginning a real—not token—withdrawal within eighteen months of the escalation." Alter, *The Promise*, p. 387.

3. Steve Coll, *Directorate S: The C.I.A. and America's Secret Wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), p. 456.

4. Steven K. Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2007), p. 79.

the Iraq surge to realign the command's population-centric counterinsurgency. Petraeus understood that counterinsurgency's clear, hold, and build approach was a reminder that there is more than one way for military force to influence the enemy.[5] The approach favored by Petraeus reaped greater operational benefits because ISAF dictated when and where combat occurred rather than simply reacting to enemy efforts to disrupt the hold and build phases of the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan.

The ultimate outcome of the Afghan surge depended on far more than changing the approach to counterinsurgency. Outside observers often were critical of the surge's impact on the overall campaign because it did not produce the dramatic results that the United States had seen in Iraq. However, the Afghan surge ultimately showed progress once General Petraeus refocused it on protecting the population, improving the ANSF, and targeting enemy sanctuaries and leadership. Crippled by losses suffered during this period, the Taliban was prevented not only from interfering with coalition efforts to improve the ANSF but also from derailing the handover of ISAF security responsibilities to the Afghan government. What remained to be seen was whether the ISAF coalition could strengthen Afghan institutions in a manner that would withstand the future departure of ISAF forces.

5. Interv, Col E. J. Degen and Lt Col John R. Stark, OEF Study Grp, with Gen (Ret.) David H. Petraeus, frmr ISAF and CENTCOM Cdr, 29 Jan 2016, pp. 86–87, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

SECTION III

END OF CAMPAIGNS


JG MUÑOZ 2019

Section III

Introduction



The surge in Afghanistan did not render the same outcomes as its predecessor in Iraq. The latter ended a protracted insurgency on the cusp of becoming a devastating civil war. Efforts to protect ordinary Iraqis from ethnic death squads won the American military popular support, and its alliance with Sunni paramilitaries expanded indigenous opposition to al-Qaeda insurgents. Twenty thousand reinforcements permitted coalition forces to protect the majority of the populace and to eliminate enemy safe havens in Baghdad, Al Anbar Province, and Al Basrah. Deprived of access to the population and safe areas from which it could plan and organize, the Iraqi insurgency collapsed.[1]

The Afghan surge created the time and space necessary for ISAF to transition from combat operations to security force assistance by targeting the Taliban and eliminating its enclaves within Afghanistan. Although it did not result in the Taliban's outright defeat, the Obama administration's approach to the mission established the conditions for an uncontested withdrawal of most American and ISAF troops. It also allowed ISAF to retrograde, or remove and reassign, equipment and supplies aggressively within the limited time available. At the same time, the surge provided the ANSF with sufficient breathing space to expand in size, absorb new equipment, upgrade logistics, develop ministerial capacity, take control of former ISAF bases, and refine its command and control procedures. In doing so, it laid the groundwork for the orderly transition of nation-building responsibilities from ISAF and U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams to the Afghan government in 2014. However, time would tell if the ANSF could gain enough experience during and after the retrograde to perform well without coalition assistance, or whether the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan could refocus its priorities toward serving the people rather than the political elite after the departure of coalition forces.

Reducing troop strength in Afghanistan was the key element to President Barack H. Obama's strategy for Enduring Freedom. On 22 June 2011, the president announced that he would withdraw 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by year's end and another 23,000 troops by summer 2012. The Obama

1. That respite, however, proved illusory as the departure of American forces in December 2011 accelerated Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki's ongoing efforts to systematically disenfranchise Kurds and Sunni Arabs. The ethnic favoritism shown by al-Maliki, combined with his political machinations to remain indefinitely in power, ignited widespread internal dissatisfaction that contributed to the rise of the Islamic State in 2014.

administration's initial reductions of U.S. forces in Afghanistan dropped force levels to 68,000 from 100,000 two months before the U.S. presidential election in November 2012.[2] Obama noted that, after the killing of Osama bin Laden on 1 May 2011, America could reduce forces from "a position of strength" and that it was time to end America's long wars to "focus on nation building here at home." Beyond summer 2012, the timetable for drawdown remained unclear, but Obama called for steadily reducing U.S. deployment numbers by the end of 2014, at which point an agreed-upon force, sized for long-term stability operations, would remain.[3]

ISAF sought to transition security responsibilities to Afghans sooner rather than later in order to maximize the effect of the surge. The combination of more ISAF troops, a higher operational tempo, and the increasingly capable Afghan security forces curtailed enemy movement, eliminated many of its leaders and fighters, severed its logistical routes, and separated the Taliban from the Afghan people. These factors prevented the insurgents from seizing more of Afghanistan's sovereign territory during their 2011 *Al-Badr* campaign. Many veteran Taliban fighters also were showing signs of disillusionment. As many as 4,990 enemy combatants, a twofold increase over the previous year, had renounced their ties to the insurgency between July 2011 and July 2012 by participating in the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program.[4]

During this same period, the Pakistani armed forces launched several major offensives against extremist groups based within Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In some instances, government forces received aid from militia units formed by Pashtun tribes that rejected the corrosive influence of extremist ideologies.[5] However, the Pakistani military's main targets were extremists that rejected secular rule and challenged the Islamabad regime specifically—such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, al-Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and Lashkar-e-Islam—rather than groups such as the Haqqani Network or the Quetta Shura Taliban that focused on cross-border operations. As a result, Pakistani efforts bolstered their own internal stability but did not necessarily aid the ISAF counterinsurgency campaign being waged in Afghanistan.

---

2. The 106,000 figure reflects a 98,000 ceiling with an additional 5 to 10 percent temporary overage authorized by the White House. Scott Wilson, "Obama Hugs the Center in Pulling Troops from Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 23 Jun 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-to-order-home-10000-troops-from-Afghanistan-officials-say/2011/06/22/AGUuRCgH_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

3. President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 22 Jun 2011), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Memo, COMISAF for Sec Def, 26 Aug 2012, sub: First Year in Command, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. David Montero, "Pakistani Tribesmen Organize Private Armies to Fight Taliban," *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 Sep 2008, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2008/0901/p99s01-duts.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

At the same time, Americans had not persuaded the Afghans to overcome their ingrained distrust for central government. The self-interested behavior of public officials at the local, district, provincial, and national levels confirmed this perception to many.[6] Despite the battlefield successes of its security forces, the relatively ineffective government of President Hamid Karzai remained incapable of making substantive inroads against the Taliban as it threatened unprotected populations and reconstituted its forces in the Pashtun tribal areas of northwestern Pakistan. U.S. drone attacks and limited Pakistani military offensives created significant problems for some extremist groups, but most Taliban base areas remained undisturbed.

Given both these promising and unfavorable aspects, the Operation Enduring Freedom and ISAF campaigns were defined by two major efforts over their final two-and-a-half years. The first was the Joint Framework for Inteqal (Transition), an effort to have ANSF lead military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014. This plan had been agreed upon at NATO's Lisbon Summit in November 2010.[7] The second was the redeployment of forces out of Afghanistan as the United States prepared for the anticipated post-2014 support mission. Backing these efforts were Afghan and coalition partnered offensives against enemy networks and leadership. Implementing these initiatives simultaneously required both coalition and Afghan forces to rebalance their means constantly, with redeployment drawing U.S. resources out of Afghanistan on a fixed schedule and the American personnel remaining in country becoming increasingly devoted to improving ANSF capabilities.

The U.S. Army stood at a crossroads at the time of the Lisbon Summit. The Army's global commitment at that time numbered more than 230,000 officers and enlisted personnel serving in nearly eighty countries and at the U.S. borders. That figure represented roughly one-fifth of the overall authorized end strength of 1,129,275.[8] As of October 2010, more than one million Army personnel had deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq one or more times, with 4,100 soldiers giving their lives and leaving behind 20,000 surviving family members. Another 27,000 soldiers were wounded, 7,500 of them requiring long-term care. In addition, 10,000 suffered traumatic brain injuries, and 4,500 grappled with post-traumatic stress following their deployments

6. Joshua Partlow, *A Kingdom of Their Own: The Family Karzai and the Afghan Disaster* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016). The distrust between the Afghan citizenry and the Afghan government, from the national down through to local levels, is a major theme of this book.

7. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Rpt, Apr 2011, p. 49, https://archive.defense.gov/news/1230_1231Report.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. This total includes an active component end strength (at a fifteen-year high due to the 2007 Grow the Army initiative) on 30 September 2010 of 561,979, with the Army National Guard numbering 362,015 and Army Reserve authorizations of 205,281. The active component and National Guard end strength grew from the previous year by 12,694 and 3,624 respectively, while the Army Reserve decreased by sixteen. Thomas Boghardt, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2010* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2015), p. 11.

overseas.[9] Despite those sobering statistics, the Army had experienced record retention numbers for enlisted soldiers within every component, averaging 110 percent of their targeted retention numbers during 2010. In terms of new recruits, both the active component and Army Reserve had exceeded their 2010 accession goals, with the Army National Guard achieving more than 95 percent of its end of fiscal year target.[10]

The end of combat operations in Iraq finally allowed the Army to address mounting internal stress by implementing a rotational model of one year deployed to two years at home-station for the active component and a one-to-four ratio for the National Guard and Army Reserve. At the same time, however, the Army still had unprecedented numbers of soldiers in Afghanistan to support the new strategic direction in that vital theater. That effort began to wind down in mid-2011 with an equally intensive redeployment of equipment and materiel from Afghanistan that lasted through December 2014. Throughout the period 2011–2014, Army Chief of Staff General Raymond T. Odierno reinforced his predecessor's efforts to invest more resources in training, equipping, and staffing the force to perform a wider and more traditional range of missions rather than remain singularly focused on counterinsurgency and security force assistance.

In recognition of negative trends that showed no signs of dissipating—as evidenced by the fact that in 2012 the Army experienced more suicides than combat deaths—the Army's senior leadership introduced the Ready and Resilient Campaign in March 2013.[11] It was intended to enhance individual and collective resilience in Army soldiers, civilians, and family members. It expanded on the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program to integrate Army-wide efforts to improve physical, psychological, and emotional health, with readiness of the force as the overall goal. The Ready and Resilient Campaign sought to influence cultural change in the Army by linking personal resilience to readiness, while addressing destructive behavior such as suicide, domestic violence, substance abuse, sexual harassment and assault, bullying, and hazing. It also sought to promote positive behaviors while eliminating stigmas and cultural norms that discouraged asking for help.[12] Such an initiative was a step forward, but the true costs of employing the force over a sustained period of time still remain to be seen.

---

9. Gen George W. Casey Jr., "The Second Decade," in *Army, 2010–2011 Green Book* (Washington, D.C.: Association of the U.S. Army, Oct 2010), p. 20.

10. Boghardt, *Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 2010*, pp. 12–13.

11. Simon Rogers, "US Military Suicides in Charts; How They Overtook Combat Deaths," *Guardian*, 1 Feb 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/feb/01/us-military-suicides-trend-charts, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. The Hon. John M. McHugh and Gen Raymond T. Odierno, Ofc of the Ch of Staff of the Army, *2014 Army Posture Statement* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, Apr 2014), https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/aps/aps_2014.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Policy and Strategy Considerations

As the security transition began and the balance of the ISAF conventional force shifted from combat to training, advising, and assisting, the Obama administration faced three major policy questions on Afghanistan. First, it had to determine how rapid the drawdown should be. Second, it had to consider whether to establish a long-term security arrangement with the Afghan government that would allow U.S. forces to remain beyond 2014. Finally, it had to ascertain how large the residual force should be based on the potential range of responsibilities and missions it received.

Both Afghan and ISAF leaders believed that the drawdown could be best managed if it took place incrementally. Transitioning security responsibilities in the thirty-four provinces would therefore occur in stages, known as tranches (*Map S3.1*). Debate occurred over the decision to transition certain areas.[13] Even though ISAF literature explicitly stated that its forces would not depart areas until the Afghans could secure them, political considerations still determined who left where and when. Consequently, operational leaders had to choose whether to transition the relatively uncomplicated areas or the more difficult areas first. Although it seemed self-evident to focus on the easier areas first, it would be more difficult to transition harder areas later on because fewer coalition forces would be available.[14]

On 22 March 2011, Karzai publically listed the first provinces and districts to begin transition. Tranche 1 included Bamyan, Panjshir, Kabul (except the Sarobi District), and districts surrounding certain provincial capitals, including Herat, Lashkar Gah, Mazar-e Sharif, and Mehtar Lam. Those areas, especially Panjshir and Bamyan, had been pacified for some time and had good security. The first provincial transition ceremony occurred in Bamyan, the capital of Bamyan Province, on 17 July 2011.

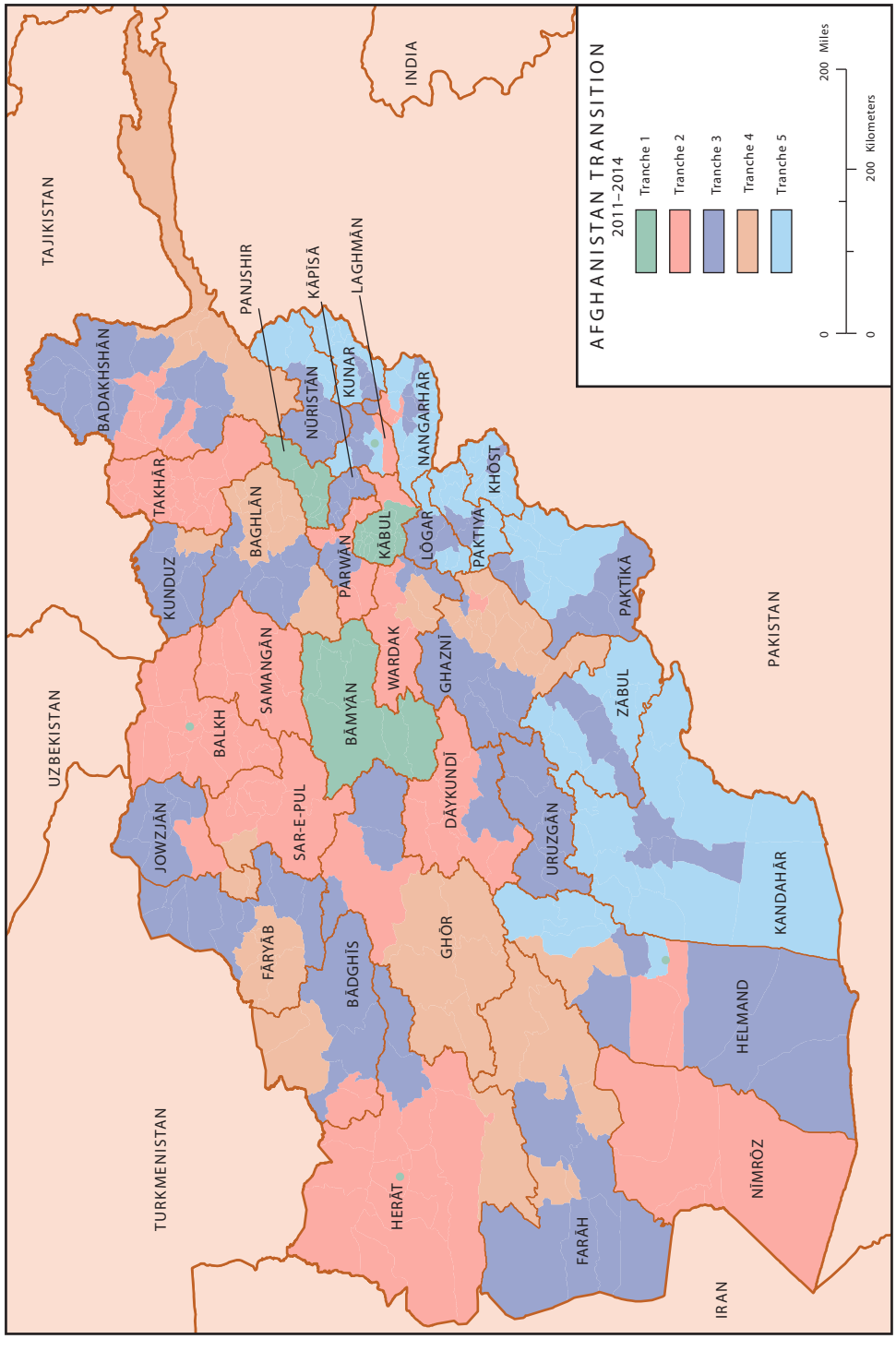
The process continued as planned. Tranche 2 was announced on 27 November 2011. This tranche, which included Balkh, Takhar, Samangan, Daykundi, Nimroz, and Kabul Provinces, as well as selected districts in Parwan, Helmand, Ghazni, and Herat Provinces, began without serious interference in December 2011.[15] Tranche 3, slated to begin in July 2012, not only transferred 122 additional districts but also initiated the handover preparations for all remaining provinces.[16] Upon completion of the fourth tranche, slated to begin in early 2013, Afghan security forces would assume

13. Afghan provincial officials viewed the process in an overall negative light because they would be forced to seek monies from Kabul once ISAF funding ended. As a result, everyone wanted to be the last to transition.

14. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Apr 2011, pp. 50–53.

15. Daniel Magnowski, "Second Afghan Security Handover Starts," Reuters, 1 Dec 2011, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-security-transition-idUSTRE7B022520111201, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Capt Justin Casey, "ISAF Transfers Security Responsibility for Districts in Logar," CENTCOM, 24 Jul 2012, https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/884617/isaf-transfers-security-responsibility-for-districts-in-logar/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


AFGHANISTAN TRANSITION
2011–2014
Tranche 1
Tranche 2
Tranche 3
Tranche 4
Tranche 5
0
200 Miles
0
200 Kilometers
TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
PAKISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
BADAKHSHĀN
TAKHĀR
KUNDUZ
BAGHLĀN
PANJSHIR
NŪRISTĀN
KĀPĪSĀ
KUNAR
LAGHMĀN
PARWĀN
KĀBUL
NANGARHĀR
LŌGAR
KHŌST
PAKTIYĀ
PAKTĪKĀ
BALKH
SAMANGĀN
BĀMYĀN
WARDAK
GHAZNĪ
ZĀBUL
JOWZJĀN
SAR-E-PUL
DĀYKUNDĪ
URUZGĀN
FĀRYĀB
BĀDGHĪS
GHŌR
KANDAHĀR
HELMAND
HERĀT
NĪMRŌZ
FARĀH

Map S3.1

responsibility for 87 percent of the nation's population and 312 districts in 23 of 34 provinces.[17] The fifth and final tranche, involving the remaining eleven provinces, would take place in mid-2013.[18] Tranches 2 through 5 included areas under government control as well as those still contested, a necessity given that the process had to occur while sufficient coalition resources were still present in country.[19]

One end state remained inexorably clear throughout the process: ready or not, Afghans would be responsible for their own security by 31 December 2014. On that date, Operation Resolute Support would replace ISAF as a noncombat NATO mission intended to continue the development of Afghan ministries. Similarly, the United States would transition its missions on the same date, replacing Operation Enduring Freedom with Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Transition in a Complex Operating Environment

As the United States brought its combat mission in Afghanistan to a close, its goal in the CENTCOM area of responsibility remained "to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al-Qaeda, and to prevent its return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan."[20] The objectives unique to Afghanistan also remained constant: "to deny safe haven to al-Qaeda and to deny the Taliban

17. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, "Afghanistan Announces Fourth Phase of Transition Will Start Within Two Months," *Reliefweb*, 31 Dec 2012, https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-announces-fourth-phase-transition-will-start-within-two-months, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. NATO Public Affairs Ofc, "Inteqal: Transition to Afghan Lead," 7 Jan 2015, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_87183.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

19. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Brig Gen Eric J. Wesley, frmr ISAF Joint Command (IJC) Plans Director, 19 Dec 2014, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt, Oct 2011, p. 7, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/October_2011_Section_1230_Report.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also the later versions of this report: DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Rpt, Apr 2012, p. 9, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Report_Final_SecDef_04_27_12.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Dec 2012, p. 11, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/1230_Report_final.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The 2013 versions of the report dropped Pakistan from the equation to read: "The goal of the United States is to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda (AQ) and to prevent Afghanistan from being a safe haven for international terrorism." See DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong Jul 2013, p. 13, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_July_2013.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Nov 2013, p. 9, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/October_1230_Report_Master_Nov7.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. In his 22 June 2011 speech, President Obama restated the goal as: "No safe haven from which al-Qaeda or its affiliates can launch attacks against our homeland or our allies." See President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 22 Jun 2011).

the ability to overthrow the Afghan government."[21] Insofar as the United States was still executing combat missions, it was "to degrade the Taliban insurgency in order to provide time and space to increase the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan Government so they can assume the lead for Afghanistan's security by the end of 2014," although the clear emphasis was now on security force assistance, not combat operations.[22] As a complement to its military campaign, the Obama administration continued its efforts to reconcile the Taliban to the Afghan government.

NATO's mission likewise changed little in these years, with the North Atlantic Council calling for counterinsurgency operations to protect the Afghan people, neutralize insurgent networks, and build legitimate and sustainable Afghan institutions.[23] Since 2007, a counterinsurgency approach designed to enable Afghanistan to secure and govern itself had translated that guidance into campaign direction. Although tactical methods had varied, the conceptual approach remained in place through 2011. When Marine General John R. Allen succeeded General David H. Petraeus as ISAF commander on 18 July 2011, the campaign changed again. Allen initiated a deliberate transition from counterinsurgency operations to security force assistance by approving Revision 6 to ISAF Operations Plan 38302 on 15 November 2011.

Two subsequent amendments to the plan incorporated guidance for reducing the theater's "footprint" and retrograding units, personnel, and equipment out of Afghanistan. Allen approved the second and last amendment to the plan on 27 October 2012. The campaign centered on developing a capable and sustainable ANSF, as described in the mission statement:

> ISAF, in partnership with the International Community, supports GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] in the conduct of counter-insurgency operations to support development of governmental institutions for legitimate, credible, and enduring governance, security, and sustainable socio-economic growth; support the ANSF as it assumes lead responsibility for security to protect the Afghan people; and neutralize insurgent networks in order to deny terrorist safe-havens, ensure GIRoA stability and sovereignty, and set the conditions for the NATO-led post-ISAF engagement NLT [no later than] 31 December 2014.[24]

The Evolving Threat

The Taliban's retreat from the battlefield following the surge did not reflect a lasting defeat. Opposition groups had enough money and motivated fighters to continue military operations against ISAF and Afghan security forces.

---

21. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2011, p. 7.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Dec 2012, p. 11.

The Haqqani Network remained foremost among these groups. Its operators and facilitators had survived the surge by avoiding contact with American forces and focusing on well-planned operations offering a high payoff for an acceptable price in lives and materials. During this period, however, the Taliban suffered an internal power struggle that unfolded largely hidden from the U.S. intelligence apparatus. Yet even with the Taliban's private upheaval, there were no shortage of willing opponents for U.S. and ISAF forces during the transition period.[25]

For much of Operation Enduring Freedom, commanders in Afghanistan dealt with the fact that the economy of force also applied to the entire range of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems. The drawdown in Iraq freed up a number of these assets for employment in Afghanistan during the surge, but it took time for commanders and staff to learn how best to use these increased capabilities and then fully integrate them. Unlike in Iraq, American troops worked side by side with international contingents from several dozen nations as well as Afghan security forces on a daily basis. As a result, procedures had to be developed to address myriad interoperability issues, data management problems, and data-sharing policies. Intelligence analysts who previously focused on Iraq had to acquire a new set of skills, including familiarity with different languages, new relationships with ISAF and Afghan counterparts, and efforts to obtain optimal results from systems being employed in a physical environment that differed significantly from Iraq. Regrettably, many of these personnel and some assets were withdrawn just as they reached their peak proficiency in accordance to the firm timetables imposed on the surge.

The Afghan intelligence services also faced comparable challenges, albeit of a far different nature. Even though the vast majority of insurgent groups hailed from Pashtun tribes in the south, approximately 70 percent of National Directorate of Security personnel were Tajiks from the Panjshir region of northeast Afghanistan. The ethnic imbalance had a starkly negative impact on the National Directorate of Security, prompting one of its operatives to complain, "When they send Panjshiri to Pashtun areas they can't do anything. They don't know anything about the South or the East. They don't know how Pashtuns talk or move. If you need information about a Pashtun, you should have a Pashtun to get that information. This is the problem."[26] As a result, even Afghanistan's own domestic intelligence service had limited ability to infiltrate enemy ranks.

Although the surge helped improve ISAF intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities in Afghanistan, those systems had limited access to Pakistan. The Taliban's inner workings were well protected in Quetta and its leaders avoided exposing their disagreements. In addition, the success of the drone campaign worked against ISAF intelligence collection efforts by instilling a growing sense of fear and caution in insurgent leaders.

---

25. Ibid., p. 22.

26. Tom A. Peter, "Why Afghanistan's Intelligence Agency Has a Major Blind Spot," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Apr 2012, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2012/0423/Why-Afghanistan-s-intelligence-agency-has-a-major-blind-spot, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Nonetheless, when Pakistani officials arrested Mullah Mohammed Omar's top deputy, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, in 2010, two Taliban commanders openly clashed as they each tried to replace Baradar.[27] The first was Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir, who had commanded the Taliban's forces in southern Afghanistan. The second was a relatively unknown functionary, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Mansour. Akhtar Mansour had made his mark in the insurgency through the opium trade. He had allegedly become the Taliban's main tax collector, responsible for funding the fundamentalist group. This power struggle would resume in the near future with the death of Mullah Mohammed Omar.[28]

New Taliban leadership combined with reduced battlefield operations for the past year promised a renewal of intensive fighting in 2012. On 2 May, just three weeks after German Brig. Gen. Carsten Jacobson, the ISAF spokesman, reiterated his organization's position that it would not face a sustained, large-scale enemy offensive that spring, the Taliban released a statement that would be paraphrased in the press:

> [The] Al Farooq Jihadi operation spring offensive would target "foreign invaders, their advisors, their contractors and members of all associated military, intelligence and auxiliary departments . . . high ranking officials of the stooge Kabul regime; members of Parliament; those associated with Ministries of Defense, Intelligence and Interior; members of the so called High Peace Council; Militia under the name of "Arbakai" and all those people who work against the Mujahedeen [*sic*], toil to pave ground for the occupation of Afghanistan and become the cause for the strength of the invaders.[29]

Rather than launch large-scale attacks, the Taliban sought to influence the security handover by indirect means, namely by targeting the ISAF personnel who trained Afghan soldiers and police. Taliban leaders also took advantage of the desperate need for new ANSF personnel by seizing opportunities to infiltrate these formations with insurgents.[30] As more and more foreign

---

27. Pakistan later freed Baradar at the request of the Kabul government. Afghan officials believed they could persuade the Taliban leader to attend reconciliation talks between the warring parties. See David Loyn, "Pakistan Frees Top Taliban Leader Abdul Ghani Baradar," BBC News, 21 Sep 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24185441, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Joseph Goldstein, "Taliban's New Leader Strengthens His Hold with Intrigue and Battlefield Victory," *New York Times*, 4 Oct 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/05/world/asia/kunduz-fall-validates-mullah-akhtar-muhammad-mansour-talibans-new-leader.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. Bill Roggio, "Taliban Announce Start of Al Farooq Spring Offensive," *Long War Journal*, 2 May 2012, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/05/taliban_announce_beg_1.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Jason Burke, "Taliban Behind Surge in Attacks on Western Troops and Advisers," *Guardian*, 31 May 2011, https://www.theguardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/31/afghan-renegades-attack-western-troops, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

soldiers advised Afghan formations, violence by Afghan security forces against their coalition partners, referred to as insider or "green-on-blue" attacks, occurred with increasing frequency. The Taliban infiltration efforts began to yield results in 2008 when two such attacks took place, followed by ten more green-on-blue incidents occurring in 2009 and 2010. A spike in these incidents led some coalition members to question the feasibility of partnering with Afghan forces.

Fifteen green-on-blue attacks occurred in 2011, skyrocketing to forty-two by mid-November 2012. The majority took place in RCs East, South, and Southwest. Although insurgent spokespeople routinely claimed credit for insider attacks, the motives for committing these deadly incidents, which eroded trust between ISAF and Afghan personnel, varied significantly.[31] One of the most publicized attacks, in which an Afghan Air Force colonel executed eight American service members and a civilian contractor, occurred on 27 April 2011 at Kabul International Airport. Although CENTCOM investigators did not uncover proof of third-party involvement, an American news outlet alleged that other U.S. officials discovered that the assailant's substantial gambling debts were paid off and his family received a large bank deposit one week before the incident.[32]

These attacks directly influenced the theater campaign at the beginning of 2012. On 20 January, an Afghan soldier fired on French trainers who were conducting physical training on their base northeast of Kabul, killing four and wounding fifteen. News of the incident, which took place as a tough election season began in France, led President Nicolas Sarkozy to proclaim, "We are friends of the Afghan people, allies of the Afghan people. . . . But I cannot accept that Afghan soldiers fire on French soldiers."[33] During a press conference with Karzai on 27 January, Sarkozy announced that his country would pull its combat forces out of Afghanistan one year earlier than scheduled and urged other NATO members to do the same.[34]

---

31. Ben Farmer and Thomas Harding, "'Cocked and Locked' Policy Considered for British Troops Working with Afghans," *Telegraph*, 2 Jul 2012, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9370817/British-soldiers-killed-in-latest-green-on-blue-incident.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Bill Roggio and Lisa Lundquist, "Green on Blue Attacks in Afghanistan: The Data," *Long War Journal*, 23 Aug 2012 (updated 8 Apr 2015), http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. Maria Abi-Habib and Matthew Rosenberg, "Task Force to Take on Afghan Corruption," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 Jun 2010, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703650604575313062382545140, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Sara Carter, "'For the Record' Investigation: It Was the Deadliest Insider Attack During the War in Afghanistan. Who Paid the Man Who Pulled the Trigger?," *The Blaze*, 15 Apr 2015, https://www.theblaze.com/news/2015/04/15/for-the-record-investigation-it-was-the-deadliest-insider-attack-during-the-war-in-afghanistan-who-paid-the-man-who-pulled-the-trigger, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Edward Cody and Kevin Sieff, "France Threatens Early Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 20 Jan 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/france-halts-training-after-afghan-soldier-kills-4-french-troops/2012/01/20/gIQA77sADQ_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Edward Cody and Karen De Young, "France Will Speed Up Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan by One Year," *Washington Post*, 27 Jan 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/

The Decline of Drone Attacks

Even as the insider attacks increased, the United States carried out fewer drone attacks in the wake of the surge in Afghanistan and during retrograde operations. This trend reflected the growing American sensitivity to the large-scale public demonstrations in Pakistan from 2012 onward that took place in response to actual or suspected strikes. The decrease in drone attacks also can be attributed to guidance issued by the Obama administration governing their use outside of areas of active hostilities. Without specifically mentioning drones, a White House press statement issued on 23 May 2013 explained, "Lethal force will be used only to prevent or stop attacks against U.S. persons, and even then, only when capture is not feasible and no other reasonable alternatives exist to address the threat effectively." The statement further elaborated, "The United States will use lethal force only against a target that poses a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons. It is simply not the case that all terrorists pose a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons; if a terrorist does not pose such a threat, the United States will not use lethal force."[35]

That same day, President Obama spoke publicly on the drone program at the National Defense University on Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. Even though he admitted that drones offered an alternative to the less-palatable scenario of sending Special Operations units into other countries, he acknowledged the drawbacks of that course of action: "The very precision of drone strikes, and the necessary secrecy involved in such actions can end up shielding our government from the public scrutiny that a troop deployment invites. It can also lead a president and his team to view drone strikes as a cure-all for terrorism."[36] After noting the wide gap between official government figures and private estimates of civilian deaths, Obama stated, "It is a hard fact that U.S. strikes have resulted in civilian casualties, a risk that exists in all wars. For the families of those civilians, no words or legal construct can justify their loss. For me, and those in my chain of command, these deaths will haunt us for as long as we live, just as we are haunted by civilian casualties that have occurred through conventional fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq."[37]

---

world/europe/france-will-speed-up-troop-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-by-one-year/2012/01/27/gIOAhc49VQ_story.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

35. Fact Sheet, White House, Ofc of the Press Sec, 23 May 2013, sub: U.S. Policy Standards and Procedures for the Use of Force in Counterterrorist Operations Outside the United States and Areas of Active Hostilities, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/23/fact-sheet-us-policy-standards-and-procedures-use-force-counterterrorism, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

36. Jason Koebler, "Obama: Administration Saw Drone Strikes as 'Cure-All' for Terrorism," *U.S. News and World Report*, 23 May 2013, https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/05/23/obama-administration-saw-drone-strikes-as-cure-all-for-terrorism, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. Tom Curry, "Obama Reframes Counterterrorism Policy with New Rules on Drones," NBC News, 23 May 2013, https://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/05/23/18448515-obama-reframes-counterterrorism-policy-with-new-rules-on-drones, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The president's address at McNair thus effectively signaled his intention to use drones more selectively and less frequently.

Although nongovernment estimates of the number of drone attacks vary, alleged strikes by unmanned aerial vehicles in Pakistan ranged from forty-six to fifty in 2012 before dropping to twenty-six to twenty-eight incidents in 2013, and between twenty-two to twenty-five attacks in the final year of Operation Enduring Freedom. Depending on the source of the figures, civilians accounted for a minimum of 0.6 percent and a maximum of 14 percent of the total casualties in Pakistan credited to drones during the campaign's retrograde and transition phase.[38] Although the drone strikes occurred less frequently, they continued to achieve notable results, including the successful targeting of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan leader Hakimullah Mehsud and his chief deputy in North Waziristan on 1 November 2013.[39] In early February 2014, officials in Washington informally agreed to halt drone strikes in Pakistan, except on positively identified al-Qaeda leaders, while Islamabad pursued peace talks with Taliban militants based in the tribal lands.[40]

With the surge at its peak, efforts to prepare the Afghans to assume the lead in security and stability initiatives across the country had begun in earnest. Beyond putting Afghan soldiers and police out front in the security mission, ISAF had to pull back the stability organizations it had developed, such as Provincial Reconstruction Teams, in order to force the Afghan government to take the lead at all levels. These efforts would require a detailed plan coauthored by ISAF and their Afghan partners.

---

38. The total of enemy combatants killed or wounded in Pakistan by alleged drone strikes during the 2012–2014 timeframe ranged from 593 to 610 based on source. Micah Zenko, "Obama's Final Drone Strike Data," Council on Foreign Relations, 20 Jan 2017, https://www.cfr.org/blog/obamas-final-drone-strike-data, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. Declan Walsh, Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, and Ismail Khan, "Drone Strikes Are Said to Kill Taliban Chief," *New York Times*, 1 Nov 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/02/world/asia/drone-strike-hits-compound-used-by-pakistani-taliban-leader.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. Ken Dilanian, "Obama Administration Agrees to Informal Drone Halt in Pakistan," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 Feb 2014, https://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-pakistan-drone-pause-20140205-story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Chapter Ten

Afghans into the Lead



President Hamid Karzai's inauguration remarks on 19 November 2009 indicated that the ANSF would assume full responsibility for securing their country by the end of 2014. ISAF troop-contributing nations formalized that goal two months later at the January 2010 London Conference on Afghanistan. Half a year of planning and negotiation leading up to the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan in July 2010 had produced a plan for a phased transition.[1] ISAF nations formalized the pending handover with the Afghan government on 20 November 2010 at the NATO head-of-state summit in Lisbon.

The centerpiece of the process was the Joint Framework for Inteqal, agreed upon by the Afghan government, NATO ISAF, the UN, nations outside the coalition, and other interested parties. Released on 19 July 2010, the document proposed a two-step process for turning responsibilities over to the ANSF and Afghan government: assessment followed by phased implementation. Regulating the pace of these transitions would be based on the progress made not just in security, but also in governance and economic development.[2]

Inteqal: The Transition Process

Four principles guided the Joint Framework for Inteqal. First, the transition was to be based on the conditions on the ground, not on a particular timeline. Second, it would not end ISAF's involvement in Afghanistan. Instead, intervening forces would shift to a supporting role as the ANSF and Afghan civilian authorities became better at security, governance, and development. Coalition members would support, mentor, enable, and sustain progress. Third, the transition was to be a district- or even subdistrict-level process,

1. Hamid Karzai, "Inauguration Speech" (Speech, High Peace Council, 19 Nov 2010), http://www.hpc.org.af/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12:president-karzais-inaugral-speech&catid=4:speeches&Itemid=29, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Communiqué, "A Renewed Commitment by the Afghan Government to the Afghan People, A Renewed Commitment by the International Community to Afghanistan," Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, 20 Jul 2010, p. 7, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/AF_100722_Kabul%20Conference%20Communique.pdf(page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. "Afghanistan National Development Strategy: Prioritization and Implementation Plan, Mid 2010 – Mid 2013, Volume I," Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, 20 Jul 2010, p. 37, https://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/ANDS%20PIP%20Vol%201%20final%2015July.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

netting a "dividend" that would free ISAF resources to be "reinvested in other areas." Finally, transition was not purely geographical. It also involved Afghan institutions and functions that could be assumed from the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, thus allowing these teams to be dissolved as needed.[3]

A potential sensitivity arose as a result of ISAF being able to move assets such as money, forces, and equipment to other areas of the country. Although such movement was unavoidable, unit reassignments disheartened Afghans who had built relationships with coalition forces and also sparked resentment from ISAF nations whose troops were reluctant to move to a location that might present a greater threat. In practice, only American forces could enter areas where new forces might be required. Only the United States, primarily through the Army's theater and tactical sustainment infrastructure, had the capability to sustain combat power outside the tactical reach of logistics hubs at Bagram and Kandahar.

What made the handover of security unique was the use of distinctive language that introduced the concept of "irreversible transition." The first public reference to "irreversible transition" appeared at the Kabul Conference in July 2010. Although the Lisbon Communiqué that conveyed the results of the November 2010 conference did not refer to this specific term, it stated that "Afghan forces will be assuming full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan." The Joint Framework for Inteqal contained the statement "to ensure the [transition] process is irreversible, at the beginning of Inteqal the combined ANSF/ISAF forces, under overarching Afghan lead in a province, shall be capable of tackling existing and new challenges that may arise from the insurgency."[4]

The First Step: Retiring Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Inteqal disestablished the Provincial Reconstruction Teams that had been a fixture of the coalition campaign in Afghanistan since January 2003, when CJTF-180 commander General Dan K. McNeill had established the first team in Gardez, Paktiya Province.[5] In his remarks at the 47th Munich Security Conference on 6 February 2011, Karzai condemned the reconstruction teams as "parallel structures" that delivered assistance to communities without

3. Backgrounder, "Transition: *Inteqal*," NATO ISAF, 29 Oct 2010, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2010_11/20110310_101122-media-backgrounder-inteqal.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Hamid Karzai, "Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on an Enduring Partnership," NATO, 20 Nov 2010, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2010_11/20101120_101120-declaration.pdf; Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Center for Humanitarian Cooperation, "The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan and its role in reconstruction," 31 May 2003, https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/provincial-reconstruction-team-prt-afghanistan-and-its-role-reconstruction, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

going through the Afghan central government in Kabul.[6] Karzai's rhetoric played to Pashtun audiences but belied the patronage system that pervaded Afghan politics and was considered corrupt by Western audiences. Those misgivings had been amplified in 2010 after the near failure of the Kabul Bank, an organization that a 2012 audit revealed as a pyramid scheme.[7]

Karzai's Presidential Directive 45, dated 26 July 2012, ordered Provincial Reconstruction Teams across the country to end operations. Americans closed their teams in Paktiya, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, and Panjshir Provinces that month, while other ISAF nations closed teams in Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghor, Baghlan, and Jowzjan Provinces.[8] Karzai's advisers welcomed the closures, noting their country's long-term prospects were not being supported by provincial officials who relied on ISAF representatives for funding rather than their own compatriots in Kabul.[9] Closing the reconstruction teams also forced the preponderance of funding to funnel through the Karzai government. Although most of the remaining reconstruction teams were not slated to cease operations until the 2013–14 timeframe, they received less funding from the Commander's Emergency Response Program, which forced local officials to route requests for money through the Afghan central government.

The full transition to Afghan civilian authority depended on connecting the government in Kabul with subnational governance, a process that reconstruction teams had fostered but could not enforce and, as Karzai realized, often hindered. One Afghan initiative that could backfill the void left by the dissolution of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams was the National Solidarity Program. This program was a promising development, as it was an initiative of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development intended to empower local governance. However, the programs that fell under the National Solidarity Program were still dependent on international financial assistance. Without such aid, the National Solidarity Program was not likely to continue. Much as with efforts to improve the ANSF, efforts to improve governance not only had to prevent the Afghans from failing, but also build their self-sufficiency.

---

6. Hamid Karzai, "Statement by H.E. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" (Speech, 47th Munich Security Conference, Munich, 6 Feb 2011), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. Jon Boone, "The Financial Scandal That Broke Afghanistan's Kabul Bank," *Guardian*, 16 Jun 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/16/kabul-bank-afghanistan-financial-scandal, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Kabul Bank Scandal: If At First President Ghani Does Succeed," *Khaama Press*, 13 Oct 2014, https://www.khaama.com/kabul-bank-scandal-if-at-first-president-ghani-does-succeed-8799, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, RL30588 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 22 Dec 2014), pp. 35, 77.

9. Nathan Hodge, "U.S. Winds Down Afghan Aid Program: Military Pulls Out Development Teams That Had Been Central to War Strategy," *Wall Street Journal*, 10 Oct 2012, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10000872396390443749204578048430936135770/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Pfc. Andrew Vidakovich, USA

An Afghan Commando hands out radios to girls at an orphanage in Gardez, Afghanistan. Afghan forces started assuming missions previously done by Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

The Strategic Partnership Agreement

As Inteqal gained momentum, the United States sought to form a strategic partnership with Afghanistan beyond 2014 to ensure that the government could survive the insurgency and prevent the reemergence of al-Qaeda safe havens. Karzai proved a difficult negotiating partner. He insisted that his government assume responsibility for all U.S. detention centers and that coalition forces stop conducting raids at night before he would sign an agreement. After U.S.-led ISAF and Afghan negotiations had carried on for more than a year, the first breakthrough came in March 2012 when the two sides agreed to transfer prisoners. The memorandum of understanding, signed by General John R. Allen and Afghan defense minister Abdul Rahim Wardak, immediately placed an Afghan official in charge of the U.S. detention facility in Parwan but allowed Americans to transfer their 3,200 detainees over a six-month period. The United States retained control over non-Afghan prisoners and could veto the release of suspected Taliban fighters.[10]

Another development of similar importance took place, although for less positive reasons, soon afterward. After taking command, General David H. Petraeus placed growing emphasis on night raids by U.S. Special Operations elements to eliminate or capture enemy leaders, bomb makers, financiers,

10. Rod Nordland, "U.S. and Afghanistan Agree on Prisoner Transfer as Part of Long-Term Agreement," *New York Times*, 9 Mar 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/10/world/asia/us-and-afghanistan-agree-on-detainee-transfer.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Mirwais Harooni, "Afghanistan and U.S. Sign Prison Transfer Deal," Reuters, 9 Mar 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-usa-prisoners-idBRE820BU20120310, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

and arms dealers. The raids were carried out in darkness to achieve surprise and take advantage of U.S. superiority in night vision. These operations often involved combined U.S. and Afghan units, but the targets were chosen exclusively by American intelligence analysts.[11] However, a series of mistakes led to the raids becoming an increasingly public and controversial element of the overall counterinsurgency campaign. Despite impressive statistics of enemy combatants killed or captured, the benefit of night raids waned as new tales of accidental killings and targeting errors led to mounting criticism from inside and outside Afghanistan.[12] By spring 2012, the United States agreed to give Afghan forces control over night raids and other special operations, while the coalition adopted a supporting role.[13]

These specific agreements paved the way for President Barack H. Obama and Karzai to sign the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement on 1 May 2012.[14] The strategic agreement allowed the United States to train Afghan forces and target al-Qaeda beyond 2014 but did not specify troop or funding levels. It also called for the two sides to replace the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Note 202, which had served as a Status of Forces Agreement since 2003, a critical step for protecting the legal rights of U.S. combatants in Afghanistan. In its place, a Bilateral Security Agreement would constitute a formal agreement; the United States was also to designate Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally.[15] The Obama administration followed through with

---

11. In addition to harming innocents, critics believed night raids were creating a group of young insurgents more militant than those who came before them, more interested in fighting an America that routinely raided the homes of family and friends. Gretchen Gavett, "What Is the Secretive U.S. 'Kill/Capture' Campaign?," PBS *Frontline*, 17 June 2011, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/what-is-the-secretive-us-killca/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. The most publicized report alleged that U.S. Special Operations personnel covered up the deaths of three Afghan women in February 2010. In this case, repeated information operations failures by ISAF resulted in major changes to the ongoing counterinsurgency campaign. Richard A. Oppel Jr. and Abdul Waheed Wafa, "Afghan Investigators Say U.S. Troops Tried to Cover Up Evidence in Botched Raid," *New York Times*, 5 Apr 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/world/asia/06afghan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. American troops were not the only ones who faced such allegations; see Ben Wadham, "New Claims of War Crimes by Australian Special Forces Shine Light on Culture of Impunity," *Guardian*, 10 Jul 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jul/11/the-fog-of-war-and-the-modern-soldier-violent-elitism-and-a-culture-of-secrecy, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. Alissa J. Rubin, "U.S. Transfers Control of Night Raids to Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 8 Apr 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/world/asia/deal-reached-on-controversial-afghan-night-raids.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Tom A. Peter, "Afghan Deal on Night Raids Presages Long-Term US Presence," *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 Apr 2012, https://www.csmonitor.com/world/Asia-South-Central/2012/0409/afghan-deal-on-night-raids-presages-longterm-us-presence, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Mark Landler, "Obama Signs Pact in Kabul, Turning Page in Afghan War," *New York Times*, 1 May 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/02/world/asia/obama-lands-in-kabul-on-unannounced-visit.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. Diplomatic Note 202, U.S. State Department, 28 May 2003, sub: Agreement regarding the Status of United States Military and Civilian Personnel of the U.S. Department of Defense Present in Afghanistan in connection with Cooperative Efforts in Response to Terrorism,

the designation one month later, making it easier for Afghanistan to obtain security funding and assistance in the future.[16] The partnership agreement had symbolic importance, as it was meant to signal the Taliban and Afghanistan's neighbors that America would not abandon Afghanistan as it had done in the 1990s.[17] In the end, Karzai refused to sign the security agreement and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, instead having his national security adviser sign the Bilateral Security Agreement on 30 September 2014.

Adapting Tactical Forces for Transition

To answer the increased demand for advisers, the Army shifted from deploying brigade combat teams to deploying brigades task organized for security force assistance. Operation Iraqi Freedom provided the precedent for a brigade fulfilling both combat and advisory roles in June 2008 when the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, deployed as an advise and assist brigade. Even though the Army National Guard assumed the TF Phoenix mission in Afghanistan, the active Army did not deploy brigades for advisory duties until it ordered Col. Brian M. Drinkwine's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division (TF Fury) to Afghanistan in the summer of 2009 as a modular brigade augmented for security force assistance.[18] The differences within this formation, when compared to the advise and assist brigades deployed earlier to Iraq, were not purely semantic. Unlike brigades sent to Iraq, TF Fury and other brigades augmented for security force assistance were not intended to operate as combat forces. Much like TF Phoenix, they were purely advisory. Rather than owning an area of operations, a modular brigade augmented for security force assistance would provide advisers who operated under the security "umbrella" of another brigade combat team conducting counterinsurgency operations.

The nuance between the two advising formations was important. Unlike in Iraq, where the United States could position units relatively easily, the

---

Humanitarian and Civic Assistance, Military Training and Exercises, and Other Activities, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; President Barack Obama and President Hamid Karzai, Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement Between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, White House Archives, 1 May 2012, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/2012.06.01u.s.-afghanistanspasignedtext.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Stephanie McCrummen, "Clinton, in Kabul, Declares Afghanistan a Major U.S. Ally," *Washington Post*, 7 Jul 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia-pacific/clinton-in-kabul-declares-afghanistan-a-major-us-ally/2012/07/07/gJQAj3VDTW_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Matthew Rosenberg and Graham Bowley, "U.S. Grants Special Ally Status to Afghans, Easing Fears of Abandonment," *New York Times*, 7 Jul 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/08/world/asia/us-grants-special-ally-status-to-afghanistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

17. Alissa J. Rubin, "With Pact, U.S. Agrees to Help Afghans for Years to Come," *New York Times*, 22 Apr 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/world/asia/2012/04/23/world/asia/us-and-afghanistan-reach-partnership-agreement.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

18. Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2011), p. 114, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

political sensitivities of the ISAF mission made changes to task organization a delicate matter. Bringing an American combat force into a coalition commander's area of operations created command and control problems and risked offending national sensitivities. Nonetheless, brigades augmented for security force assistance would be a less controversial approach than deploying additional combat units. They bolstered existing forces in RCs North, West, and Capital as part of ISAF's operational approach of partnered operations with the ANSF. They also allowed U.S. and ISAF combat forces to start leaving the country.

One impetus for sourcing advisers from brigades was the cumulative effect of individually sourcing advisers, rather than sourcing them from units. The Army's Worldwide Individual Augmentation System plucked service members from units to fill operational requirements elsewhere without replacing them. Because the system issued only temporary change-of-station orders, the individuals selected were not considered as having been reassigned. The losing unit simply took a gap in staffing, which detracted from its own readiness. Another impetus for sourcing advisers from brigade combat teams was procedural. In the Joint Operations Planning and Execution System, the overhead associated with each force package being built and readied for deployment was the same, whether it was an ad hoc group of individual augmentees or a full brigade combat team with its organic units. Because of system parameters, it was easier for the Army to source advising personnel by forming brigades.

The institutional solution to providing the ANSF with advisers was a hybrid of the individual augmentation and brigade task organization approaches. Building a modular brigade augmented for security force assistance entailed merging two organizations. In January 2012, the Army started to train security force assistance advisory teams to meet ISAF's requirements. Armored and infantry brigades across the force supplied the personnel and equipment for these teams. The brigade combat teams that became donors for advisory teams were called security force assistance brigades. The 162d Infantry Brigade at Fort Polk, which inherited duties for training advisers on 31 August 2009 from 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, out of Fort Riley, Kansas, became the responsible agent for molding groups of individuals into advisory teams.[19]

To create modular brigades augmented for security force assistance, the Army incorporated advisory teams into standard brigade combat teams. The underlying assumption was that an infantry brigade combat team or a heavy brigade combat team could be the building block for any combat mission that Army forces might conduct, including training, advising, and assistance operations.[20] The teams included officers and noncommissioned

19. Bfg, Brig Gen James C. Yarbrough and Col Mark A. Bertolini, Joint Readiness Training Center and 162d Inf Bde, 17 Sep 2009, sub: Modular Brigade Augmented for Security Force Assistance (MB-SFA) Training – Vice Chief of Staff Update, p. 2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. Combined Arms and Tactics Dir, Doctrine Div, Handbook, *The Modular Brigade Augmented for Security Force Assistance Handbook* (Fort Benning, Ga.: U.S. Army Infantry School, 2009), pp. 1–6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

officers with the rank and experience to mentor Afghan leaders up to ANA corps or Afghan Uniformed Police region headquarters. They also provided advisers for the operational coordination centers that were intended to facilitate communication between the ANA and the ANP at the regional and provincial level.[21]

Within the DoD's Global Force Management system, units were designated as security force assistance brigades or modular brigades augmented for security force assistance according to their intended role. Army leaders tried to meet the demand for personnel without using the Worldwide Individual Augmentation System. At the same time, the Army sought to adjust heavy and light infantry brigade combat teams designed for combat operations for advisory missions. Preparing these units required a significant augmentation of officers and senior noncommissioned officers. The creation of the modular brigade augmented for security force assistance streamlined command and control relationships for advisers and provided partnered forces to conduct combat operations alongside the ANSF.[22]

The Army's sourcing of security force assistance brigades and augmented modular brigades coincided with a reduction in the demand for Army forces. With the impending end of military operations in Iraq, the Army was able to reallocate heavy brigade combat teams that had been earmarked for that mission. The first heavy brigade combat team redirected to Afghanistan was TF Raider, formed from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and commanded by Col. Jeffrey R. Martindale. In July 2010, TF Raider replaced TF Fury as a modular brigade augmented for security force assistance covering Kandahar City. TF Raider deployed from Fort Carson, Colorado, without tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles; they assumed control over equipment that the paratroopers of TF Fury had been using. Following this model, the Army converted other heavy brigade combat teams into advisory forces for Operation Enduring Freedom, a theater accustomed to light forces.[23]

The Army's employment of heavy brigade combat teams in Afghanistan was an opportunity provided by the success of the Iraq surge combined with decisions made as part of the Grow the Army Plan. Approved in January 2007, the Grow the Army Plan sought to add 65,000 soldiers to the active Army, 8,200 to the Army National Guard, and approximately 1,000 to the Army Reserve by fiscal year 2013. New personnel supported an expansion of force to 76 brigade combat teams (48 Active Army, 28 Army National Guard), 97 multifunctional support brigades (including battlefield surveillance, aviation, fires, maneuver enhancement, and sustainment), and 130 functional support brigades (such as air defense, chemical, engineer, intelligence, military police,

21. Bfg, U.S. Army Forces Command, 19 Dec 2011, sub: Security Force Assistance Advisory Teams (RFF 1344) SFAAT Planning Update, p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Combined Arms and Tactics Dir, Doctrine Div, Handbook, *The Modular Brigade Augmented for Security Force Assistance Handbook*, pp. 1–6.

23. Presentation, Ofc of the Asst Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, 9 Aug 2011, sub: HQDA/FORSCOM DEF/CEF Patch Chart 11.3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

signal, and medical).[24] All of the new ground maneuver combat units were infantry brigade combat teams. The first completely new unit was the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which did not activate until 16 August 2009. Under the command of Col. Mark H. Landes, it deployed to Wardak and Logar Provinces in October 2011.[25] In a sense, growing the Army initially benefited the Afghan mission, rather than the Iraqi one as intended.

The only two maneuver units yet to have undergone modular conversion were the Germany-based 170th Infantry Brigade and 172d Infantry Brigade. They both deployed to Afghanistan as heavy forces instead of light infantry, without their tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. The 170th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Col. Patrick E. Matlock, deployed to RC North from February 2011 to February 2012 as a modular brigade augmented for security force assistance, minus the 4th Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, which was assigned as a security force in support of NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan advisers in RC South. Matlock's brigade replaced Col. Willard M. "Bill" Burleson III's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, which had spent the past year training Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan National Border Police.[26] The 172d Infantry Brigade, led by Col. Edward T. Bohnemann, served as a modular brigade augmented for security force assistance in Paktika Province from May 2011 to May 2012.[27]

As the ANSF assumed greater responsibility for security, the requirement for combat power shifted from modular brigades augmented for security force assistance to security force assistance brigades. Although modular brigades augmented for security force assistance were capable of self-defense and independent combat operations if necessary, their most immediate contribution to combat power was providing ANA and ANP units with intelligence and access to close air support and rotary-wing aviation.[28] By the end of 2012, the U.S. Army was no longer sending forces trained, organized,

---

24. Execution Order (EXORD), Ofc of the Asst Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, 16 Jun 2008, HQDA, Army Campaign Plan 2008, p. 64, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. The previous brigade, bearing the designation of 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division (known as 3/1 AD) was a heavy brigade combat team at Fort Riley that became the basis for a rebuilt 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. From 2008 to 2009, there was no active unit bearing the designation of 3/1 AD and so, the new brigade had to be rebuilt from scratch. Unit History, 3d Bde Combat Team, 1st Armd Div, 12 Aug 2012, sub: OEF 11-12 TF-Bulldog, pp. 9–10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Blair Neelands, "1st BCT Transfers Authority to 170th IBCT in Afghanistan," 7 Mar 2007, http://www.newzjunky.com/news/0307bct_afghanistan.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. News release, 170th Inf Bde Combat Team Public Affairs Ofc, 4 Feb 2011, Sub: 170th IBCT commander answers deployment questions, http://www.army.mil/article/51355, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; 172d Inf Bde Newsletter, *BattleCry*, (Apr 2012): 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Jul 2013, p. 14, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_July_2013.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp;

and equipped principally for combat operations. Security force assistance brigades had become the norm.[29]

The last brigade combat team to deploy to Afghanistan not specifically structured for advising was the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, under Col. Reynolds J. Lillibridge.[30] Although ISAF embraced security force assistance as its core mission in 2012, the experiences of several brigades demonstrated that counterinsurgency operations were still necessary to set conditions for the stability operations conducted by units structured for security force assistance. Lillibridge's brigade replaced the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Salerno in RC East in September 2012. Its area of responsibility encompassed the volatile Khost, Paktiya, and northeast Paktika Provinces that the Haqqani Network had long sought to dominate. Given that few ANSF were capable of competing with the Haqqani without considerable U.S. assistance, Colonel Lillibridge's soldiers conducted operations in much the same manner as their predecessors.[31]

Handing over security responsibility to ANSF began with securing the population. Understanding this, Lillibridge supported expanding Village Stability Operations in his districts. These operations began with establishing a village stability platform (similar to a forward operating base) where local Afghan police could be trained to protect their neighborhoods and impede Haqqani IED teams. While ANA units or ANP elements always accompanied units of the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, the high threat environment ensured that the Americans led these combined operations. The firefights that occurred motivated ANSF units to improve their infantry skills, tactical planning, and communications.[32]

The Goal of a Self-Sufficient ANSF

As the United States was deploying more advisory units to partner with fielded ANA units, the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan, now headed by American Lt. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger, remained ISAF's primary means of ensuring that the ANSF were capable of securing their own country. Between November 2009 and August 2011, the unit issued 56,859 weapons, 10,700 vehicles, and 70,262 radios to the ANA, which expanded during the period by 74,000 personnel and 64 kandaks. These figures indicated the mission's impressive achievements, but they also created a long-term challenge as the lack of support infrastructure made it difficult for the Afghan military force

29. Interv, Sgt Maj George R. Bryant, CALL, with Maj Gen Kenneth R. Dahl, Cdr, U.S. National Support Element and Deputy CG for Support, USFOR-A, 7 May 2013, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Jul 2013, p. 52.

31. Capt Elijah B. Bales, "Combat Outpost Chamkani Force Redistribution: 1–3 October 2012, Second Platoon's First Combat Actions, Paktiya Province, Afghanistan, Crusher Company, 1-187th Inf, 3d BCT, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)" (Personal experience paper [PEP], Maneuver Capts Career Course 02-15, n.d.), pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. Ibid., pp. 5–15.



D. Myles Cullen, DoD

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dempsey (left) meets with General Bolger, commander of the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan in Kabul.

to maintain the Western-made equipment. The ANA found itself grappling with unfamiliar Western technology while attempting to master tactical proficiency in an expanding force.[33]

The ANSF units created during that period reflected the coalition's near-term need to generate sufficient light infantry to augment ISAF counterinsurgency efforts as well as Commando units to aid coalition-led counterterrorist operations. Whenever Afghan units were committed alongside ISAF, the latter provided all supporting fires; rotary-wing assets; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; and logistical support. Bolger's ambitious charter therefore included not only growing the ANSF—not an easy task, given the average 30 percent annual attrition rate—but also providing Afghans with some of the more critical capabilities previously furnished by ISAF.[34] These capabilities included the further development of self-sustaining branch and vocational schools, as well as army aviation, fire support, engineers, and logistical units.[35]

Coalition efforts to develop the ANSF initially stressed quantity over quality. The idea was that once indigenous forces reached their target sizes

33. Nick Barley, "The NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan: A Game-Changer; Lest We Forget," *Small Wars Journal*, 5 Dec 2015, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-nato-training-mission-afghanistan-a-game-changer-lest-we-forget, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Baris Ates, "Afghan National Army Challenge with Attrition: A Comparative Analysis," *Security Strategies* 10, no. 19 (Feb 2018): 177, https://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/84482, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

35. In some instances, Bolger would have to inaugurate a totally new program, while in other instances, such as the branch and vocation schools, he could build upon the efforts of his predecessor, General William B. Caldwell IV.

in 2012, the ANSF would be better postured to address shortfalls in equipment, logistics, personnel, and leadership. After 2012, advisers and their Afghan counterparts would focus on developing enablers and professionalizing the force. The December 2014 deadline for the transition of the mission was of pressing importance to Afghan Special Operations and aviation units, which were heavily dependent on coalition intelligence collection and close air support.[36]

Increasing ANSF authorizations to 352,000 in October 2012 was a calculated risk. The defense and interior ministries still depended on coalition assistance for planning and sustaining campaigns.[37] A larger ANSF was needed to achieve security gains that would be irreversible by the time decreasing foreign aid forced the ANSF to downsize. Achieving those gains relied on a broad approach across multiple Afghan national defense and security force organizations.

The NATO Training Mission's tactical advisory efforts in 2012 focused on ANA Corps and Afghan Uniformed Police regions, while CSTC-A covered institutional aspects with the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, National Directorate of Security, and Kabul Military Academy.[38] Developing an Afghan security establishment that could sustain military and police forces entailed establishing institutions for training, education, and recruiting, and systems for strategic planning, intelligence gathering, logistics, and force generation. Advising commands sought an ANSF that could prevail in battle and sustain forces throughout an entire campaign.

Unexpected Developments

Although green-on-blue incidents impeded security force assistance, the actions of some Western soldiers also set back Afghan-ISAF relations. On the night of 20 February 2012, soldiers from the 535th Military Police Battalion's intelligence section burned Islamic religious books at the detention facility in Parwan. The books had been confiscated from the facility library when the Theater Intelligence Group's counterintelligence team discovered that detainees were using them to pass messages. As the books were examined, an interpreter informed the Americans that three-quarters of them contained extremist sentiments. Several days later, a junior leader acting on his own initiative ordered almost 2,000 of these confiscated books onto a truck

---

36. Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr., *Written Posture Statement: Statement of General Joseph F. Dunford, Commander, U.S. Forces–Afghanistan before the House Appropriations Committee for Defense on the Situation in Afghanistan*, 18 April 2013, p. 3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. Schroden et al., *Were the Afghan National Security Forces Successful in 2013?*, pp. 8–10.

38. Interv, Diane R. Walker, CSI, with Lt Gen William B. Caldwell IV and Col (Ret.) Daniel Klippstein, frmr Cdr NTM-A and frmr Director NTM-A Cdrs Action Grp, 20 Feb 2013, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; NATO Press Release, "NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan," 4 Apr 2009, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/ news_52802.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; HQ ISAF Handbook, *Resolute Support Security Force Assistance Guide v3.0*, Cdr's Advisory and Assistance Team (Kabul: Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, 2014), pp. 37–38, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

for transport to the camp incinerator. Observing U.S. personnel loading Qurans and other religious texts into the vehicle, an ANA soldier went to the detention facility's operations center to voice his concerns. Operations center personnel attempted to stop the truck but were unsuccessful. The detail arrived at the waste disposal site and began burning the books, only to be stopped by Afghan civilian workers who tossed water into the incinerator in an attempt to extinguish the flames. As the detail ignored continued protests by Afghan workers and attempted to resume burning the books, operations center personnel arrived to terminate their efforts.[39]

Just weeks later, on 11 March 2012, S. Sgt. Robert Bales, a noncommissioned officer from Company B, 2d Battalion, 3d Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, out of Fort Lewis, Washington, murdered sixteen Afghan civilians and injured many others during an unauthorized nocturnal foray from Village Stability Platform Belambai in Kandahar Province. Although originally a Special Forces program, Village Stability Operations had proven so successful that Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan requested two infantry battalions to expand their implementation.[40] At the time of the incident, Bales was the senior member of a two-squad infantry element supporting an operational detachment securing the Belambai platform. Following the Quran burnings, news of an American soldier killing innocent women and children dealt yet another severe setback to ISAF efforts to strengthen its ties with the Afghan populace.[41]

Although a subsequent investigation noted the collocated element's overall morale was good, the ODA leadership rarely interacted with the infantry squads, preferring to leave that task to noncommissioned officers. In addition, Combined Special Operations Task Force South had denied a request by Bales' parent company to send a more senior leader to the stability platform. Leaders from the 2d Battalion, 3d Infantry, were not able to visit the outpost on a regular basis because of the remoteness of the platform and difficulties associated with obtaining helicopter transportation to the area. Although Bales did not exhibit overt signs of erratic behavior prior to the 11

---

39. After being informed of the situation in the library, the Military Police battalion commander instructed his personnel to "get rid" of the extremist literature. Memo, Brig Gen Bryan C. Watson for USFOR-A CG, 24 Mar 2012, sub: Executive Summary of Findings and Recommendations, Army Regulation (AR) 15–6 Investigation (Allegation that U.S. Service Members Improperly Disposed of Islamic Religious materials), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Six soldiers, including four officers, received administrative punishment for their part in the incident. Phil Stewart and David Alexander, "U.S. Troops Punished over Koran Burning, Urination Video," Reuters, 27 Aug 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan/u-s-troops-punished-over-koran-burning-urination-video-idUSBRE87Q0PP20120828, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. Memo, Cdr, USFOR-A for Cdr, CENTCOM, 24 Jun 2012, sub: Report of Investigation IAW AR 15-6 – Facts and Circumstances Surrounding Alleged Shooting of Afghan Civilians outside Village Stability Platform Belambai, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

41. Sangar Rahimi and Alissa J. Rubin, "Koran Burning in NATO Error Incites Afghans," *New York Times*, 21 Feb 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/22/world/asia/nato-commander-apologizes-for-koran-disposal-in-afghanistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

March incident, his actions had concerned junior members of the infantry element on several occasions. Unfortunately, those soldiers were reluctant to voice their concerns because Bales was the senior noncommissioned officer in their chain of command.[42] These circumstances enabled Bales to conduct a murderous rampage and hand the Taliban a major information operations victory while eroding the Afghan people's trust in ISAF.[43]

The Insider Threat: More Green-on-Blue Attacks

The decision to end combat operations hinged upon Afghan security forces being able to prevent the Taliban from toppling the Kabul government. In preparation for the handover, ISAF invested more personnel, money, and resources in preparing the ANSF for increased responsibilities. ISAF not only sent more advisers to work with ANSF but also conducted more partnered operations in the field. The increasing interaction between foreign and Afghan troops made green-on-blue attacks more common. Vetting of Afghan security forces became even more critical, but assets in theater that could conduct these detailed background checks were limited.

The much publicized Quran burnings encouraged attacks and riots across the country. Company B, 2d Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, of the 82d Airborne Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team experienced a green-on-blue incident within seventy-two hours of arriving at Combat Outpost Sangsar on 1 March 2012. Although the incoming soldiers knew they were vulnerable to such attacks from news sources and word of mouth, they believed they were far enough from Kabul to escape Afghan discontent.[44]

The incident involving Company B began at 0200 on 2 March when three Afghan attackers shot one of their comrades and an American manning the entry control point separating the Afghan and American portions of the outpost. Both of the wounded men survived, but two attackers were able to gain access to a guard tower on the American side after killing the soldier inside it. The third attacker appeared to lose heart and returned to his barracks. The two Afghans occupying the heavily armored guard tower then turned their weapons on the tents and buildings housing Company B. Within seconds, the attackers killed an American noncommissioned officer making his way to the guard tower to investigate the situation. Fortunately, concrete barriers surrounding the tents and buildings occupied by the Americans

42. Ibid., pp. 4, 14–19, 22.

43. After three days of testimony, the panel of six military jurists that found Bales guilty of all charges also stipulated he serve a life term in prison without possibility of parole. Because Bales had pled guilty, he did not receive the death penalty, but before he began his prison sentence the Army dishonorably discharged him from military service. Jack Healy, "Soldier Sentenced to Life Without Parole for Killing 16 Afghans," *New York Times*, 23 Aug 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/24/us/soldier-gets-life-without-parole-in-deaths-of-afghan-civilians.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. Capt William J. Vanderlip, "Green on Blue: The Fight at COP SANGSAR" (PEP Maneuver Capts Career Course, 25 Apr 2014), pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

prevented the assailants in the guard tower from inflicting additional casualties on Company B.

The other paratroopers on duty mounted a hasty counterattack to recover the downed noncommissioned officer and prevent the rogue ANA soldiers from leaving the tower and entering the sleeping area on the U.S. side of the outpost. The Americans quickly discovered that all of the antitank rockets and 40-mm. grenades they fired at the tower were bouncing off it without inflicting damage because their warheads did not have sufficient time to arm. Undeterred, the paratroopers poured an intense volume of machine-gun fire into the tower, silencing their opponents long enough for several Americans to begin tossing grenades at the guard post atop the tower. Although the grenades only succeeded in setting fire to a fuel container underneath the tower, smoke and flames soon enveloped it. Using the cover provided by the inadvertent conflagration, the attackers climbed down to the top of the perimeter wall, whereupon they began making their way from the camp to the surrounding wood line. The Americans made a quick call to a nearby Apache helicopter, whose crew tracked down and killed both assailants.[45]

The investigative process began almost immediately after the fires were extinguished, as information from the U.S. soldier wounded at the entry control point proved sufficient to identify and arrest the third attacker. The investigation disclosed that an Afghan civilian instructor contracted to teach reading and writing to the Afghan soldiers at the outpost had been the instigator of the attack. The teacher, who had radical ideas and ties to the Taliban, used the Quran burnings as a motivation to recruit an Afghan noncommissioned officer and two enlisted soldiers for a surprise attack on the Americans. The assailants then waited until the U.S. units were in the middle of their relief-in-place to make their move. Although the Americans had adequate reason to distrust their allies, one platoon leader marveled at the sight of "two of my soldiers sitting down, trying to talk with the ANA soldiers. . . . Most of the platoon felt betrayed by these partner forces, but there were a few who understood better than I did that if we showed them we were human too and built a relationship, we could possibly deter these Green on Blue attacks."[46]

In April 2012, American Lt. Gen. James L. Terry, the V Corps and IJC commander, estimated that 25 percent of green-on-blue incidents were "insurgent-related."[47] In response, he announced "the vetting process of individuals who are coming into the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police with an eight-step process [including] the requirement to have valid identification cards, letters of endorsement or recommendation from village elders and other aspects, criminal background checks, and so on." Expanded collection of biometric data such as fingerprints and iris scans and intensified counterintelligence screening were expected to exclude potential

45. Ibid., pp. 3–7.

46. Ibid., p. 10.

47. "Taliban Behind a Quarter of Insider 'Green on Blue' Attacks, NATO Says," 7 Sep 2012, http://www.news.com.au/world/taliban-behind-a-quarter-of-insider-attacks-nato-says/story-fndir2ev-1226466868462, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

security risks and reduce inside attacks.[48] These efforts led to the discharge of hundreds of recruits who displayed any sign that they were capable of being radicalized. In addition, the deaths of two Americans killed in the offices of the Afghan defense ministry prompted ISAF to implement a program in August 2012 in which armed NATO service members, designated as "guardian angels," protected unarmed comrades working in administrative areas.[49]

Insider attacks reached new heights in 2012 and influenced NATO's advisory plan. Protectors such as the guardian angels were now required to ensure the safety of teams embedded with their Afghan counterparts, increasing the personnel committed to each mission. According to Maj. Gen. Tod D. Wolters, the commander of the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force–Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012, a single green-on-blue incident could force ISAF at any time

> to go back and look at the math equation as far as the ratio is concerned in this Security Force Assistance model. . . . Any time you have one of these Green on Blue incidents, as you can well imagine, you're probably a little less prone to have one coalition member support 50 Afghan security members. You might be in a position where you desire to have five or six coalition members.[50]

Operation Naweed

Maintaining trust between ISAF and Afghan soldiers became paramount as Afghan security forces began repositioning major elements in advance of the security transition. During autumn 2011, the IJC staff worked on a plan supporting Operation Naweed (Good News), the ANA, ANP, and National Directorate of Security operational campaign for 2012. Operation Naweed utilized an overarching approach to synchronizing ANSF and ISAF efforts.[51] Also known as Operational Plan 1391 (after the year 1391 under the Afghan calendar), it was authored by the Ministry of Defense with help from the IJC, and was the Kabul government's attempt to convince its citizens that

48. Statement, Congressional Hearings and Reporting Requirements Tracking System SASC-11-011, 22 Mar 2012, sub: General John R. Allen testimony and response to written questions, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. Graham Smith, "Chief Army Officer Afghanistan Orders Guardian Angels to Protect US Troops from Insider Attacks," *Daily Mail*, 29 Mar 2012, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2122130/Chief-army-officer-Afghanistan-orders-guardian-angels-protect-U-S-troops-insider-attacks.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD News Bfg, Sec Def Leon Panetta and Gen Martin Dempsey, 14 Aug 2012, https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=5099, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. John Reed, "Guardian Angels in Afghanistan: The Pentagon's Attempt to Reduce the Growing Trend of 'Green on Blue' Violence," *Foreign Policy*, 14 Aug 2012, http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/08/14/guardian-angels-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

51. DoD News Bfg, Lt Gen Curtis M. Scaparrotti, 8 Feb 2012, https://archive.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4973, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Afghan army and police units could provide for their safety. The plan divided the country into geographical sections concurrent to the regional command boundaries designated by ISAF, and described a detailed concept for how ISAF, National Directorate of Security, Afghan police, and army forces would cooperate in each region.[52] It listed ISAF and ANSF responsibilities, detailed the conditions under which the handover would occur, and laid out a general timetable.

Operation Naweed was unique in that it was the first plan conceived and written by the ANSF. The Afghan authors of Naweed recognized that security transition entailed more than transferring responsibility from one party to the other. As a result, their plan directed shaping operations in the provinces of Nuristan, Kunar, Nangarhar, Logar, Paktiya, Khost, Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz, and Farah to target known enemy strongholds to wrest the operational initiative from the insurgents. The ANSF would also have to blunt enemy counterattacks so as to maintain security in key areas. The Afghan government viewed Naweed as an opportunity to exert greater control over its borders. Although ISAF would continue to provide air support, helicopters, medical evacuation, and other critical services, General Allen convinced the Afghan Ministry of Defense to use Naweed to develop the Afghan military's logistical systems.[53] The nine-month planning process ended with the Afghan Ministry of Defense publishing Joint Order No. 5 on 1 September 2012. Immediately after issuing the plan, the Ministry created the Afghan Army's Ground Forces Command and ANSF National Military Operations Center.[54] Naweed would be the first test for both organizations.

Operation Naweed involved all six ANA Corps, the separate 111th Division, Afghan Uniformed Police, Afghan Border Police, National Security Directorate organizations, and developmental ministries, including the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock; and the Independent Directorate of Local Government. Each major ANA formation received broad goals and objectives tailored to its area of operations. These objectives included preventing insurgent groups from conducting operations and ensuring that criminal elements such as smugglers, kidnappers, extortionists, and drug lords were unable to take advantage of the security transition process.

Because implementing the plan simultaneously across the country would overwhelm the nascent ANSF logistical system and newly reconfigured national command and control structure, U.S. and Afghan planners ensured that Operation Naweed unfolded deliberately. By the time Tranche 3 was

---

52. House of Commons Def Committee, *Securing the Future of Afghanistan: Tenth Report of Session 2012–2013*, Rpt HC–413, vol. 1 (London: The Stationery Office Ltd., 10 Apr 2013), p. 84, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

53. Operation Selab, which prepositioned supplies and equipment at ANA Corps logistical centers in April 2012, set the foundation for this goal. Rpt, DoD, Inspector Gen, Special Plans and Opns, *Assessment of U.S. Efforts to Develop the Afghan National Security Forces Command, Control and Coordination System*, 22 Mar 2013, pp. 11–12, https://media.defense.gov/2013/Mar/22/2001712817/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2013-058.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Ibid., pp. 16–17.



M. Sgt. Kap Kim, USA

ISAF commander General Allen kneels after a memorial ceremony for fallen marines at Camp Leatherneck, Helmand Province.

announced on 13 May 2012, the ANSF was responsible for securing 75 percent of Afghanistan. This period also marked a major structural change for the ANSF, namely the creation of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command and Special Mission Wing, both of which began operations on 16 July 2012. The first command created an advocate for Afghan SOF that prevented the Afghan conventional force leadership from improperly utilizing their unique capabilities.[55]

The Special Mission Wing provided aviation support for the Afghan Special Forces. The wing was created from the former Ministry of Interior Air Interdiction Unit, which was originally formed for counternarcotics operations. Its charter, outlined in a memorandum of understanding among the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, Combined Training Command, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, expanded the scope of the organization to include aviation support for Afghan counterterrorism and SOF.[56] In spite of an agreement signed by the National Defense Service and the interior and defense ministers in August 2013, the Special Mission Wing's

55. ISAF HQ Public Affairs Ofc, "ISAF Welcomes Opening of the Afghan Special Operations Command Division," 17 Jul 2012, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/91686/isaf-welcomes-opening-afghan-special-operations-command-division, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Steven Hoarn, "Afghan Special Operations Command Division Joins the Fight," Defense Media Network, 27 Jul 2012, https://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/afghan-special-operations-command-division-joins-the-fight, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 9 Nov 2012, sub: Memorandum of Understanding Among the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats, the Office of the Deputy Commanding General, Special Operations Forces, NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan and Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan, and the U.S.

split parentage was beset with infighting, and its command relationship remained unresolved through the end of the ISAF campaign.[57]

The one bright spot for the Special Mission Wing was its tactical capability. In spite of the fight over the unit, it successfully conducted multiple air assault and aerial surveillance missions in support of Afghan SOF operations. The NATO Training Mission's deputy commanding general for SOF had originally trained, advised, and assisted the wing. Eventually, oversight was transferred to the newly created NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, with Army Special Operations Aviation personnel in charge of training, advising, and assisting.[58] The creation of Afghan SOF and Special Mission Wing came at a favorable moment in September 2012, as Tranche 4 gave the ANSF lead security responsibility for 87 percent of the population.

With the Afghans continuing to increase their control of the security environment across the country, and the Afghan government building capacity and pushing it out to the provinces, the coalition drawdown of forces and materiel could begin in earnest. However, a successful drawdown would be much more complex than merely redeploying soldiers and equipment. An intricate, coordinated plan of base closures throughout Afghanistan would be required so as not to leave security or governance voids that insurgents could exploit. U.S. and ISAF leadership would have to strike the right balance between steadily removing their assets on the ground and maintaining support for continued stability within Afghanistan—a mission that would put all of their hard-learned experience to the test.

Drug Enforcement Administration Concerning the Establishment of the Afghan Special Mission Wing, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. HQ ISAF Handbook, Resolute Support Security Force Assistance Guide v3.0, pp. 50–51. Bfg, NATO Special Operations Component Command—Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force—Afghanistan, 9 Jan 2014, sub: NSOCC-A SMW Way Ahead, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. Bfg, NATO Special Operations Component Command—Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force—Afghanistan, 9 Jan 2014, sub: NSOCC-A SMW Way Ahead.

Chapter Eleven

Drawdown



In his address at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, on 1 December 2009, President Barack H. Obama told the assembled cadets:

> I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After eighteen months, our troops will begin to come home. . . . The 30,000 additional troops that I'm announcing tonight will deploy in the first part of 2010—the fastest possible pace—so that they can target the insurgency and secure key population centers.[1]

Seventeen months later, in late June 2011, he followed up on those remarks:

> Thanks to our extraordinary men and women in uniform, our civilian personnel, and our many coalition partners, we are meeting our goals. As a result, starting next month, we will be able to remove 10,000 of our troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year, and we will bring home a total of 33,000 troops by next summer, fully recovering the surge I announced at West Point.[2]

The president also explained that U.S. troop withdrawals would not end with the recovery of the surge forces. In fact, tens of thousands of additional American troops would depart Afghanistan in the months leading up to the planned transition of security responsibilities at the end of 2014.[3]

Drawing down forces entailed the retrograde of equipment and the disposal of materiel that would be uneconomical to return to the United States. The stockpile that had to be reduced, retrograded, and disposed of had been accumulating since the U.S. mission began in 2001. In addition to the sheer amount of materiel involved, the equipment was widely dispersed and had to travel long distances over routes that the coalition did not control. Consequently, planning for the retrograde became a multiyear effort to meet the policy goals that had been set for the end of 2014. Although ANSF and

---

1. President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Speech, West Point, N.Y., 1 Dec 2009), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 22 Jun 2011), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

3. Ibid.

Afghan civilian leaders eagerly accepted coalition equipment and bases, materiel without further utility was scrapped or destroyed. The U.S. military leaders who planned and executed the drawdown were mindful of the fact that Soviet military equipment and supplies left over from the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s had been used extensively in the Afghan civil war of the early 1990s by government and opposition forces alike. This knowledge shaped their approach to handling their own equipment as the United States pulled back from its involvement in Afghanistan.

Senior commanders in the final three years of the ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom missions had to balance two necessary tasks while maintaining the force caps specified by policy decisions. Those policy decisions mandated that coalition military equipment in Afghanistan be reduced, while enablers such as close air support and intelligence support to the ANSF would be continued at current levels. Throughout the process, the coalition had to protect itself from the same malign elements that it was training the ANSF to fight. Although the retrograde of equipment and materiel and the transition to security force assistance were separate efforts, they complemented each other.

Scoping the Surge Recovery

Planning for the drawdown started before Obama announced at the NATO Summit in Lisbon on 20 November 2010 that ISAF would begin transitioning security responsibility to the ANSF in early 2011. The first substantive work toward planning the drawdown of surge forces started in June 2010 and resulted in an order on 18 August 2010 directing units in Afghanistan to prepare to dispose of specified excess equipment. A second conference on excess equipment at the CENTCOM forward headquarters in Qatar from 13–14 October 2010 and a CENTCOM order on 7 December 2010 directed USFOR-A to begin planning to redistribute or dispose of equipment that was not mission essential.[4]

As the USFOR-A deputy commander for support, Maj. Gen. Timothy P. McHale was responsible for withdrawing forces and equipment from Afghanistan. His planning had to occur concurrently with planning for surging forces into theater. As early as July 2010, the 401st Army Field Support Brigade, an organization from the U.S. Army Materiel Command supporting USFOR-A, took advantage of lessons learned in Iraq to begin preparations to expand property holding facilities even as the military saturated the theater with new units. Yet even with these proactive measures, the contractors overseeing operations in the yards soon found themselves struggling with the growing workload.[5]

---

4. Planning Order (PLANORD), CENTCOM, 7 Dec 2010, sub: J4 Plans, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Rpt, DoD Inspector Gen, *The Army Needs to Improve Property Accountability and Contractor Oversight at Property Redistribution Assistance Team Yards in Afghanistan*, 4 Mar 2014, https://www/dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a602853.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Richard R. Brennan et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and the Disestablishment*

Although planning continued through winter and spring, it competed with combat operations throughout Afghanistan, which included the 10th Mountain Division's assumption of responsibility for RC South from the British. The Afghan surge also marked an expansion of the Afghan Local Police and aggressive clearing operations in Helmand, Kandahar, and Uruzgan Provinces.[6] On 5 April 2012, while those operations were underway, USFOR-A published Fragmentary Order 11–072: *Interim Base Closure and Transfer Guidance*, ordering all U.S. units in Afghanistan to prepare for withdrawal concurrent with ongoing combat operations.

Although commanders at all levels understood how important it was to reduce theater assets, units in combat were hard-pressed to account for equipment, redistribute property, remediate hazardous environments, and modify or terminate contracts. The tensions among combat operations, growth of the force as a result of the surge, and planned retrograde were greatest in RCs South and Southwest. Each regional command stood to lose more than one hundred combat outposts and bases by summer 2011. Requirements to return those bases to their original environmental state demanded close oversight from the engineer staff at USFOR-A, and added to the complexity of missions.[7]

Leaders made some broad assumptions at the beginning of the planning process. When the American command started looking at how it could reduce excess, it did not contemplate a full withdrawal from Afghanistan. Furthermore, ISAF and IJC staff officers recognized that the theater had to shed personnel but did not consider that equipment had to be withdrawn in tonnage greater than the equipment associated with current troop numbers. They also had to deal with warehouses and motor parks full of equipment not being used by units in the field. Tactical planners, focused on combat operations, simply wanted to mitigate the burden that retrograde placed on their units that were still conducting combat operations to clear and hold terrain in support of the Afghan surge. This made concurrent planning for the retrograde difficult to attain at all echelons.[8]

Other ISAF members also were reducing their personnel and equipment. The Netherlands ended its combat mission on 1 August 2010, while Canada withdrew its task force in July 2011. The British planned to withdraw roughly 500 troops from their commitment of approximately 9,000 troops, with the goal of reducing the total to 4,500 by 2013.[9]

---

of United States Forces – Iraq, RAND Rpt 232 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2013), pp. 270, 280–81.

6. DoD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Apr 2011, p. 2

7. Rpt, HQ USFOR-A, 1 Jan 2012, sub: Narrative History, Jul–Dec 2011, p. 90, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park and Capt Miranda M. Summers-Lowe, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Col Andrew Dziengeleski, frmr IJC Plans Ofcr, 21 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Robert H. Reid, "Netherlands Becomes First NATO Country to End Its Combat Mission in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 2 Aug 2010, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/01/AR2010080103108.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Canadian

Planning the drawdown of forces from Afghanistan was not a direct equivalent to the retrograde from Iraq. Brig. Gen. Scottie D. Carpenter, commanding the 311th Sustainment Command near the end of the Afghan drawdown, was forthright about the considerations:

> It took me about a week here to realize, this isn't Iraq. In Iraq, it was a fairly simple process of driving equipment to Kuwait and letting it sit there until someone else could ship it home. Afghanistan is a landlocked country. Here, everything is difficult. Retrograding equipment is time-consuming, it's expensive. You have to consider the PAK GLOC [ground lines of communication through Pakistan] and whether it's open or not. Iraq had improved roads, here the road networks can be very difficult. So, retrograde here is much more complex and difficult than what I experienced in Iraq.[10]

The stark differences between the two redeployments dwarfed any similarities they shared.

Geography and the Initial Disposition of the Force

The manner in which the United States retrograded forces from Afghanistan reflected how the conflict had expanded geographically over the past decade. From ISAF's arrival in Kabul in late 2001 and the 10th Mountain Division's occupation of the Bagram and Kandahar airfields in early 2002, coalition forces had spread eastward and southward. The desire to interdict lines of communication to Pakistan and interact with Afghans through Provincial Reconstruction Teams justified new bases such as Salerno in Khost Province and Orgun-e in Paktika Province. Later, the shift to population-centric counterinsurgency expanded the coalition footprint to the northeast and southwest into the heavily populated Pashtun areas. Because the U.S. footprint had expanded, most of the forces and materiel needing to be withdrawn from Afghanistan were concentrated in RC East, RC South, and RC Southwest.

The Hindu Kush and Afghanistan's landlocked borders posed challenges to logisticians. Most of the country was either mountainous or desert, cargo coming in by road would transit Afghanistan National Highway 1, the Ring

---

Department of National Defence, "Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan – Mission Timeline," 9 Apr 2014, https://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad-past/afg-timeline.page, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Dossier de Presse: 13 ans d'intervention militaire française en Afghanistan" [Press kit: 13 years of French military intervention in Afghanistan], Ministère des Armées [French Ministry of the Armed Forces], 17 Jan 2015, p. 8, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/334266/4644903/file/DOSSIER%20DE%20PRESSE_%20Afghanistan.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Mohammed Abbas, "Thousands of British Troops to Quit Afghanistan in 2013," Reuters UK, 14 Oct 2012, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-afghanisatn-withdrawal-idUKBRE89D03D20121014, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

10. Interv, Sgt Maj George R. Bryant, CALL, with Brig Gen Scottie D. Carpenter, 311th Sustainment Cmd Cdr, 25 Jul 2013, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Road, which circled the Hindu Kush in the south, west, and north, and penetrated the mountain range by way of the Salang Tunnel in the east. This increasingly decrepit tunnel was the only alternative to transporting cargo through Taliban-controlled areas in RC South.[11]

There were four border crossing points where cargo could exit Afghanistan via ground transportation in the north. The easternmost, at Qizil Qal'ah in Kunduz Province, led to Tajikistan. Located approximately 260 kilometers by road to the west was a crossing into Uzbekistan at Hairatan in Balkh Province. Hairatan was also the location of the only rail line in Afghanistan, which extended only as far south as the north-central city of Mazar-e Sharif. The third crossing was about 290 kilometers by road west of Hairatan at Aqineh in Faryab Province, bordering Turkmenistan. The westernmost crossing was approximately 940 kilometers west by road at Toraghundi in Herat Province and also spilled traffic into Turkmenistan. The first three, and later all four, of those border crossings were entry points in what the United States called the Northern Distribution Network, a connection of truck, rail, and water routes through Kazakhstan, Russia, and Latvia to Baltic seaports (*Map 11.1*). The network was also operated under NATO authorities as the Northern Ground Line of Communications.[12]

Afghanistan had two border crossing points suitable for heavy cargo south of the Hindu Kush. The eastern crossing was at a gate complex between Tor Kham, Afghanistan, and Tor Kham, Pakistan, entering the Khyber Pass from Nangarhar Province toward the Pakistani city of Peshawar. The western crossing was at Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province, directly opposite the Pakistani city of Chaman and on the route to Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan. Both the Peshawar and Quetta routes converged at Karachi on the Arabian Sea. These routes collectively constituted the Pakistan ground line of communications.

All of these border crossing points could handle vehicle traffic. In February 2012, a rail line opened from Mazar-e Sharif to Termiz, Uzbekistan. A subsidiary of the Uzbekistan State Railways Company operated the line, in conjunction with ISAF advisers, while it trained Afghan engineers and mechanics to assume those roles.[13] The continued operation of a rail line required a secure environment, and Balkh Province had been relatively quiet. However, the Taliban had made inroads into neighboring Kunduz Province and launched several successful attacks into Balkh in 2011.[14]

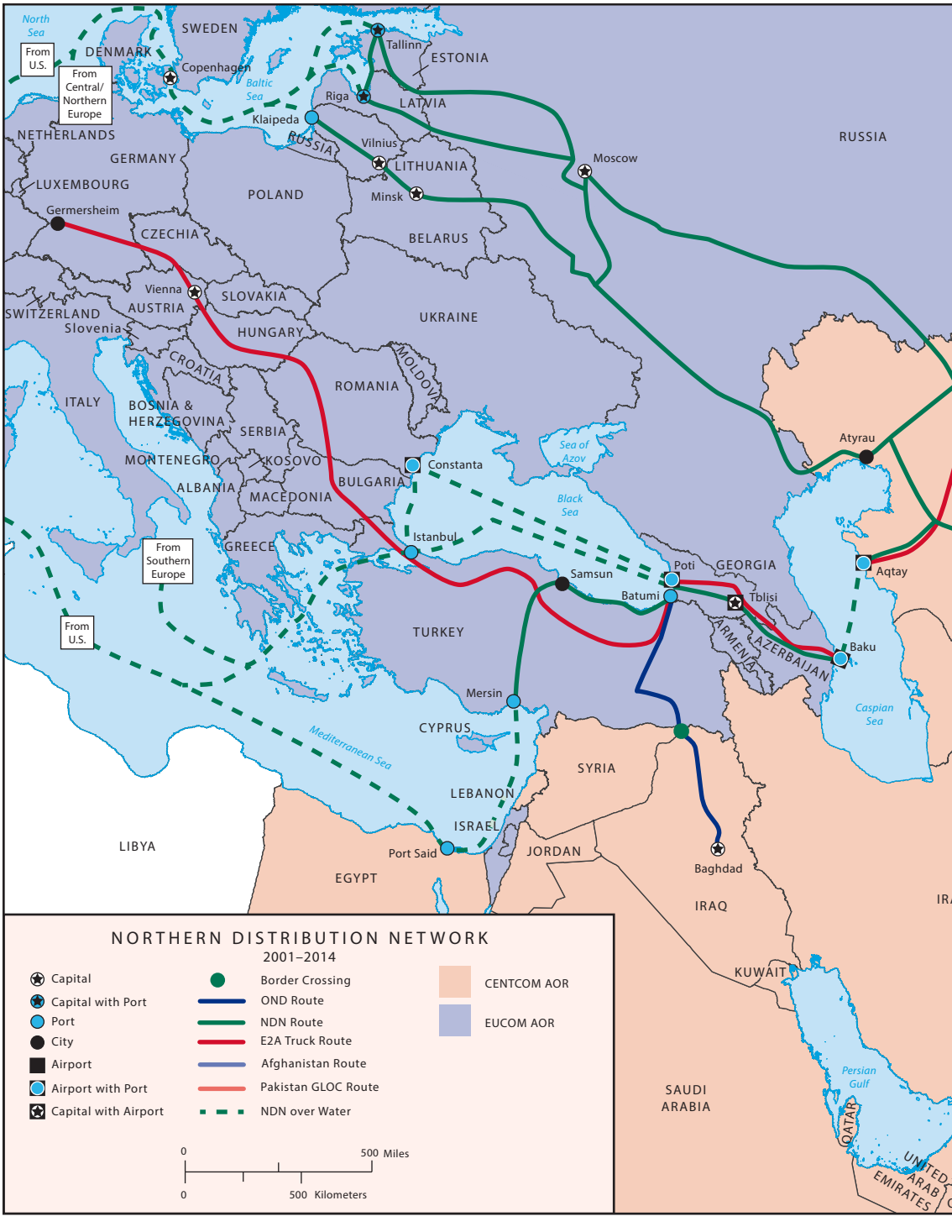
---

11. Sean Carberry, "Afghan Tunnel: Decrepit, Dangerous Yet Indispensable," NPR, 24 Jun 2012, https://www.npr.org/2012/06/24/155302587/afghan-tunnel-decrepit-dangerous-yet-indispensible, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. Heidi Reisinger, "Not Only 'Containerspotting' – NATO's Redeployment from Landlocked Afghanistan" (Rome: NATO Defense College, Oct 2013), p. 8.

13. "Unstoppable: The Hairatan to Mazar-e-Sharif Railway Project – Performance-Based Operation and Maintenance Contract," Asian Development Bank, 21 Feb 2014, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/31203/unstoppable-hairatan-mazar-e-sharif-railway-project.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

14. Rod Nordland, "Bomber Kills 36 Outside Afghan Recruiting Center," New York Times, 14 Mar 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/world/asia/15afghanistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


North Sea
From U.S.
DENMARK
From Central/ Northern Europe
SWEDEN
Copenhagen
Baltic Sea
Tallinn
ESTONIA
Riga
LATVIA
Klaipeda
RUSSIA
Vilnius
LITHUANIA
Moscow
RUSSIA
NETHERLANDS
GERMANY
LUXEMBOURG
POLAND
Minsk
Germersheim
CZECHIA
BELARUS
Vienna
AUSTRIA
SLOVAKIA
SWITZERLAND
Slovenia
HUNGARY
UKRAINE
CROATIA
MOLDOVA
ROMANIA
ITALY
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA
MONTENEGRO
KOSOVO
Constanta
Sea of Azov
ALBANIA
MACEDONIA
BULGARIA
Black Sea
Istanbul
From Southern Europe
GREECE
From U.S.
Samsun
Poti
GEORGIA
Batumi
Tblisi
Atyrau
Aqtay
TURKEY
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
Baku
Mersin
Caspian Sea
CYPRUS
Mediterranean Sea
SYRIA
LEBANON
ISRAEL
LIBYA
Port Said
JORDAN
EGYPT
Baghdad
IRAQ
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
Persian Gulf
QATAR
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
NORTHERN DISTRIBUTION NETWORK
2001–2014
Capital
Capital with Port
Port
City
Airport
Airport with Port
Capital with Airport
Border Crossing
OND Route
NDN Route
E2A Truck Route
Afghanistan Route
Pakistan GLOC Route
NDN over Water
CENTCOM AOR
EUCOM AOR
0
500 Miles
0
500 Kilometers

Map 11.1



Both the Northern Distribution Network and Pakistani ground routes had significant limitations. The latter had been in use for most of the war, but Pakistani instability and cargo theft had persuaded U.S. Transportation Command to develop the Northern Distribution Network as an alternative.[15] Although there was little pilferage of cargo transiting the northern route, it cost approximately double what the Pakistani routes cost and took anywhere from twenty to forty days longer to deliver the goods.

Unfortunately for ISAF, bilateral agreements prevented the Northern Distribution Network from being used for combat vehicles, weapons, and ammunition. Those cargos had to go through Pakistan or move by air transport. Meanwhile, Islamabad's political sensitivities would not accommodate U.S. personnel working at the Port of Karachi or along the routes connecting offloading docks to Afghanistan. Some outsized cargos such as Stryker personnel carriers and MRAP vehicles were too impractical or sensitive to move through Pakistan and had to exit the theater on Air Force C–5 or C–17 cargo aircraft.[16]

---

15. Andrew C. Kuchins and Thomas M. Sanderson, *The Northern Distribution Network and Afghanistan: Geopolitical Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010), p. 7; U.S. Transportation Command Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, "Northern Distribution Network (NDN) Records," 5 U.S.C. § (a)(2)(D) Records, 14 Feb 2012, https://www.ustranscom.mil/foia/docs/FOIA_11-87_Fnl_Rsp_Released_Documents_(RDCT).zip, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Maj Kerry Dennard, Maj Christine A. Haffey, and Maj Ray Ferguson, "45th Sustainment Brigade: Supply Distribution in Afghanistan," *Army Sustainment* 42, no. 6 (Nov-

Air Transport and Multimodal Operations

Air transport was the fastest and most secure method to bring cargo in or out of Afghanistan, but it was also the most expensive. It cost approximately $12,400 to haul a single 6.1-meter shipping container (empty or full) via commercial truck from Afghanistan to Karachi, load it on a ship, and return it to the United States. In comparison, it cost $167,400—nearly $56,000 per container—to transport the equivalent of three fully loaded shipping containers aboard an Air Force C–17 fixed-wing transport aircraft from Kandahar Airfield to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Furthermore, although airlift was faster than sealift, the actual throughput via air was slower because a single cargo vessel ferried the equivalent of hundreds of aircraft sorties during a single voyage.[17]

The compromise that emerged combined truck, rail, sea, and air transportation in what was called multimodal operations. The Northern Distribution Network was effectively multimodal because cargo moved from border crossing points by truck, watercraft, and rail to the seaports in Europe prior to returning to the United States. Multimodal transport paid huge dividends for cargo leaving from southern Afghanistan. Outgoing cargo could be loaded onto a C–17 at Bagram or Kandahar and flown to Kuwait or another location in the CENTCOM area of responsibility. After being offloaded, vehicles and containers could then be shipped back to the United States. The throughput was greater and cheaper.[18] Because the shorter flights were considered intratheater lift, they were under the control of the Combined Air Operations Center at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar rather than U.S. Transportation Command. Because of this, they were more responsive to the theater requirements; an important consideration given that circumstances frequently required reallocating transport assets.

Competition for Limited Assets

One of the fundamental differences between the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan was coalition presence. The expiration of UN Security Council Resolution 1790 and the refusal of the Iraqi government to approve coalition missions beyond 31 July 2009 meant that the British and Australians departed Iraq on 28 July 2009, leaving only American forces by the end of Operation

---

Dec 2010), https://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/NovDec10/45th_supplydistrib.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

17. The C–17 cargo aircraft cannot physically accommodate three containers, but can hold three containers' worth of equipment. Col Daniel K. Rickleff, "The Retrograde of Shipping Containers from Afghanistan" (Strategic research project paper, U.S. Army War College, 2013), p. 8; Maj Joel E. Eppley, "Optimizing Aircraft Utilization for Retrograde Operations" (Graduate research project, Air Force Institute of Technology, 2012), pp. 33–34 https://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a566064.pdf.

18. Eppley, "Optimizing Aircraft Utilization for Retrograde Operations," pp. 14–15.



Maj. Brandon Lingle, USA

A C–17 Globemaster transports Army vehicles from Bagram.

New Dawn.[19] In Afghanistan, however, ISAF's status as a NATO mission meant that coalition members would continue missions throughout the ISAF campaign. The simultaneous extraction of troops and equipment by several nations complicated retrograde efforts as coalition partners competed for space on ground and air lines of communications.

Under NATO doctrine, logistics, including transportation expenses, were a national responsibility. Only NATO equipment and headquarters could receive NATO funding; anything provided by a country for the ISAF mission was paid for by that country.[20] In some cases, the United States supported other countries through lift and sustain agreements. Eligibility for such assistance was limited to those allies deemed essential to stability operations.[21] In practice, it meant that the United States was responsible for redeploying the personnel and equipment for multiple nations.[22] Army forces conducted most of the retrograde activity within the CENTCOM area of responsibility. To coordinate all of the moving parts in multimodal transportation, retrograde required tight synchronization. Detailed planning and control of participating units mitigated the risk of well-meaning tactical commanders unhinging the entire effort through their own, undisciplined initiatives.

---

19. Stephen A. Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011), pp. 26–30.

20. Reisinger, "Not Only 'Containerspotting' – NATO's Redeployment from Landlocked Afghanistan," pp. 3–4.

21. Memo, Ofc of the Sec of the Army to Principal Officials of HQDA et al., 30 Apr 2012, sub: *Army Directive 2012–12, Interim Army Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements, Lift and Sustain, and Foreign Assistance Act Authorities*, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Gen William E. Rapp, frmr USFOR-A Deputy Cdr for Support, 3 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



US Army

General Rapp visits Army Field Support Battalion Kandahar in December 2011.

Planning the Retrograde

Translating policy guidance into campaign plans started with a Joint Staff order on 1 July 2011 directing the planning of surge recovery. On 20 August, CENTCOM published Fragmentary Order 07–769, *Order to Plan Drawdown of U.S. Surge Forces in Afghanistan*, directing USFOR-A to begin withdrawing surge forces in accordance with President Obama's national address. The order outlined two phases. The first was to reduce end strength by 10,000 troops by the end of 2011, leaving 91,000 U.S. service members in country. The second was to send another 33,000 troops back to the United States by the end of September 2012. Planners at USFOR-A were responsible for identifying who would be withdrawn and sequencing their departure.[23] In the meantime, McHale's tour as deputy commander for support ended on 1 September 2011 when he transferred his duties to Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp.

As planning continued, it became apparent that the U.S. forces did not have a truly accurate assessment of what materiel actually was in Afghanistan. Because retrograde planning could not proceed without that knowledge, the USFOR-A Fusion Cell published Fragmentary Order 11–228 on 21 September 2011. The order directed Operation Clean Sweep–Afghanistan, a phased retrograde and base reduction plan that would identify serviceable and unserviceable theater-provided equipment. On 29 September 2011, the initial estimate of theater-provided equipment in Afghanistan was approximately 26,000 vehicles and 1.8 million pieces of nonrolling stock, which later was estimated to require the equivalent of 95,000 containers. The initial estimate valued that materiel at approximately $17 billion and predicted that it would

23. FRAGO 07–769, CENTCOM, 20 Aug 2011, sub: Order to Plan Drawdown of US Surge Forces in Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

cost $6 billion to move it out of Afghanistan. Those estimates increased to $25 billion and $10 billion respectively as Operation Clean Sweep–Afghanistan continued.[24]

In a discussion near the end of September 2011, Rapp told ISAF commander General John R. Allen that "we have a physics problem." There was always the potential that the coalition might have "to go to zero," meaning total withdrawal of all personnel at the end of 2014. Consequently, any planning for surge recovery had to account for the materiel that had accumulated since 2001. In 1989, the Soviet Union's 40th Guards Army had left stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, and other equipment for the military of the Republic of Afghanistan, and that equipment had been a major factor in the ensuing Afghan civil war. It was unlikely that the American public or NATO would tolerate its war materiel being used in a similar uprising.[25]

General Rapp realized that his subordinate commanders and staff needed a target with which to plan and measure progress. That target, which he termed the "Number," was his estimate of how much excess needed to be pushed out of theater per month once the surge recovery had ended. The initial Number, calculated on 24 October 2011, was estimated at 1,250 vehicles and equivalent containers. Rapp's intent was to create a consistent stream of rolling and nonrolling stock to be turned in for disposal. Whatever was not disposed of in Afghanistan would have to be transported out of the theater. As USFOR-A staff members continued analyzing the retrograde, they settled on 1,200 vehicles and 1,000 containers transported a month, along with the closure of twenty bases per month through November 2012. Some believed that President Obama would keep a residual force of 10,000 to 20,000 service members in Afghanistan after 2014, but Rapp assumed the American forces would have to empty the theater by the end of 2014 under the premise that slowing retrograde was easier than accelerating it.[26]

To meet these three targets, USFOR-A would need the assistance of partners outside Afghanistan. The most vital of these were the Army Materiel Command, Defense Logistics Agency, U.S. Transportation Command, and Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness, which granted the authority for much of what eventually transpired. Most of the equipment in theater had been provided by the Army, and the U.S. Army Materiel Command was the agent for identifying outbound equipment to fill requirements outside Afghanistan. Items not identified for shipment out of Afghanistan were slated for disposal and became the responsibility of the Defense Logistics Agency. Armored vehicles were cut apart with plasma torches, while smaller equipment was destroyed in industrial shredders. Finally, U.S. Transportation Command was responsible for moving cargo from Afghanistan to its final destination. Retrograde could not have occurred without outside assistance, although it

24. Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.; Bfg, Maj Gen William E. Rapp, HQ, USFOR-A, 10 Dec 2011, sub: Theater Reposture: The Time Is Now!, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



S. Sgt. Brandon Pomrenke, USA

IJC commander General Scaparrotti speaks with ANA officers in Kabul.

was impossible for these state-based units to alleviate all withdrawal tasks from deployed units.

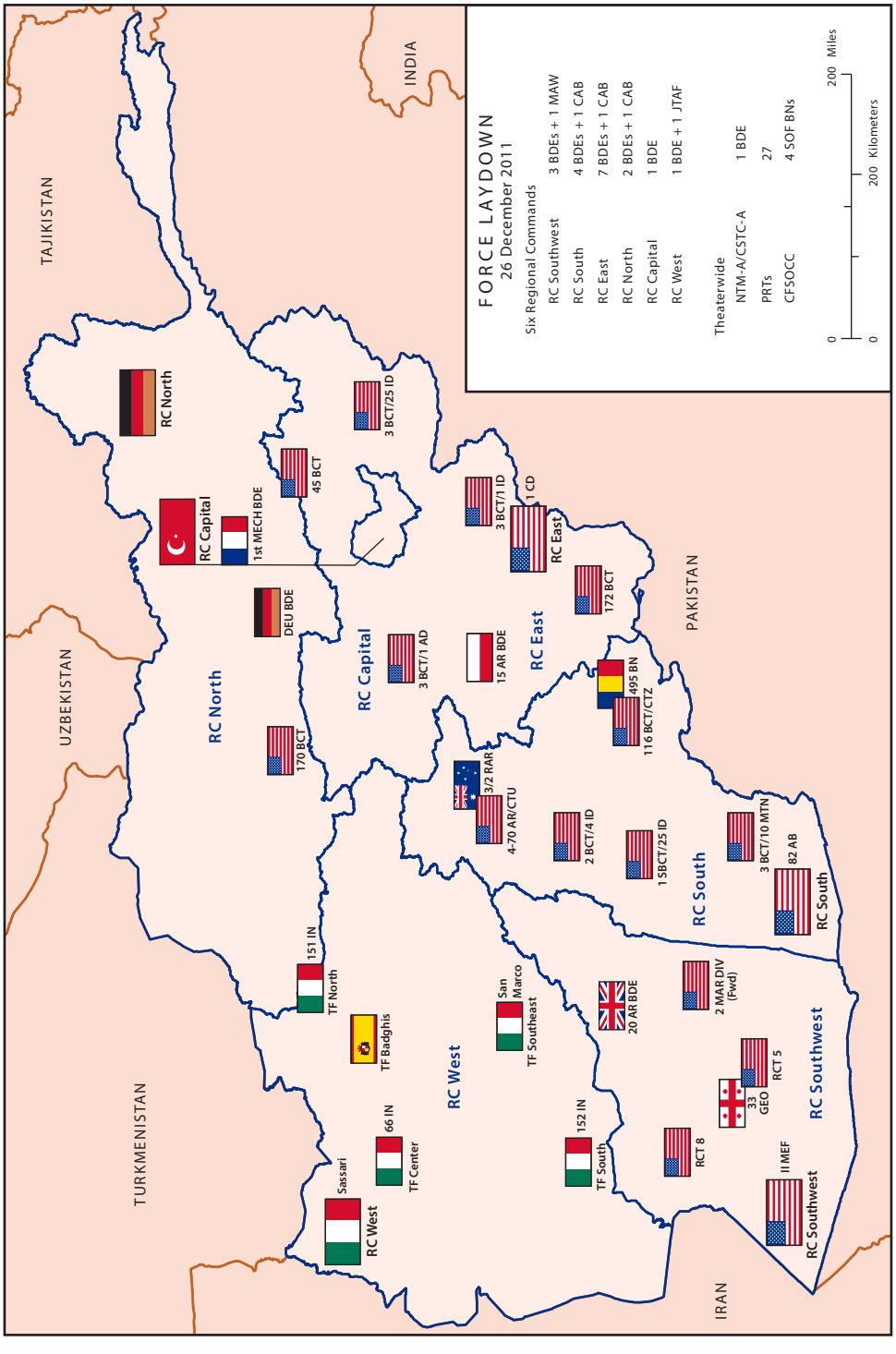
The CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element

Planning for retrograde had to account for the reality that Afghanistan remained an active combat zone. In his first "surge recovery workshop" on 5 October 2011, Rapp outlined three priorities for USFOR-A: maintain campaign momentum, plan the surge recovery, and exercise stewardship of equipment.[27] A week earlier, IJC commander Lt. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti had voiced concerns that surge recovery might interfere with combat operations. Scaparrotti's worries were well founded, as ISAF's posture at the time included bases ranging in size from giant air fields at Bagram and Kandahar to assistance platforms housing only ANSF advisers (*Map 11.2*). RCs South and Southwest retrograding began the previous summer. As tactical units occupying small bases simply did not have the personnel or resources to conduct advisory operations, protect themselves in contested areas, and retrograde equipment all at the same time.[28]

In mid-November 2011, Rapp asked Scaparrotti for a dedicated force to handle retrograde actions so that units would be free to focus on combat operations. Any dedicated retrograde force had to be counted toward force caps for military personnel as well as limits on exempted staff for contractors. The only other way to get personnel that would be exempt from force caps was to utilize an external logistics task force on temporary duty orders, as was the

27. Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

28. Ibid.


FORCE LAYDOWN
26 December 2011
Six Regional Commands
RC Southwest 3 BDEs + 1 MAW
RC South 4 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC East 7 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC North 2 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC Capital 1 BDE
RC West 1 BDE + 1 JTAF
Theaterwide
NTM-A/CSTC-A 1 BDE
PRTs 27
CFSOCC 4 SOF BNs
0 200 Miles
0 200 Kilometers
TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
UZBEKISTAN
PAKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
RC North
RC Capital
RC East
RC West
RC South
RC Southwest
RC North
3 BCT/25 ID
45 BCT
RC Capital
1st MECH BDE
DEU BDE
170 BCT
3 BCT/1 ID
1 CD
RC East
172 BCT
3 BCT/1 AD
15 AR BDE
495 BN
116 BCT/CTZ
3/2 RAR
4-70 AR/CTU
2 BCT/4 ID
1 SBCT/25 ID
3 BCT/10 MTN
82 AB
RC South
151 IN
TF North
TF Badghis
San Marco
TF Southeast
20 AR BDE
2 MAR DIV (Fwd)
66 IN
TF Center
152 IN
TF South
RCT 8
33 GEO
RCT 5
II MEF
RC Southwest
Sassari
RC West

Map 11.2

case with the Marine Corps' Retrograde and Redeployment In Support of Reset and Reconstitution Operations Group which had been formed the year before to begin the retrograde of RC Southwest.[29] The forces were critical to the retrograde mission, but they could not be assigned the mission unless they were exempt from theater force caps.

Fortunately, Scaparrotti and Allen readily endorsed Rapp's proposal for a Retrograde Task Force, which was intended to be a joint organization, given that RC Southwest included a Marine Air-Ground Task Force and a sizable Army support structure. Rapp had engaged senior leaders such as CENTCOM commander Marine Corps General James N. Mattis and Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter to gain support. In parallel, the USFOR-A and ISAF staffs engaged their counterparts at CENTCOM, Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command, the Defense Logistics Agency, and U.S. Army Materiel Command. Their work came to fruition on 12 December 2011 when CENTCOM published Fragmentary Order 07–778 directing the actions necessary to reduce to 68,000 personnel; setting the roles, missions, command, and control structure for the retrograde; and preparing the theater to endure steady-state retrograde operations through the end of the campaign. The order explicitly stated the need for a "Reposture Task Force" dedicated to retrograde operations.[30]

The retrograde was to be divided into four phases, generally corresponding to the targets that had been given in policy statements on force levels. Phase I, from July 2011 to March 2012, was dedicated to achieving initial operating capability and withdrawing 10,000 troops by the end of 2011 as directed by President Obama in his 22 June 2011 speech. The Phase I goal was to close 10 bases and eliminate 800 containers and 600 vehicles per month. To achieve those aims, approximately 4,000 troops were redeployed or curtailed without replacement.[31] Planners envisioned a Reposture Task Force becoming operational during Phase II to assist in reducing troop strength to 68,000 by the end of summer 2012. They proposed continuing the retrograde based on 10,000–20,000 U.S. forces remaining in Afghanistan after 2014. Rapp's Number—12,000 vehicles, 1,000 containers, and 20 bases—would remain constant once Phase II started.[32]

The competing demands of progressively smaller force caps, the advising mission, and force protection had stalled previous attempts to retrograde equipment. On 4 January 2012, Mattis formally requested that the secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff support force cap exemptions for the 2,400 military and 1,400 civilian personnel needed for the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element and, two days later, sent a

29. Ibid., p. 11; Bfg, Rapp, 10 Dec 2011, sub: Theater Reposture: The Time Is Now!

30. FRAGO 07–778, CENTCOM, 12 Dec 2011, sub: PLAN AND EXECUTE RETROGRADE OPERATIONS IN CJOA-A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. Curtailment is defined as cutting short a unit's tour of duty due to changes in operational requirements after it has deployed. Bfg, HQ, USFOR-A, Retrograde Fusion Cell Update, 23 Dec 2011, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. Ibid.; Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

formal request to the Joint Staff.[33] After endorsements from Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey and Secretary of Defense Charles T. "Chuck" Hagel, the president approved a 2,400-troop exemption in March. The Materiel Recovery Element exemption was crucial to pushing forces out of Afghanistan because it concentrated retrograding expertise on the retrograde itself, thereby enabling combat commanders to focus on the immediate needs of the Afghans in their areas of operations.[34]

Trouble on the Border

As the retrograde gathered momentum, an unforeseen development in late 2011 closed the Pakistan ground line of communications. On the night of 25–26 November, an ANA Special Forces Company, aided by fourteen U.S. Special Forces soldiers, targeted a Taliban cell operating from the village of Maya near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Soon after CH–47 Chinook pilots deposited the Afghan and U.S. forces, they came under machine gun and mortar fire from positions atop a ridgeline to the east. Given the proximity of Maya to the border, the troops on the ground requested a show of force rather than return fire. The unidentified assailants continued targeting the Afghan and U.S. forces despite a low-level pass by an F–15E Strike Eagle. In response, an AC–130 Spectre gunship and AH–64 Apache helicopters engaged the assailants. Over the next ninety minutes, the commander on the ground authorized two more air strikes as his troops continued to receive fire. The engagement ended at 0105 after IJC confirmed that Pakistani Army personnel occupied the high ground overlooking Maya and had been firing on U.S. and Afghan forces. The Afghan and U.S. forces then entered Maya, where they collected a substantial amount of Taliban weapons, supplies, and equipment before being airlifted out on 27 November.[35]

Upon receiving news of the incident, CENTCOM ordered an investigation. CENTCOM offered to conduct a joint inquiry with the Pakistani military, but Islamabad declined. As a result, CENTCOM relied on news agencies for the Pakistani perspective. After interviewing all U.S. and Afghan participants, investigators learned that the Pakistani military had not been notified of the raid in a complete or timely fashion, a required practice. In addition, electronic mapping devices mistakenly depicted the nearest Pakistani unit as fourteen kilometers from Maya. However, poor coordination and erroneous map data do not satisfactorily explain why Pakistani military personnel ignored the show of force or continued firing at U.S. and Afghan troops for almost two

33. During discussions with the National Security Council, sensitivities over calling the organization a "Redeployment Task Force," which sounded like a potential combat unit, spurred the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element designation. Ibid.; Memo, Gen James N. Mattis, CENTCOM Cdr, for Sec Def and CJCS, 4 Jan 2012, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

34. Rathnam Indurthy, "The Obama Administration's Strategy in Afghanistan," *Journal on World Peace* 28, no. 3 (2011): 7–52.

35. Memo, Brig Gen Stephen A. Clark, CENTCOM, 18 Dec 2011, sub: Investigation into the incident in the vicinity of Salala Checkpoint on the night of 25/26 November 2011, pp. 4, 11–13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

hours. In retrospect, it is clear that mistakes by both parties contributed to the fatal encounter.[36]

The incident triggered claims and counterclaims by the United States and Pakistan. According to news accounts, the Pakistani government strongly believed that the air strikes against the ridgeline east of Maya were "premeditated, irresponsible and deliberate. . . . The [Afghan and U.S.] soldiers were 300 meters inside Pakistan, in the Mohmad [Mohmand Agency] tribal areas, recently cleared of militants."[37] Not content with trading claims with Washington, Islamabad ordered CIA drone operators to leave Shamsi Airfield in southwest Pakistan within fifteen days. Determined to gain as much diplomatic leverage as possible, Pakistan's high commissioner to the United Kingdom, Hina Rabbani Khar, warned British officials that "this business could . . . wreck the timetable for an American troop withdrawal."[38] To prove its point, the Pakistani government shut down the roads running through the Khyber Pass that led to the Port of Karachi. Severing the Pakistan ground line of communications posed a tremendous challenge to ISAF; nearly 40 percent of its inbound and outbound logistical traffic utilized those routes.[39] It would take months of negotiation to reopen the Pakistani routes.

The reopening of the ground route through Pakistan on 3 July 2012 did not accelerate retrograde efforts, as the first containers of nonrolling stock did not transit it until February 2013. Although the route was nominally open, throughput lagged for different reasons. Pakistani drivers operating out of Karachi had gone on strike to protest their government's demand that local truckers could carry ISAF equipment only if they worked with an authorized transport company. Afghan and Pakistani customs agencies had ongoing disputes with each other over procedures and protocol.[40] The only method available to move cargo out of Afghanistan was now flying transport planes to seaports in the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

Accelerating the Surge Recovery

The loss of the Pakistan ground lines of communications interrupted the retrograde before it had started in earnest. Before that point, outbound

---

36. Ibid., pp. 7, 22–25, 28.

37. Luke Harding, "Pakistan and US Wage a War of Words over Border Post Deaths," *Guardian*, 28 Nov 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/28/pakistan-us-claims-border-post-deaths, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

38. Simon Tisdale and Saeed Shah, "Pakistan Boycotts Talks on Afghanistan and Asks UK to Mediate Row with US," *Guardian*, 29 Nov 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/29/pakistan-boycotts-bonn-conference-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. Salman Masood and Eric Schmitt, "Tensions Flare Between Pakistan and U.S. After Strike," *New York Times*, 27 Nov 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/27/world/asia/pakistan-says-nato-helicopters-kill-dozens-of-soldiers.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. Thom Shanker, "Main Hurdle in Afghanistan Withdrawal: Getting the Gear Out," *New York Times,* 15 Feb 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/15/world/middleeast/afghan-withdrawals-main-hurdle-getting-gear-out.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

retrograde throughput was a trickle; as few as fifty vehicles exited in September 2011. Retrograding the theater became a two-part problem encompassing both inbound and outbound cargo. In its role as the National Support Element, USFOR-A had to control inbound cargo flow while ensuring that it disposed of any equipment that could be dealt with in Afghanistan. Reducing equipment in Afghanistan required controls to ensure that units did not bring in more equipment than could be retrograded; the issue was net cargo flow rather than just outbound throughput. At the front end, the cargo coming into the theater had to be reduced. Units rotating into Afghanistan had tried to bring their own equipment, much of which included the latest and most modern technology. After arriving in Afghanistan, many units received additional equipment specific for the mission they would assume.

The 401st Army Field Support Brigade, which had set up redistribution property accountability yards in anticipation of the surge recovery, began identifying what was actually in Afghanistan. Years of fielding equipment to units after their arrival in Afghanistan had left a mass of excess equipment in theater. After multiple transfers of authority and changes in areas of operations, much of this equipment was badly in need of a proper inventory. Redistribution property accountability teams were responsible for inventorying and accounting for this excess equipment, which then became available to incoming units.

One of the greatest innovations to assist the property accountability process came from Col. Kurt J. Ryan's 10th Sustainment Brigade, which established a retrograde sorting ("retrosort") yard at Bagram in December 2011. Retrosort yards accepted excess, nonmission-essential equipment and cargo containers from units that were reducing their bases in Afghanistan, even if the units did not have complete custody paperwork. By relieving units from having to account for this property, retrosort yards helped units clear bases while still conducting partnered operations with the ANSF, and lifted the burden of maintaining, sorting, and processing, materiel not on their property books. The yards also served as reutilization warehouses that provided free issue to units that needed it, rather than shipping it from home station.[41] From February to July 2012, Col. Jeffrey W. Drushal's 45th Sustainment Brigade established another retrosort yard at Kandahar Airfield and a third at Camp John Pratt near Mazar-e Sharif.[42]

As could be expected, it took time to stand up the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element. Although units already in Afghanistan such as the 10th Sustainment Brigade shifted to the mission once approved, the first unit allocated in its entirety to the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element mission was the New York Army National Guard's 427th Support Battalion. Upon its arrival in March 2012, the battalion was split between the 10th and

41. Pamphlet, CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element Smartbook, 24 Apr 2013, p. 20, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

42. Capt Christian S. Noumba, "Managing and Maintaining Equipment for a Materiel Recovery and Retrograde Mission," *Army Sustainment* 45, no. 4 (Jul-Sep 2013): 50–53; 1st Lt Ryan Dennison, "The 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Forward Retrograde Elements," *Army Sustainment* 45, no. 4 (Jul-Sep 2013): 40.



Sfc. Jon Cupp, USA

Spc. Jackie Tackett uses a rough terrain container handler to stack containers of excess equipment at Kandahar Airfield.

45th Sustainment Brigades in RC East and RC South respectively. The first dedicated Materiel Recovery Element organization at Kandahar Airfield was established in July 2012 with the arrival of the 18th Support Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Michelle M. T. Letcher.[43]

Addressing inbound flow required units to identify what equipment they required for the mission. U.S. Army Central Command was the broker for all requests for equipment, which it did in conferences with USFOR-A, IJC, and incoming units. These consultations helped USFOR-A achieve its monthly goal of 1,200 vehicles and 1,000 containers in March 2012, a substantial improvement over the 50 pieces of rolling stock that had moved in September 2011.[44] This achievement validated the multimodal approach and was all the more remarkable because the Pakistani lines of communications were still closed.

Equipment designated for disposal in Afghanistan fell into categories that all required different authorities. Much of the property that had built up in theater, whether operated by military units or contractors, was termed foreign excess personal property since it was no longer necessary to the mission. Foreign excess personal property included containerized housing units, industrial safety equipment, air conditioners, refrigerators, generators, computers, furniture, water trucks, forklifts, tractors, and other nontactical vehicles.[45] On 23 January 2012, Alan F. Estevez, assistant secretary of defense

43. Noumba, "Managing and Maintaining Equipment for a Materiel Recovery and Retrograde Mission," p. 50.

44. Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

45. DoD Manual 4160.21–M, Defense Materiel Disposition (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 1997), pp. xxi, 1–1.

for logistics and materiel readiness, greatly accelerated the retrograde by granting "tiered delegation authority" to tactical commanders, allowing them to approve transfers of foreign excess personal property directly to the Afghans after vetting the transaction with USFOR-A.[46]

Equipment too expensive to transport was designated as excess defense articles. The United States offered excess defense articles to other countries at no charge under the proviso that it was "where is, as is." Those who received these items were responsible for transporting and maintaining them. USFOR-A worked closely with the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to solicit interest from other Central Asian states, though those countries generally were interested in only new equipment available through foreign military sales.[47] Therefore, the excess defense article program would never become the primary dispersal method of excess property for U.S. forces.

Because Rapp was adamant that the United States would not leave military equipment behind after a drawdown, he permitted excess defense articles to be transferred to the ANSF only under exceptional circumstances.[48] His counterpart in these transactions was Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, commander of the NATO Training Mission. Caldwell's command had spent significant effort to disabuse Afghan soldiers of the belief that equipment and other resources had to be hoarded. The tendency to mass combat equipment for status reasons ran counter to the coalition's efforts to build an Afghan logistics enterprise and streamline ANSF vehicle fleets so to reduce their maintenance burden.[49] The Training Mission had been trying to stop this type of hoarding behavior for years. A similar rationale existed for transferring bases; the ANSF had to be able to maintain any property they received from the coalition. A base that the ANSF could not maintain ran the risk of becoming either a drain on the Afghan government's resources or a battle position for the insurgency if abandoned or overrun.[50]

In most cases, there was still serviceable equipment left even after disposing of excess personal property and defense articles. On 1 March 2012, the DoD granted its Defense Logistics Agency authority to destroy serviceable equipment that U.S. Transportation Command representatives jointly determined too costly to ship. Serviceable vehicles that were not required elsewhere or whose values were less than the cost to ship them back to the United States—the majority of items being in the latter category—

---

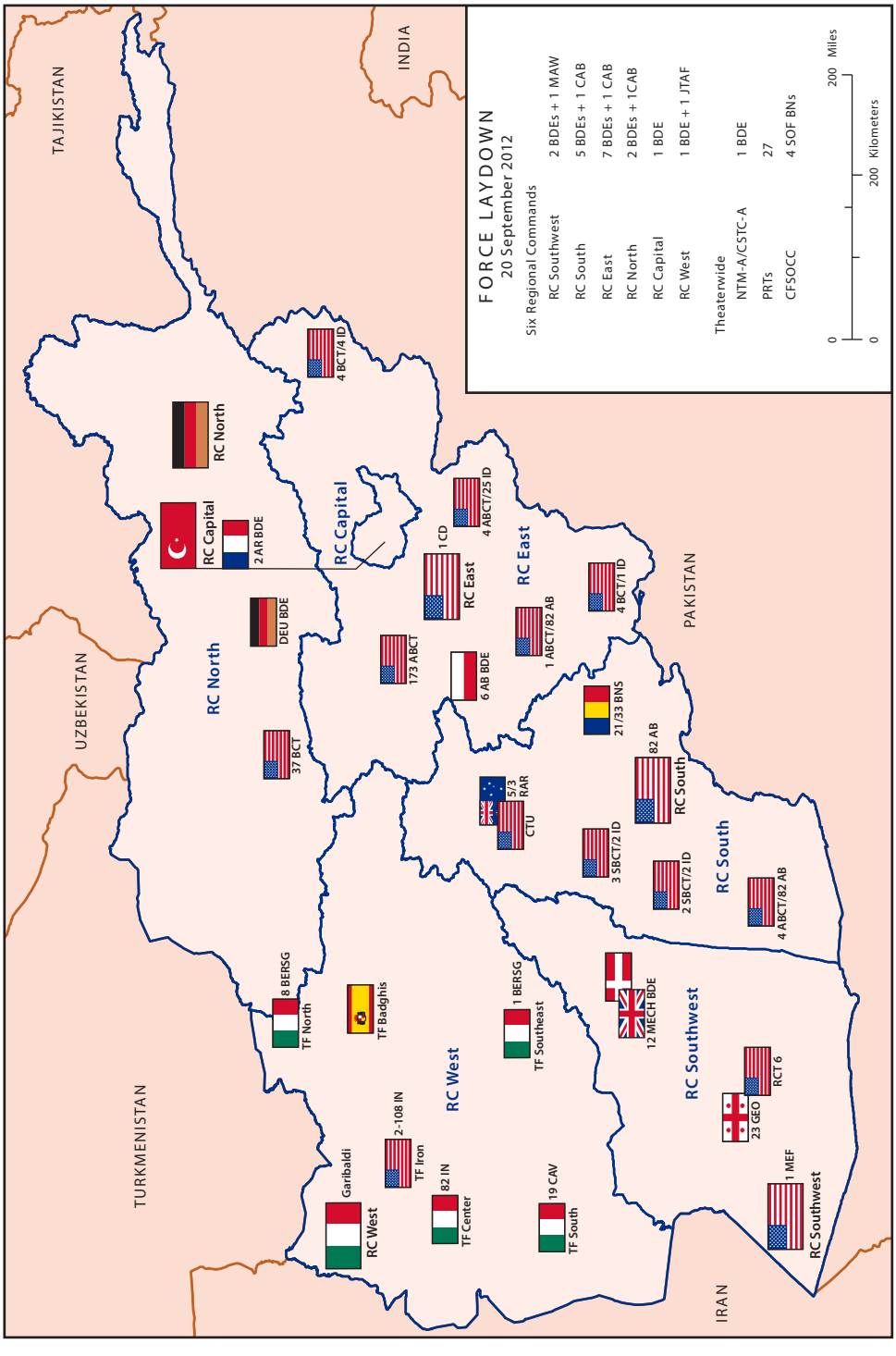
46. Bfg, 401st Army Field Support Bde, 26 Dec 2013, sub: Foreign Excess Personal Property Process: Afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

47. Excess defense articles fall under the authority of *U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961*, PL 87–195, 22 U.S.C. § 2321(j), (4 Sep 1961); Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

48. Ibid.

49. Interv, Diane R. Walker, CSI, with Lt Gen William B. Caldwell IV and Col (Ret.) Daniel Klippstein, frmr Cdr NTM-A and frmr Director NTM-A Cdrs Action Grp, 20 Feb 2013, pp. 28–29, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Brig Gen Edward F. Dorman III, frmr ISAF CJ–4, 6 Dec 2012, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


FORCE LAYDOWN
20 September 2012
Six Regional Commands
RC Southwest 2 BDEs + 1 MAW
RC South 5 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC East 7 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC North 2 BDEs + 1CAB
RC Capital 1 BDE
RC West 1 BDE + 1 JTAF
Theaterwide
NTM-A/CSTC-A 1 BDE
PRTs 27
CFSOCC 4 SOF BNs
0 200 Miles
0 200 Kilometers
TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
UZBEKISTAN
PAKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
RC North
RC Capital
RC East
RC South
RC West
RC Southwest
4 BCT/4 ID
2 AR BDE
DEU BDE
37 BCT
173 ABCT
1 CD
4 ABCT/25 ID
6 AB BDE
1 ABCT/82 AB
4 BCT/1 ID
21/33 BNS
82 AB
5/3 RAR
CTU
3 SBCT/2 ID
2 SBCT/2 ID
4 ABCT/82 AB
8 BERSG
TF North
TF Badghis
1 BERSG
TF Southeast
12 MECH BDE
2-108 IN
TF Iron
82 IN
TF Center
19 CAV
TF South
Garibaldi
23 GEO
RCT 6
1 MEF

Map 11.3

were destroyed in theater.[51] In the absence of the Pakistan ground lines of communications and with the lack of significant backhaul throughput on the Northern Distribution Network, multimodal transport was the most reliable method for equipment that could not be disposed of or destroyed. It was a costly option, but nonetheless it was the most fiscally sound decision given that the campaign was coming to a close.[52]

The CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element formed around Letcher's battalion preceded much larger ones. The August 2012 arrival of the 593d Sustainment Brigade, commanded by Col. Douglas M. McBride Jr., enabled USFOR-A to establish a single materiel recovery element headquarters for all of Afghanistan. As retrograde throughput continued to accelerate, the last of the 33,000 troops constituting the Afghan surge departed by 21 September 2012, marking the end of Phase II and shrinking U.S. forces to their 68,000 force cap (*Map 11.3*).[53]

Securing the Retrograde

Along with sending additional logistical elements to manage the retrograde, CENTCOM sought to prevent the Taliban from exploiting vulnerabilities in the country's contested eastern region by temporarily allocating General Allen additional combat power to use as he saw fit. As a result, the U.S. Army deployed Lt. Col. David W. Gardner's 2d Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Afghanistan as the ISAF Operational Reserve Force. Gardner's unit was to conduct Operation Ready Eagle, which began on 10 July 2012 and lasted for four months. The mission was "disrupting enemy forces in Afghanistan's Regional Command East to provide repositioning units space and time to perform retrograde operations and battlespace handover."[54] In

---

51. Almost 4,000 vehicles were destroyed in theater, including more than 1,000 MRAPs. The U.S. military possessed a total of 22,500 MRAPs worldwide with 11,000 deployed to Afghanistan. See Ernesto Londoño, "Scrapping Equipment Key to U.S. Drawdown," *Washington Post*, 19 Jun 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/scrapping-equipment-key-to-afghan-drawdown/2013/06/19/9d435258-d83f-11e2-b418-9dfa095e125d_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "U.S. Considers Demolishing Its Vehicles in Afghanistan," 24 Mar 2014, https://www.military.com/dodbuzz/2014/03/14/u-s-must-demolish-thousands-of-its-vehicles-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Retrograde from Afghanistan," *Afghan War News*, https://www.afghanwarnews.info/topics/retrograde.htm#Endnotes, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

52. U.S. Transportation Cmd Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, "Northern Distribution Network (NDN) Records," 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D) Records, 14 Feb 2012; Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

53. Karen DeYoung and Richard Leiby, "Pakistan Agrees to Open Supply Lines after U.S. Apology," *Washington Post*, 3 Jul 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pakistan-agrees-to-open-supply-lines-after-us-apology/2012/07/03/gJQAXW60KW_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Rod Nordland, "Troop 'Surge' in Afghanistan Ends With Mixed Results," *New York Times*, 21 Sep 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/22/world/asia/us-troop-surge-in-afghanistan-ends.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Capt Chip Greer, "Twenty-Four Hours in Gabari Ulya" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course, 20 May 2013), p. 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

other words, the battalion would engage the Haqqani and the Taliban where they found them so they would not interfere with the retrograde. The forces included a company from the 2d Battalion; an ODA from the 1st Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment; and an ANA Commando company. Throughout the operation, the infantry company normally would establish a cordon around the targeted area to secure it so the U.S. and Afghan SOF could search the objective, interact with locals, and gather intelligence.

Unlike the broad geographical charter of its predecessors, 2d Battalion, 505th Infantry, focused on Afghanistan National Highway 1, the primary land route supporting retrograde operations in RC East. Rather than react to Taliban attacks, Gardner executed intelligence-driven preemptive strikes on known Taliban bases in order to eliminate fighters and destroy caches stockpiled for future attacks on ISAF convoys. The Taliban fighters could have abandoned their positions near the highway, but they trusted that their elaborate IED fields would give them advance notice of ISAF encroachment and inflict casualties on potential attackers. Many Taliban outposts featured extensive tunnel systems that allowed fighters to avoid detection while minimizing the damage inflicted by fires called in by ISAF ground troops. Conducting Ready Eagle missions until winter terminated the 2012 fighting season, 2d Battalion, 505th Infantry, was able to shift the Taliban's attention from attacking retrograde convoys to defending their safe havens along the highway.[55]

ISAF Infrastructure Comes Under Attack

Although the Taliban focused on reconstituting its ranks following the surge, it also sought to remain in the media by conducting high-profile attacks. This quest for favorable news coverage began on 15 April 2012 with a coordinated assault by Haqqani fighters on embassies, a supermarket, a hotel, and the parliament building in Kabul, as well as targets in eastern Nangarhar, Logar, and Paktiya Provinces. Eleven ANSF personnel, four Afghan civilians, and thirty-six insurgents were killed in the ensuing fighting. ISAF commanders may have considered the attacks relatively ineffective from a purely military standpoint, but Western media outlets took a different view: "Though the death toll was relatively low . . . it highlighted the ability of militants to strike high-profile targets in the heart of the city even after ten years of war."[56]

The sharply contrasting assessments of the same event once again highlighted the fact that ISAF and the U.S. military rarely conducted effective information operations. News releases from the various military headquarters in Afghanistan often presented the perceptions and beliefs of senior leaders to the public rather than unvarnished facts. They tended to downplay mishaps by friendly forces and enemy successes and overemphasize friendly successes. Even among news agencies that were dedicated to

55. Ibid., pp. 1–2, 12.

56. Rob Taylor and Hamid Shalizi, "Karzai Says NATO Failed as 18-Hour Kabul Attack Ends," *Reuters*, 16 Apr 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-attack-idUSBRE83E05620120417, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Sgt. Christopher McCann, USA

Field artillery at Forward Operating Base Pasab in Zabul Province fire at suspected enemy movements at night.

presenting events as objectively as possible, without any particular editorial bias, their reporting was only as accurate as the information they received from official sources. President Hamid Karzai magnified these disparities in reporting when he began regularly contradicting ISAF releases during his second and final term in office. Consequently, global audiences were far more likely to consider the media as more reliable than the military, regardless of the latter's nationality.

The media-oriented approach continued when Haqqani fighters launched a complex attack on Forward Operating Base Salerno near the city of Khost on 1 June 2012. Originally established in September 2002, Salerno had grown into a sprawling community. The base, which now hosted nearly 5,000 ISAF service members and contractors, had been unsuccessfully assaulted by the Taliban in 2008 and 2010. At the time of the Haqqani attack, it boasted a combat support hospital, aviation hangars, helicopter arming and refueling facilities, subcamps for U.S. special operators, a gymnasium, a post exchange, a chapel, a community dining facility, and a gravel runway capable of supporting C–130 Hercules aircraft.[57]

The Haqqani Network had earned a reputation among ISAF personnel for meticulous planning, disciplined leadership, and mastery of small unit tactics. Exploiting familial ties within Khost, Paktiya, and Paktika Provinces to gain intelligence and access, Haqqani fighters often launched unexpected

57. Sgt Brent Powell, "Base Operations Section Keeps Salerno Functional," CJTF-101 Public Affairs Ofc, 26 Sep 2010, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/56992/base-operations-section-keeps-camp-salerno-functional#.Uoa6b JFaRVg, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Camp Salerno/Forward Operating Base Salerno," 14 Jul 2011, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/fob_salerno.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

attacks on ISAF targets before withdrawing to their sanctuary in Miran Shah, Pakistan. At 1200 on 1 June, a flatbed truck loaded with roughly a ton of explosives detonated after being parked next to the southern perimeter wall at Salerno. A few moments later, an insurgent drove a white minivan through the gaping hole in the wall to disgorge more than a dozen attackers intent on massacring unarmed soldiers and contractors in the nearby dining facility, which had been severely damaged by the blast. Unbeknownst to the insurgents, a platoon from Company A, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, reserved by the commander of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, for high-value targets of opportunity, was billeted near the dining facility.[58]

Without taking time to organize, soldiers from the platoon rushed to the damaged dining hall. An inner wall prevented the Haqqani fighters from advancing directly on their target, allowing the Americans to win the race to the dining facility where they occupied positions overlooking the breach. With bursts of machine gun fire, they cut down a number of heavily armed insurgents clad in U.S. uniforms. As the firefight continued, several American combat vehicles arrived at the scene, oblivious that some of the men dressed in U.S. uniforms were Haqqani fighters.[59]

To the Americans occupying defensive positions near the dining hall, it seemed as if the enemy fighters were chafing at the imposed delay. Instead of remaining in their relatively secure positions, the attackers sprinted across the road, incurring more casualties before stopping to shoot rocket-propelled grenades at their defenders. While the delay permitted the American platoon to consolidate, a single attacker sought cover under vehicles parked near the dining facility. As the firefight increased in intensity, drivers positioned MRAP vehicles and Afghan police vehicles on the flanks of the attackers to cut off their escape routes.[60]

Next to appear on the scene were several OH–58 Kiowa Warrior helicopters from the 82d Airborne Division. The Kiowa pilots could not employ rockets or Hellfire missiles because of the proximity of friendly troops, so they leaned out of their cockpits and emptied M4 rifles at the attackers while making low-level passes over the breach. Reacting to the fire from overhead, the Haqqani sought cover elsewhere only to be killed by Americans firing at point-blank

---

58. Capt Edmund J. Carazo, "A Complex Attack on Forward Operating Base Salerno: The Hasty Defense of a Perimeter During Operation Enduring Freedom" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course 04–14, 21 Oct 2014), pp. 11–13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Although the Taliban took credit for the attack, the attackers were Haqqani; see Joshua Partlow and Craig Whitlock, "Attack on U.S. Outpost in Afghanistan Worse Than Originally Reported," *Washington Post*, 16 Jun 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/attack-on-us-outpost-in-afghanistan-worse-than-originally-reported/2012/06/16/gJQAlyaihV_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

59. Video footage from a security camera in a nearby guard tower recorded the attack. The 501st Infantry soldiers, Haqqani fighters, and shadows cast by Kiowa Warriors are clearly visible. See Nathaniel Miller, "Suicide Taliban terrorist attack FOB Salerno," 17 Aug 2016, YouTube video, 9:22, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwhaRlyNMl8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

60. Carazo, "A Complex Attack on Forward Operating Base Salerno," pp. 11–13.

range from their defensive positions. One Haqqani fighter managed to reach a sewage-filled ditch, where he resisted for a few minutes before being shot. At about the same time, the attacker hiding under the vehicles was killed after wounding two Americans. The battle ended with the enemy force eliminated, five Afghan civilians killed, and one 4th Brigade soldier mortally wounded. About one hundred ISAF soldiers and civilians were treated for superficial injuries incurred when the dining facility and adjacent post exchange collapsed.[61]

Although the Haqqani Network failed to inflict serious damage and casualties at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Taliban spokesmen described the attack as a tremendous victory. To the Americans, it showcased the tensions between retrograde efforts and combat operations. Even though the U.S. military was drawing down its presence in Afghanistan, it still needed sufficient materiel to safeguard U.S. and ISAF forces against well-coordinated insurgent attacks. On the international scene, the incident at Salerno triggered diplomatic broadsides between Washington and Islamabad. Obama administration officials cited the incident as an example of why the Pakistani government needed to take extraordinary steps against the Haqqani Network. The attack prompted Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta to proclaim during a 7 June 2012 visit to Kabul that the United States had reached "the limits of our patience" with Pakistan. Those remarks came one day after Panetta "slammed Pakistan as an untrustworthy partner" during a visit to neighboring India.[62]

The Taliban gained the victory it sought with a subsequent attack on the Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak base complex in RC Southwest on the night of 14–15 September 2012. Built around Camp Bastion, a British-occupied compound supporting operations in what was then RC South, the complex had merged in June 2010 with the adjacent Camps Leatherneck and Shorabak, respectively occupied by U.S. marines and ANA forces. Forty kilometers of chain-link fence and guard towers girded the base, which could accommodate up to 30,000 personnel within its one hundred square kilometers. The Taliban attack benefited from the fact that ISAF commanders were expected to protect bases enlarged to accommodate surge troops with a dwindling number of personnel. The Marine contingent on Leatherneck, which numbered more than 17,000 in March 2012, had shrunk to 7,000 by the time of the attack.[63]

Fifteen enemy fighters infiltrated through a chain-link fence near an unguarded tower on Camp Bastion just after dark on 14 September. The Taliban strike force, wearing U.S. uniforms adorned with name tags and 10th Mountain Division insignia, split into three five-man teams to attack

---

61. Partlow and Whitlock, "Attack on U.S. Outpost in Afghanistan Worse Than Originally Reported."

62. Ibid.

63. Memo, Lt Gen William B. Garrett III and Maj Gen Thomas M. Murray for Gen Lloyd F. Austin, 19 Aug 2013, sub: Army Regulation (AR) 15 – 6 Investigation of the 14–15 Sep 2012 Attack on Camp Bastion, Leatherneck, and Shorabak (BLS) Complex, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Encl 3)Executive Sum), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters of the 3d Marine Air Wing (Forward) parked on the airfield.[64] The infiltrators remained undetected for sixteen minutes while they destroyed six Marine AV–8B Harriers and damaged two more, along with one Army C–12 fixed-wing transport, three Marine MV–22 Ospreys, one C–130 Hercules, and one British Sea King helicopter.[65]

In addition to the damaged and destroyed aircraft, the assault teams exploded three fuel bladders, destroyed five fabric aircraft shelters, and severely damaged two British vehicles. A combination of Taliban grenades, machine guns, and fire from responding ISAF helicopters damaged four more aircraft shelters and a maintenance building.[66] Two Americans were killed and eight more were wounded in the attack, while the British forces suffered eight wounded. ISAF personnel responding to the attack, aided by Marine helicopters, killed fourteen of the fifteen attackers in a hectic four-hour battle.[67] A company from the 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, which remained uncommitted during the fight to avoid fratricide, swept the flight line at dawn. Shortly afterward, ISAF soldiers captured the one enemy survivor, who provided his captors with enough information to enable SOF to track down the planner of the attack.[68]

The Taliban's efforts to duplicate its successful attack on Camp Bastion elsewhere did not prove as fruitful. Twelve Taliban insurgents attacked Forward Operating Base Fenty on the eastern outskirts of Jalalabad on the afternoon of 2 December 2012. At the time, Fenty housed the incoming 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division; the outgoing 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division; medical evacuation and attack aviation assets; SOF; ANSF units; contractors; and other tenants. Fenty also had a surgical hospital capable of stabilizing combat injuries prior to sending wounded soldiers out of country. Additionally, Fenty had the only asphalt airfield capable of supporting C–130s in the region, which meant that it handled most of the ISAF air traffic into Nangarhar and surrounding provinces.[69]

The attack began suddenly. Insurgents directed a truck bomb against a guard tower overlooking the pedestrian gate entrance on Fenty's northern perimeter at 0550, and followed it with a second truck bomb at the same location. Twelve enemy fighters, covered by machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades firing from hidden positions across the Kabul-Jalalabad Road on the other side of the ruined pedestrian gate, charged in an attempt to

64. Capt Jacob Grob, "Defense of Camp Bastion Attacks" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course 06–14, 16 Mar 2015), pp. 11–12, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

65. Memo, Garrett and Murray for Austin, 19 Aug 2013, sub: Army Regulation (AR) 15 – 6 Investigation of the 14–15 Sep 2012 Attack on Camp Bastion, Leatherneck, and Shorabak (BLS) Complex, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, p. 2.

66. Grob, "Defense of Camp Bastion Attacks," p. 9.

67. Memo, Garrett and Murray for Austin, 19 Aug 2013, sub: Army Regulation (AR) 15 – 6 Investigation of the 14–15 Sep 2012 Attack on Camp Bastion, Leatherneck, and Shorabak (BLS) Complex, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, p. 2.

68. Grob, "Defense of Camp Bastion Attacks," p. 12.

69. Capt Will Freakley, "Forward Operating Base Fenty High Profile Attack" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course, 2012), pp. 1–2, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



CENTCOM

An AH–64 Apache deploys flares against possible enemy surface-to-air missiles while supporting ANA Commandos in Daykundi Province.

enter Fenty. Fortunately for the camp's inhabitants, the ANSF unit billeted nearest the gate was preparing for a dawn live-fire exercise. The Afghan soldiers and their American advisers began shooting at the Taliban seeking to enter Fenty, forcing the attackers to take cover in a drainage ditch running along the adjacent highway. Using the fire as cover, soldiers from 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment, blocked enemy access to the camp by physically wedging one of their HMMWVs in the gap opened by the truck bomb.[70]

American troops from the 3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, ascended the surviving guard tower in order to engage Taliban fighters sheltering in a ditch outside the camp. At the same time, two pilots from 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, jumped in their Kiowa Warrior helicopters and flew to the scene, followed by a pair of AH–64 Apaches. All four helicopters made firing passes along the length of the ditch while the Taliban began engaging the pedestrian gate defenders with mortar fire. Shortly afterward, a third truck bomb rammed the perimeter wall beneath the tower. The explosion wounded six Rangers, forcing them to abandon their vantage point. The efforts of the third truck-bomb operator were in vain, however, as the orbiting Apaches wiped out the pinned-down enemy assault element with 2.75-inch rockets.

The attack, which ended ninety minutes after the first truck bomb exploded, resulted in twelve Taliban deaths, four ANSF fatalities, fourteen Afghan military wounded, ten American service members wounded, and one U.S. civilian contractor injured. The events at Fenty illustrated that although

70. Kevin Lilley and Michelle Tan, "1 DSC, 8 Silver Stars Awarded to 3d SF Group Soldiers," *Army Times*, 12 Feb 2015, https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2015/02/12/1-dsc-8-silver-stars-awarded-to-3rd-sf-group-soldiers/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the Taliban had informants within many ISAF installations, those individuals were rarely capable of gathering a full and timely picture of activities taking place within the bases. In this instance, the attackers unexpectedly encountered Afghan and U.S. Special Operations personnel gathering at the point of the attack for a training exercise. Galvanized by the brazen assault, U.S. forces stepped up their own intelligence collection efforts in the region. Consequently, only three weeks later, the timely acquisition of intelligence led to a SOF raid that apprehended six individuals who had been organizing a repeat attack.[71] As coalition forces continued the drawdown, the confidence and competence of the ANSF would become even more critical.

71. Freakley, "Forward Operating Base Fenty High Profile Attack," pp. 7–18.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Transitioning from Counterinsurgency to Security Force Assistance

By 21 September 2012, the last of the surge forces had redeployed and USFOR-A met the White House's guidance by reducing end strength to 68,000. The 33,000 troops withdrawn over the previous year predominantly came from everywhere but RC East. Those reductions included six Army brigade combat teams, five Marine infantry battalions, elements of a combat aviation brigade, and headquarters staff. Coalition forces had also reduced, most significantly with the departure of Task Force Lafayette, the French brigade operating in RC East on 16 July 2012.[1] In its place, ISAF increased its security force assistance teams, reflecting the shift in mission from combat to advising. That advisory focus was crucial as the ANSF assumed greater responsibility for securing Afghanistan.

The ANSF and the Culmination of Inteqal

Command of ISAF changed in the midst of security transition. On 10 February 2013, Marine General Joseph F. Dunford Jr. assumed command of ISAF from General John R. Allen.[2] Dunford signaled the soundness of the campaign plan developed by Allen with an 18 June 2013 announcement heralding the start of Tranche 5, also known as Milestone 2013. On that day, the ANSF assumed responsibility for securing all of Afghanistan, a landmark achievement that testified to the progress made in the past years. The ANSF also had taken responsibility for planning their annual and seasonal operations. Among the new ANSF plans was Operation Oqab (Eagle), which coordinated the efforts of Afghan ministries. Oqab was the successor of the previous year's Operation Naweed. Political corruption and criminality remained problems, but the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior

1. Press Release, French Ministry of Defense, "Afghanistan: transfert du dernier poste de combat avancé de la TF Lafayette à l'armée national afghan" [Afghanistan: Transfer of the last TF Lafayette Forward Operating Base to the Afghan National Army], 20 Jul 2012, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. ISAF Public Affairs Ofc, "General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. Assumes Command of ISAF," 10 Feb 2013, https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/News-Article-View/Article/884697/general-joseph-f-dunford-jr-assumes-command-of-isaf/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.



Catherine Threat, DoD

ISAF commander General Dunford (center), outgoing Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 commander Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber (left), and incoming Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 commander Air Force Brig. Gen. Balan R. Ayyar render honors at the change-of-command ceremony at Camp Phoenix on 5 July 2003.

were markedly better and more independent at Milestone 2013 than they had been in 2011 at the beginning of the surge recovery.[3]

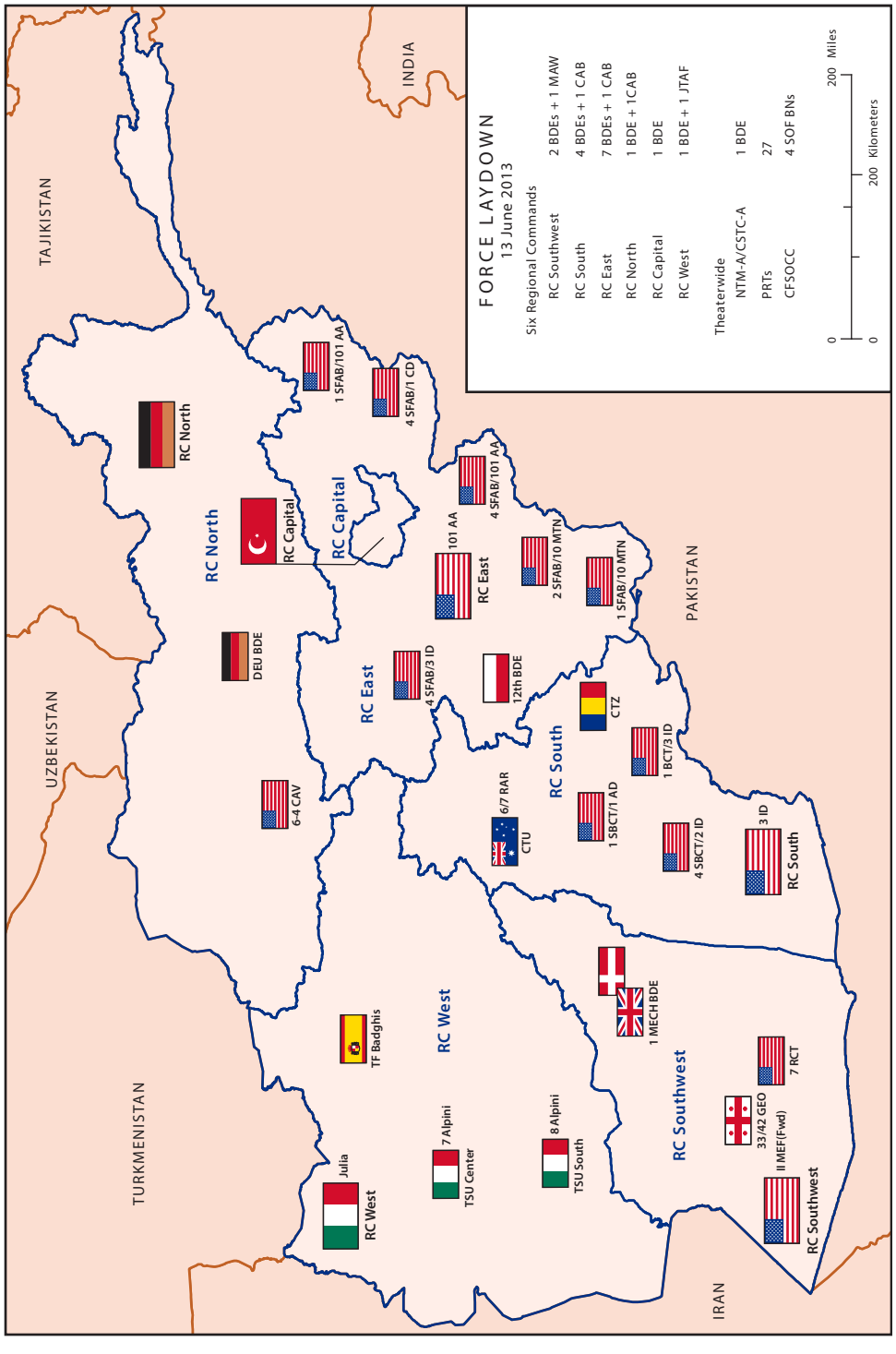
The decision to stress capability development over rapid growth had started to have a noticeable effect. By the end of June 2013, the ANSF led nearly 90 percent of all operations and secured almost 90 percent of Afghanistan (*Map 12.1*).[4] By the time Milestone 2013 was reached, ANA kandaks had proven themselves capable of planning and executing tactical operations from start to finish and had developed a nascent capability for combined arms operations at the brigade level while preventing the insurgency from seizing population centers or lines of communications. Work remained on logistics, operational and strategic planning, intelligence sharing, and aviation.[5] Enabling Afghans to consolidate gains beyond the small-unit level, however, would require ISAF to change its operational method.

ISAF intensified its efforts to shift from combat advising to functionally based security force assistance during 2013. Advisers now aligned with

3. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Apr 2011, pp. 3–4; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Jul 2013, p. 50. A comparison of the reports reveals tangible gains in Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capacity.

4. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Jul 2013, p. 2.

5. Interv, Kendall Gott, CSI, with Col Gary Brito, frmr IJC Deputy Director Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Development, 15 May 2014, p. 8, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Jul 2013, pp. 48–49; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Apr 2014, pp. 23–24.


FORCE LAYDOWN
13 June 2013
Six Regional Commands
RC Southwest 2 BDEs + 1 MAW
RC South 4 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC East 7 BDEs + 1 CAB
RC North 1 BDE + 1CAB
RC Capital 1 BDE
RC West 1 BDE + 1 JTAF
Theaterwide
NTM-A/CSTC-A 1 BDE
PRTs 27
CFSOCC 4 SOF BNs
0 200 Miles
0 200 Kilometers
TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
PAKISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
RC North
RC Capital
RC East
RC South
RC West
RC Southwest
1 SFAB/101 AA
4 SFAB/1 CD
4 SFAB/101 AA
101 AA
2 SFAB/10 MTN
1 SFAB/10 MTN
DEU BDE
4 SFAB/3 ID
12th BDE
CTZ
1 BCT/3 ID
6-4 CAV
6/7 RAR
CTU
1 SBCT/1 AD
4 SBCT/2 ID
3 ID
TF Badghis
1 MECH BDE
Julia
7 Alpini
TSU Center
8 Alpini
TSU South
33/42 GEO
7 RCT
II MEF(Fwd)

Map 12.1

Afghan components on eight essential stability functions: (1) plan, program, budget, and execute; (2) transparency, accountability, and oversight; (3) civilian governance of Afghanistan's security ministries and adherence to rule of law; (4) force generation; (5) sustain the force; (6) plan, resource, and execute effective security campaigns; (7) develop sufficient intelligence capabilities and processes; and (8) maintain internal and external strategic communications capability. Connecting these eight functions was intended to develop the long-term sustainability of the Afghan security ministries and forces.[6] By October 2013, 344,602 Afghans were serving in the army, police, or paramilitary organizations such as the Afghan Local Police.[7] Afghan security forces conducted 95 percent of conventional operations and 98 percent of special operations in Afghanistan.[8] Although the ANA did not exhibit the tactical aptitude of ISAF units, its performance was good enough to force the Taliban to abandon open battle and restrict attacks to indirect methods such as IEDs.

The ANA planned, executed, and sustained several major offensives aimed at eliminating staging grounds for insurgent attacks on Kabul during 2013. The largest of these efforts, which took place in Logar Province in September and October, involved several ANA corps, Afghan SOF, and the Afghan Air Force. Its purpose was to clear a valley and secure a district center so that humanitarian supplies and voter registration materials could reach the local population. After three weeks of fighting with intermittent air support as a result of inclement weather, government forces achieved their objectives. As the ANA withdrew from the valley, the Ministry of Interior replaced the departing soldiers with police to provide sustained security.[9]

Now that they led most combat operations, Afghan security forces suffered more killed and wounded than in previous years.[10] During a September interview, Dunford expressed his concern that ANSF were averaging more than one hundred deaths per week: "I'm not assuming that those casualties are sustainable."[11] The Afghan National Army's nonbattle attrition rates, which included desertion due to diminishing ISAF medical support and the increased chance of injury, doubled to almost 3 percent monthly and 30 per-

6. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2014, p. 3.

7. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Nov 2013, p. 3.

8. Ibid., p. 1.

9. Ibid., p. 4.

10. According to Afghan government spokesmen, the ANSF suffered 13,729 killed and 16,511 wounded from December 2001 through March 2014. Two-thirds of these casualties occurred after 2010. Rod Nordland, "War Deaths Top 13,000 in Afghan Security Forces," *New York Times*, 3 Mar 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/04/world/asia/afghan-cabinet-releases-data-on-deaths-of-security-personnel.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

11. Emma Graham-Harrison, "Afghan Forces Suffering Too Many Casualties, Says Top NATO Commander," *Guardian*, 2 Sep 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/02/afghan-forces, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

cent annually.[12] Despite combat losses and nonbattle attrition, no Afghan Army unit collapsed in battle, and recruiting goals continued to be met.[13]

The trends emerging from this period indicated both the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. security force assistance efforts. Fielding new equipment such as the U.S.-manufactured M224 60-mm. mortar proved helpful. This lightweight and easily maintained weapon increased the Afghan Army's ability to overmatch enemy forces while reducing its reliance on ISAF air support.[14] The ANA performed credibly at the tactical level, but Afghan military units experienced difficulties mastering intricate battlefield functions such as counter-IED operations, maintenance, fire support, collecting and disseminating intelligence, and providing medical care.

The Unified Implementation Plan

Putting the Lisbon Communiqué and Allen's campaign direction into practice required an operational plan to guide tactical actions during Inteqal. That task initially fell to Lt. Gen. James L. Terry, who approved a support plan that came to be called the Unified Implementation Plan. The Unified Implementation Plan had its roots in Terry's experience commanding the 10th Mountain Division and RC South in 2010–2011 when Terry attempted to unify the guidance his unit received from the various headquarters in its area of operations. As General Terry prepared to deploy the V Corps staff to Afghanistan, he envisioned a similar approach for IJC. Work on the Implementation Plan started in January 2012 at the V Corps' home station in Germany and was refined during a mission rehearsal exercise held from 18 March to 5 April 2012.[15] The plan became active after Terry assumed command of IJC when the V Corps relieved Maj. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti's I Corps on 12 June 2012.

Several years of operating under IJC and with the NATO Training Mission had given conventional ground units a degree of coherence that had not existed before 2012.[16] Unfortunately for unity of effort, that coherence excluded ISAF's other subordinate commands, most notably NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan and NATO Air Command–Afghanistan. While operationally relevant within their own domains, these organizations were not part of a unified framework and pursued different campaign objectives. Another factor complicating coalition unity was the Afghan concern that the Unified Implementation Plan would

12. Schroden et al., *Were the Afghan National Security Forces Successful in 2013?*, p. 3.

13. Ibid., p. 4.

14. Franz-Stefan Gady, "Can the Afghan Army Prevail on the Battlefield?," *The Diplomat*, 7 Jan 2015, https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/can-the-afghan-army-prevail-on-the-battlefield/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

15. Ltr, Lt Col Jonathan P. Klug, frmr IJC Campaign Planner, to Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, OEF Study Grp, 9 Feb 2016, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Inci Kucukaksoy, "Interview: Colonel John C. Valledor, Exercise Controller, MCTP," *Three Swords* 22 (Jan-Jul 2012): 30.

16. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Randall C. Lane, frmr Ch, IJC Future Plans Div (CJ–55), 26 Oct 2014, pp. 3–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

supersede Operation Oqab, the Afghan-planned operation for 2013. Although competition between the two plans was always possible, Terry's goal was to complement ANSF efforts, not replace them.[17]

Allen had provided Terry guidance on the Unified Implementation Plan by setting the acceptable risks to both the force and the mission. In his own assessments, Terry recognized that the Unified Implementation Plan had to translate ISAF's strategic guidance into tactical direction for his regional commands. The plan needed to provide context to coalition partners in the joint operating area as well. Even though it had been informed by the highest levels of expertise in operational planning in theater, the plan was limited in that it encompassed only units in IJC's hierarchy. Therefore, it excluded special operations, air-advisory actions, and much more. The Unified Implementation Plan could not direct the detention and rule of law functions that fell under Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber's Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 or the anticorruption and economic development efforts that fell under Combined Joint Interagency Task Force Shafafiyat, a command that had just passed from Maj. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster to Maj. Gen. Richard C. Longo. Terry's immediate concern, consistent with his tactical responsibilities as a corps commander, would be to balance force reductions with risk to the force over time. In October 2012, concurrent with work on the Unified Implementation Plan, ISAF had added additional retrograde guidance by publishing Amendment 2 to Revision 6 of its campaign plan. This plan was inherently a compromise, as it had to be vetted through the NATO chain of command and approved by the North Atlantic Council. It consequently did not meet with Terry's satisfaction.[18]

The Unified Implementation Plan was not written like a traditional operations plan. Its structure was narrative in form, starting with a statement of operational design more consistent with a theater strategy than a campaign plan. Its planning horizon extended beyond Inteqal to the end of the ISAF mission in December 2014. It was intended to continue transitioning security responsibility to the ANSF independent of the stability planning occurring at IJC. In the absence of a comprehensive theater strategy in Operation Plan 38302, the Unified Implementation Plan approved by Terry on 1 January 2013 provided long-term direction for U.S. forces in theater.[19]

After seeing the clarity that the Unified Implementation Plan provided to Terry's subordinate units, Dunford wanted to reexamine Operation Plan 38302 but refrained from doing so knowing that any revision might stall in the NATO approval process.[20] In its existing state, Operation Plan 38302 covered ISAF's activities to the end of the Afghan surge recovery, which had concluded a year earlier. Because a document such as the Unified

17. Ibid.

18. Ltr, Klug to Park, 9 Feb 2016; Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Col Thomas B. Gukeisen, frmr IJC Campaign Planner, 21 Oct 2014, pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The common but nondoctrinal term "risk to force" refers to attempts to preserve combat power, while "risk to mission" refers to ability of the organization to attain its assigned objectives.

19. Interv, Chandler Garcia with Gukeisen, 21 Oct 2014, pp. 5–6.

20. Ibid., pp. 4–5.



S. Sgt. Richard Andrade, USA

IJC commander General Terry (left) speaks with ISAF commander General Dunford at Bagram Air Base.

Implementation Plan could not serve as authoritative guidance to ISAF beyond regional commands, Dunford filled the gap by directing his deputy chief of staff for operations, American Maj. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland, to develop fragmentary orders that complemented the IJC plan.

The order to complete Operation Plan 38302, issued as ISAF Fragmentary Order 081–2013 on 20 May 2013, was the first clear statement of what ISAF would do after Inteqal ended.[21] Fragmentary orders did not normally offer strategic guidance, but 081–2013 foretold how the ISAF and Enduring Freedom campaigns would progress from Milestone 2013 to the end of both missions on 31 December 2014. It built on work in the Unified Implementation Plan to provide guidance critical to implementing Dunford's campaign visualization. It was through this fragmentary order that Dunford would direct the transformation, started under Allen, of ISAF into an organization dedicated to security force assistance.

The concept, to be instituted in May 2013, included general principles but offered scarce guidance on how units would interact with the ANSF.[22] Because little time was left in the campaign and the ISAF troop-contributing nations had diverse backgrounds, the principles were less prescriptive for adviser conduct. Rather than focus on operations, Dunford emphasized that security force assistance must be done with ANSF sustainability in mind, provisionally defined as "the ability to maintain the SFA [security force

21. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Lt Col Adelaido Godinez III, frmr ISAF Deputy Ch of Plans, 21 Nov 2014, pp. 6–9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Robert Johnson and Timothy Clack, eds., *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 403–04.

assistance] effort throughout all the phases of the operation and the ability of the Afghan Security Institutions and ANSF to sustain their capabilities independently over the long term."[23]

One example of ANSF sustainability was in the area of planning and executing campaigns, where there had been decent progress already. By fall 2013, the Ministry of Defense had developed the Afghan *National Military Strategy* to guide the ANA through 2017. The ANA General Staff had completed its planning for Operation Oqab, its operations order for Solar Year 1392 (2013), earlier than in previous years. The Ministry of Interior made similar progress, publishing both a National Police Strategy and a National Police Plan without direct coalition assistance. Although both ministries had made substantial progress in improving their logistics, they still needed help in identifying national sustainment requirements and getting supplies and maintenance to the force.[24]

One of the greatest obstacles to developing those capabilities in the ANSF was finding the appropriate expertise in the coalition itself. Above the tactical level, troop-contributing nations had little expertise in the strategic planning, programming, force structure, and budgeting necessary to advise a national defense establishment. The largest repository of those skills was the contractors and civilians at CTSC-A. Such knowledge was less common in CTSC-A's uniformed military members, let alone other Operation Enduring Freedom or ISAF organizations. Exacerbating the issue was the need to balance short-term operational imperatives with long-term developmental needs. Building professional security institutions from individual and small-unit skills up to the ministerial level required coalition commanders to allow the Afghans to build expertise in basic tasks such as operational planning, supply, maintenance, and transportation while also addressing their long-term developmental deficiencies.

At the end of 2013, recognizing how little time was left in the ISAF and Enduring Freedom campaigns, Dunford directed a change in emphasis from advising tactical units to advising ANA corps, ANP regional headquarters, and the national ministries. Dunford truly believed the ANSF were becoming tactically proficient, and therefore a change in advisory efforts was warranted. In a statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 12 March 2014, he highlighted the improved skills and continued cohesion of the ANSF in spite of increased casualties. As a result of the change from counterinsurgency to stability operations, American and coalition casualties in 2013 were a quarter of what they had been in 2010, when ISAF had started partnered security operations with the ANSF.[25] Dunford's statements, while indicating the progress that the security forces and Afghan ministries had

23. HQ ISAF Handbook, *Security Force Assistance Guide v1.0*, Cdr's Advisory and Assistance Team (Kabul: Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, 31 May 2013), p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

24. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Nov 2013, pp. 37–40.

25. Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr., *Written Posture Statement: Statement of General Joseph F. Dunford, Commander, U.S. Forces–Afghanistan before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Situation in Afghanistan,* 12 Mar 2014, pp. 2–3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

made, were a precursor to the immense effort required to reshape ISAF and its subordinate commands for the shift away from security operations.

The U.S. policy guidance supported this shift during 2013 and 2014 but remained vague for the post–Enduring Freedom campaign. Surge recovery guidance not only affected retrograde efforts but also changed ISAF's operational approach. Up to the transition, coalition forces had taken the lead for security so that the ANSF could stand up as an independent force. Coming at the end of surge recovery, a self-sufficient ANSF, capable Afghan institutions, and a transformed ISAF became the operational goals of allied intervention.

The campaign's dependence on hard policy guidance for the post-2014 mission complicated planning for the retrograde. The final international agreement authorizing military operations in Afghanistan under the ISAF mission was published on 10 October 2013 as United Nations Security Council Resolution 2120.[26] That resolution granted ISAF's authorization under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter through 31 December 2014 but indicated that the mission would not be extended further, stipulating that the headquarters would render its final report by December 2014. The way around this impasse came in changing how participants defined the post-2014 mission. As a noncombat mission, the subsequent NATO-led Operation Resolute Support did not fall under the provisions of Chapter VII. Prior to any subsequent UN Security Council resolution, agreements for a noncombat post-2014 mission would have to be negotiated bilaterally between Afghanistan and individual states or multinational entities.[27]

In spite of repeated claims that he would sign a bilateral security agreement between the U.S. and Afghan governments, Afghan president Hamid Karzai refused to do so, even after a referendum and *loya jirga* (grand assembly) overwhelmingly called for such a document. Karzai's reticence troubled Dunford and his political leadership as the majority of personnel and equipment for the post-2014 mission would come from the United States.[28] The need for counterterrorism operations to continue under Operation Freedom's Sentinel (the U.S. mission following Enduring Freedom) required a bilateral security agreement granting the United States legal authorization for military operations in Afghanistan after 2014. Without this authorization, U.S. forces would not be able to participate in the mission—and without the U.S. military contribution, there would be no Resolute Support mission.

---

26. UN Security Council, Resolution 2120, S/RES/2120 (2013), 10 Oct 2013, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/sres2120.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. UN Security Council, Resolution 2189, S/RES/2189 (2014), 12 Dec 2014, https://www.securitycouncil report.org/un-documents/documents/sres2189.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Emma Graham-Harrison, "Hamid Karzai Refuses to Sign US-Afghan Security Pact," *Guardian*, 24 Nov 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/24/hamid-karzai-refuses-to-sign-us-afghan-security-deal, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Layered Security and the Maturation of the ANSF

With assistance from the NATO Training Mission and CSTC-A, efforts to develop the ANSF and their supporting institutions evolved into what ISAF commander General Allen initially termed as a "layered defense in depth," in which synchronization, redundancy, and ANSF components would complement each other.[29] Over time, the concept of layered defense in depth gave way to the more general notion of layered security.

Dunford formally introduced his layered security concept in March 2013 as an addendum to the ANSF's Operation 1392, or Oqab. Rather than applying personnel, resources, attention, and intellectual effort to one component of the ANSF, layered security sought to establish coordination across Afghanistan's security apparatus. According to the concept, the Afghan Uniformed Police, which comprised most of the Ministry of Interior's conventional police forces, would operate in the population centers, while the ANA would cover the areas beyond those centers. As its name implied, the Afghan Border Police would control border crossing points.

As the layered security concept evolved, it came to encompass local indigenous forces such as the Afghan Local Police (ALP). A year earlier, in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Allen attested to the effectiveness of the ALP by stating:

> What has happened with the ALP is it has created opportunities for large amounts of the Afghan population to reject the Taliban. And there—there is—there have been some SIGINT [signals intelligence] . . . where Taliban commanders have said, if you can, kill an ALP commander, so an Afghan local policeman who is leading his own tribesmen in that particular village, if you can kill an ALP commander it's worth 10 coalition soldiers. The Taliban are very threatened by the ALP because the significant terrain, the key terrain in a counterinsurgency, is the human terrain, and the Afghan local police deny the human terrain to the Taliban.[30]

Layered security protected coalition forces as well as Afghans. Dunford used an analogy of a soccer game to describe force protection under the construct. As the last line of defense, security forces guarding coalition bases equated to goalkeepers. Prior to shooting on goal, the insurgency would have to go through the Afghan Border Police, ANA, and ANP. Even though a skilled goalkeeper would stop most shots, given enough opportunities and time, the insurgents would eventually score. The goalkeeper would have a much better chance of defending the goal if the other lines of defense denied the

29. "A Discussion on Afghanistan with General John Allen," Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, Brookings Institution, 25 Mar 2013, http://www.brookings.edu/events/2013/03/25-allen-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Gen John R. Allen, "Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee Subject: 'Situation in Afghanistan,'" Senate Armed Services Committee, 22 Mar 2012, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

attacker opportunities to shoot.[31] Therefore, it was in the best interest of all to develop all the lines of defense equally. The soccer analogy resonated with coalition audiences and encouraged continued engagement by other troop-contributing nations. What remained, of course, was building those relationships among the ANSF.

The layered security concept would undergo a sustained test even as it was adopted. In early 2013, the Taliban announced that its spring offensive *Khalid Bin Waleed*—named after the great Muslim general from the time of the Prophet Muhammad—would begin on 28 April. The Taliban promised to direct suicide assaults on coalition installations, launch "special military tactics" and "collective martyrdom operations," and employ "insider attacks" known as green-on-blue attacks. Although ISAF had met previous spring offensives with intense summer campaigns, recent developments prevented similar action in 2013. The 33,000 additional military personnel deployed to Afghanistan as part of the 2010 surge were now largely gone. The wholesale departure of foreign troops convinced the Taliban that efforts to discredit coalition and ANSF security gains would produce greater dividends at less cost than in the recent past. As a result, the Taliban sought to reassert itself within the Pashtun-dominated south and began to expand its footprint in the east while also making a long-deferred appearance in the west. At the same time, the Taliban sought to influence the domestic political climate of ISAF-contributing nations and dissuade Afghans from supporting the Karzai government by launching multiple, high-profile attacks in Kabul.[32]

Taliban efforts in early 2013 thus focused on gaining tactical advantage over the ANSF and moral ascendency over the Karzai government before the 2014 elections. Although the Taliban's spring offensive did not begin until 28 April, 2,331 attacks were recorded during the first four months of 2013, a figure that exceeded the previous year's total for the same period by 47 percent. In addition to launching more attacks, the Taliban targeted ANSF personnel rather than coalition forces. In the first quarter of 2013, the Taliban and its associates killed 1,183 Afghan soldiers, compared to 841 during the same period in 2012. In a related development, coalition fatalities fell from 183 (135 U.S.) during the January–May period in 2012 to 66 (53 U.S.) over the same period in 2013.[33]

Recognizing the threat that the ALP posed, the insurgents focused their attacks on Afghanistan's auxiliary forces, which suffered disproportionate casualties in the 2013 fighting season and continued to receive the brunt of attacks through 2014. In spite of the Ministry of Interior's difficulties sustaining the ALP, its formations prevailed against the insurgency even in

---

31. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Maj Gen Jeffrey L. Bannister, frmr ISAF Deputy Ch of Staff for Opns, 16 Jan 2015, p. 11, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

32. "Taliban Vow Suicide And 'Insider' Attacks in New Spring Offensive," Reuters, 27 Apr 2013, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-offensive/taliban-vow-suicide-and-insider-attacks-in-new-spring-offensive-idUSBRE93Q01Z20130427, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Rajeev Agarwal, "Taliban's Spring Offensive and Its Consequences," Institute for Defence Analysis and Study, 3 Jun 2013, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/TalibansSpringOffensiveandtheConsequences_ragarwal_030613, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the face of high casualties, and even had spikes in recruitment following those attacks.[34] Even as the ALP faced increased attacks, it remained an integral element of the layered security concept, which envisaged relationships among ANSF that enabled the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.

Given that most ANSF senior leaders had once fought as tribal or militia chieftains, the need for unity of command was pronounced. ISAF's advocacy of a layered security construct was a critical factor in improving the coordination at the ministerial level and among the ANA, ANP, and Afghan Border Police on the ground.[35] The layered security construct broke the competition that existed among components of the ANSF. It also promoted national unity.

Balancing Priorities: Security Force Assistance versus Retrograde

Whereas most American troops who had deployed to Afghanistan in 2012 understood that they had to ready Afghan security forces for independent operations while preparing to downsize ISAF presence, incoming personnel in 2013 faced an even more complex situation. The CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element reduced the burden of base closing, but incoming units still had to assist their Afghan army or police counterparts to secure the Afghan population. The units also still had to defend against Taliban and Haqqani attempts to disrupt their operations.

The fact that fewer Americans could provide security assistance to the ANSF meant that incoming U.S. units often found themselves nested within progressively larger Afghan formations. When the 140 soldiers of Capt. Benjamin E. Scott's Company A, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, arrived at Assistance Platform Chamkani in April–May 2013, they occupied a small portion of a sprawling Afghan installation. Chamkani also housed the 7/1 ANA Kandak, the 2/2 Afghan Border Patrol Battalion, a National Directorate of Security office, district-level Afghan Uniformed Police, and Afghan Local Police. In addition, an explosive ordinance detachment team, several Air Force joint terminal attack controllers, a female engagement team, the battalion surgeon, and two howitzers from 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, were located with Captain Scott's company. On any given day, the troops under Scott's command performed force protection duties, mentored ANA soldiers, conducted partnered operations with the Afghan Uniformed Police, fired counterbattery missions against insurgent rocket and mortar teams, worked with the Afghan chain of command to coordinate local

34. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Nov 2013, p. 18; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2014, pp. 58–59.

35. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Brig Gen Eric Wesley, frmr IJC Director of Plans, 19 Dec 2014, p. 10, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

operations, inventoried equipment for transfer, or interacted with their own battalion headquarters.[36]

The priority task for the first several months of Company A's deployment was to train the ANSF by conducting partnered planning and operations. Each of Scott's platoons was partnered with an Afghan company, though the requirements of other missions prevented them from working with their counterparts daily. Tactical instruction focused on improving individual skills, with emphasis on map reading and marksmanship, while also teaching collective skills such as squad or platoon battle drill and employing the crew-served weapons organic to an infantry company. During partnered operations, the Americans taught planning procedures, orders briefs, and mission rehearsals in lieu of maneuver-oriented skills. The training and partnered operations were aimed at preparing 7/1 Kandak for a multiweek, ANA corps-level mission in RC East. The 203d Corps conducted the mission, designated Operation Semourgh, in Logar Province during early August. After three weeks of fighting, Afghan forces succeeded in bringing in humanitarian aid to Azrah and Jaji Districts, securing the Azrah district center, and delivering registration materials for the 2014 national elections.[37]

Captain Scott's company discovered that mentoring the ANA was simple compared to ridding Chamkani of equipment that had accumulated on the post after five years of American troop rotations. This equipment could not be turned over to the Afghans because it exceeded the items authorized for 7/1 Kandak. Because Assistance Platform Chamkani was being transferred to the Afghans rather than reoccupied by another U.S. unit, Company A had to turn in 1,000 theater-specific pieces of equipment valued at $30 million. Scott had to modify his own supply procedures to reduce consumables before his unit departed. In addition to his own resources, Scott could count on assistance from the 101st Airborne's 4th Brigade Combat Team's support battalion. The logistical specialists from this unit planned to transfer equipment to Forward Operating Base Gardez using M1120 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck Load Handling Systems, each carrying a shipping container with a second container towed behind the vehicle. Items slated to be retrograded filled seventy containers and required five M1120 trucks towing trailers making seven trips between Gardez and Chamkani and airlifts to move sensitive equipment.[38] All equipment was sequenced for movement to ensure that mission-essential items would leave on the last convoy.

Backhauling equipment to Gardez began with equipment boxes lifted out by six CH–47 Chinooks. Loading and flying took place at night to minimize opportunities for the Haqqani to engage the helicopters. The final airlift, which included a pair of howitzers and two containers of ammunition, was deferred until the day the Americans permanently left the base. A base-

36. Capt Ryan C. Van Wie, "Operation Chamkani Transfer; 06 Oct 2013, Assistance Platform Chamkani, Paktya Province, Afghanistan, Able Company/1-506th IN/4th BCT/101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course 05–14, 6 Oct 2014), pp. 1–3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Nov 2013, p. 4.

38. Van Wie, "Operation Chamkani Transfer," pp. 11–13.



Spc. Steven Cope, USA

A CH–47 Chinook prepares to slingload a howitzer as part of the retrograde in Paktiya Province.

closure assistance team provided expertise on force protection, preventative medicine, ordnance disposal, and commodity reduction. The property transfer culminated with Scott signing over $400,000 worth of equipment to 7/1 Kandak.[39]

The final and most dangerous phase took place when oversized items were trucked from Chamkani to Gardez. The convoy consisted of sixteen cargo trucks, including ten Afghan-operated commercial tractor trailers, escorted by forty-four other vehicles. As the Americans disassembled the tethered surveillance aerostat and tower-mounted cameras, they positioned a thermal sight-equipped outpost overlooking their base while reconfiguring internal barriers to create a 360-degree defensive perimeter. After waiting three days for the weather to allow close air support and predator unmanned aerial vehicles to maintain station over the route, the ground convoy departed from Chamkani during the early morning hours of 4 October 2013. Despite constant overhead aerial support and 155-mm. artillery fire missions against suspected ambush positions, a Haqqani recoilless rifle team scored a direct hit on an engineer MRAP, wounding four Americans. The injured soldiers were evacuated by helicopter, and the convoy exited the ambush without further incident, arriving at its destination before dark.

Just before midnight on 5 October, Chinook helicopters airlifted the two howitzers, two mortars, and all four gun crews from Chamkani. Within three weeks, Scott's company began working with the rest of 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, to close the massive forward operating base at Gardez. Continuing with the orchestrated retrograde plan, elements of the 101st Airborne Division departed Gardez on 24 November 2013, transferring to

39. Ibid., pp. 15–18.

Forward Operating Base Shank in Logar Province for a short stay before returning to Fort Campbell in early December.[40]

Although ISAF remained focused on advising in 2013, the fact that it was shrinking in size complicated its task. The advisory teams assigned to ANA kandaks, now designated as Security Force Advise and Assist Teams, averaged just nine personnel, all of whom instructed the Afghan kandak headquarters rather than accompanying infantry companies outside the base. In addition, more units and fewer advisers meant that junior U.S. and coalition officers were routinely assigned to mentor Afghans older and more senior to them.

One member of a newly deployed advise-and-assist team working with 1/1 Kandak in Paktiya Province during this period observed:

> Our initial attempts at training the Afghans were largely unsuccessful. . . . First, our mission was to train ANA officers and NCOs, but we had no authority over them. Second, our ability to incentivize constructive change with support or equipment began to disappear as the United States began drawing down its forces and limiting how much its ground forces could get involved in operations. . . . the ANA interpreted this as a lack of effort and competence on our part.[41]

The teaching methods adopted by advisory personnel, who often lacked specific guidance and tailored programs of instruction, were counterproductive during this period. Far too many teams wasted time attempting to impart U.S. doctrine to unreceptive Afghan counterparts before switching to other methods. As a result, many advisory teams achieved only incremental success, such as convincing a kandak mortar platoon to make firing calculations using a portable laptop or showing an Afghan kandak how to deploy its companies in an effective cordon.[42]

Operation Drumbeat: Cutting the Force in Half by 2014

Although the Unified Implementation Plan was an IJC document, it served as the basis for Operation Drumbeat, the plan guiding the retrograde through the end of the ISAF and Enduring Freedom campaigns. Operation Drumbeat was the product of the USFOR-A Joint Operational Corps Headquarters, an entity created on 6 June 2012 to streamline command and control arrangements in Afghanistan. The Joint Operational Corps Headquarters allowed select American members of the IJC staff to contribute to U.S. national planning. That arrangement acknowledged the joint command's separation from ISAF proper while leveraging the intellectual capacity of the

40. Ibid., pp. 22–25.

41. Capt Thomas Reece, "Advising at the Kandak Level in Afghanistan" (PEP, Maneuver Capts Career Course 05–14, 11 Dec 2014), p. 4, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Ibid., pp. 5, 12–14.

V Corps. The ability to work both sides of the ISAF and Enduring Freedom missions paid dividends with Operation Drumbeat, which supported the force posture line of operation in the Unified Implementation Plan.[43]

The creation of the Joint Operational Corps Headquarters coincided with the return to a single command and control arrangement for all U.S. logistical forces in Afghanistan. At the creation of USFOR-A, the Army expeditionary sustainment command and its subordinate sustainment brigades had been controlled by U.S. Army Central Command in its role as the Army service component for CENTCOM. That first experiment in a single logistics command and control had ended on 16 June 2010 when all Army forces were transferred to USFOR-A control.[44]

The return to a single logistics command and control arrangement was a by-product of creating the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element and the subsequent division of labor necessary to execute the surge recovery. The centralized control necessary to execute logistics across Afghanistan left no latitude for competing priorities of logistical support. Between a tactical commander's priorities and the retrograde effort, the latter necessarily took precedence. Instead of exercising command of the U.S. logistics organizations in Afghanistan, USFOR-A became a supported unit for U.S. Army Central Command and its efforts to retrograde rolling and nonrolling stock.[45]

The U.S. units and service members executing the Operation Drumbeat directive published on 16 June 2013 faced the challenge of maintaining ISAF's momentum while achieving the force posture milestones directed by national policy. Although the United States did not command other national elements, it provided about 65 percent of the personnel and 85 percent of the materiel to the coalition in Afghanistan, and so other countries naturally would follow the U.S. lead. Before the start of Operation Drumbeat, personnel levels had fallen from 91,000 to 68,000 through relatively natural attrition. Rather than curtail units already in theater and send them home early, the DoD chose not to replace units that redeployed at the end of their tours, and repositioned units already in theater to cover any vacancies. The plan to further reduce U.S. forces to 34,000, however, had to balance several considerations. American and coalition forces had to retain enough capacity to ensure that the ANSF remained tactically successful while continuing to wean the ANSF off coalition support.

The consequences of departing theater early varied greatly between the U.S. Army's active and reserve components. Deployed Army Reserve and National Guard units were mobilized with the expectation of being away from their civilian jobs for a set period of time. Curtailing expected combat tours

---

43. Interv, Lynne Chandler Garcia, CSI, with Brig Gen Christopher P. McPadden, frmr Director IJC Future Plans, 16 Dec 2014, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

44. FRAGO 07–565, CENTCOM, 4 Oct 2008, sub: ESTABLISHMENT OF USFOR-A, NARR, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; FRAGO 07–718, CENTCOM, 16 Jun 2010, sub: U.S. Command and Control Relationships in CJOA-AFG WRT USFOR-A, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

45. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Gen William E. Rapp, frmr USFOR-A Deputy Cdr for Support, 3 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

or, worse, "off-ramping" mobilized units within 180 days of their originally scheduled deployments—both of which were common at the beginning of the surge recovery—created major administrative difficulties for the soldiers involved.[46] In an effort to mitigate the disruptive consequences of these practices and to ease reintegration into civilian life, the Army published an execution order detailing the administrative requirements for units that were curtailed or off-ramped.[47]

The challenge of reducing U.S. troops to 34,000 was known long before the release of the Operation Drumbeat directive. Withdrawing forces required accelerating retrograde, disposal, and base closure efforts while improving "asset visibility," which is the process of identifying documented and undocumented military equipment in Afghanistan. Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp's target goal of 1,250 pieces of rolling stock and 1,000 containers per month was still the prevailing guidance. With Drumbeat, the retrograde and redeployment pace accelerated in what was called the "R2 Surge" that started in September 2013 and lasted through January 2014. Exceeding monthly targets during those five months cleared much of the theater before the start of the 2014 fighting season and the transition of security force assistance.

By the end of 2013, the R2 Surge actually had increased retrograde capacity beyond the specified targets to 2,975 pieces of rolling stock and 3,300 containers a month. The increased capacity was due solely to multimodal transport. Some equipment did exit theater along the Pakistan ground lines of communications, but the route remained unpredictable. Throughput along the lines stalled when a protest against U.S. drone strikes in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan closed northern routes. The protesters, led by politician and former cricket player Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, blocked the roads with the support of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government. More than 10,000 protesters stopped vehicles carrying cargo for ISAF to protest the 1 November 2013 death of Hakimullah Mehsud, the self-proclaimed emir of the Pakistani Taliban who reportedly had been killed by a missile launched from a remotely piloted aircraft.[48]

---

46. Unlike curtailment, which cuts short a unit's actual tour of duty, off-ramping occurs when a unit's mission is cancelled due to changes in operational requirements either before its mobilization or after its mobilization but before it has deployed. Both can have a significant negative impact on arrangements that soldiers make with civilian employers before their mobilization. During fiscal years 2013 through 2015, the Army curtailed or off-ramped 1,085 National Guard and Army Reserve units containing 58,614 officers and enlisted personnel. Staff Paper, "Scope of Unit Off-Ramps from 2013–2015," National Commission on the Future of the Army, 21 Nov 2015, https://www.ncfa.ncr.gov/sites/default/files/20151102%20Off%20Ramp%20Paper.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

47. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park and Capt Miranda M. Summers-Lowe, OEF Study Grp, with Lt Col Andrew Dziengeleski, frmr IJC Plans Ofcr, 21 Dec 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; EXORD 097–13, HQDA, 18 May 2013, sub: Revised Guidance for Reserve Component (RC) Force Utilization and Soldier Hardships Based on Changes to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) operational requirements (off-ramps and curtailments), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

48. Tim Craig, "Drone Kills Taliban Chief Hakimullah Mehsud; Pakistan Accuses U.S. of Derailing Peace Talks," *Washington Post*, 2 Nov 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/



M. Sgt. Ben Bloker, USAF

MRAPs and other vehicles at Bagram's Camp Warrior retrosort yard await transport back to the United States.

The blockade of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa route backlogged vehicles and containers at holding yards in eastern Afghanistan. Logisticians at CENTCOM and U.S. Transportation Command responded by developing enhanced options in December 2013 to clear the backlog, which included increasing multimodal lift and shifting cargos to the southern Pakistan route through the Spin Boldak border-crossing point. The latter option required moving cargo from the northern route along Afghanistan National Highway 1 to Kandahar. Such a route was hardly tortuous, but nonetheless it was not a straightforward replacement for the blockaded route. The enhanced options were extraordinarily successful, retrograding 3,000 vehicles in only two months. By February 2014, the cargo backlog along the routes had been cleared in its entirety while backlogged containers at holding yards in eastern Afghanistan were repositioned at Bagram for multimodal movement.

THE RETROGRADE GAINS MOMENTUM

As part of the enhanced options, the deputy commanding general of the 1st Support Command (Forward), Brig. Gen. Duane A. Gamble, had established a "channel flight" or regular air rotation between Kuwait and Afghanistan. Channel flights allowed certain retrograde functions such as sorting cargo and customs clearance to be done in Kuwait. Assets in Kuwait included the 595th Transportation Brigade, a subordinate unit of the U.S. Army Surface

asia_pacific/pakistani-official-accuses-us-of-sabotage-as-drone-targets-taliban-leaders-in-northwest/2013/11/01/1463d0c2-431d-11e3-b028-de922d7a3f47_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; "Thousands Protest Against Drone Strikes in Peshawar," *Dawn*, 23 Nov 2013, https://www.dawn.com/news/1058051, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Deployment and Distribution Command, and the 402d Army Field Support Brigade, a forward-deployed U.S. Army Sustainment Command unit.[49]

To reduce the property that had to be shipped or destroyed, the Defense Logistics Agency conducted a "white goods" sale on 28 June 2014 at Bagram Air Base. Unlike excess defense articles, white goods were foreign excess personal property such as usable nonmilitary vehicles, appliances, and furniture. In addition to reducing the retrograde load, the sale stimulated the Afghan economy. Because it recouped value that otherwise would have been lost in scrapping or disposal, the sale generated goodwill with the Afghan government and local businesses and demonstrated good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.[50]

In March 2014, USFOR-A determined that leaving behind only the materiel required for the Resolute Support mission meant that it had to reduce on-hand quantities to about 11,000 pieces of rolling stock and containers by 1 August 2014. The reopening of the Pakistan ground lines of communications, as well as the continued channel flights, enabled USFOR-A to meet this goal by 29 July 2014 and reduce further to 10,350 vehicles by 9 August 2014. The command had to plan carefully so retrograde velocity would not adversely affect operational capacity.[51]

From the start of Operation Drumbeat on 1 June 2013 to the end of Phase II on 1 February 2014, logisticians throughout the Afghan theater had met all their goals. They did this in spite of difficulties with the northern route through Pakistan, which did not reopen fully until 27 February 2014, after the Peshawar High Court ruled that the protests by Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party were illegal. Of the 158 bases open in June 2013, USFOR-A and ISAF had closed 70, removing all buildings, eliminating all explosive material, and remediating all environmental hazards. The force was also able to redeploy, retrograde, or divest 11,600 pieces of rolling stock, about 55 percent of the original number. More impressively, it had moved more than 1,000,000 pieces, or 2,900 containers, of nonrolling stock, leaving 674,000 pieces, or 1,900 containers. The number of cargo containers in the Afghan theater was reduced by almost 60 percent. The collective efforts of the USFOR-A team and supporting agencies enabled ISAF and Enduring Freedom to meet or exceed all of their redeployment, retrograde, divestiture, and base closure goals. Now the coalition was well-postured to begin the most sweeping change it had yet undertaken in its operational approach.[52]

---

49. C. Todd Lopez, "Reliable Tempo Draws Down 13-Year Combat Footprint in Afghanistan," 9 Apr 2015, https://www.army.mil/article/146113, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Capt Devon McRainey, "DLA Sells Excess Equipment in Afghanistan Saves Taxpayer Dollars," 2 Jul 2014, https://www.army.mil/article/129067, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

51. Lopez, "Reliable Tempo Draws Down 13-Year Combat Footprint in Afghanistan"; Interv, Park with Rapp, 3 Dec 2015.

52. "PTI Decides to End Its Three Month Blockade of NATO Supplies," *Express Tribune*, 27 Feb 2014, https://tribune.com.pk/story/677027/pti-to-end-blockade-of-nato-supplies, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Functionally Based Security Force Assistance

Despite its importance to the termination of Operation Enduring Freedom and the ISAF mission, the change from counterinsurgency to stability operations was not recognized immediately in the force. The change in mission marked the first time that ISAF had taken as its primary role security force assistance rather than combat operations. To make this transition work smoothly, ISAF needed to fully restructure not only its force but also its organizational culture.

The vehicle for that change was an evolving process, eventually called functionally based security force assistance, spanning from mid-2011 to late 2014 to reach its final form. Because NATO had no approved plan for advancing the advising mission, General Allen's 2011 security force assistance concept had served as a stopgap. In the absence of established procedures, ISAF forces needed guidance on how coalition forces would transition from combat to advising.

Reorganizing the Headquarters for Security Force Assistance

With the change in focus from counterinsurgency operations to security force assistance, ISAF headquarters became responsible for many of the functions held by the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan. The two outgoing change of command ceremonies held on 4 September 2013 for Lt. Gen. Kenneth E. Tovo, commander of both the NATO Training Mission and CSTC-A, were the first visible movements toward that end. When Maj. Gen. Kevin R. Wendel assumed command of CSTC-A from Tovo, it marked the organization's separation from the NATO Training Mission and ended its responsibility for combat-advising the ANSF conventional forces. At the same time, USFOR-A retained command over Wendel's formation, because the latter disbursed U.S. security assistance funding to the Afghans.

Wendel also assumed the duties of the newly designated ISAF deputy commander of the Ministerial Advisory Group. This role had two sets of oversight responsibilities. First, Wendel worked with the advisers to the defense and interior ministries and maintained liaisons with the nonsecurity ministries, including the Ministries of Finance, Education, Justice, Public Health, Commerce and Industry, and Communication and Information Technology. Second, he provided advisory oversight of functional enterprises, including human resource management, sustainment, strategic plans and policy, and most notably, inspector general transparency, accountability, and oversight. In addition to these tasks, Wendel was responsible for integrating, coordinating, and synchronizing the critical security force assistance tasks for ISAF.

The full scope of oversight duties for CSTC-A, particularly for fiscal support to the ANSF, required significant expertise in acquisitions and fiscal matters. A deputy command position was established to oversee this critical function. The first deputy commanding general of CSTC-A to serve in that capacity after the training headquarters split was Maj. Gen. Harold R. Greene,

a career Acquisitions Corps officer. While Wendel and his staff were looking outward to manage outreach to the ANSF, Greene was looking inward to ensure that the United States and other donor nations provided the ANSF with proper resources through the Afghan Security Forces Fund, security assistance and foreign military sales, contracts, and infrastructure support.[53]

The second change of command passed the NATO Training Mission and its oversight for combat advising of the conventional ANSF to Maj. Gen. Dean J. Milner, a Canadian officer who had served as deputy commanding general of the III Corps under Lt. Gen. Mark A. Milley. Under this new arrangement, NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan was subordinated to IJC—a fortuitous development—as the III Corps was the unit providing the nucleus for both headquarters. Milner would once again work for Milley, whose III Corps had succeeded Terry and his V Corps. Under IJC, Milner and his NATO Training Mission were responsible for training, advising, and assisting the ANSF to develop their training, logistics, and medical institutions to support the creation of a sustainable and increasingly professional ANA and ANP capable of protecting the population and denying safe haven to the enemies of Afghanistan. Rather than the previous focus on advising at the brigade and below level, the training mission supported ANSF institutional training centers for their branches of service, as well as in sustainment, police, and combat health support.[54]

In his visualization of the remaining ISAF campaign, Dunford described a "single battle" of security force assistance from the ministerial level down to the kandak level. The notion of single battle came from Marine Corps doctrine, in which a commander would plan centrally and then execute the plan in a decentralized fashion while viewing the area of operations as one indivisible entity. The single-battle concept was intended for a Marine Air-Ground Task Force, but it aptly described Dunford's vision for the ISAF campaign, in which previously disparate efforts would have to be tied into preparing Afghan ministries and ANSF for Resolute Support.[55]

To help unity of effort and provide technical assistance to those implementing General Dunford's guidance, a security force assistance fusion cell began operations under Wendel's oversight on 27 January 2014. This cell was an instrument for transforming ISAF from a headquarters overseeing counterinsurgency operations to one overseeing stability operations. It served as the secretariat for all of the functionally based security force assistance staff functions and was the focal point for coordination among all related activities.[56]

---

53. FRAGO 1001–2014, ISAF, 6 Jul 2014, sub: Operationalization of FB-SFA, pp. 4–6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. Heather Graham-Ashley, "Corps Bids Farewell to Last of Canadian DCGs as Milner Pins on 2nd Star," *Fort Hood Sentinel*, 18 Apr 2013, https://www.forthoodsentinel.com/story.php?id=11169, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

55. HQ, United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–0, Marine Corps Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Ofc, 2001), pp. 6–20.

56. Info Paper, Ellen Jackman, ISAF Security Force Assistance Fusion Cell, 22 May 2014, sub: Operationalising FB-SFA, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Instead of relying on the previous pillars of security force assistance outlined in the campaign plan, General Dunford directed Wendel to develop a new organizational design for supporting the Afghan security ministries and increasing ANSF self-sustainability. From 21 to 26 March 2014, the security force assistance fusion cell developed a definition of self-sustainability and, more importantly, eight essential functions that shifted focus to the ministerial level. The release of these eight functions on 26 March 2014 occurred with only 280 days left in the ISAF campaign. Dunford, recognizing that a revision of COMISAF (Commander ISAF) Operational Plan 38302 would require approval by the North Atlantic Council, published the changes in guidance to the force through fragmentary orders. Changing the battle rhythm was a deliberate attempt to change the culture of the organization. It was also a consequence of the inexorable flow of equipment and personnel out of Afghanistan in 2014 and the considerable reorganization of the force itself in its last year.[57]

Reorganizing the Force for the New Mission

The first major reorganization of ISAF toward the Resolute Support mission, which resulted in the split of NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan and CSTC-A, also included a realignment of the command. The rationale for this realignment was to better posture systems and processes for the advisory missions in accordance with the eight essential functions of functionally based security force assistance. The distribution of missions previously held under the training commands resulted in a completely reorganized ISAF headquarters. The magnitude of the changes that occurred in the ISAF staff and subordinate commands starting on 1 July 2014 was a testament to establishing ISAF as a command that focused primarily on security force assistance.

On 1 July 2014, NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan cased its colors for the last time and was deactivated, with its personnel and functions becoming the CJ–7 (Training and Exercises) staff section within ISAF headquarters. Simultaneously, the title of deputy commander of the Ministerial Advisory Group ceased to exist, leaving Wendel solely with his duties as the commander of CSTC-A. This reorganization codified a number of changes that had been proposed in late 2013 to set the command for the Resolute Support mission. First was the change of the security force assistance fusion cell into a more

57. The eight functions are (1) plan, program, budget, and execute; (2) transparency, accountability, and oversight; (3) civilian governance of Afghanistan's security ministries and adherence to rule of law; (4) force generation; (5) sustain the force; (6) plan, resource, and execute effective security campaigns; (7) develop sufficient intelligence capabilities and processes; and (8) maintain internal and external strategic communications capability. HQ ISAF Handbook, *Resolute Support Security Force Assistance Guide v3.0*, Cdr's Advisory and Assistance Team (Kabul: Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, 1 Jul 2014), p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Interv, Col E. J. Degen, OEF Study Grp, with T. Andrew Shoffner, frmr Security Force Assistance Fusion Cell, 8 Oct 2019, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

expansive Security Force Assistance Center working directly under ISAF.[58] The ministerial advisers who had been part of General Wendel's groups moved into the ISAF headquarters and picked up advisory roles to the ANSF. Rather than having dedicated advisers, the intent was for the principal staff and their subordinates to double as the ISAF battle staff and as advisers to their Afghan counterparts in the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, and the ANA General Staff.[59]

External to the ISAF headquarters, Special Operations institutional training was overseen by the NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, commanded by Maj. Gen. Edward M. Reeder Jr., who had five previous Operation Enduring Freedom rotations at multiple levels of command. Air institutional training was overseen by NATO Air Command–Afghanistan, under the command of U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Kenneth S. Wilsbach, who also commanded the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force–Afghanistan.[60]

From 2003 to 2014, ISAF had divided its area of operations into regional commands, which were usually divisional headquarters led by a one- or two-star general officer.[61] Up to 2013, the mission of regional commands had been to control operations at the tactical level, although this singular focus was modified when the United States started deploying security force assistance brigades instead of combat brigades as part of the surge recovery. These headquarters controlled combat forces and also oversaw NATO Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams in their areas of operation after TF Phoenix disestablished in 2011. They later added embedded training teams and police mentoring teams.

The regional command structure worked well for overseeing combat operations, but fundamental changes were needed once modular brigades augmented for security force assistance began arriving in theater. By the end of the surge in August 2011, the prevailing philosophy in the campaign—encapsulated in the informal motto "shona ba shona" (shoulder to shoulder)—was that coalition forces were to be partnered fully with their ANSF counterparts. The change to security force assistance in Revision 6 to Operational Plan 38302 shifted the underlying philosophy again to Afghans taking the lead with coalition forces in a supporting role.

58. FRAGO 1001–2014, ISAF, 6 Jul 2014, sub: Operationalization of FB-SFA, pp. 4–5.

59. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Nov 2013, p. 12.

60. FRAGO 1001–2014, ISAF, 6 Jul 2014, sub: Operationalization of FB-SFA, pp. 4–5.

61. The term "framework nation," while not formally defined, normally meant the country that provided the forces and majority of the sustainment for a given RC headquarters.

Chapter Thirteen

Enduring Freedom Becomes Resolute Support

The final three years of the ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom campaigns presented one of the most difficult challenges faced by the coalition and its leaders during the entire conflict. Changing the mission from counterinsurgency operations to security force assistance while simultaneously withdrawing the force was difficult enough. The chaotic policy environment that characterized the last two years of the conflict made closing out the campaign even harder.

A Campaign in Transition

One factor that hindered ISAF in transitioning to Resolute Support was the ambiguity of national policy in terms of ends, ways, and means. Delays in signing the Bilateral Security Agreement and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, combined with the lack of a substantive policy decision, resulted in incomplete campaign guidance and orders. Operational Plan 38312 for Resolute Support and Operational Plan 1710–14 for Operation Freedom's Sentinel could not be updated and published with a clearly articulated end state to operations in Afghanistan.[1] Uncertainty over what forces would be available beyond 2014, a direct outcome of the U.S. policy debate, contributed to that ambiguity. Absent clarity, any campaign planning for the post-2014 mission was at best an estimate.

Although President Barack H. Obama had announced that 9,800 U.S. personnel would remain in Afghanistan following the end of Operation Enduring Freedom, some senior officials within the administration continued to press for a much smaller residual force. They proposed that the total of 9,800 personnel could be a starting point, with the desired final number of residual forces being 1,000 officers and enlisted personnel operating from a single base near Kabul.[2] General Joseph F. Dunford Jr.'s replacement, General John F. Campbell, would spend months championing the need to stick to the original target for residual forces and convinced the White House and key members of Congress not to reduce the 9,800 figure before his departure from

1. White Paper, "The Failures of Operational Art," COMISAF Cdr's Action Grp, 10 Oct 2014, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

2. David Vergun, "Former Resolute Support Commander: Leaders Heeded Advice," *Army News Service*, 16 Mar 2016, https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/694949/former-resolute-support-commander-leaders-heeded-advice, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

command.[3] The decision to maintain agreed-upon post–Enduring Freedom troop levels did not come easily given Obama's pledge to withdraw all U.S. forces by the end of his second term.[4]

Even if there had been complete certainty on the campaign objectives and force structure beyond 2014, getting the right people for the job still remained a challenge. It had not been difficult to choose and train advisers for duty with ANA tactical units from among the large number of eligible individuals, but the same could not be said for advisers responsible for aiding Afghan defense ministry officials. The number of qualified individuals was much smaller because the U.S. Army itself had fewer positions calling for specialized knowledge in strategic planning, large-scale logistics, programming, and budgeting compared to the number of soldiers familiar with leading companies, battalions, and brigades. The former set of responsibilities normally was assigned to selected officers and civilians midway or later in their careers, while all officers had to pass through the crucible of command before advancing to senior ranks. In addition, a number of installations and units were able to provide multiweek advisory-related courses for officers and enlisted soldiers, whereas it required a year or more of specialized education at dedicated learning institutions to provide similar levels of training to ministerial-level advisers. The Army's ability to generate ministerial-level advisers thus had to contend with limited numbers of qualified individuals within its ranks as well as an equally constrained ability to generate more of them.[5]

The confluence of all of these factors meant that more work would be needed to translate unclear policy through military strategy and meaningful operations. Without a coherent strategy, the spirit, blood, and treasure spent in Afghanistan would be for naught. In spite of the extensive efforts to adapt operations and logistics in Afghanistan to the challenges of the Enduring Freedom and ISAF campaigns, the future of Afghanistan, even with forces set for Operations Freedom's Sentinel and Resolute Support, remained uncertain.

Competing Demands in the 2014 Fighting Season

Although the Taliban had halted most of its large-scale efforts to oppose ISAF on the battlefield after the American-led surge, it had not been defeated. Opposition groups had sufficient resources and motivation to continue

3. The White House began reexamining a proposal to reduce the 9,800 total to 5,500 following General John F. Campbell's change of command in 2016. Missy Ryan and Greg Jaffe, "Senior U.S. General Wants to Start Striking Taliban Again," *Washington Post*, 14 Mar 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/top-us-general-wants-to-start-striking-the-taliban-again/2016/03/14/2f347c18-e9eb-11e5-b0fd-073d5930a7b7_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. Missy Ryan and Greg Jaffe, "This Shadowy General Is Expected to Be the Next Leader of America's Special Operations Forces," *Washington Post*, 7 Jan 2016, https://www.businessinsider.com/this-shadowy-general-is-expected-to-be-the-next-leader-of-americas-special-operations-forces-2016-1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

5. Ibid.

military operations against ISAF and the government of Afghanistan. Foremost among these groups was the Haqqani Network, whose operators and facilitators had survived the surge by focusing their energies on discrete suicide operations with high payoff and minor cost in lives and property.[6]

The Taliban, meanwhile, was embroiled in an internal power struggle that unfolded largely out of public view. An earlier conflict had developed between Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir and Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Mansour to replace Mullah Mohammed Omar's top deputy, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The new struggle began when Omar mysteriously died in the summer of 2013. After a two-year power struggle, Akhtar Mansour emerged as the Taliban's de facto leader. In the process, he recemented ties with the Haqqani Network, choosing two deputies from the Haqqani leadership.[7] This decision was important as the Haqqanis had become somewhat disconnected from the Taliban fight in the south. Bringing Haqqani members and influence into the Taliban's core leadership channeled the network's military actions in ways that supported the Taliban's goals to discredit and undermine the Kabul regime while striking at significant American targets.

Turmoil within the Taliban was not readily apparent in its announcement that the 2014 spring offensive *Khaybar* (named after the Battle of Khaybar, in which Muslim forces led by the Prophet Muhammad overcame a Jewish stronghold in CE 629) would begin on 12 May. ISAF personnel and facilities topped the list of Taliban goals for 2014, which included eliminating "foreign invaders and their backers under various names like spies, military and civilian contractors and everyone working for them like translators, administrators and logistics personnel." In addition, the Taliban targeted members of the Afghan government such as cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, Interior and Foreign Ministry officials, agents in the National Directorate of Security, and attorneys and judges involved in criminal trials for captured Taliban.[8]

The Taliban claimed it was prepared to utilize "various modern military technique[s]," such as "martyrdom strikes" (suicide attacks and bombings), "infiltrator operations" (insider or green-on-blue attacks), and "head-on offensive operations against enemy gatherings" (attacks on ISAF installations).[9] The Taliban released a list of potential targets for 2014 that included foreign and Afghan bases, "diplomatic centers," military and civilian convoys, and other "facilities of foreign, interior, intelligence and Arbakai [local] militia." The reference to the last organization attested to the success

---

6. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Rpt, Apr 2012, pp. 55–56.

7. Joseph Goldstein, "Taliban's New Leader Strengthens His Hold with Intrigue and Battlefield Victory," *New York Times*, 4 Oct 2015, https://www.newyorktimes.com/2015/10/15/asia/world/Kunduz-fall-validates-mullah-akhtar-muhammad-mansour-talibans-new-leader.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. Bill Roggio, "Taliban Announce This Year's Spring Offensive,"*Long War Journal*, 9 May 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/05/taliban_announce_thi.php, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

9. Ibid.

of Village Stability Operations. Although the Taliban did not threaten to disrupt the June runoff election—suggesting that such an undertaking would have exceeded its current capabilities—the 2014 announcement made it clear that the Taliban would actively exploit any emerging vulnerability as the ISAF drawdown continued.[10]

The Afghan presidential and provincial council elections would be the biggest tests for the ANSF in 2014. The ANSF had successfully provided security to campaign rallies, but both they and the coalition anticipated high-profile attacks in an attempt to undermine the elections. On 20 March 2014, two weeks before election day, the Taliban attacked the Serena Hotel in Kabul, a popular spot for foreign visitors, killing nine civilians, four of whom were foreigners. That attack came a day after the Taliban conducted a complex attack on a police station in downtown Jalalabad, near the Nangarhar governor's residence, and two days after a suicide bomber killed sixteen people in a market in Faryab Province. In spite of these events, the Afghans continued to carry on their daily business, an optimistic trend for the election.[11]

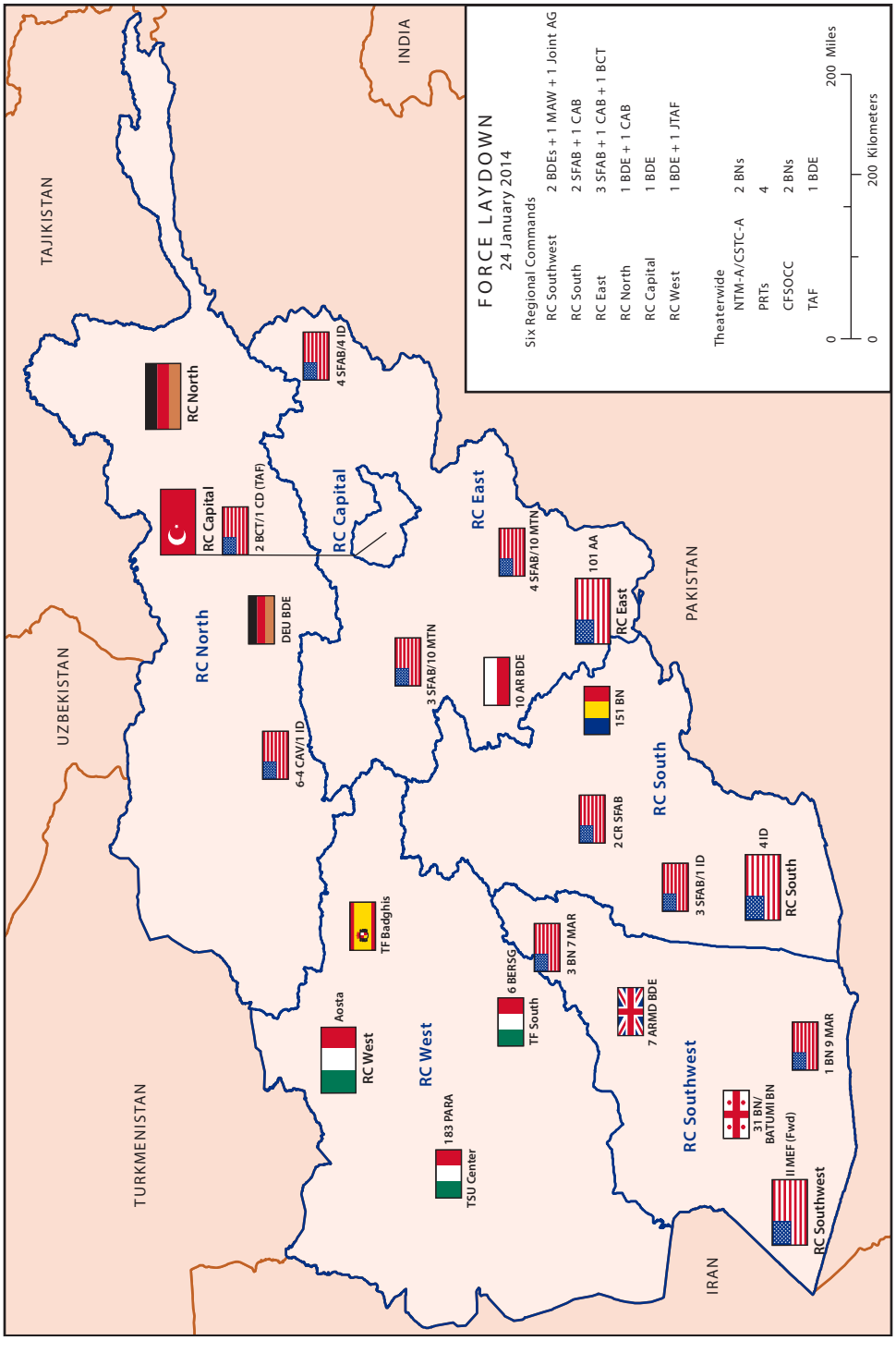
The 2014 fighting season was the first in which the ANSF took the lead for security operations. Leaders at ISAF and its subordinate headquarters, anticipating increased election security requirements and reduced coalition visibility during the election period, slowed the pace of retrograde accordingly (*Map 13.1*).[12] The intent was that the capabilities required to support the ANSF would be available through the end of the 2014 fighting season, then retrograded after the election was complete. The Taliban tested the ANSF by launching massed assaults against isolated checkpoints and outlying government centers. Although the attacks often succeeded, the insurgents invariably failed to hold onto their gains. Overall, the ANSF continued to demonstrate tactical superiority over insurgents with some assistance from United States and coalition partners throughout the presidential elections and the fighting season.

When the Afghan people went to the polls on 5 April 2014, less ISAF support was required than expected, even in light of numerous security incidents throughout the day. ANSF operations to disrupt the Taliban prior to the election, along with a comprehensive security plan for the election itself, ensured that no major attacks succeeded and that the 2014 elections saw less violence overall than in the 2009 presidential and the 2010 provincial

10. Ibid.

11. The assault on the police station killed ten ANP, one civilian, and all seven attackers. Agence France-Presse, "At Least 18 Dead in Taliban Suicide Attack on Jalalabad Police Station," *Guardian*, 20 Mar 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/20/18-dead-taliban-suicide-attack-jalabad-police, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Emma Graham-Harrison, "Taliban Gunmen Kill Nine Civilians in Attack at Kabul's Serena Hotel," *Guardian*, 21 Mar 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/21/taliban-gunmen-kill-nine-kabul-serena-hotel, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

12. Weekly Ltr, Lt Gen Joseph Anderson, Cdr, IJC, and Deputy Cdr, USFOR-A, to Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Cdr, ISAF and USFOR-A, 28 Mar 2014, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


FORCE LAYDOWN
24 January 2014
Six Regional Commands
RC Southwest 2 BDEs + 1 MAW + 1 Joint AG
RC South 2 SFAB + 1 CAB
RC East 3 SFAB + 1 CAB + 1 BCT
RC North 1 BDE + 1 CAB
RC Capital 1 BDE
RC West 1 BDE + 1 JTAF
Theaterwide
NTM-A/CSTC-A 2 BNs
PRTs 4
CFSOCC 2 BNs
TAF 1 BDE
0 200 Miles
0 200 Kilometers
TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
UZBEKISTAN
PAKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
RC North
RC Capital
RC East
RC South
RC West
RC Southwest
4 SFAB/4 ID
2 BCT/1 CD (TAF)
DEU BDE
6-4 CAV/1 ID
3 SFAB/10 MTN
4 SFAB/10 MTN
10 AR BDE
101 AA
151 BN
2 CR SFAB
3 SFAB/1 ID
4 ID
TF Badghis
Aosta
183 PARA
TSU Center
6 BERSG
TF South
3 BN 7 MAR
7 ARMD BDE
31 BN/ BATUMI BN
II MEF (Fwd)
1 BN 9 MAR

Map 13.1

elections.[13] Even with the high voter turnout, neither Ashraf Ghani nor Abdullah Abdullah, the two leading presidential candidates, was able to secure a decisive victory with more than 50 percent of the vote.

The ANSF protected the candidates and voters leading up to and during the April election, and did so again less than two months later when Ghani and Abdullah competed in a runoff election. More than seven million voters participated in this second round. After credible reports of significant irregularities voided the 14 June runoff, the Afghan Independent Election Commission declared Ghani as Hamid Karzai's official successor on 21 September. That same day, Ghani announced that he would form a national unity government, with Abdullah holding the newly created post of chief executive. Though initial reports suggested that insurgents had attempted approximately 300 attacks during the June election, along with 351 incidents during the April election, the Taliban was unable to disrupt either event.[14] Throughout the process, U.S. forces limited their involvement to transporting ballots to an audit location where ANSF provided security for the actual counting.[15]

Although the ANSF had succeeded in protecting the runoff election, the fighting continued throughout the year. On 21 June 2014, the Taliban caught the ANSF off guard with an offensive in the Sangin and Now Zad Districts of Helmand Province. Despite the surprise attack, the ANA and Afghan Uniformed Police in those districts were able to regain lost territory before the end of July, preventing the Taliban from holding key terrain. Support from RC South was limited to intelligence, armed helicopter escort for medical evacuation flights, close air support, and advisory support. The ANSF conducted virtually all of the ground combat operations.[16]

By the end of summer 2014, the ANSF were on track to assume responsibility for all conventional and Special Operations missions, many of which were already being conducted solely by Afghans. The successes experienced by the ANSF came at the expense of the retrograde velocity that had accelerated over the winter and decelerated for the fighting season. With only a few months left in Enduring Freedom, USFOR-A focused on clearing the theater in time for the transition to Resolute Support.

The retrograding success that the United States and its coalition partners had achieved through the 2014 fighting season meant that Operation Drumbeat was already about 80 percent complete by the beginning of the fourth and final phase of the plan.[17] Coming out of the surge recovery in January 2012, USFOR-A was responsible for 396 bases, 48,677 pieces of rolling stock, 26,816 containers of equipment, and 78,000 contractors. From the start of Drumbeat on 1 June 2013 to its conclusion at the end of 2014, USFOR-A and its coalition partners had closed or transferred 189 bases. They transferred, shipped home, or destroyed 24,450 pieces of rolling stock,

13. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Apr 2014, pp. 2–3.

14. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2014, pp. 1–2.

15. Ibid., p. 3.

16. Ibid., p. 13.

17. Ibid.



Pfc. David Devich, USA

An ANA Commando directs ANA soldiers during a firefight with insurgents in Ghazni Province.

1,794,450 pieces of nonrolling stock (5,300 containers), and 80,900 cargo containers. During the same period, the command reduced the number of civilian contractors in Afghanistan by 45,900 personnel. Commanders and staff balanced downsizing force activities with retaining the capabilities needed to continue advising the ANSF. In most cases, the requirements had reduced to the degree that remaining forces would be able to perform those duties. In some cases, requirements no longer existed and the organizations to which they were assigned were repurposed or withdrawn altogether.[18]

From Regional Commands to Train, Advise, and Assist Commands

By 30 September 2012, coalition troop levels had reduced from their surge strength of 134,000 to approximately 107,000. A year later, the total ISAF number had shrunk to approximately 65,000, with the U.S. presence in Afghanistan down from 68,000 to just over 39,000 personnel. By October 2014, short of ISAF's full reorganization, ISAF end strength was just over 34,000 personnel, with American forces constituting approximately 24,000 of that number.[19]

In order to decrease the number of American personnel serving in Afghanistan, tactical units were redeployed to the United States without replacement. With the expanded ANSF assuming greater responsibility for operation planning and execution, U.S. soldiers and marines were no longer

18. These figures are taken from the DoD reports on *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* from these periods. See DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Apr 2014; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2014.

19. Ibid.

needed in the same numbers as before. Although the Bilateral Security Agreement did not stipulate a particular echelon for advisory efforts, the Resolute Support mission eliminated all tactical-level advising except that conducted by special operators working alongside the Afghan Commandos. As a result, advisers from conventional units were withdrawn from every echelon of command below ANA corps.

Coincident with the reduction in force, ISAF began to replace regional commands with train, advise, and assist commands, which ended the military's practice of appointing battlespace owners. These train, advise, and assist headquarters, which were smaller than the regional commands they replaced, would be the focal point for developing and improving the ANA corps and ANP regional and provincial headquarters in their areas of operations.[20] Their role hearkened to CTSC-A's previous Afghan Regional Security Integration Commands, which had been located at the same bases as ANA corps headquarters before NATO had established its training missions.

Train, advise, and assist commands had fewer capabilities than their predecessors. In the conversion, regional commands transferred former functions such as medical evacuation and the collection and processing of battlefield intelligence to IJC, which retained tactical responsibilities. Two aspects of these transfers forced the ANSF to become more self-sufficient. First, authority for the release of coalition combat enablers moved to IJC, making it more difficult to request enablers and less likely that they would be provided. Second, as forces redeployed and countries reduced their presence in theater, those combat enablers became less available to provide assistance, decreasing the probability that the ANSF would be able to call on them for help even in exigent circumstances.[21]

The first regional command to transition to a train, advise, and assist command was the Turkish headquarters serving as RC Capital, which became Train, Advise, and Assist Command–Central on 10 July 2014. Next, the Italian headquarters serving as RC West in Herat became Train, Advise, and Assist Command–West on 16 July 2014. The German headquarters in Mazar-e Sharif serving as RC North became Train, Advise, and Assist Command–North on 1 August 2014. The American headquarters at RCs Southwest, South, and East were the last to transition. Each had been organized around an Army division or a reduced Marine Expeditionary Force command and had overseen the efforts of large subordinate units with many troops. On 14 October 2014, RC South transferred authority to Train, Advise, and Assist

20. In 2013, the ANP underwent a significant change in command and control structure. The previous ANP regional headquarters became known as Type A headquarters. It did not exercise command and control over the Type B headquarters at the provincial level. However, the Type A regional commanders did exercise some influence over the Type B provincial police chiefs, who answered formally to their provincial governors. Info Paper, Lt Col Christopher Medina, CJ–35 Planner, IJC, 30 May 2013, sub: Consolidated Paper on ANP Zone Restructuring to Type A Provincial HQs, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

21. Lt Gen Joseph Anderson and Maj Matthew M. McCreary, "International Security Assistance Force Joint Command 2014: The Year of Change," *Military Review* 95, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 2015): 19.



U.S. Army

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, conduct a joint patrol with ANP forces near Tarnak Farms in Kandahar Province.

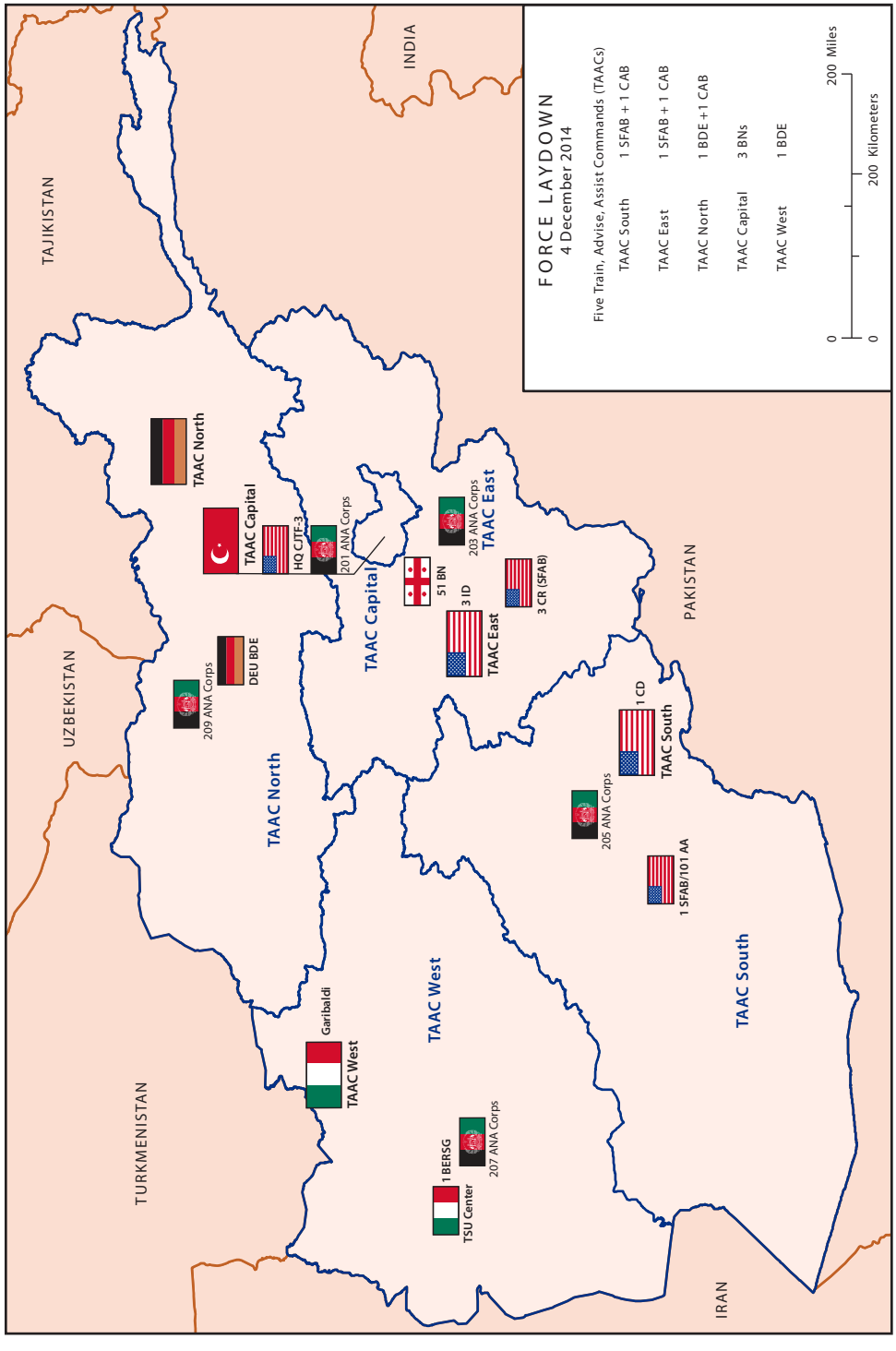
Command–South in Kandahar. Maj. Gen. Paul J. LaCamera, commanding the 4th Infantry Division, handed over command to Maj. Gen. Michael A. Bills, his counterpart in the 1st Cavalry Division (*Map 13.2*). Bills did not remain in Afghanistan, as command of the newly created headquarters fell to Brig. Gen. Viet Luong, deputy commanding general for maneuver, who remained with a small staff element. In the meantime, most of the 1st Cavalry Division's staff officers remained at Fort Hood and would rotate with their counterparts in Afghanistan midway through the year.[22]

The withdrawal of forces from RC Southwest differed markedly from other areas, as it was the one region where responsibility for ANSF would not transfer to a train, advise, and assist command that would be physically present. On 5 February 2014, authority transferred from II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) to the Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan. That transfer reduced the grade of the RC commander from major general to brigadier general.

Coalition forces in RC Southwest reduced measurably in early 2014 with the departure of the Tongan, Estonian, Bosnian, and Danish forces. The Georgian and Jordanian missions left a few months later, and by the end of summer 2014 the only forces left in RC Southwest were Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan and Task Force Helmand, formed around the Desert Rats of the British Army's 7th Armored Brigade.[23]

22. Weekly Assessment Rpt, HQ, Train Advise Assist Cmd-South, 6–12 Oct 2014, 14 Oct 2014, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. AAR, Opn Enduring Freedom 14, Camp Leatherneck Marine Expeditionary Bde–Afghanistan, 5 Jan 2015, pp. 4–5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.


FORCE LAYDOWN
4 December 2014
Five Train, Advise, Assist Commands (TAACs)
TAAC South 1 SFAB + 1 CAB
TAAC East 1 SFAB + 1 CAB
TAAC North 1 BDE +1 CAB
TAAC Capital 3 BNs
TAAC West 1 BDE
0 200 Miles
0 200 Kilometers
TAJIKISTAN
INDIA
UZBEKISTAN
PAKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
TAAC North
TAAC Capital
TAAC East
TAAC South
TAAC West
HQ CJTF-3
201 ANA Corps
203 ANA Corps
209 ANA Corps
205 ANA Corps
207 ANA Corps
DEU BDE
51 BN
3 ID
3 CR (SFAB)
1 CD
1 SFAB/101 AA
Garibaldi
1 BERSG
TSU Center

Map 13.2

RC Southwest conducted its end-of-operations ceremony at Camp Leatherneck in Helmand Province on 26 October 2014, transferring the Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak base complex to the 215th ANA Corps on 27 October 2014. It turned over its responsibilities to the Kabul-based Train, Advise, and Assist Cell–Southwest, which had begun operations on 15 July 2014 and achieved full operational capability by the end of October. While not an ideal design, Train, Advise, and Assist Cell–Southwest was able to provide some measure of oversight for the ANSF in Helmand and Nimroz Provinces. A similar cell was formed to support the 203d ANA Corps, which had forces in Wardak, Logar, Paktiya, Khost, Paktika, and Ghazni Provinces. In the wake of Milestone 2013, some risk could be assumed, as all four brigades in 203d Corps and three of the four brigades in 215th Corps had shown promise. The American command rated them capable of planning and conducting joint and combined arms operations with minimal to no coalition assistance. The ANP in those areas received similar ratings.[24]

Unlike other regional commands, RC East, now covered by the 10th Mountain Division under the command of Maj. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, handled two ANA Corps, two Afghan Uniformed Police Type A (Regional) headquarters, and two Afghan Border Police zones. In addition to the 203d ANA Corps headquarters next to Forward Operating Base Lightning at Gardez in Paktiya Province, RC East was responsible for training, advising, and assisting the 201st ANA Corps, whose headquarters was at Forward Operating Base Gamberi in Laghman Province, a short drive from Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province. This arrangement led to the creation of two advising commands forward of Bagram, where the RC East main headquarters was located. The 201st ANA Corps was the responsibility of Train, Advise, and Assist Command–East at Gamberi. The 203d ANA Corps was the responsibility of Train, Advise, and Assist Command–Southeast at Lightning. Each command was led by a one-star general who also had advisory responsibilities to the ANP and Afghan Border Police. Each was assisted in its mission by a brigade combat team serving as a corps support platform, with tactical forces to partner with ANSF units. More importantly, these commands were able to partner with Afghan enablers such as close air support, intelligence, and logistics.

By 2014, the 10th Mountain Division and 3d Cavalry Regiment were sourcing Train, Advise, and Assist Command–Southwest. As the ISAF footprint continued to shrink, this headquarters ceased operations on 1 October 2014 and transferred to Forward Operating Base Lightning to support the 203d ANA Corps while the 3d Cavalry Regiment moved to Gamberi to serve as the Train, Advise, and Assist Command–East. Although no longer collocated with 203d ANA Corps, the cavalry had built relationships with their ANA counterparts that would help to bridge advising efforts until Train, Advise, and Assist Command–Southeast could be stood up in Kabul. The experience that RC East established with two advising commands was an invaluable test for how to advise at the regional level before ISAF and its subordinate units were reorganized for Resolute Support.

24. DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2014, pp. 52–57.

On 4 November 2014, the 10th Mountain Division curtailed its deployment to RC East, conducting an early transfer of authority with the 3d Infantry Division. The early relief gave the 3d Infantry Division more time to assume its new requirements. The first requirement was to relieve the 3d Cavalry Regiment of the Train, Advise, and Assist Command–East mission at Forward Operating Base Gamberi. The second was to provide the personnel for the U.S. national support element at Bagram Air Base, which it inherited from the XVIII Airborne Corps. Maj. Gen. John M. Murray, commanding the 3d Infantry Division, assumed the role of the commander of Joint Task Force 3 and also assumed the responsibilities of deputy commander, USFOR-A, from Lt. Gen. Joseph T. Anderson, the XVIII Airborne Corps commander and previous USFOR-A deputy commander.

The decision not to maintain an advisory presence in the two ANSF units covering the most contested areas of the country had a certain degree of logic to it. The 215th ANA Corps had fought a bitter effort to secure the Helmand River Valley and its surrounding districts while the 203d ANA Corps remained astride territory that the Haqqani Network considered its home terrain. The two corps had displayed their capabilities, indicating that they were better equipped (relative to the rest of the ANSF) to operate independently; therefore, it seemed feasible to withdraw the advisers. However, other practical considerations were in play. Both ANA corps were located in dangerous areas, and to maintain a continued advisory presence in those areas, coalition forces would have needed to retain their bases to provide close air support and medical evacuation. More U.S. personnel also would have had to remain behind to operate and secure those sites. Given the noncombat framing of the Resolute Support mission, the NATO troop-contributing nations were particularly sensitive to casualties, and they were reluctant to leave their advisers in contested areas where they were virtually guaranteed to make contact with the enemy. As the advisers increasingly left ANA units in southern Afghanistan to their own devices, the Afghan forces suffered from mounting desertion rates resulting from poor leadership, intermittent pay, and inadequate logistics, all of which were compounded by increasing casualties.[25]

Consolidating the Task Organization

Another consequence of reducing forces was the elimination of organizations whose roles had been greatly diminished or made redundant as the

25. The removal of ISAF advisers resulted in a number of Afghan brigade and battalion commanders abusing their authority or taking part in illicit enterprises without fear of discovery or removal; see Sayed Sarwar Amani and Andrew MacAskill, "Desertions Deplete Afghan Forces, Adding to Security Worries," Reuters, 18 Jan 2016, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-army-desertions/desertions-deplete-afghan-forces-adding-to-security-worries-idUSKCN0UW1K3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. See also Michelle Tan, "About 200 Fort Stewart Soldiers Heading to Afghanistan on 12-Month Deployment," *Army Times*, 28 Oct 2014, https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2014/10/28/about-200-fort-stewart-soldiers-heading-to-afghanistan-on-12-month-deployment/ Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; DoD, *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Oct 2014.

counterinsurgency mission transitioned. Much like tactical units that left Afghanistan as part of the drawdown, many of the functional headquarters consolidated roles or simply ended their missions. An example of an organization that eventually disappeared was Combined Joint Task Force Paladin, which had grown as a response to the enemy's use of IEDs. Paladin began in 2005 as a counter-IED organization built around a rotational explosive ordnance disposal group headquarters. It had provided expertise and training to coalition forces throughout Afghanistan but reduced its outreach as part of the drawdown. Although CJTF Paladin was not an ISAF unit, its mission had evolved to encompass training, advising, and assisting the ANSF.[26] On 15 December 2013, Col. Marue R. Quick's 52d Ordnance Group (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) began to return to Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

One of the outgrowths of the ISAF population-centric counterinsurgency approach was Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, which had been established on 24 September 2009 to manage Law of Armed Conflict detention, Afghan rule of law proceedings, biometrics, and advisory functions to Afghan Central Prisons Directorate.[27] The 25 March 2013 transfer of the U.S. detention facility in Parwan just outside Bagram Air Base coincided with signing a memorandum of understanding on detentions that transferred responsibility for the facility and its detainees to the Afghan Ministry of Defense.[28] Although some U.S. authorities for detentions continued through the ISAF mission, many of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435's authorities would end when the Bilateral Security Agreement took effect on 1 January 2015.

When it was disestablished on 1 October 2014, the interagency task force had assisted the Afghans in moving from confessions to evidence-based justice, a critical element of the rule of law. With the task force's oversight, the Rule of Law Field Force–Afghanistan worked closely with the Afghan ministries and the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to expand Afghan judiciary coverage to provinces and districts.[29] The organization's remaining missions transitioned to a Rule of Law Development Team to provide ministerial advising in Kabul after Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 and the Rule of Law headquarters were disbanded.[30] Besides managing the critical Law of Armed Conflict detention mission, the task force significantly

---

26. CJTF Paladin Press Release, Ed Rohan, "CJTF Paladin Ends Mission in Afghanistan," 15 Dec 2013, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

27. Lt Col John H. Modinger and Joseph T. Bartlett, "A History of Detainee Operations in Afghanistan: How Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 Came to Be and What it Has Done" (Combined Joint Interagency TF 435, 1 Jul 2012), p. 24, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Combined Joint Interagency TF 435 Newsletter, *435 Sentinel* (10 Apr 2013): 1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

29. Memo, Lt Col Jesse M. Aronstein, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 Public Affairs, 6 Sep 2014, sub: CJIATF 435 talking points for casing ceremony, pp. 1–3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Ibid., p. 6.

advanced the Afghan institutional capacity in the rule of law, prisons, and law enforcement.

As the force continued to contract, other functions consolidated. One example was the Joint Force Engineer Command–Afghanistan, which had been established in 2009. Its functions were divided between the USFOR-A and IJC headquarters in 2014.[31] Other organizations ceasing operations included the anticorruption Combined Joint Interagency Task Force Shafafiyat in 2010. Those missions merged with another task force on anticorruption in 2013 to create Combined Joint Interagency Task Force–Afghanistan.[32] This short-lived task force quietly disappeared when the ISAF headquarters reorganized in the second half of 2014.

The largest change was the disbanding of ISAF Joint Command on 8 December 2014. The expansion of the ISAF force structure in 2009 had created the need for a tactical corps headquarters to command and control regional commands, while ISAF conducted engagements at the operational and strategic levels. As the ISAF mission evolved under functionally based security force assistance, the functions that had come to be performed by IJC reconsolidated back into the ISAF headquarters.[33]

IJC had significantly more soldiers and marines in Afghanistan than the rest of ISAF by the beginning of the final transition. As part of the shift to Resolute Support, IJC passed its responsibility for command and control of the ISAF area of operations to a newly reconstituted ISAF Combined Joint Operations Center starting on 1 November 2014. The Combined Joint Operations Center assumed full responsibility for monitoring current operations and exercising command and control of ISAF subordinate units on 14 November 2014.

The XVIII Airborne Corps was the last corps headquarters to provide the troops for both the USFOR-A and the IJC headquarters missions at the same time. On 8 December 2014, a ceremony held at Kabul's international airport—recently renamed after former President Hamid Karzai—marked the end of mission for IJC and the end of tour for the XVIII Airborne Corps. The mission passed to the 3d Infantry Division at Bagram.

As ISAF shifted to a supporting position in the wake of Milestone 2013, it took on the same challenging role for the upcoming Resolute Support mission that the now-defunct NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan had faced before. Reorganizing the ISAF headquarters for security force assistance as IJC stood down created three competing demands. First, the ISAF headquarters retained its theater-strategic role as the senior NATO military organization in Afghanistan. Second, ISAF was also creating a new NATO Training Mission of sorts, though its advisory efforts were almost exclusively focused at the

---

31. Anderson and McCreary, "International Security Assistance Force Joint Command 2014," p. 19.

32. T. S. Allen, "Addressing an Ignored Imperative: Rural Corruption in Afghanistan," *Small Wars Journal*, 19 Feb 2013, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/addressing-an-ignored-imperative-rural-corruption-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, CMH.

33. Anderson and McCreary, "International Security Assistance Force Joint Command 2014," pp. 19–21.

Afghan ministerial level. Third, with the disestablishment of IJC, the ISAF headquarters had to reconstitute the capability to exercise tactical command and control that it had divested to IJC in 2009.[34]

The Resolute Support troop-contributing nations continued to source forces for the mission, augmenting the ISAF Combined Joint Operations Center with personnel, mostly Army officers and senior noncommissioned officers from Train, Advise, and Assist Commands South and East. Those personnel were in excess of post-2014 requirements; nonetheless, they had the skills and grades to bring the operations center to full operating capability.[35] The joint operations center was capable of monitoring tactical dispositions throughout Afghanistan, but much like its parent command, it now had a different role. Finding the people to run the center was not as much of an issue as finding the people who could advise ministerial-level leaders on their national responsibilities.

The Right People

Getting the right people in the right numbers and in a timely fashion was not a new problem in Afghanistan. This issue affected plans as far back as Operation Anaconda and the original formulation of training organizations. The leading challenge that ISAF now faced in assuming the NATO Training Mission was a lack of expertise for its advisory efforts to build ministerial capabilities. Tactical advisers, which had been in demand until 2012, were relatively easy to locate and acquire, but personnel who had experience in the ministerial-level functions needed to strengthen national ministries were far less common. Individuals with these highly specialized skills were difficult to mobilize, partly because most of them were civilians. Those who could deploy could not provide sufficient coverage, especially considering the extent of the reform needed. Even the U.S. Army, which had more capacity for such functions than its sister services, could not meet the requirements.

In a letter to the CENTCOM Commander General Lloyd J. Austin III, General Dunford outlined the changes that ISAF needed to make to fill its adviser requirements starting in early 2014. To build the long-term sustainability of the Afghan security ministries and ANSF, the pre-mission training would have to change:

> This change in focus will require that advisors sourced by CJSOR (Combined Joint Statement of Requirements) 13.5 and CE (Crisis Establishment) 21 are trained to execute the functional SFA [security force assistance] model at the Afghan ministerial level as well as at the Corps/Zone/Region level. As a result, pre-deployment training for SFA teams will need to be updated.

34. Ibid.

35. U.S. Joint Chs of Staff, Joint Opns Div, Joint Staff J–3, SECDEF Special Orders Book: USCENTCOM: IJC Command & Control, 5 Jun 2012, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; FRAGO 14–244, IJC Personnel to HQ ISAF, 24 Sep 14, sub: USFOR-A FRAGO 14–244, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

> Rather than studying Afghan tactics and maneuvers, SFA teams will require instruction that is oriented towards Afghan institutional development. . . .
>
> . . . Additionally, success in Resolute Support will depend on the proper identification, screening, and selection of personnel to fill advisor positions. I would ask your full support in conveying to the Military Services the importance of sourcing personnel with the correct grade, experience, and skill set for each job.[36]

Unfortunately, no solutions were available to provide an adviser force at the institutional level. The uniformed services simply did not have the personnel to fill the requirements for Resolute Support. The problem was structural in nature. None of the services, the Army included, had established a way to produce officers in sufficient quantities with technical skills in high-level functions such as strategic assessment, strategic planning, or force management, let alone the DoD's planning, programming, budgeting, and execution processes that provided context for those skills. Such skills could only be built through experience. Furthermore, every adviser deployed with those skills counted against a force cap for uniformed personnel that became immovable by 2013.

Even in the best circumstances, the likelihood of finding an officer who was experienced at the operational and strategic levels outside of the Army's functional areas was low. In the case of the combat arms, the demand for tactical command and staff assignments in those branches of the Army made it even less likely to locate suitable candidates. Given the competition for battalion and brigade command, there was little opportunity for officers to gain broader experience outside of their career fields where they might gain a sense of policy and strategy. American officers simply did not have enough time in their careers for such assignments. Many coalition members who sent officers to the ISAF staff did not provide these developmental opportunities either, with the exception of a few who might have gained experience by working in their countries' defense ministries or on their general staffs.

The U.S. Army's regulatory guidance for commissioned officer professional development went into effect when ISAF recrafted its mission to security force assistance and identified three foundations for leader development: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development. Virtually all the key developmental duty positions critical to promotion, and the majority of the developmental and broadening assignments, were at the tactical level. Battalion and brigade command

36. Memo, Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr., HQ ISAF and USFOR-A, CENTCOM, 13 Oct 2013, sub: Transition to Functionally Based Security Force Assistance, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The Combined Joint Statement of Requirements outlines the full personnel requirements for the headquarters, while the Crisis Establishment is the primary structure document that describes the individual qualifications by position to meet the requirements. Neither document accounted for voluntary national contributions to the ISAF and later Resolute Support missions.

were viewed as prerequisites to be considered for general officer.[37] Officers seeking those positions needed to take repetitive tactical-level assignments to remain competitive. Those who took multiple broadening assignments found themselves at a disadvantage, especially as promotion timelines accelerated to create the ranks necessary for the modular force. The alternative was to pull from the functional areas, but they were smaller than the basic branches. The demand for functional area officers in operations research, systems analysis, force management, information operations, and strategy development far outstripped the supply available.

An alternative source for those skills might have been found in the Army and other services' civilian workforces. However, in the case of the Army Civilian Corps and other U.S. civil service personnel, no authority could direct personnel to fill critical ministerial advisory positions. It was easy to advertise such positions, but no mechanism was in place to reassign civilians involuntarily to positions in Afghanistan. Civilians who volunteered then had to meet the physical standards to deploy. This was quite often a challenge.

The last source of personnel was contractors, but their employment was also problematic given the changes in legal protections affected by the Bilateral Security Agreement. The jurisdictional limitations written into the Bilateral Security Agreement and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement reflected Karzai's August 2010 Presidential Directive 62, which responded to allegations of employee misconduct by banning private security companies in Afghanistan.[38] The bilateral and NATO agreements both specified that Afghanistan maintained the right to exercise jurisdiction over U.S. and NATO contractors and their employees, a distinct change from the permissions given under the preceding U.S. State Department Diplomatic Note 202 and the ISAF Military-Technical Agreement.[39] As a result, it was legally risky for commanders to send contractors to work on predominantly Afghan bases located away from urban centers. In addition to potential legal complications, contractors working at isolated locations often encountered significant transportation difficulties.

Even though the rhetoric about the post-2014 mission consistently emphasized its status as a noncombat mission, the environment remained dangerous. The death of Maj. Gen. Harold R. Greene at the hands of a rogue Afghan soldier on 5 August 2014 served notice that the Guardian Angel program could not prevent all insider attacks. Greene, the first U.S. flag officer to die in combat since Vietnam, was killed by gunfire directed at coalition personnel from a barracks window at Camp Qargha's Marshal

37. HQDA, Pamphlet 600–3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, D.C.: Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–1, 2010).

38. Joshua Partlow, "Karzai Wants Private Security Firms Out of Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 17 Aug 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/16/AR2010081602041.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

39. U.S. Government and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Bilateral Security Agreement*, 30 Sep 2014, sec. 13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; NATO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Status of Forces Agreement*, 30 Sep 2014, sec. 13, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Fahim National Defense University in Kabul. Greene and about ninety other U.S. and coalition personnel were visiting the base for an update on its construction projects and a preview of its officer-producing capabilities. At about 1140, the group made an unplanned stop near the military police barracks for a briefing. About fifteen minutes later, an Afghan military policeman, later identified as Rafiqullah, started shooting. The Afghan army claimed the attacker, a Pashtun serving since 2012, had exhibited no signs of anti-American or anti-ISAF sentiments, but the U.S. investigation "indicated he may have had some bias against coalition forces" with "disdain for Americans in particular."[40]

At the same time, ISAF continued to walk a fine line between encouraging the ANSF to operate independently and letting them fail. Coalition advisers had become accustomed to desperate pleas for assistance, often containing exaggerated estimates of enemy strength or friendly casualties in an attempt to trigger coalition enablers. Nevertheless, ANSF personnel grudgingly learned how to stand on their own. They had been successful throughout the 2014 fighting season, and yet their sustainability was the pivotal question as the ISAF and Enduring Freedom missions came to a close.[41]

Special Operations at the End of the Campaign

As the end of Operation Enduring Freedom neared, U.S. SOF in Afghanistan experienced changes similar to those affecting their conventional brethren. The top priority of CJSOTF–Afghanistan during this period was to build Commando kandaks so that they could assume the missions previously accomplished by ISAF units. The most difficult goal associated with this transition was persuading U.S. Special Operations personnel to allow the Afghans to lead in planning and executing missions. To facilitate the necessary mindset, Col. Patrick B. Roberson, the 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment, commander in charge of the combined joint special operations task force from March to November 2013, limited the number of U.S. Special Operations personnel accompanying their Afghan counterparts in the field. When some Americans complained that the Afghans were not as practiced in these tasks as U.S. forces, Roberson explained, "If you want to put the Afghans in the lead, you're going to have to accept the fact that they are, in some ways, going to be less capable."[42] By ensuring that Afghans constituted 90 percent of any mission task force, Roberson created a situation where U.S. personnel were forced to assign more responsibility

40. Michelle Tan, "General's Killer Fired Thirty Rounds," *Army Times*, 4 Dec 2014, https://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2014/12/04/greene-afghanistan-friendly-fire/19479293, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

41. Jim Michaels, "Afghans Are on Their Own in Fight against Taliban," *USA Today*, 29 Dec 2014, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/12/29/afghanistan-airstrikes-coalition-nato-john-campbell-ghani-abdullah-kabul/20802809, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

42. Michael E. Krivdo, "CJSOTF-A (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan) – A Short History 2002–2014," *Veritas: Journal of Special Operations History* 12, no. 2 (2016): 23–24.



Sgt. Pete Thibodeau, USA

ANA soldiers rest during a joint patrol in Farah Province.

to their Afghan counterparts. As a result, Afghan Commando officers and noncommissioned officers gained experience in tactical planning and mission execution.

Ranked immediately below preparing Commando kandaks was turning Village Stability Operations over to Afghan district and provincial officials. The transition involved preparing local police to work with their fellow citizens while showing Afghan officials how to manage the program. The dispersion of local security forces and their unique one-on-one relationships with the American mentors who lived among them added complexity to the transfer. The transition began with consolidating or eliminating some Village Stability Operations sites and continued with transferring the remainder to Afghan security forces. During this phase, U.S. personnel gradually turned over responsibility for training ALP to their ANSF counterparts. As the number of U.S. SOF operational detachments decreased, they transitioned to mounted patrols and circulated among multiple Village Stability Operations locations. The Afghans displayed growing proficiency, so the U.S. SOF personnel incrementally reduced their profile until Afghans owned all platforms and conducted nearly all operations.[43]

The ANSF led nearly all of both conventional and special operations from January to the end of October 2014. The ANSF were generally but not uniformly successful while in the lead. Most promising, they showed resilience after initial setbacks. On the morning of 23 February 2014, Taliban fighters overran an ANA base in Ghaziabad District, near the provincial capital of Asadabad in Kunar Province, killing twenty-one soldiers from 2d Brigade, 201st ANA Corps. The ANA retook the base the same day, using Mi–17 cargo helicopters for air assault and casualty evacuation. Coalition

43. Ibid.

involvement was limited to close air and intelligence support. The Afghan public rallied around the ANA in a large memorial ceremony held in Kabul that week, a resounding indicator of ANSF success.[44]

American Special Operations units and their Afghan counterparts continued to conduct dangerous missions as other ISAF forces retrograded before and after the 2014 Afghan elections. Five Americans, including two soldiers from the 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Operations Regiment, and one Afghan Commando were killed on 9 June 2014 by an errant air strike during an intense firefight in the Arghandab District of Zabul Province. The U.S. and Afghan special operators were targeting insurgent groups in advance of the runoff election.[45] The June casualties were followed by more losses as SOF continued to conduct aggressive offensive operations during the last half of the year. The 7th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment, suffered fatalities from enemy small-arms fire during separate combat operations in Helmand and Zabul Provinces in September and December while the 3d Special Forces Group lost one soldier to small-arms fire in Kunduz in November.[46]

Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan, configured around a core provided by the 3d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group, under the command of Lt. Col. Michael P. Sullivan, gained responsibility for U.S. SOF in country when CJSOTF-Afghanistan deactivated on 31 December 2014.[47] Sullivan assumed command when the conditions facing SOF in Afghanistan were undergoing significant change. For the first time in more than a decade, the Special Operations geographical footprint aligned with that of conventional forces. While consolidating American units in a few locations and then deploying out to conduct operations eased force protection and logistical burdens, it did not facilitate Sullivan's mission to conduct ground combat operations against armed groups targeting U.S. troops throughout Afghanistan. Complications arising from consolidating supporting fires, medical evacuation, and logistical assets would hinder the task force's ability to conduct missions beyond the immediate range of U.S. enclaves.

Obtaining Closure

America's senior commanders in Afghanistan changed once again during this period as Army General John F. Campbell replaced Dunford on 26

---

44. Niamatullah Karyab and Rod Nordland, "Taliban Raid Afghan Army Base, Killing Soldiers in Their Sleep," *New York Times*, 23 Feb 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/24/world/asia/taliban-attack-afghan-army-base-killing-soldiers-in-their-sleep.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

45. Azam Ahmed, "'Friendly Fire' Strike Kills 5 Special Operations Soldiers in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 10 Jun 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/11/world/asia/friendly-fire-strike-kills-5-special-operations-soldiers-in-afghanistan.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

46. "Operation Enduring Freedom," https://icasualties.org/oef/Fatalities.aspx, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

47. Krivdo, "CJSOTF-A (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan) – A Short History 2002–2014," p. 25.

August 2014.[48] For the next several months, Campbell guided Enduring Freedom along the established path toward Operation Resolute Support. Organizational changes associated with the transition included replacing regional commands with the smaller train, advise, and assist commands and merging the IJC with ISAF headquarters so the latter could assume command of all ground operations. These changes occurred in the midst of continuing violence in eastern Afghanistan.

When Campbell told media representatives in fall 2014 that "we're not out on patrol with the Afghans; they've taken over the fight. We're focused on the systems and processes that they have at the corps level. We're no longer with the brigades. We're no longer with the Kandaks," he was highlighting the rationale behind changes to his command's physical footprint within Afghanistan prior to Enduring Freedom ending.[49] The total U.S. contribution to Resolute Support, including both conventional and Special Operations Forces, would not exceed 9,800 personnel. NATO nations added another 2,900 soldiers for a total of 12,700 personnel. Downsizing ISAF dropped personnel numbers and reduced the amount of close air support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; medical evacuation; and logistics the coalition could bring to the aid of the Afghans.[50]

A much smaller foreign military presence in Afghanistan would exist, and the remaining troops would be located in just a few key areas rather than spread across the entire country. As Campbell explained,

> We will have forces in the north, in the west, in the east, and in the south, and then in Kabul center. So we're going to really a spoke and hub, and come 1 January, in the east, we'll have forces in Jalalabad, in Gamberi, in Bagram. In the north, they'll be in Mazar-e-Sharif, in the west, they'll be in Herat, and in the south, they'll be in Kandahar.[51]

The smaller geographical footprint, coupled with reduced troop levels, meant that ISAF troops would be collocated with only four of the six ANA corps. The advisory needs of the remaining corps were addressed when resources became available or when the tactical situation dictated additional support, albeit on a temporary basis.[52]

Downsizing ISAF reduced the support available to Afghan security forces, and meant that any available resources had to be concentrated on

---

48. Lt Cdr Jennifer Cragg, "Campbell Takes ISAF Command in Afghanistan," DoD News, 26 Aug 2014, https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/603130/campbell-takes-isaf-command-in-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

49. DoD News Bfg, Gen John F. Campbell and Press Sec R Adm John Kirby, 2 Oct 2014, https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/606938/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-gen-campbell-via-satellite-in-the-penta, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. NATO, Resolute Support Mission Placemats, n.d., https://www.nato.int.cps/en/natolive/107995.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

the most dangerous threats. Identifying these threats was a priority given the fragile state of Afghan politics in this period. The highly contested presidential election reflected this fragility, which barely improved with the installation of a National Unity Government that did not address the Afghan government's inherent structural problems. In addition, the tense election period had presented the Taliban with an opportunity to exploit political divisions within Afghanistan. Aware that the Constitutional Loya Jirga scheduled for 2016 had the authority to alter the power arrangements in Afghanistan by either codifying or invalidating the president/prime minister structure of the National Unity Government further clouded the political landscape.[53]

Although no fewer than six insurgent or criminal organizations sought to destabilize the newly elected administration of President Ghani by launching attacks in Kabul, both ISAF and Afghans considered the Haqqani the most dangerous.[54] CJSOTF–Afghanistan focused on degrading and disrupting this network. ISAF had been waging an intense battle against the terrorist organization for many years, and countering it was now a top priority for coalition forces. In mid-October 2014, Afghan and ISAF troops managed to detain Anas Haqqani, son of the network's founder, and Hafiz Raschid, a key planner and suicide attack facilitator.[55] Pakistani armed forces provided belated but welcome assistance during summer 2014 when they responded to a terrorist attack against the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi on 8 June by cordoning off several towns in North Waziristan that had provided safe havens for extremists. Government forces initiated Operation Zarb-E-Azb (Swift and Conclusive Strike) with a series of air strikes against terrorist targets, killing dozens of foreign fighters and prompting others to flee toward the waiting Pakistani ground units. After 450,000 civilians were safely evacuated from the area, government troops initiated a sustained series of attacks against the terrorists that continued through fall 2016.[56] In addition to landing damaging blows against the Pakistan Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Pakistani counterterrorist operations also disrupted Haqqani infrastructure in the region.[57]

---

53. Vanda Felbob-Brown, "Blood and Hope in Afghanistan: A June 2015 Update," Brookings Institution, 26 May 2015, https://www.brookings.edu/research/blood-and-hope-in-afghanistan-a-june-2015-update/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

54. DoD News Bfg, Campbell and Kirby, 2 Oct 2014.

55. Interv, Gabriel Dominguez, *Deutsche Welle* correspondent, with Omar Hamid, Head of Asia Pacific Country Risk at Information Handling Service, Deutsche Welle, 27 Oct 2014, https://www.dw.com/en/capture-of-senior-leaders-to-further-weaken-haqqani-network/a-18001448, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

56. Aliza Kassim, "450,000 Displaced as Pakistan Attacks Militants," CNN, 25 Jun 2014, https://www.cnn.com/2014/06/24/world/asia/pakistan-north-waziristan-displaced-people/index.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Saima Ghazanfar "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two Years of Success," *Nation*, 6 Sep 2016, https://nation.com.pk/06-Sep-2016/operation-zarb-e-azb-two-years-of-success, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

57. "US Commander Commends Zarb-e-Azb for Disrupting Haqqani Networks Ability to Target Afghanistan," *Express Tribune*, 6 Nov 2014, http://tribune.com.pk/story/786641/



ISAF Public Affairs Office

Joint Forces Command–Brunssum commander General Hans-Lothar Domröse (left) and ISAF commander General Campbell salute at the start of the change-of-mission ceremony in Kabul 28 December 2014.

On 28 December 2014, General Campbell presided over a ceremony marking the end of Operation Enduring Freedom and the start of Resolute Support. Scores of attendees were present to witness the lowering of the NATO flag, marking a symbolic shift to a new, much smaller assistance and training mission. The speakers included Afghan national security adviser Mohammed Hanif Atmar, who acknowledged past sacrifices by observing, "We recognize that you carried on the fight for us when we were not ready. We pray for the fallen, for your sons and daughters who died on our soil."[58] In a written statement also issued that day, President Obama reminded Americans of their future responsibilities: "The United States—along

us-commander-commends-zarb-e-azb-for-disrupting-haqqani-networks-ability-to-target-afghanistan/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

58. Pamela Constable, "NATO Flag Lowered in Afghanistan as Combat Mission Ends," *Washington Post*, 28 Dec 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/nato-flag-lowered-in-afghanistan-as-combat-mission-ends/2014/12/28/5a3ad640-8e44-11e4-ace9-47de1af4c3eb_story.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

with our allies and partners—will maintain a limited military presence in Afghanistan. Our personnel will continue to face risks, but this reflects the enduring commitment of the United States to the Afghan people and to a united, secure and sovereign Afghanistan that is never again used as a source of attacks against our nation."[59]

With the U.S. Army's personnel now mostly back at their home stations, whether in the continental United States or abroad, it was time for Army leaders to reset the force. Nearly two decades of irregular warfare had required many changes in order to provide trained and ready formations in numbers necessary to meet the demands. Force designs, structures, doctrine, training methodologies, and much more needed to be reevaluated, adjusted, and reconstituted in order to prepare for the proverbial "Next War." That war could come from anywhere across the spectrum of conflict, ranging from the lowest to the highest threats.

59. President Barack H. Obama, "The End of the Combat Mission in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 28 Dec 2014), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/28/statement-president-end-combat-mission-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Chapter Fourteen

The U.S. Army Beyond Enduring Freedom

Preparations for the 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* spurred U.S. Army leaders to consider the role of the Army in future conflicts. The first results of that effort produced the *Army Capstone Concept* in 2009, but the true harbinger of a significant conceptual change appeared in August 2010 with the publication of the *Army Operating Concept*. This release promoted the "central idea" that Army forces would conduct "combined arms maneuver" and "wide area security."[1]

In 2010, as the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth prepared to update the Army's *Operations* manual (Department of the Army Field Manual 3–0), General Martin E. Dempsey, commanding U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, directed the school to include "combined arms maneuver" and "wide area security" as a distinct statement of the Army's unique contributions to the nation. Those missions did not replace the offense, defense, stability, or civil support (later defense support to civil authorities) construct that formed full-spectrum operations. Nonetheless, their inclusion undoubtedly informed the Army's internal fight over whether to stress major combat operations or irregular warfare in its preparation for the 2010 Defense Review. In spite of initial opposition to Dempsey's guidance, the Field Manual 3–0 authors included "combined arms maneuver" and "wide area security" as "Army core competencies" overlaid on top of full-spectrum operations. Their addition created considerable confusion among readers of the early drafts.[2]

By including combined arms maneuver and wide area security in the official publication describing how the Army fights, the authors ensured that these concepts would receive wide readership. Normally, a strategic concept would be published in *The Army* (Department of the Army Field Manual 1), but this document had not been revised since 2005. As Army leaders looked to a future beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, they also sought to inform future strategy by including a clear statement of what the Army did in the new national defense strategy that the DoD was about to publish. With General George W. Casey Jr. nearing the end of his term, the responsibility for publishing the new Field Manual 1 would fall to the Army's new chief of staff.

---

1. TRADOC Pamphlet 525–3–1, *The United States Army Operating Concept, 2016–2028* (Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2010), p. 11.

2. Interv, Thomas A. Bruscino Jr., CSI, with Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, frmr ISAF Strategic Planner, 29 Sep 2015, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. The directed inclusion of the two concepts was apparent by version 6.3 of the draft, approximately mid-April 2011.

President Barack H. Obama nominated Dempsey to replace Casey on 8 February 2011. The former Training and Doctrine commander assumed his new duties on 11 April 2011 but held that office less than two months before his name was announced on 26 May 2011 as the nominee to replace Admiral Michael G. Mullen as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As the Field Manual 3–0 rewrites continued during 2011, Dempsey recognized that his successor, General Raymond T. Odierno, would inherit the publication. It meant that any planned revision of Field Manual 1 would be deferred until Odierno assumed his duties on 7 September 2011. The next iteration of *The Army*, now labeled Army Doctrine Publication 1, would be published in September 2012.[3]

Roles, Missions, Strategy, and Doctrine

The final version of the revised Field Manual 3–0, labeled as Army Doctrine Publication 3–0 and published in October 2011 as *Unified Land Operations*, introduced the operational concept of the same name. Unified land operations drew initially from the concept of AirLand Battle that had been unveiled in the 1982 edition of *Operations* (Department of the Army Field Manual 100–5), and then was modified to reflect recent wartime lessons. The new doctrinal manual reestablished the importance of operational art and realigned the doctrinal hierarchy to place stability operations on par with combat operations. As an operational concept, unified land operations sustained intellectual trends that originated with the 2010 *Army Operating Concept*. In addition to introducing combined arms maneuver and wide area security, the concept replaced "command and control" with "mission command."[4] Unified land operations established a broader doctrinal framework that provided a stronger foundation than its predecessors had for blending offense, defense, stability operations, and defense support to civil authority.[5]

One other small but far-reaching change occurred with the publication of Army Doctrine Publication 3–0. Odierno had not mandated changes in the content, but he directed that the term "full spectrum operations" be replaced by "decisive action" just after assuming his duties as Army chief of staff. The earliest reference to the new term occurred on 21 July 2011, during General Odierno's confirmation testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee,

3. Barbara Starr and Ed Henry, "Obama Nominates Army Head to Serve as New Joint Chiefs Chairman," CNN, 31 May 2011, http://www.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/05/30/joint.chiefs.chairman/index.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

4. While an *operational* concept is intended for immediate use in the present day and appears in doctrine, an *operating* concept is a theoretical document used in capabilities development to describe how a future Army beyond the five-year Future Years Defense Program planning horizon might conduct operations. Col William Benson., "Unified Land Operations: The Evolution of Army Doctrine for Success in the 21st Century," *Military Review* 92, no. 2 (Apr 2012): 6–11.

5. Bfg, Combined Arms Doctrine Dir, 21 Oct 2011, sub: ADP/ADRP 3-0 Update Brief, ver. 6, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

when he described the Army as the "force of decisive action."[6] In spite of the seemingly drastic change in terminology, there was no change to the arrangements of offense, defense, stability operations, and defense support to civil authorities inherent to full-spectrum operations.

The new operational concept described how the Army fought, but it did not define the Army's role to the nation, which seemed about to change. When Odierno became chief of staff, the Iraq campaign was nearing its end, and the transformation of the Afghanistan campaign had already been announced. Policy statements by the Obama administration signified that less funding would be allocated to military needs.[7] The role of the Army may have seemed self-evident internally, but externally, the role of the Army in the future was seen in a much different way by the civilian leaders of government.

Budgetary Pressures and Institutional Strategy

Continuing the work of the 2010 Defense Review, a new National Defense Strategy appeared in January 2012 under the title *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. Referred to as the *Defense Strategic Guidance*, this document announced a need for "a force that would be smaller and leaner, but agile, flexible, ready, and technologically advanced:" language reminiscent of the literature that Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld had influenced on defense transformation at the beginning of the Bush administration.[8]

Reductions to the defense budget stemmed from the 2011 Budget Control Act. This act, which formed the underlying context for the *Defense Strategic Guidance*, mandated $487 billion in defense cuts to be made from 2012 to 2022, with the stipulation that $259 billion would be cut in the first five years. Other sweeping changes included a repudiation of the 1990s policy of massing resources to defeat one regional adversary while conducting a holding action against a second. Instead, the nation's military would be sized to defeat a single adversary and then "facilitate a transition to stable governance on a small scale for a limited period using standing forces and, if necessary, for an extended period with mobilized forces." The force would "no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations," an unmistakable reference to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the *Defense Strategic Guidance*, U.S. forces would "rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific

6. Gen Raymond T. Odierno, Statement Before the U.S. Cong., Senate, Committee on Armed Services, "Statement of Gen Raymond T. Odierno, USA, for Reappointment to the Grade of General and to Be Chief of Staff, U.S. Army," 21 Jul 2011, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-112shrg74537/html/CHRG-112shrg74537.htm, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

7. President Barack H. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 22 Jun 2011), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

8. DoD, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* [hereafter *Defense Strategic Guidance*] (Washington, D.C.: Ofc of the Sec of Def, 2012), http://nssarchive.us/national-defense-strategy/defense_strategic_guidance/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

region," an explicit geographical reprioritization that further distanced the military from the wars of the last decade.[9]

The other major outcome of the 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* was its introduction of ten unclassified missions for U.S. Armed Forces:

1. Counter Terrorism and Irregular Warfare
2. Deter and Defeat Aggression
3. Project Power Despite Anti-Access/Area Denial Challenges
4. Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction
5. Operate Effectively in Cyberspace and Space
6. Maintain a Safe, Secure, and Effective Nuclear Deterrent
7. Defend the Homeland and Provide Support to Civil Authorities
8. Provide a Stabilizing Presence
9. Conduct Stability and Counterinsurgency Operations
10. Conduct Humanitarian, Disaster Relief, and Other Operations.[10]

Of those missions, the force was to be sized only to fulfill four: counter terrorism and irregular warfare; deter and defeat aggression; maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; and defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities. These "force-sizing missions" drove discussions on force structure and size.[11] By focusing on only one adversary at a time, the new approach lent weight to arguments calling for a reduction in the number of ground units in the active component, meaning the Army and Marine Corps. In addition, the new strategic vision materially influenced Army efforts to articulate its role beyond the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

General Odierno's institutional strategy for the Army rested on a globally engaged and regionally responsive force that could "Prevent, Shape, and Win," as the *Defense Strategic Guidance* put it. His vision first appeared in a January 2012 pamphlet that promised to emphasize training on tasks required for decisive action that the Army had put aside during its wartime shift to counterinsurgency and irregular warfare operations.[12] However, such a vision could not ignore the continuing requirement for forces in Afghanistan. Although the Army was recovering from the Afghan surge, it still had to generate forces capable of combat and advising for at least another three years.

Implementing Odierno's vision meant changing how the Army generated deployable forces in an environment that demanded less from conventional units. One change was reducing combat deployments for most personnel from a year to nine months.[13] The Army also would begin training "Regionally

---

9. DoD, *Defense Strategic Guidance*, pp. 2–5.

10. Ten missions are listed here. The eleventh mission is classified and is not included.

11. DoD, *Defense Strategic Guidance*, pp. 4–6.

12. HQDA, *38th CSA Marching Orders: Waypoint #1*, Jan 2013, https://www.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/280914.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

13. Memo, John M. McHugh, Ofc of the Sec of the Army, 4 Aug 2011, sub: Army Deployment Period Policy, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Aligned Forces," which were tailored to the needs of combatant commands and provided on a predictable basis, while retaining widespread capabilities in the force through units trained for the full range of military operations. Finally, the Army would support the Asia-Pacific "rebalance" by preparing theater support forces and Army service-component commands.[14]

The Regionally Aligned Forces concept, in which forces trained in "decisive action" would be "habitually aligned" to combatant commanders, included corps headquarters, division headquarters, brigade combat teams, and sustainment units charged with providing theater-wide support. Regionally Aligned Forces would conduct more than security cooperation.[15] In addition, they would be capable of operations up to and including combat. By predetermining the theater to which they would deploy, these units would have real-world missions on which they could focus their preparatory training.[16] Implementing Regionally Aligned Forces required the Army to change how it generated forces because there would be little demand for a brigade combat team acting as an undivided or whole organization in a noncombat role. Instead, deployments lasting anywhere from a week to several months and involving small units, teams, or individuals with specific capabilities would become the norm.

Reducing the Force

President Obama's pronouncement that "the tide of war is receding" and "it is time to focus on nation building here at home" in a 22 June 2011 speech at the White House presaged cuts to military spending.[17] It was a foregone conclusion that the Army would shrink after Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The questions were how much and how quickly. In anticipation of change, the 2012 *Army Posture Statement* introduced two terms to govern potential postconflict developments. The first was reversibility, which it described as "structuring and pacing reductions in the Nation's ground forces in a way that preserves the ability to make a course change to surge, regenerate and mobilize the capabilities needed for any contingency." The second was expansibility, described as "managing the force in ways that protect the Army's ability to regenerate capabilities that might be needed to meet future, unforeseen demands, maintaining

14. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2012), pp. 4–8.

15. The U.S. military strengthens regional stability by conducting security cooperation activities with foreign defense establishments. Such activities support mutual security interests, develop partner capabilities for self-defense, and prepare for multinational operations. Strengthening partners is fundamental to our security, building strategic depth for our national defense. See *National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Ofc of the Sec Def, 2015), http://nssarchive.us/national-military-strategy-2015/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

16. Memo, Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, Stability Opns Div, Regional Alignment of Forces, 29 Jan 2013, sub: Army Campaign Plan Horizontal Integration Strategic Effort #1, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

17. Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 22 Jun 2011).

intellectual capital, rank structure and other assets that could be called upon to expand key elements of the force."[18]

The first reductions began in 2009 when Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates announced that the Army would curtail its Grow the Army Plan. The plan was designed to add brigade combat teams to bring the active Army up to a total of forty-eight; Gates' order stopped that growth at forty-five. Gates then announced that the Army would reduce its active component strength by some 27,000 on 6 January 2011. That reduction included a retraction from its temporary end strength authorized by Section 403 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, which was effective for two years.[19]

In 2012, the Army planned to decrease its end strength from a wartime peak of 570,000 in the active Army, 358,200 in the Army National Guard, and 206,000 in the Army Reserve to 490,000 active Army, 353,500 Army National Guard, and 205,000 Army Reserve. Those reductions were projected to occur at a measured pace through the end of 2017 so as to allow the Army to meet its commitments in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The pace would facilitate reversibility of the force should unforeseen circumstances arise. To "keep faith" with soldiers and their families, the reductions would not be immediate or massive.[20]

As part of restructuring, the Army decreased its brigade combat teams from forty-five to thirty-three.[21] Although the Army was projected to have fewer brigades, the ones that remained were more capable than their predecessors. As part of the planned reduction, active component units based in the continental United States regained their third maneuver battalion that had been removed in order to create modular brigades.[22] Stryker-equipped brigades, which already had three maneuver battalions, received an engineer battalion. In addition, the Army converted brigade support troop battalions within remaining brigade combat teams into engineer battalions. Artillery battalions in the remaining combat brigades would convert from two firing batteries with eight howitzers apiece to three firing batteries with six howitzers apiece, permitting each maneuver battalion to be supported by a dedicated artillery battery. Upon completion, the reductions left the Army with twelve armored brigades, fourteen infantry brigades, and seven Stryker brigades in the active force.[23]

---

18. The Hon. John M. McHugh and Gen Raymond T. Odierno, Ofc of the Sec of the Army and Ofc of the Ch of Staff, *2012 Army Posture Statement* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, Feb 2012), p. 7, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/aps/aps_2012.pdf.

19. *National Defense Authorization Act of 2010*, PL 111–84 (28 Oct 2009), p. 78, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/content/pkg/PLAW-111publ84/pdf/PLAW-111publ84.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

20. McHugh and Odierno, *2012 Army Posture Statement*, p. 10.

21. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Campaign Plan (2010)* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2010), pp. B-2–B-3, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Organization Over Time* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2009), pp. 8–9, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

22. Press Conf, Gen Raymond T. Odierno, Ch of Staff of the Army, sub: Army Force Structure Reductions (As Prepared), 25 Jun 2013, http://www.army.mil/article/106355/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

23. C. Todd Lopez, "Brigade Combat Teams Cut at 10 Posts Will Help Other BCTs Grow," *Army News Service*, 25 Jun 2013, https://www.army.mil/article/106373, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Army plans to reduce to 490,000 personnel by the end of fiscal year 2017 reverberated throughout organizations above the brigade level. On 12 June 2013, the Army deactivated the V Corps, which had been spared that fate almost exactly four years earlier to fill the requirement for ISAF Joint Command headquarters. With the impending end of this joint command mission, a corps headquarters based in the United States would temporarily fill that billet. The V Corps was left with no subordinate elements following the relocation of the 1st Armored Division from Germany to Fort Bliss, Texas, in 2011.[24]

What was not readily visible in those changes was the streamlining of units outside the combat brigade structure. Consolidations substantially changed the Army's school systems, perhaps none more so than the restationing of the Air Defense Center and School from Fort Bliss to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to form the Fires Center of Excellence in 2010. The following year, the Maneuver Center of Excellence was created at Fort Benning, Georgia, by merging the post's Infantry Center and School with the Armor Center and School, newly arrived from Fort Knox, Kentucky. Other economies came through eliminating overhead such as the U.S. Army Accessions Command in 2012 as well as a mandated 25 percent reduction in the Army Staff and equivalent lower-level headquarters.[25]

Readiness for an Army after Enduring Freedom

The impending end of combat operations in Afghanistan meant a corresponding decrease in supplemental funding—a troubling prospect for Army leaders, since their service's base budget did not permit maintaining even a reduced force at full readiness. Faced with less money and fewer soldiers to maintain its operational responsibilities across the globe, Army leadership took steps to synchronize fiscal and strategic realities. The contingency force program was the Army's means of ensuring it could still meet time-sensitive requirements. Instead of maintaining the force pools created by the Army Force Generation process, a smaller mix of armored, infantry, and Stryker brigade combat teams were kept at full combat readiness. Only those units would benefit from combat training center rotations; the remainder of the Army would be trained at lower levels of proficiency.[26] At the same time, the Army adopted the sustainable readiness model, which brought back what in 2001 had been known as the Band of Excellence, an echelonment in which

---

24. Matt Millham, "V Corps Cases Its Colors in 'Bittersweet' Ceremony in Wiesbaden," *Stars and Stripes*, 12 Jun 2013, https://www.stripes.com/news/v-corps-cases-its-colors-in-bittersweet-ceremony-in-wiesbaden-1.225552, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

25. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Organization Over Time*, pp. 6–8; Paul McLeary, "US Army Leaders Give Subordinates Just Weeks to Cut Staffs, Budgets by 25 Percent," *DefenseNews*, 19 Aug 2013, http://archive.defensenews.com/article/20130819/DEFREG02/308190019/US-Army-Leaders-Give-Subordinates-Just-Weeks-Cut-Staffs-Budgets-by-25-Percent, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

26. Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management, Department of the Army Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Submission (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, Mar 2014), p. 53, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

a unit's readiness fluctuated but remained below deployable status until assigned missions.[27]

These arrangements to ensure that selected units received the training they needed to achieve deployable readiness did not address the fact that the Army needed to regain experience in conventional warfare after a decade of counterinsurgency operations. That process began in 2009 with the publication of *Army Training and Leader Development Guidance*, which combined the core mission essential task list and the directed mission essential task list into a full spectrum mission essential task list.[28] The next step did not take place until the demand for units trained in counterinsurgency abated with the retraction of the Afghan surge. Between August 2011 and February 2012, maneuver combat training centers began discarding tailored mission rehearsal exercises in favor of generic full-spectrum scenarios pitting units against similarly equipped conventional opponents.[29]

The shift from counterinsurgency to full-spectrum operations or decisive action would not be easy. By the end of Enduring Freedom, the Army's principal repository for skills in conducting major combat operations was senior leaders who had grown up with those processes. In fact, by that point, soldiers who might have had substantial experience in combined arms warfare were brigade commanders and their command sergeants major, a situation the Army had not experienced since the early 1970s. Division commanders noted that leaders at the battalion level simply did not have the knowledge or experience to train their units on techniques that were common knowledge before 2001.[30]

After watching several rotations in which visiting units attempted full-spectrum operations, Brig. Gen. Terry R. Ferrell, commanding general of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, observed that "we have second lieutenants, first lieutenants, captains, and many majors now who have not operated or trained on major combat operations."[31] Ferrell's comments echoed observations found in a white paper written at the behest of Maj. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, whose South Korea–based 2d Infantry Division faced the threat of conventional invasion across the 38th Parallel. The paper noted that small-unit leaders had "little or no knowledge of breaching or gap crossing operations, have difficulty analyzing the terrain, visualizing enemy courses of action, and developing event templates with time and

---

27. Gen Robert B. Abrams, "ILW Contemporary Military Forum #8: Building and Sustaining Readiness," 14 Oct 2015, https://www.dvidshub.net/video/428314/ilw-contemporary-military-forum-8-building-and-sustaining-readiness, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

28. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, *Army Training and Leader Development Guidance* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 2009), p. 3.

29. Ofc of the Deputy Ch of Staff, G–3/5/7, Dir of Training, *CTC Rotation History FY02–FY16*, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

30. Notes, Army Training and Leader Development Conf, Asst Ch of Staff G–3/5/7, 16 Jul 2014, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

31. Interv, Casey E. Bain, Joint Fires Integration and Interoperability Team Public Affairs, with Brig Gen Terry R. Ferrell, CG, National Training Center and Fort Irwin, May 2011, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

distance analysis to identify signature equipment and High Value Targets."[32] Similarly, a soldier at the Joint Readiness Training Center in October 2014 observed that "the basics of fighting position construction, sectors of fire, sector sketches, interlocking fire, obstacle preparation and many more basics of defensive operations have atrophied over the past 13 years at war."[33] Even more indicative of over a decade of nondoctrinal missions was that junior leaders, many of whom had known no other professional reality, "seemed to be operating with a FOB [forward operating base] mindset."[34] In this context, "FOB mindset" was shorthand for counterinsurgency operations, a dangerous approach to pursue when engaged in high-intensity combat.

The return to full-spectrum or decisive operations recognized that future opponents likely would be skilled in cyber warfare, unlike those the Army faced in Iraq and Afghanistan. This challenge would be as difficult to address as that of retraining units to fight against conventional foes. Ever since the original decision to go to war as part of a multinational effort, the Secure Internet Protocol Routing Network, a U.S. national secured communications network, gave way to coalition networks such as the ISAF Secret network and national extensions like the British OVERTASK network. A replacement, the U.S. Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System, followed a similar path after General Stanley A. McChrystal directed all units to transition as much traffic as possible off their national networks and onto the Afghan Mission Network in January 2010.[35]

Blending networks hurt the campaign by triggering numerous security breaches as American personnel sent information not cleared for universal distribution to coalition recipients. The Army's insufficient security protocols against insider threats came to light during the court-martial and conviction of Spc. Bradley E. Manning (now known as Chelsea E. Manning), who had leaked classified diplomatic cables and Army reports to a third-party Web site. Recognizing that future conflicts would likely be multinational, that potential regional aggressors would employ cyber warfare specialists, and that insider threats could cause grievous national harm, the Army began training the entire force in information assurance procedures previously practiced only by its intelligence community.

Although senior Army leaders recognized that the Army had to change its approach to training, the service's normal means of regaining expertise in long-neglected skills were either greatly diminished or gone. The streamlining of the force that had created centers of excellence from branch schools and substituted civilian instructors for military faculty gave the U.S. Army little excess personnel from which to rebuild expertise. By taking personnel from

32. White Paper, "Maintaining the Combat Edge in a Modular ARFORGEN Force," 2d Inf Div, 23 Jul 2010, p. 7, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

33. Ibid.

34. U.S. Army and Training Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Capabilities Manager Inf Bde Combat Team, *Joint Readiness Training Center Decisive Action Training Environment Observations* (Fort Benning, Ga.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, 7 Oct 2014), p. 10.

35. Donna Miles, "New Afghan Network Supports Coalition Sharing," DoD News, 9 Mar 2011, https://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=63080, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

the Generating Force (mainly from the Army schools) to fill requirements in the Operating Force (forces under FORSCOM prepared for contingency operations), the Army effectively had used up its source for rebuilding expertise in warfighting approaches other than tactical counterinsurgency. It would take time, money, and concerted effort to build proficiency in old and new mission sets alike.[36]

The inescapable need to grow the Army for Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom also contributed to the evisceration of the Generating Force. As the Army expanded, promotion timelines shortened so that it could field the appropriate rank of officers and noncommissioned officers needed to fill new requirements. Promotions came overwhelmingly to those who held repetitive tactical command, preferably in combat. In a period of compressed timelines, officers had fewer opportunities to gain experience in anything other than their basic branches. For the majority of the Army's future senior leaders who came from the combat arms branches, such experience was predominantly in the Operating Force and frequently in units that operated most comfortably at the tactical level.

Studies on officer personnel management conducted as early as 1997 identified these risks but did not forecast the amplifying effects of an expanded Army.[37] The emphasis on brigades, divisions, and corps as the building blocks of the Army's contribution to the joint force excluded many skills needed at joint task force, service staff, and combatant command levels. In 2005, Human Resources Command had recognized problems with building experience outside an officer's branch or functional area in the existing Officer Professional Management System—which did nothing to facilitate General Peter J. Schoomaker's original intent for "pentathletes" who were capable across a broader spectrum of the conflict.[38]

The Reserve Component after Fifteen Years of War

The wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan were shaped by the decisions to adopt a total-force policy and an all-volunteer force following the Vietnam War. Operation Enduring Freedom and its counterpart in Iraq tested the Army's ability to sustain overlapping campaigns for almost a decade without the need for the draft. Mobilizing the Guard and Reserve had connected the American public to the Global War on Terrorism in some ways, but it still did not produce wide public support for—or opposition to—the war as conscription had in the past. Although successful, the total-force concept

36. Interv, Lt Col Francis J. H. Park, OEF Study Grp, with Maj Gen (Ret.) David Fastabend, frmr Director, Department of the Army Strategic Plans and Policy, 1 Jul 2015, pp. 52–56, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

37. The OEF Study Group files contain many of these studies and reports dating back to 1997.

38. Asst Ch of Staff, G–3, "OPMS III Council of Colonels" (U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 7 Jun 2005), p. 71; Sally B. Donnelly and Douglas Waller, "Ten Questions With Peter Schoomaker," Time, 22 Apr 2005, https://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1053555,00.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

suffered as the reserve component strained under the demands of performing both homeland defense and overseas combat operations after the September 11th attacks. As former Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs David L. McGinnis stated, "If there's anything you ought to give to the reserve components . . . it's the high demand/low density unit . . . [which] represents the chasm between service culture and the needs of the nation, because the services will not invest their money . . . in these things that they don't think is [*sic*] important to their culture."[39] Elevating the National Guard and Reserve to full readiness levels between 2001 and 2016 was a costly exercise, undermining the notion that the total-force approach would save money.

Despite the challenges of their varied missions, the National Guard and the Reserve benefited from playing key roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the end of both conflicts, reserve units and personnel were more experienced, better trained, and better equipped than they had been in 2001. The number of power projection platforms for the Guard, for example, increased from four in 2001 to fourteen by 2008, ten of which were filled by the reserve component.[40] Until 2007, individual readiness checks and small-unit tasks were permitted only under active component supervision at mobilization stations, but they would now be performed by reserve component personnel ahead of mobilization. Medical and dental readiness went from being the primary factor keeping soldiers from deploying to an administrative issue, although the cost of offering premium-based healthcare for the entire force at all times and no-cost insurance for reservists prior to deployment rose exponentially.[41]

The reserve component experienced as dramatic a change in force structure as the active Army. Modularity created interchangeable units across components, eliminating the last vestiges of tiered readiness. The components of the Army came to resemble each other in many ways, although bureaucratic competition for missions, funding, and resources resumed as the tempo of combat operations decreased. For example, the 2014 Army Aviation Restructuring Initiative deactivated two combat aviation brigades and led to the decision to phase out all OH–58 Kiowa Warrior helicopters from the force by fiscal year 2018. An initiative to transfer four National Guard AH–64 Apache helicopter battalions to the active component, in exchange for transferring active component UH–60 Black Hawks to the National Guard and Army Reserve, encountered skepticism from Congress. As a result, while some elements of the restructuring plan proceeded as scheduled, the Apache battalions remained in place until a congressionally appointed commission studied the issue. The commission recommended against the transfer of Apaches,

---

39. Sydney Freedberg Jr., "Active vs. Guard: Avoidable Pentagon War," *Breaking Defense*, 28 Jun 2013, http://breakingdefense.com/2013/06/active-vs-guard-an-avoidable-pentagon-war/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

40. Gary Langford, *Power Projection Platforms: An Essential Element of Future National Security Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: U.S. Army War College, 2004).

41. Legislative Fact Sheet, National Guard Association of the United States, "TRICARE for the National Guard and Reserve," Mar 2005, https://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2005/mar/guard_insurance/tricarefactsheet.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

suggesting instead that the National Guard procure fewer modernized Black Hawks to offset the cost of maintaining more attack helicopters.[42]

The Declaration of National Emergency by Reason of Certain Terrorist Attacks, in place since 14 September 2001, underpinned the continued operational use of the reserve component as well as supplemental funding. Although this declaration was renewed each year after 2001, the authority to continue employing the Guard and Reserve as an operational force was not guaranteed. Nearly twenty years after September 11th, the United States continues to use emergency powers. Though the active component likely will continue to call upon the reserve component even after repairs and modifications to the forces are made, access to the reservists may well depend on a reexamination of existing legislation.

Retrospect and a View to the Future

To the casual observer, the Army at the end of 2014 looked much the same as it had in late 2001. The force structure appeared outwardly similar in many organizations and the overall size differed little from the beginning of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns. The reality, expressed mostly in intangibles, was that the Army had changed significantly. The Army of 2001 had been organized, trained, staffed, and commanded in a manner consistent with its fight against Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. Changes forced upon the Department of the Army after 2001 occurred in the context of a conflict that senior leaders had not predicted. That experience transformed the Army into a force that started off by fighting terrorists, then countered insurgents, then pursued functionally based security force assistance, and finally prepared for stability operations. A tenacious enemy, an evolving national strategy, and a dynamic environment changed the Army over the longest overseas war it has ever fought.

The Army faced numerous challenges as the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq continued longer than anticipated. Undisciplined force management—fostered in part by the pervasive but illusory notion in the 1990s that future wars would be short, decisive, and dominated by the precise application of firepower against opposing conventional forces—led to severe staff shortages soon after 11 September 2001. Ironically, the Army had helped create this crisis through its own practice of granting exceptions to existing assignment policies for individuals in the reserve component who volunteered to fill the ranks of joint headquarters and low-density, high-demand units in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Several factors produced this volunteerism, including a professional desire for combat experience and anxieties among Guard and Reserve soldiers that the war would end before they had a chance to deploy,

42. David Wasserbly, "Pentagon Budget 2017: Controversial Army Aviation Restructuring Again Requested," *HIS Jane's Defence Weekly*, 9 Feb 2016, http://www.janes.com/article/57874/pentagon-budget-2017-controversial-army-aviation-restructuring-again-requested (page discontinued), Hist Files, OEF Study Grp; Stephen Trimble, "US Commission Urges Tweaks to Army Aviation Restructure," *FlightGlobal*, 29 Jan 2016, https://www.flightglobal.com/news/articles/us-commission-urges-tweaks-to-army-aviation-restruct-421417/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

as had happened in Operation Desert Storm. Though the active component did not experience as significant a backlash, many reserve component units ultimately became nondeployable by 2004 because key individuals had volunteered for overseas service and did not have enough dwell time to return to service.

The Army remained an all-volunteer, professional organization by spreading necessary sacrifices among the various branches of service in deployed active component contingents as well as within the reserve component and stateside Generating Force. These sacrifices included deploying a large number of National Guard units to Iraq to enable the active force to implement modularity, repurposing combat support and combat service support units to perform combat missions, and revising training curriculum to better prepare soldiers for what they would face in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although these developments showed that the Army was adapting to the conflicts it faced, the limited time available to reset units returning from combat meant that whatever proficiency was left in their core mission essential task lists eroded over time as predeployment training continued to focus on tasks unique to Iraq and Afghanistan. Ignoring pre–September 11th core tasks came at a price. By 2011, the revamping of doctrine in the form of the *Unified Land Operations* manual (Army Doctrine Publication 3–0), and the difficulties the Army faced in reestablishing expertise in full-spectrum operations and decisive action made it clear that the Army had lost much of its original expertise in functions that were not irregular warfare.

Training in full-spectrum operations only partially addressed this deficit in traditional skills. Major structural changes to the modular force were also required. The Army started that process by reflagging its fires brigades as division artillery brigades, beginning with the 1st Armored Division on 23 July 2014, bringing back a combat support command and control structure that had disappeared with the introduction of modularity.[43] Although direct support artillery battalions remained in brigade combat teams, authority for training and certifying fires now became the responsibility of the division artillery commander, infusing a critical mentorship role back into the force structure. Similarly, the return of armor and infantry brigade combat teams with three maneuver battalions was another step away from modularity, although the reorganized brigades retained their cavalry squadrons and organic support organizations that previously belonged under divisional headquarters.

Although the 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* and 2014 *Quadrennial Defense Review* appeared to reinforce the argument that the Army needed to be sized in anticipation of another long-duration conflict, both documents noted that near-term force structure decisions likely would not be influenced by the remote possibility of more conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan. Given the likelihood that military budgets would shrink, policymakers instead began exploring how to manage the force in ways that would allow the Army to regenerate capabilities that had atrophied as a result of its decade-plus focus on irregular warfare. The 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* explicitly

43. Sgt Alexander Neely, "Division Artillery Returns to the Army," *Army News*, 24 Jul 2014, https://www.army.mil/article/130514/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

mentioned the need for "intellectual capital and rank structure that could be called upon to expand key elements of the force." The 2014 *Quadrennial Defense Review* contained similar language suggesting a requirement for regeneration of the force.[44]

If the United States became involved in a conflict that seemed like it might be protracted, a decision to grow the force would have to be made much sooner than occurred during the Bush administration's Global War on Terrorism.[45] In the Army's 2015 annual posture statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh and Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno noted that it takes around thirty months to generate a complete brigade combat team.[46] That period includes recruiting new soldiers and putting them through initial entry training, assembling the chain of command, building facilities, issuing equipment, and mastering the individual and collective training goals that must be met before committing a unit to combat.[47]

Training concerns were not confined to the physical side of operations. The uniformed expertise previously resident in the Army's schools and centers had been replaced by civilians as uniformed authorizations were moved from the Generating Force into the Operating Force to fill new unit authorizations. Some of that expertise remained in the reserve component, but those forces were subject to constraints. Maintaining the Guard and Reserve at the same level of readiness as their Active Army counterpart would either increase costs or, worse, force reserve expertise to leave the service because of the higher operations tempo. For competencies such as attack aviation and combined arms warfare, those talents could not be replaced easily.

To regenerate the force, senior leaders would have to make some hard tradeoffs. As the Army at large reduced in size, the size of the Generating Force needed to expand relative to the size of the whole Army. The greatest challenge to regeneration rested in midgrade officers and noncommissioned officers who needed to be capable of serving as a cadre for expansion of the Operating Force and training the personnel that were part of the expansion itself. Those midgrade officers and noncommissioned officers would serve

---

44. DoD, *Defense Strategic Guidance*, pp. 6–7; DoD, 2014 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: Ofc of the Sec Def, 2014), pp. vii, 55, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

45. The United States invaded Afghanistan in November 2001, followed by a much larger operation in Iraq beginning in March 2003. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld did not authorize an increase to the Army's active component end strength prior to his resignation in December 2006. When Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates approved an increase for active Army end strength in early 2007, it required several years to generate and train the additional units.

46.The Hon. John M. McHugh and Gen Raymond T. Odierno, Ofc of the Sec Army and Ofc of the Ch of Staff, *2015 Army Posture Statement* (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, Mar 2015), p. 8, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/aps/aps_2015.pdf.

47. Info Paper, Lt Col Robert Gleckler and Renee G. Carlucci, Ofc of the Under Sec of the Army, Strategic Initiatives Grp, 12 Sept 2014, sub: "How Fast Can the Army Grow?" Implications of Regeneration Decisions, p. 5, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

as building blocks to enable that expansion, which itself would require additional recruiters.

In an effort reminiscent of Donald Rumsfeld's first year as secretary of defense, like-minded Obama administration officials recommended that U.S. conventional forces should not be resourced or configured to conduct large-scale stability operations over an extended period.[48] The Army's senior leadership remained opposed to the narrow strategic path espoused by transformation advocates. In a 20 July 2013 *New York Times* article, Maj. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster exposed the fundamental flaw in both presidential administrations' arguments by pointing out that technological superiority did not guarantee that the United States could avoid being drawn into irregular conflicts.[49] Two years earlier, Marine General James N. Mattis, then CENTCOM commander, had voiced a similarly sobering assessment before the Senate Armed Services Committee: "I think, as we look toward the future, I have been a horrible prophet. I have never fought anywhere I expected to in all my years."[50]

48. DoD, *Defense Strategic Guidance*, p. 6.

49. Maj Gen Herbert R. McMaster, "The Pipe Dream of Easy War," *New York Times*, 20 Jul 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/21/opinion/sunday/the-pipe-dream-of-easy-war.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

50. Quoted in Micah Zenko, "100% Percent Right 0% of the Time: Why the U.S. Military Can't Predict the Next War," *Foreign Policy*, 16 Oct 2012, https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/10/16/100-right-0-of-the-time/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

Conclusion

Modern War in an Ancient Land: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001–2014

Following the September 11th terror attacks, the U.S. Army entered an era of sustained warfare unlike anything experienced during its 225-year history. The challenges that the Army faced included skilled and tenacious foes, unreliable regional allies, shifting objectives, and inadequate resourcing. The course of Operation Enduring Freedom thus swung from the high of its initial success in toppling the Taliban to a three-year period where the United States searched for the right operational approach in Afghanistan while it shifted its primary focus to Iraq. As NATO assumed the operational lead in Afghanistan starting in 2006, the Taliban and its allies seized the initiative while the United States maintained an economy of force effort as the situation in Iraq deteriorated. After the election of Barack H. Obama in 2008, the United States reinvigorated its efforts in Afghanistan for roughly eighteen months before retrograding its forces and bringing the campaign to a close. Even after a successful drawdown of American forces, the legacy of the nearly 15-year-long Enduring Freedom campaign remains inconclusive.

An Imperfect Strategic Crystal Ball

The events of 11 September 2001 shocked the United States. In the immediate wake of the attacks, President George W. Bush and his cabinet raced to formulate a retaliatory strategy and prevent further attacks. The 21st-century news cycle, which broadcast images of death and destruction in New York City and at the Pentagon for weeks afterward, influenced strategic deliberation and campaign planning to an unprecedented degree. The speed of the American counterstrike, coupled with the fact that American conventional forces were ill-equipped for a rapid and coordinated response a decade after the end of the Cold War, largely shaped the Army's opening involvement in Afghanistan.

Despite the many challenges inherent in a U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, the DoD and CENTCOM, with the approval of the National Security Council, championed an untested style of campaign planning and warfighting during the opening phase of Operation Enduring Freedom. The new approach, based on the concept of transformation, blended coalition conventional and unconventional units, airpower, CIA operatives and indigenous opposition groups, to form an effective fighting team against an irregular enemy using conventional tactics. The unproven approach favored by the Bush administration delivered decisive results at little cost in American

lives while avoiding the appearance of a Soviet-style occupation. The Taliban government crumbled under the pressure of the United Front supported by American advisors controlling precision aerial strikes. Resistance from al-Qaeda broke after the combined U.S.-Afghan assault at Tora Bora in December 2001. The remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban scattered, seeking refuge in rural Afghanistan or in sanctuaries in Pakistan. The speed of the coalition's victory caught everyone by surprise and appeared to vindicate the American embrace of a new style of warfare.

In the second phase of the campaign, culminating with Operation Anaconda in March 2002, a number of unexpected issues emerged after the fall of Kabul which signaled the fragile nature of the new coalition and questionable durability of the strategic choices made by the United States. The Americans soon learned that ethnic and personal agendas prevented the United Front from seamlessly transitioning into the role of Afghanistan's primary security force. The Taliban and al-Qaeda learned the limits of American aerial capabilities and adjusted their tactics accordingly. With enemy fighters focused on reconstituting their power base in cross-border sanctuaries, conventional units increasingly confronted growing administrative responsibilities in support of nation building and humanitarian relief. American combat units also took over many of the missions formerly allocated to allied indigenous forces after diminished United Front involvement affected the ability of Special Forces and the CIA to contribute to the campaign.

President Bush's speech at the Virginia Military Institute on 17 April 2002 announced a shift in the American approach to Afghanistan, with the employment of additional conventional forces in ground operations and a new commitment to some form of nation building. Operation Mountain Lion, initiated by Maj. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck's CJTF-Mountain and concluded under General Dan K. McNeill's CJTF-180 during the summer of 2002, signaled the beginning of a new stage in the campaign, in which American units conducted security operations in support of a new Afghan government established under the aegis of the United Nations. The transition marked a crossroads for the Global War on Terrorism, as the United States shifted its strategic focus to Iraq while continuing to support stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. The invasion of Iraq jeopardized the successful campaign in Afghanistan as the United States was not militarily prepared to wage two protracted conflicts simultaneously. With the Bush administration unwilling to raise taxes, establish additional Army and Marine combat units, or mobilize the nation as a whole to devote greater resources to the war, fighting in multiple locations presented a complex operational challenge. The de facto relegation of Afghanistan to a secondary effort—for the purpose of redirecting limited resources to Iraq—undercut the gains of the opening campaign in the Global War on Terrorism.

Sustaining the Initial Victories

Making Operation Enduring Freedom a lower priority sparked a number of collateral changes as the international community, U.S. government, coalition

partners, and Afghans were forced to make do with less support and fewer resources. One justification for shifting the DoD's attention to Iraq was the American assumption that the Taliban was a defeated entity and no longer of serious concern. Successive U.S. commanders thus received unaccustomed authority and discretion in Afghanistan. However, circumstances on the ground soon began to inhibit the smooth implementation of the Bonn Process. The international humanitarian aid effort, which U.S. authorities originally envisioned as the centerpiece of reconstruction, gradually imploded. The U.S. leadership also came to realize that Pakistan supported the Taliban's return, a factor that complicated attempts to stabilize Afghanistan's border regions. Nevertheless, the Bush administration remained reluctant to commit additional U.S. ground combat power to maintain internal stability until sufficient indigenous security forces and government bureaucracies could be created.

American military efforts in Afghanistan from 2002 through 2005 failed to gain momentum owing to the overall lack of boots on the ground and the need to deploy these limited forces in geographically isolated locations. With a focus on mounting counterterrorism operations, newly deployed American combat units discovered that sparse allocations of intelligence and surveillance assets made it difficult to find and engage the enemy. Growing demands for infantry in Iraq resulted in noninfantry organizations being sent to Afghanistan to perform close-combat missions. Even with augmentation by noninfantry units, however, U.S. commanders in Afghanistan lacked adequate numbers to secure the entire country. As a result, available units were deployed in eastern Afghan provinces opposite HIG and Haqqani strongholds as well as in Pashtun tribal areas around Kandahar. In addition, confirmation of growing cross-border traffic between Afghanistan and Pakistan led U.S. and coalition Special Forces, conventional units, and new Afghan security organizations to focus more on securing the eastern and southeastern borders with Pakistan.

Although a larger number of indigenous military units could have helped redress the unavailability of American troops, various obstacles hindered early attempts to create those security forces. First, the U.S. defense establishment balked at absorbing the projected cost of this program. Second, the United Front proved unwilling to deploy its forces in the Pashtun-dominated areas of Afghanistan, or to convert its militia units into regular forces answering to a central government, without commensurate incentives. As the United States hesitated to make significant early investments in security force assistance, these incentives never appeared. By January 2003, the U.S.-led effort had trained only 1,800 ANA troops. The resultant lack of sustainable security beyond the confines of Kabul hampered reconstruction efforts and economic development in areas where U.S. troops did not operate, and facilitated the rise of local strongmen and the reemergence of the opium trade.

Insufficient funding was not the only challenge associated with the creation of Afghan security forces. As a result of growing demands from Iraq, the mission of training Afghan troops shifted from SOF to rotating conventional units operating under the designation of TF Phoenix. At the

same time, the U.S. Special Operations units remaining in Afghanistan made effective security assistance all the more complicated by forming their own indigenous auxiliary units to help fill the security vacuum created by the lack of conventional units in theater. Although this approach satisfied near-term needs, it siphoned off thousands of potential ANA recruits while creating paramilitary units beholden to local authorities rather than the central Afghan government. The limited resourcing caused by the invasion of Iraq therefore directly hampered reconstruction and security force assistance efforts, and offered fewer opportunities to improve the integration of Special Operations and U.S. conventional forces.

American interest in Afghanistan briefly revived after U.S. and coalition troops ousted Iraq's Saddam Hussein from power in April 2003. Within two months, the National Security Council adopted a new political-military action plan titled Accelerating Success, which aimed to curtail the power of warlords and reform Afghanistan's interior and defense ministries.[1] Weeks later, the DoD adopted new policy guidelines for the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition. The overarching objective was still to "prevent Afghanistan from serving as a base for terrorists," but policymakers viewed this goal quite differently.[2] The United States now sought to create a representative and democratic Afghan government capable of controlling and overseeing its territory.[3] NATO, which assumed leadership of ISAF from the UN in August 2003, shared this lofty ambition. CENTCOM tasked Lt. Gen. David W. Barno with overseeing the complex transition from counterterrorist operations to an appropriate mix of counterinsurgency methods. The United States did not digress from this path for the remainder of the Bush presidency.[4]

The adoption of expanded political objectives invariably meant a broader military role as most U.S. government organizations were unwilling to send their personnel into an unstable security environment. Awareness of the difficulties associated with implementing a whole-of-government approach had been growing for some time as Provincial Reconstruction Teams struggled to obtain experts from the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture, and other agencies. Although these organizations made some efforts to address this issue, the lengthy time required to train these experts coupled with the constant need to provide personnel for similar missions in Iraq ensured that the problem remained unsolved throughout Enduring Freedom.

---

1. Graham, *By His Own Rules*, p. 435; Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, pp. 140–41.

2. Memo, Ofc of the Sec Def, 7 Jul 2003, sub: Principles for Afghanistan—Policy Guidelines, p. 1, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/438/2003-07-07%20re%20Principles%20for%20Afghanistan-Policy%20Guidelines.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

3. Ibid.

4. This was the desired end state for CFC-A. See Robert Kemp, *Counterinsurgency in Eastern Afghanistan 2004–2008: A Civilian Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2014); DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Rpt to Cong., Jan 2009, p. 15, http://www.dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/OCTOBER_1230_FINAL.pdf, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

The Strategic Equation Is Altered Again

The Bush administration viewed the completion of the Bonn Process with the Afghan election in September 2005 as the logical time to downsize the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. Taking a page from the successful peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans, the Americans sought to transfer security responsibilities to the NATO-led ISAF. After lengthy negotiations, NATO agreed to extend ISAF's mandate across all of Afghanistan. Likewise, the American government saw the transition as a means to avoid sending more troops rather than as a sign of imminent withdrawal.

Tying the NATO ISAF transition to the culmination of the Bonn Process placed U.S. commanders in Afghanistan in the position of having to factor coalition politics and the concerns of an increasingly assertive Afghan government into strategic deliberations. The uneven nature of insurgent activity throughout Afghanistan influenced NATO ISAF's initial plans for assuming responsibility over the various regional commands. However, the Taliban's decision to aggressively oppose the deployment of NATO units into RC South in 2006 added to the challenges facing Operation Enduring Freedom. The enemy actively sought opportunities to fracture the opposing military coalition by inflicting casualties on less resolute participants until domestic political pressure from those nations prompted their withdrawal.

The Taliban viewed the transition period as the optimal time to stage a comeback. Its leadership was aware that the impending transition did not guarantee the departure of U.S. forces. Nonetheless, it knew that a favorable window of opportunity would close once ISAF reinforced the American troop presence and their efforts to provide security assistance and humanitarian aid to the Kabul government, and so it chose to exploit the evolving strategic environment by launching major offensives in contested eastern and southern Afghanistan. In doing so, the Taliban finally shed the strategic and operational hubris that had led to its humiliating rout in late 2001. Their assault caught both the Americans and NATO as they were adjusting dispositions, reconfiguring their command and control apparatus, and refining tactical-level interoperability.

The sheer ferocity of the Taliban's unexpected return to the battlefield upset American efforts to realign their involvement in Afghanistan. Even though American commanders initially intended to wage an aggressive counterterrorist campaign in RC East, growing insecurity beginning in 2006 forced them to divide their attention between pursuing their own objectives and assisting their NATO allies. The Taliban's rejuvenation served as a rude shock to the ISAF members who planned to focus on rebuilding war-torn Afghanistan. Many of the United States' European allies had signed on to the Afghanistan mission expecting to provide security assistance along the lines of their engagements in Kosovo and Bosnia; accordingly, they were reluctant to actively confront the Taliban. What resulted was a bifurcation of the American effort—divided along separate command chains—between counterterrorist operations and support for ISAF. Slowly, the United States assumed full command of the operations in Afghanistan, including both the U.S.-only Enduring Freedom and its NATO ISAF forces, beginning with the

appointment of General Dan K. McNeill as ISAF commander in early 2007. Aligning the two campaigns, however, would take considerably more time.

The urgent task of defeating Taliban efforts to reassert control in the south and east fell to ISAF and American conventional and Special Operations units. With the Afghan army and police proving unequal to the demands of fast-paced combat operations, American units also found themselves aiding their underprepared NATO brethren on short notice. The impressive achievements made by coalition and Afghan forces during Operation Medusa in September 2006 proved that they could work together and establish clear dominance in a region. The same could be said of Lt. Col. Brian J. Mennes' 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry's service as the ISAF Theater Tactical Reserve beginning in mid-2007, which demonstrated that a single battalion could exert a significant impact on the path of the campaign. The experience of Mennes' battalion, and of other units that performed just as effectively, indicated that both ISAF and American conventional units could develop good working relationships under trying circumstances. However, ISAF simply did not have the numbers and resources needed to fight for every piece of contested ground while attempting to win the Afghan people's hearts and minds. The ISAF decision to spread its manpower across as many areas as possible in an attempt to hold ground and safeguard the populace, rather than accepting near-term risk by massing to defeat the enemy's main effort, inadvertently ceded the operational initiative to the insurgents. The Taliban would maintain the gains it had made during the ISAF transition until the end of the surge in Iraq made it possible to send more U.S. troops to Afghanistan.

As might be expected, the Taliban resurgence triggered considerable changes in security assistance and reconstruction. Indigenous army and police units that had existed before the Taliban resurgence suffered considerably from casualties and desertions as a result of the high tempo of operations. Armed with additional funding, the U.S. Army undertook immediate steps to rebuild and expand the Afghan army and police forces. Of course, competent armies take time to build. The Afghan police forces required even more augmentation than their army counterparts. ISAF invested considerable funding, time, and effort in forming ad hoc home guard police units in an effort to solve personnel shortfalls more rapidly. However, most of these initiatives fell short of their intended goals or failed outright despite generous funding. Consequently, Afghan security forces were in only marginally better shape several years after NATO ISAF began to devote more resources to train and equip them.

Similar and more successful efforts provided reconstruction and humanitarian aid programs with additional funding and resources. The reconstruction teams grew much larger in size as robust security elements were added in provinces where the Taliban posed a threat to their efforts. The categories and scope of the projects being undertaken also changed as brigade and battalion commanders, influenced by experiences in Iraq where money was an effective weapon against insurgents, added more reconstruction projects to their tactical repertoire. The Americans also introduced long overdue innovations, such as agricultural development teams that aided Afghan efforts to restore local economies by rejuvenating farming, animal

husbandry, and fruit-growing. Translating these efforts into popular support for the central government, however, continued to be a problem.

In addition to the changing nature of the battlefield, the Taliban resurgence added several new elements to the overall strategic equation. First, the enemy's sanctuaries in Pakistan were a clear threat to Afghan stability, and could not be addressed solely by drone strikes. Second, the groups opposing the U.S.-led coalition and the Karzai government openly reasserted control over areas in Afghanistan's south and east where a vacuum of security and governance existed. That development would have a significant impact on future security assistance and reconstruction efforts. Finally, the insurgency exposed clear divisions within the international coalition. The coalition had neither a comprehensive campaign plan nor a unified understanding of the mission in Afghanistan. Ostensibly, this problem was resolved with the establishment of USFOR-A in late 2008, but this measure did not address the lack of coalition resources even as the insurgency continued to expand.

The Economy of Force Campaign Receives More Resources

In the fall of 2008, the Bush administration ordered a strategic review of the American effort in Afghanistan. With the situation in Iraq largely stabilized after the troop surge in 2007—and with casualties in Afghanistan climbing steadily as the security situation deteriorated—American policymakers shifted their attention away from what had been the main effort in the Global War on Terrorism since 2003. Led by Lt. Gen. Douglas E. Lute, the National Security Council review recommended pursuing a more robustly resourced counterinsurgency effort with greater attention given to Pakistan. President Bush supported the recommendation, but the November 2008 election of Barack Obama tempered the outgoing administration's willingness to announce new policy initiatives. Bush did not want to present his successor with a strategic fait accompli.

Upon taking office in January 2009, the new president ordered another strategic review to define the desired end state in Afghanistan and discern the necessary troops and equipment required to achieve it. During a 27 March 2009 address to the nation, Obama signaled his willingness to commit more resources to the campaign. This became clear when the president announced his approval of a long-standing request from ISAF commander General David D. McKiernan for 17,000 additional combat troops to balance increasing insurgent activity and capabilities and to help set conditions for the upcoming Afghan presidential election. That contingent, he explained, would be followed by 4,000 more U.S. personnel dedicated to training and supporting the Afghan army and police. Added to the 32,000 troops already in country, the increase brought American troop levels to 53,000.

The administration began exploring a more robust strategy for Afghanistan by instituting a second review, even as General Stanley A. McChrystal, who was chosen specifically to oversee the future campaign, replaced General McKiernan. McChrystal took charge less than eighty days after Obama's 27 March address. The incoming commander had experience

in both Iraq and Afghanistan, albeit mostly from the perspective of a Special Operations commander focused on counterterrorism. Under pressure to craft an innovative approach, McChrystal began his tenure with a review of the overall situation that was designed to guide the development of a new path forward. The assessment led to a draft campaign plan, which borrowed considerably from recent developments in Iraq. To fully resource his preferred counterinsurgency approach, McChrystal called for a significant increase in American troop strength in Afghanistan over and above the 21,000 recently dispatched soldiers.

General McChrystal's assessment reinforced the White House's belief that additional troops in Afghanistan could be employed best by conducting population-centric counterinsurgency. Reasoning that the Taliban's growing momentum came out of its efforts to coerce support from the Afghan people, McChrystal wanted to employ U.S. and coalition forces to build support for the Kabul government by protecting the people from the enemy's depredations. The move toward elevating population-centric counterinsurgency over all other doctrines soon gained strong support at the highest levels of the U.S.-dominated ISAF command structure. Pointing to its success in Iraq, proponents of that particular approach failed to realize that far different conditions existed in Afghanistan. The most fundamental and marked difference was the fact that in Afghanistan the enemy was not concentrated large population centers. In addition, the counterinsurgency methods advocated by McChrystal were based on U.S. doctrine, which not all coalition partners accepted or were prepared to employ. Several NATO nations rejected the terminology favored by Americans, because it called to mind the brutal counterguerrilla tactics their militaries used to counter colonial independence movements following World War II. These nations did not want to appear to be involved in similar operations again. Other European countries, such as the United Kingdom, were more willing to participate in counterinsurgency activities. Whatever the case, each troop-contributing nation chose to interpret counterinsurgency through its own historical lens rather than through that of American doctrine.

After numerous planning sessions over the summer and fall months, which strained relations between the White House and the Pentagon, President Obama delivered a speech in December 2009 outlining his administration's intended approach to the war in Afghanistan. He reminded listeners that the highest strategic priority would continue to be to dismantle, degrade, and destroy al-Qaeda, because that organization alone had the willpower and capability to carry the war to the American homeland. Obama then elaborated on three key objectives necessary to deny al-Qaeda safe haven in Afghanistan: the implementation of a military strategy over the next eighteen months that included a surge of 30,000 American troops—along with an additional 10,000 from NATO members—to break the Taliban's momentum and increase Kabul's security capabilities, greater use of civilian expertise to help Afghan officials learn how to use improved security capabilities effectively, and American recognition that Afghanistan's path forward would be linked inextricably to Pakistan.

President Obama announced the surge with a timetable; the United States would begin to redeploy these troops from Afghanistan by June 2011. He intended to send the message to both the Afghan government and the DoD that increased resources came with an expiration date that required them to be used to effect within a certain period. The president decided to combine intensive combat operations with an expanded train-and-equip mission for eighteen months, followed by a drawdown as Afghan forces took responsibility for their own security. Critics both inside and outside of the defense establishment were frustrated by the public disclosure of the timeline, claiming that it signaled that the enemy need only hold out during the troop increase. Meanwhile, Obama's military commanders assured him they could do the mission in the time stipulated.

Although the main thrust of contemporary criticism focused on the timetable, the decision to prioritize population-centric counterinsurgency while conducting high-tempo surge operations (designed to buy time for security force assistance efforts) deserved more analysis and consideration than it received at the time. Even with the urgent need to prepare Afghanistan for its own governance and defense as soon as possible, population-centric counterinsurgency called for sustained patience, thoroughness, and far more military personnel. However, the Obama administration made it clear that while it was willing to authorize a significant increase in boots on the ground, it would not accept an open-ended commitment in a war that had already lasted nearly a decade. The opening moves of the surge did not focus exclusively on large population centers; rather, ISAF emphasized clearing and securing terrain around population centers rather than eliminating the threat by attacking enemy enclaves.

When General David H. Petraeus assumed command after McChrystal's resignation in June 2010, the former CENTCOM commander emphasized the need to protect civilian communities by diminishing or eliminating the insurgents most likely to prey upon innocents. The approach favored by Petraeus proved more successful in the short term because it took into account the time available to conduct operations. Petraeus also understood that ISAF performed best when it dictated when and where combat occurred rather than reacting to enemy attempts to disrupt the build and hold phases of the operation.

The differing interpretations of counterinsurgency espoused by McChrystal and Petraeus created friction among subordinate commanders. Some commanders gravitated toward an approach that stressed persuading the population to switch allegiances to the central government by cordoning off urban centers from predatory insurgents. McChrystal's emphasis on reducing civilian casualties and empowering Karzai's government captured the interest and imagination of outside audiences much more readily than more aggressive methods. At the same time, his restrained operational approach frustrated many of the troops on the ground, who felt constrained in their ability to take the fight to the enemy. Petraeus, who had considerable familiarity with population-centric counterinsurgency, realized that cordoning off urban centers merely allowed the enemy to relocate to areas where coalition forces were not deployed to continue intimidating

the population.[5] Commanders who relied on theory and doctrine rather than first-hand surge experience were more liable to elevate protecting the populace over other considerations, while those intimately familiar with the surge in Iraq preferred the more kinetic approach that had been successful in that environment. Even with these highly publicized tensions over the best methods to achieve strategic goals, the more fundamental problem of this disconnect was that it interrupted continuity of effort during a limited-duration campaign.

The new strategy espoused by the Obama administration also ushered in a holistic approach to security assistance. It discarded the metrics that the DoD had devised in 2002: quality now took precedence over quantity. Rather than turning out tens of thousands of Afghan junior-level personnel in advance of turning over security responsibilities, the Americans and their NATO allies focused on crafting a solid foundation for the existing force structure. For the first time in eight years, American advisers undertook a comprehensive inventory of the equipment and weapons issued to Afghan security forces, allowing them to redistribute items as necessary and reestablish property accountability. Afghan recruits were taught to read and write in order to help them absorb the training methods used by ISAF. Afghan commanders increasingly planned and executed major operations with minimal outside assistance while their staffs coordinated logistics and other types of support. More assistance was focused on developing ministerial-level competency, especially in the defense and interior ministries. However, even with this reinvigorated advisory effort, senior ISAF leaders acknowledged it would take time for Afghan self-reliance to achieve the desired results.

Both McChrystal and Petraeus recognized that dismantling, degrading, and destroying al-Qaeda required both coalition and Pakistani conventional forces working with SOF in conjunction with drone strikes. Coalition conventional forces had responsibility for reversing the Taliban's momentum and buying time for Afghan security forces to become self-sufficient, with assistance from SOF and their indigenous counterparts, who were tasked with striking high-value enemy leadership targets whenever intelligence sources identified their location. The mission of reducing enemy enclaves within southern and eastern Afghanistan fell to conventional forces that had the necessary combat power and fire support. Enhancing the quality and staying power of Afghan security forces required a mix of conventional and Special Operations participation, with the former outnumbering the latter simply because far more conventional indigenous units existed than Afghan Special Operations units.

Major changes, although trending in different directions in some instances, took place within American- and ISAF-sponsored nation-building programs. The mandate and scope of Provincial Reconstruction Teams evolved in response to the focus on transferring responsibilities to Afghan

5. Similar frictions had emerged during the Iraq surge; for example, see William Langewiesche, "How One U.S. Soldier Blew the Whistle on a Cold-Blooded War Crime," *Vanity Fair*, July 2015, https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/06/iraq-war-crime-army-cunningham-hatley-trial, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

authorities. Many U.S. government civilians taking part in the Afghan surge were assigned to Afghan national ministries rather than filling long-standing shortfalls on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Though a number of incoming U.S. civilians received reconstruction-related responsibilities, in many instances they were made part of newly created District Support Teams. Provincial Reconstruction Teams were able to support the increased operational tempo during the surge, but their days were numbered as the senior Afghan cabinet ministers and interior ministry officials made it clear they viewed Western reconstruction teams as shadow entities that undermined Kabul's authority.

The ultimate outcome of the Afghan surge never depended on taking a softer or harder approach to counterinsurgency. Development and reconstruction projects demonstrated ISAF's good intentions, but they could not forge stronger ties between the populace and central government if the latter proved unwilling or incapable of matching international efforts. Any success attributable to the surge was because U.S. forces and their coalition partners removed more enemy from the battlefield than ever before. In the vacuum created by this removal, enough ANSF were fielded to enable the Afghans to take the lead in security missions. Nonetheless, the creation of additional army and police units was only one aspect of the overall counterinsurgency effort. It was not a guarantee of either a positive long-term outcome or a seamless handover of security and governance to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Retrograde and Transition

The strategy chosen by the Obama administration succeeded in building Afghan security capacity and rolling back the Taliban. Beginning in 2011 and lasting for the remainder of Enduring Freedom, U.S. commanders focused on building upon the surge's gains while tackling the massive challenge of withdrawing more than a decade's worth of equipment and materiel. The retrograde mission in Afghanistan was a far more formidable task for logisticians than it had been in Desert Storm or Iraqi Freedom. Both of those conflicts had robust ground routes of communication leading to seaports or airfields. The few available ground routes in Afghanistan, by contrast, were underdeveloped and far more susceptible to enemy interdiction or interference by neighboring states. When the surge recovery began in June 2011, the Army faced five major challenges: reducing the operational footprint, materiel stocks, and overall number of personnel to levels acceptable to the Afghans; handing over security responsibilities to the Kabul government in accordance with approved timetables; transferring selected installations, supply stockpiles, and weapons to Afghan security forces; providing effective security assistance to Afghan forces in order to better prepare them to assume leading roles in securing their nation; and ensuring the post–December 2014 residual force could accomplish its mission while conforming to footprint limitations and personnel ceilings.

During the retrograde and transition period, U.S. and ISAF forces continued to conduct combat operations, maintaining pressure on the

enemy as coalition troops departed in order to prevent the Taliban and other opposition groups from achieving tactical successes and information operations victories. The collateral effects of the Afghan surge gave Afghan soldiers and police enough time to transition into security leadership throughout the country and prove resilient enough to support those efforts. In an attempt to maintain relevance in Afghanistan, while recuperating from the effects of the surge, the Taliban persuaded its allies to launch attacks against ISAF installations in order to gain propaganda victories. With the sole exception of the assault on Camp Bastion in September 2012, the Taliban's attempts to penetrate major ISAF bases ended in complete failure.

The constantly changing operational dynamic of Enduring Freedom evolved yet again in the final stages of the campaign. As the number of conventional coalition forces focusing on security assistance and retrograde continued to decrease, SOF received a larger share of the tactical fight even as their own security assistance responsibilities grew. Conventional American maneuver units concentrated on training the Afghan army and police, and U.S. SOF invested time and effort in their Afghan counterparts while overseeing the creation of tribal-based militias for local defense. With growing requirements being levied on Special Operations units, integration between those organizations and conventional forces became more important. Innovative solutions to offset resource shortfalls became commonplace, with conventional battalions functioning as the controlling headquarters for Special Operations task forces on several occasions. The organizations involved in nation building experienced a drawdown similar to the conventional forces, as Provincial Reconstruction Teams were deactivated and their responsibilities were turned over to Afghan district and provincial governments.

The most visible threat to the retrograde came not from the Taliban and other opposition groups, but from the Pakistani government. Although Pakistan had consistently expressed its willingness to cooperate with the United States since the September 11th attacks, Islamabad's actions during the retrograde and transition phases of the campaign reflected a combination of the fragmented nature of the Pakistani government, public frustration fed by the shooting deaths of two Pakistanis by an alleged CIA operative, and lingering fallout from the Osama bin Laden raid. The Pakistanis closed the primary ISAF southern logistics route, threatened to shoot down drones transiting their airspace without authorization, and expelled U.S. personnel from Shamsi Air Base following the November 2011 border post incident in Salala. However, Pakistani officials miscalculated the effect of their retaliatory actions as ISAF weathered the disruption for almost eight months with little discernable impact. That realization, coupled with changes within the Pakistani political leadership, led to Islamabad lifting the closure after Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton issued a formal apology in July 2012.[6]

6. Eric Schmitt, "Clinton's 'Sorry' to Pakistan Ends Barrier to NATO," *New York Times*, 3 Jul 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/04/world/asia/pakistan-opens-afghan-routes-to-nato-after-us-apology.html, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp. Supplies were shipped through an alternate Central Asian route at the estimated cost of an additional $1 billion.

The shutdown did not achieve Islamabad's goals because many U.S. and ISAF units deploying to Afghanistan during this period were tailored to provide security assistance to the Afghan military and police, rather than to conduct combat operations. Many incoming units left their assigned equipment at home station when deploying, and when they arrived in Afghanistan they received whatever equipment they required from in-country stocks. Commanders in theater could continue to downsize stockpiles in Afghanistan because brigades assigned to security assistance did not need much of the equipment issued to conventionally organized maneuver units. In addition, significant amounts of materiel could be turned over to Afghan forces as the security assistance forces completed their deployments. This dynamic ensured that Army units had the right equipment for their primary mission of training their Afghan counterparts, and that this equipment could be transferred to indigenous security forces and reduce the logistics burden of shipping out or disposing of stockpiles.

Continuing instances of green-on-blue incidents, in which Afghan security forces killed or wounded coalition personnel, remained a significant impediment to U.S. and ISAF assistance efforts. This tactic was the Taliban's most effective weapon during the post-surge period. Although the actual numbers of casualties were low in comparison to the overall number of foreign troops in Afghanistan, the countermeasures adopted by ISAF did not eliminate the dangers that U.S. and coalition soldiers faced in providing security assistance to Afghan units. Consequently, U.S. advisers were under further restrictions during the retrograde and transition phases of the campaign; for instance, they were forbidden from accompanying conventional Afghan units on tactical operations. The restrictions increased after the death of an American general at the hands of an Afghan soldier, resulting in U.S. advisers being withdrawn from all Afghan units below corps level.

Despite the tremendous friction and distrust created by green-on-blue incidents, the training of the ANSF made remarkable progress, reaching its target strength of 352,000 by September 2012, two months ahead of schedule. Success was not measured in mere numbers, as Afghan forces repeatedly proved capable of taking the fight to the enemy after assuming responsibility for key areas following the withdrawal of ISAF troops. These developments allowed President Obama to execute the final portion of the strategy he approved in 2009 as Afghan security forces assumed the lead for combat operations in June 2013 and both the ISAF and U.S. missions officially ended in December 2014.

At the conclusion of Operation Enduring Freedom, the White House left 9,800 troops in Afghanistan to support the new NATO-led advisory mission, Operation Resolute Support, and to carry out Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the counterterrorism mission against the remnants of al-Qaeda.[7] At the time, President Obama planned to cut that number in half by 2016,

7. Dan Lamothe, "Meet Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the Pentagon's New Mission in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 29 Dec 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/12/29/meet-operation-freedoms-sentinel-the-pentagons-new-mission-in-afghanistan/, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

and draw down to an embassy presence by 2017. However, faced with strong opposition from ISAF and Afghan leaders, the administration agreed to keep more troops in place. In announcing this decision, President Obama reasoned that he could "not allow Afghanistan to be used as a safe haven for terrorists to attack our nation again."[8]

The Campaign in Retrospect

Operation Enduring Freedom began on uncertain footing because key decision makers misread the lessons of recent conflicts. To avoid placing American infantry directly in harm's way, proponents of transformation and politicians alike preferred to achieve battlefield success using indigenous fighters aided by Special Forces advisers calling in precision airstrikes. With airpower, special operators, and proxies forming the centerpiece of an unproven warfighting arsenal, the United States embarked on the opening campaign of the Global War on Terrorism. Although that unique combination was successful, it disbanded in the wake of its initial triumph, never to be reassembled as originally organized. American foot soldiers were then substituted for absent battlefield proxies until an equivalent indigenous force could be fielded.

Premature thoughts of victory, sparked in part by the unexpected manner in which the campaign unfolded, coupled with the rapid refocusing of the Global War on Terrorism's main effort to Iraq, placed the conflict in Afghanistan on a shaky foundation. American military and political leaders, convinced that they had adequate situational awareness based upon information derived from technological superiority, did not realize that this technology had lulled them into a false sense of confidence. For example, it was relatively simple to use space and aerial platforms to identify terrorist camps and Taliban military bases. Drones also allowed U.S. forces to track Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders in real time. Decision-makers therefore equated the scarcity of information available after the toppling of the Taliban to the absence of a viable threat.

Yet even after arriving at that determination, the United States did not seek to learn as much as possible about the liberated Afghans or the future intentions of the Taliban and neighboring Pakistan in order to invest resources judiciously and achieve the campaign's desired end state of a stable, democratic Afghanistan. The Bush administration felt that the rapid victory in Afghanistan permitted national attention and resources to be redirected against Iraq or other efforts, and for several years they were content to absorb information filtered second-hand through proxies, allies, international organizations, Afghan officials, and warlords. The resulting lack of insight reinforced erroneous decisions made early in the campaign while obscuring the dire need for significant changes. The Army—particularly the intelligence community—appeared surprisingly reluctant to enhance its own

8. President Barack H. Obama, "Afghanistan" (Speech, Washington, D.C., 15 Oct 2015), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/15/statement-president-afghanistan, Hist Files, OEF Study Grp.

knowledge of the inner workings of Afghan society and politics, leaving it to the DoD to institute the AfPak Hands program in September 2009 to build its institutional understanding of the region.

This reluctance to learn more about post–Taliban Afghanistan was compounded by the lack of expertise in wartime security assistance. The metrics-based approach adopted for developing indigenous security forces guaranteed neither rapid progress nor an acceptable measure of combat effectiveness, which in turn required U.S. troops to absorb more security-related responsibilities. As a result, the Afghan military was not prepared to deal with a resurgent Taliban in 2006, and the Afghan police forces were even further behind. Additional coalition troops had to be deployed to create the environment necessary to build up indigenous security forces. Nonetheless, when a new strategic approach dictated the need to generate large numbers of indigenous security forces in a short timeframe, the DoD demonstrated it willingness to accomplish that mission while using the Army as its primary agent.

Although the course of Operation Enduring Freedom supports Army Maj. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster's observation that the United States cannot rely on proxies and partners to achieve objectives of vital national interest, the 2001 decision to do so came from an incongruous mix of caution fostered by the Soviet experience and eagerness to test untried warfighting methods advocated by the DoD.[9] In the same vein, inaccurate perceptions or lack of knowledge also led to the U.S. government relying too much on one component or service. Events in Afghanistan have shown that the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and even NATO ISAF cannot accomplish the entire mission unaided. The myriad responsibilities of a protracted campaign offer a strong argument for integrating the capabilities of U.S., allied, and indigenous organizations while simultaneously encouraging further coordination between Special Operations and conventional communities. Other government agencies and international organizations also had to participate in building the Afghan governing capacity, and so all components involved had to understand what capabilities each could bring to the table.

Since the fall of 2001, all interested parties in the region had been planning for the day when America would leave. Yet the United States itself upset these calculations by remaining in Afghanistan far longer than anyone had anticipated. As time passed, the Bush and Obama administrations made critical decisions that altered the trajectory of those initial calculations on three occasions: first by invading Iraq, second by encouraging NATO to take over the UN-mandated ISAF mission, and third by announcing the surge in conjunction with a withdrawal date. These decisions encouraged Pakistan to hedge its strategic position by continuing to support the Taliban even as it backed efforts to eliminate al-Qaeda and convinced the enemy that he could wait out the United States. Put another way, these three key moments prevented the United States from persuading the enemy that he was

9. Lt Gen H. R. McMaster, "Continuity and Change: The Army Operating Concept and Clear Thinking About Future War," *Military Review* 95, no. 2 (Mar-Apr 2015): 13–14.

defeated. Then again, both the enemy and regional powers miscalculated American intentions.

A final point of discussion on the Army's involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom concerns the conceptual framework of the campaign. Policymakers routinely displayed a lack of knowledge of Afghanistan, its people, and regional power dynamics. In some cases, political considerations restricted military operations. This was the case with Pakistan throughout the campaign, as Washington officials never reached an accord with their counterparts in Islamabad. A learning curve emerged over time, leading the Obama administration to make the pragmatic choice of transferring responsibility to the Afghans while limiting American participation to counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda and aiding indigenous allies. Knowledge naturally comes with time, but the United States—including its military leaders—cannot afford, now or in the future, to permit years to elapse before grasping the basic dynamics of a conflict, as was the case in Afghanistan.

Upon Reflection

A closing assessment remains to be made of the U.S. Army's experience in Operation Enduring Freedom. The fight in Afghanistan began in fall 2001 and continues, as of the time of this writing, under the banner of Resolute Support. The conflict tested the U.S. Army in ways unimaginable to most soldiers who rolled across the burning Kuwaiti desert in a steel-tipped wave or stood for decades in the Fulda Gap awaiting a Soviet juggernaut that never materialized. Although technology has given the Army a crucial edge in many ways, American soldiers have prevailed time and again in the most elemental form of combat where individuals and not machines count. The Korangal or Arghandab Valleys would seem familiar to veterans who fought at Dak To in Vietnam or atop the shell-torn heights of Pork Chop Hill in Korea. While the soldiers in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan wore different uniforms and carried different weapons, the same shoulder insignia is seen in photographs of each conflict, providing a timeless and compelling reminder that experiences transcend battlefields. To that end, the authors of this study offer eight key lessons from Operation Enduring Freedom.

The first is a reminder that political and military leaders must ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to meet strategic objectives. Put another way, there must be alignment between ends, ways, and means. Overcommitting resources, whether it be personnel, treasure, or time, puts unnecessary pressure on military forces and their families. At the same time, insufficiently resourcing a conflict, as was so often the case in Afghanistan, opens up the nation to the possibility of strategic failure. It erodes morale and sacrifices tactical and operational successes and achievements due to an inability to build upon progress at the strategic level.

This leads directly into the second lesson that innovation and agility are vital components of the armed forces. In an environment where military leaders do not necessarily control resources or mission objectives, they must be able to utilize to the best of their ability the resources they have to complete their assigned mission. The Army cannot be overly tied to current doctrine,

force structure, or military operational specialties. Whether it be SOF units riding into combat on horseback, support and service support personnel operating as maneuver forces, or combat troops managing nation-building projects, the Army must remain flexible enough to adapt to the demands of modern war. The war in Afghanistan provides abundant examples of the value of innovation, as U.S. soldiers trained to fight outnumbered and win against a massed enemy—equipped with armor and supported by artillery and airpower—adapted to the combat environment of the rugged Afghan mountains, where often soldiers had nothing more than what they could carry on their backs.

That being said, the third lesson is that initiatives to transform force structure and design should only be undertaken during wartime when necessitated by mission requirements. Though the transformation efforts championed at the DoD could have positive effects in the post–Global War on Terrorism era, many of these same efforts impeded current operations in Afghanistan. A prime example is the opening salvo of the war utilizing smart bombs with limited soldiers on the ground. While the "Shock and Awe" method was successful in scattering al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, the approach had no chance to secure and stabilize Afghanistan afterward. Modularity had the opposite effect during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, constituting the most significant force design initiative since the Pentomic Division efforts of the late 1950s.[10] Although the modularity initiative caused disruption within the Army, without it the Army could not have fulfilled the combat unit requirements necessary in both countries while also servicing missions around the globe.

Fourth, although some organizations have impressive capabilities, it is unrealistic to expect them to dominate a combat environment in all cases and under all circumstances. Even though the opening phase of Enduring Freedom featured a dazzling display of American airpower, achievements on a comparable scale have not been repeated since. Airpower had a central role in the conflict's opening months, but over the remaining thirteen years it served as a combat multiplier for American foot soldiers striving to engage with and destroy the enemy. That evolution reflects the enemy's ability to learn and adapt. Whether they employ sophisticated technology or drape burlap bags over themselves to eliminate thermal signatures, thinking enemies invariably find ways to render the deadliest of weapons far less effective.

The same point applies to the employment of each of the branches of the U.S. Army. SOF, for example, have demonstrated that the individuals in their ranks are among the best-trained, best-equipped, and best-led soldiers in the world. In some ways, Afghanistan has provided an optimal battlefield

10. The Pentomic Division design was a result of the institutional Army trying to deal with a possible atomic battlefield after World War II and Korea. The concepts prescribed radical design changes in numerous combat formations, most of which did not prove valid through testing and evaluation. See, for instance, Brian M. Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield* (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 83–98; John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades*, Army Lineage Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), pp. 270–79.

for these warriors to demonstrate unique skills. Yet the high tempo and tension associated with back-to-back deployments result in unsustainable burdens being placed on these soldiers. In addition, although Special Operations units have unparalleled flexibility, they are not self-sustaining entities over extended periods or under specific circumstances. The necessity for close cooperation between communities was made clear repeatedly during Enduring Freedom when infantrymen, fire supporters, logisticians, and planners from conventional units provided the edge needed by Special Operations personnel to accomplish an assigned mission in the most efficient manner possible.

The fifth lesson from Operation Enduring Freedom is the critical importance of maintaining unity of command and unity of effort, especially in a coalition fight. Over the first four years of the conflict, the United States sought the appropriate operational approach in Afghanistan, shifting from counterterrorism to a limited counterinsurgency effort. When NATO began expanding the ISAF mission in 2005, it anticipated engaging in peacekeeping rather than sustained combat operations. The Army responded by effectively splitting its missions between counterinsurgency under ISAF and counterterrorism under Enduring Freedom. This division included separate American command chains, with the former falling under NATO and the latter continuing under CENTCOM. Although General McNeill tied the American efforts together through his position as ISAF commander, some disconnects persisted within the Army's operations and between American forces and their NATO allies. It was not until the establishment of USFOR-A under General McKiernan that the coalition effort achieved unity of command. Unity of effort, however, continued to be an issue as national caveats and political concerns resulted in inconsistent capabilities among NATO forces. Even within American operations, the creation of RC Southwest to facilitate the deployment of additional U.S. Marine Corps units unnecessarily disrupted and fragmented American operations. This resulted in an inconsistent effort by NATO forces, enabling the insurgents to take advantage of inefficiencies within the coalition. It is not known whether utilizing a unified command chain and a unified effort from the beginning would have made an appreciable impact on the conflict, but the lack of both aspects created unnecessary and self-inflicted difficulties for the coalition.

Sixth, Afghanistan offers clear evidence of the outsized impact that information operations can have on a conflict. The modern 24-hour news cycle, the prevalence of social media, and competition to dominate the conflict's strategic narrative placed increased importance on events that were often of limited tactical or operational significance. The American "kill team" controversy, the insurgent attack at Wanat in 2008, and the burning of Qurans at Bagram in 2012 are all examples of small-scale events having significant operational and strategic impacts. They also illustrate the reality that in a persuasion campaign, one negative act can outweigh a hundred positive ones. The high-visibility attacks on Forward Operating Base Salerno and Camp Bastion, intended primarily to generate news coverage, demonstrates that our foes are equally aware of the influence of mass media and even willing

to expend personnel during operations of transitory value in order to gain advantage in that medium.

It should be recognized that the insurgents routinely displayed superiority in communicating with the Afghan people over the course of Enduring Freedom. For all the Army's efforts to build support for the central government and the coalition among the Afghan people, it could never match the insurgents' ability to reach them. One problem was that turnover among coalition forces due to force rotations limited their ability to build lasting relationships with locals. The coalition also struggled by failing to make connections with local religious leaders. As in many majority-Muslim countries, mosques were a central element of Afghan communities. The coalition's inability to establish a presence within the mosques, either directly or through relationships with the mullahs, cut the coalition off from a fundamental element of public discourse.

Most importantly, the coalition had no counterpoint to the simple fact that the threat of violence is more persuasive than the promise of communal betterment, especially when the former arises from within the permanent community whereas foreigners with transient local ties are linked with the latter. Despite its best intentions, the coalition would not remain in Afghanistan indefinitely, whereas the insurgents would. The Army, therefore, must improve its ability to work with indigenous actors to build genuine support among the population, with the understanding that those individuals would remain after the Americans depart.

The penultimate lesson of Operation Enduring Freedom is that without security, there can be no stability. The overthrow of the Taliban government—while key to the American strategic objective of removing safe havens for international terrorists—left a security vacuum throughout Afghanistan. Warlords and militias proved unreliable substitutes for security forces controlled by an elected centralized authority. Neither the Afghan National Army nor the Afghan National Police existed, and it would take time and resources to establish them. Debates over the appropriateness and viability of nation building as a national strategy cannot afford to overlook that the agent for change responsible for removing a national government from power assumes responsibility for providing services to the affected population until a new government can be formed. The absence of a viable plan, or the resources to carry it out, will destabilize the affected society. While the Army cannot create security forces without active indigenous support and supplemental funding over a sustained period, it must take steps to maintain the knowledge base necessary to accomplish that mission in the future.

Finally, the U.S. Army's experience in Afghanistan reinforces the maxim that war is a marathon and not a sprint. History is replete with examples of politicians choosing to resolve national problems through conflict because they honestly believed that war would be a brief and ultimately successful endeavor—but the truth often has turned out differently. It is likely that few within the Army's senior leadership shortly after 11 September 2001 would have predicted that Operation Enduring Freedom would not end until 31 December 2014, and that it would continue even after that in some form under Resolute Support. Few could have forecasted that the soldiers fighting



Spc. Breanne Pye, USA

A soldier watches over the Arghandab River Valley to provide security for his squad as they climb up the cliff from the valley.

in Afghanistan would be taking part in a second major effort in Iraq from 2003 through 2010 or, a few years later, in the battle against the so-called Islamic State. The enemy in each instance was not only tenacious but also tactically and operationally adaptive. Each war evolved to the point at which tactics, techniques, and procedures used by American troops near the end of the conflicts bore scant resemblance to those employed in opening battles. Policymakers and senior uniformed leaders alike would do well to remember what recent history has shown: what appears to be a decisive victory could merely be the start of a new and unpredictable kind of conflict. Leaders must clearly articulate the end state, provide the means to achieve that end state, and approve the ways in which it will be achieved—or risk repeating a protracted campaign.


U.S.
ASAP

Bibliographical Note



Documents and Publications

The sources for this account by the Chief of Staff of the Army's Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group were campaign plans, daily update briefings, and monthly and weekly reports compiled or composed before, during, and immediately after many of the events described in this account. They were collected in Afghanistan, from CENTCOM files at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, and from archival sources available at the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort McNair, D.C. Those caches of electronic documents—virtually all of which remain classified—were created by the headquarters overseeing the operations discussed in this narrative. These include CJTFs Mountain, 76, 82, 101, and 180; RC East, RC South, and RC Southwest; TF Phoenix; Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan and Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan; CFC-A; CSTC–A; and USFOR–A. Operational records from upper-echelon headquarters outside of Afghanistan, such as CENTCOM at MacDill Air Force Base; CFLCC at Camp Doha, Kuwait; and Southern European Task Force at Vicenza, Italy, also were useful sources of information.

Much of the documentation required to write about events happening after 2006 was generated by NATO ISAF and its subordinate commands. However, these records are classified by both U.S. and NATO sources. As a result, few of the NATO records were used because of the lengthy procedures required to declassify NATO material. Even more restrictive measures are in place in regards to the release of information on Special Operations activities after the March 2002 timeframe. However, there are a few online avenues for researchers to access formerly classified materials, including George Washington University's National Security Archive and the CENTCOM Freedom of Information Act Web page. The U.S. material provides strategic-level planning, diplomatic, and policy-making documents generated by the Departments of Defense and State, while material found on the latter site is devoted to declassified reports and investigations covering critical events involving U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Useful unclassified accounts of Operation Enduring Freedom and the events leading up to that conflict include retired Brig. Gen. John S. Brown's *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989–2005* as well as two books by the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute: *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom, October 2001–September 2005* and *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan*. The material in *Weapon of Choice* is amplified by the United States Special Operations Command's unclassified *United States Special Operations Command History*

1987–2007. In addition to these unclassified published accounts, primary source materials used to examine the conflict's impact on the Army as an institution were collected from various staff sections of the Headquarters, Department of the Army; the National Guard Bureau; Office of the Chief of Army Reserve; U.S. Army TRADOC at Fort Monroe, Virginia; U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A number of memoirs dealing with events leading up to the events of 11 September 2001 and the American reaction to the terrorist attacks were consulted. While these accounts often provided a detailed, first-hand perspective of decisions made by senior policymakers and commanders, in some cases they presented differing interpretations of events that required deconfliction by the Study Group. Useful accounts of events leading up to the attacks and the U.S. response include CIA director George J. Tenet's *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General H. Hugh Shelton's *Without Hesitation: The Odyssey of an American Warrior*, CENTCOM commander General Tommy R. Franks' *American Soldier*, DoD policymaker Douglas J. Feith's *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism*, and former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld's *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*. For the post-2002 timeframe, the Study Group utilized Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers' *Eyes on the Horizon: Serving on the Front Lines of National Security*, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates' *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, as well as autobiographies of ISAF commanders, including General Sir David J. Richards' *Taking Command* and General Stanley A. McChrystal's *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*.

In addition to the recollections of senior officials and military officers, American and British soldiers have written a number of eyewitness accounts that convey a human perspective often invisible to operational and strategic-level participants. These include Robert S. Anders' *Winning Paktika: Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, Doug Beattie's *Task Force Helmand: A Soldier's Story of Life, Death and Combat on the Afghan Front Line*, Jimmy Blackmon's *Pale Horse: Hunting Terrorists and Commanding Heroes with the 101st Airborne Division*, Ronald Fry's *Hammerhead Six: How Green Berets Waged an Unconventional War Against the Taliban to Win in Afghanistan's Deadly Pech Valley*, Carter Malkasian's incomparable *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier*, Dakota Meyer's *Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War*, Sean Parnell's *Outlaw Platoon: Heroes, Renegades, Infidels, and the Brotherhood of War in Afghanistan*, Clinton Romesha's *Red Platoon: A True Story of American Valor*, and Stuart Tootal's *Danger Close: Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*.

Oral History Interviews and Manuscript Sources

The OEF Study Group's efforts to interview various notables for the project proved very productive due to the tremendous cooperation it received from virtually everyone contacted. While the roster of prominent civilian

officials and military officers—both American and allied—who agreed to be interviewed is too lengthy to list in its entirety, the Study Group gratefully acknowledges President George W. Bush, Vice President Richard B. "Dick" Cheney, Secretaries of Defense Robert M. Gates, Leon E. Panetta, and Charles T. "Chuck" Hagel; CENTCOM commanders Tommy R. Franks, John P. Abizaid, David H. Petraeus, and Lloyd J. Austin III; Ambassadors Ronald E. Neumann, Zalmay Khalilzad, Karl W. Eikenberry, William B. Wood, and Robert P. J. Finn; ISAF commanders Dan K. McNeill, David D. McKiernan, and Stanley A. McChrystal; RC East commanders James J. Schlosser and Curtis M. Scaparrotti; RC South commanders British General Sir Nicholas P. Carter and Dutch Lt. Gen. Mart De Kruif; senior Marine commanders Lt. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson and Lt. Gen. Richard P. Mills; and *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward, who provided key insights into the Obama White House. Many other individuals not listed here kindly consented to being interviewed and for that courtesy the Study Group is profoundly grateful.

The authors also made use of unpublished first-person accounts written to satisfy academic requirements in U.S. Army professional development courses. Most prominent were Personal Experience Papers by students attending the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Georgia's Maneuver Center of Excellence. Several hundred of these accounts have been declassified and posted on Army Knowledge Online and the Fort Benning Donovan Research Library Web site. Similar narratives utilized by the Study Group included those authored by senior noncommissioned officers attending the U.S. Army Sergeant Majors Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, available online via the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College's Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library digital collection. That same collection contains Afghanistan-related interviews conducted by Combat Studies Institute historians for the Operational Leadership Experience series.

Recognizing the need to capture information on key events soon after they occurred, the U.S. Army deployed a number of Military History Detachments to Afghanistan during the opening phase of Operation Enduring Freedom. Maj. Richard M. Brown's 130th Military History Detachment and Maj. John Warsinke's 47th Military History Detachment conducted valuable interviews between March and July 2002. Following the 2001–2002 timeframe, however, most Military History Detachments were deployed to Iraq, and few U.S. Army historians served in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2010. After discovering large gaps in the available Military History Detachment collections, the OEF Study Group conducted a targeted collection effort by compiling multiple terabytes of electronic records from Maj. Gen. John M. Murray's 3d Infantry Division headquarters at Bagram and General John F. Campbell's ISAF headquarters in Kabul.

Secondary Sources

Commercially produced accounts augmented or filled gaps in our primary sources. Although the Study Group drew on information from many publications, several are worth singling out. For a useful general overview,

both Peter Tomsen's *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* and Thomas J. Barfield's *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* proved informative. Valuable accounts that shed additional light on extremist influences in the Middle East and Central Asia included not only Barfield and Tomsen, but also Peter Bergen's *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al-Qaeda's Leader*, Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall's *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, and Seth G. Jones' *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qa'ida since 9/11.*

A selection of useful books on U.S. and ISAF conventional units includes Patrick Bishop's *3 Para*, Stephen Grey's *Into the Viper's Nest: Task Force 1 Fury and the Battle of Musa Qala*, Toby Harnden's *Dead Men Risen: The Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, Col. Bernd Horn's *No Lack of Courage: Operation Medusa, Afghanistan*, Jake Tapper's *The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor*, Gregg Zoroya's *The Chosen Few: A Company of Paratroopers and Its Heroic Struggle to Survive in the Mountains of Afghanistan*, Col. Nathan S. Lowrey's *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan 2001–2002: From the Sea*, and compiler David W. Kummer's *U.S. Marine Corps in Afghanistan, 2001–2009: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* and its companion volume by Paul W. Westermeyer with Christopher Blaker entitled *U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, 2010–2014: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography.*

There are a similar, if not greater, number of detailed and well-written accounts dealing with special operations in Afghanistan, notable among which are Eric Blehm's *The Only Thing Worth Dying For: How Eleven Green Berets Fought for a New Afghanistan*, Rusty Bradley and Kevin Maurer's *Lions of Kandahar: The Story of a Fight Against All Odds*, Daniel R. Green's *In the Warlords' Shadow: Special Operations Forces, the Afghans, and Their Fight Against the Taliban*, Linda Robinson's exceptional *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare*, and Mitch Weiss and Kevin Maurer's *No Way Out: A Story of Valor in the Mountains of Afghanistan.*

The OEF Study Group also relied on published accounts of nation building and coalition warfare, both of which are central to the Afghanistan conflict. A few of the books consulted for reference on these topics include James F. Dobbins' *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan*; Ahmed Rashid's *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*; and *Coalition Challenge in Afghanistan: The Politics of Alliance,* edited by Gale A. Mattox and Stephen M. Grenier.

Think tank papers and government reports frequently contain facts unavailable elsewhere. First and foremost among sources covering the period from October 2008 onward were Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction reports submitted quarterly to Congress. Among private institutions, the Santa Monica, California–based RAND Corporation has produced a number of useful studies of Afghanistan, including Terrence K. Kelley, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker's *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts*, Seth G. Jones and Arturo Muñoz's *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defense Forces*, and C. Christine Fair's *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and*

India. Many articles and publications by RAND's competitors—the majority of which are located in Washington, D.C.—not only enlightened OEF Study Group members but also provided valuable insights to senior commanders in Afghanistan. Sources for these pieces include the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Institute for the Study of War, the Brookings Institution, the Center for a New American Security, and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. The last named institution also hosts Bill Roggio's informative *Long War Journal* Web site.

Newspaper often can provide historians with perspectives and facts found nowhere else. Useful media sources on events in Afghanistan for the OEF Study Group included the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*; the British newspapers the *Guardian* and the *Independent*; the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, and Agence France-Presse. When consulting these sources, the OEF Study Group members normally compared multiple accounts from various publications before settling on an accepted version of events in order to compensate for inadvertent errors introduced by journalists writing under tight deadlines. This precaution, however, did not have to be used as frequently when consulting pieces by reporters on extended assignment in the region.

Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group Biographies



Col. (Ret.) Edmund J. "EJ" Degen, a career field artillery officer, currently serves as the director of the Chief of Staff, Army's Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group. He has commanded artillery units at all levels through brigade, and served as the V Corps (U.S.) chief of plans for the Iraq invasion at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, chief of future operations for U.S. Forces Korea, and chief of staff for Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 in Afghanistan. Colonel Degen was a fellow on the CSA's inaugural Strategic Studies Group and served as the Senior Fellow the following year. He has multiple combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Colonel Degen has an MMAS (Master of Military Art and Science) from the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies and an MS in Strategic and Operational Planning from the Joint Advanced Warfighting School. He is the coauthor of *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005), along with numerous journal articles.

Col. Adrian A. Donahoe, a Special Forces officer, enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in 1987. He was commissioned and entered active-duty service in 1993 after graduating from the University of South Dakota. He completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1999 and has served in various command and staff positions within Special Operations and the conventional Army. He is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and multiple Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines deployments. Colonel Donahoe holds an MS from the Naval Postgraduate School and an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies. He is the former director of Special Operations Leadership Development and Education at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the director of the Commander's Action Group for NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force–Afghanistan.

Col. Bryan R. Gibby is the chief of the Military History Division in the Department of History, United States Military Academy, West Point. A 1993 West Point graduate, he was awarded master's and doctoral degrees in history from Ohio State University. Colonel Gibby is a career military intelligence officer and has served in command and staff assignments from tactical to strategic levels. His most recent operational experience was as Commander, 707th Military Intelligence Battalion, providing SIGINT (signals intelligence) support to the CENTCOM areas of responsibility. He twice deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a brigade (2007–2008) and

division (2005–2006) intelligence officer. Following service in Iraq, Colonel Gibby joined Allied Force Command, Madrid, where he served as the chief of intelligence assessments for CJTF Unified Protector in 2011. He is the author of *The Will to Win: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1946–1953*.

Dr. Brian F. Neumann is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He earned his BA in history from the University of Southern California in 1998 and his MA and PhD in history from Texas A&M University in 2001 and 2006, respectively. His academic field is twentieth-century U.S. military history with a focus on World War I. After teaching for four years, he joined CMH in 2010 and began working in the Contemporary Studies Branch, Histories Division, with a focus on Operation Enduring Freedom. He cowrote and edited the center's campaign brochure on Operation Enduring Freedom 2002–2005. After working with the CSA's OEF Study Group for two years, Dr. Neumann became the editor of the "U.S. Army Campaigns of World War One" commemorative pamphlet series in November 2016. He also serves as a member of the CMH World War I Commemoration Committee and as the Center's World War I subject matter expert.

Col. Francis J. H. Park is a historian in the Joint History and Research Office of the Joint Staff. Prior to his current assignment, he was the chief of the Strategy Development Division in the Joint Staff J–5. After commissioning in 1994, he served in command and staff duties primarily in armored cavalry and light airborne cavalry assignments. Designated an Army strategist in 2004, he has served at division, corps, army service component command, and joint task force levels, as well as in the Army Staff and Joint Staff. His service in Operation Enduring Freedom spans 2008–2009 as principal campaign planner for CJTF 101 and RC East, and 2013–2014 as deputy director, Commander's Action Group, ISAF. His other combat experience includes Operations Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve. Colonel Park holds a BA in history from the Johns Hopkins University; an MA in international relations from St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas; an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies; and a PhD in history from the University of Kansas.

Mr. Mark J. Reardon is a senior civilian historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Before joining the Center in 2006, he served as a regular officer in parachute, reconnaissance, and armor units during a twenty-seven-year career in the Army, and retired as a lieutenant colonel. Mr. Reardon, who recently completed a manuscript for the Center on training the post–Saddam Iraqi Army, has also published four books on World War II and Korea, a history of the initial Stryker Brigade deployment to Iraq, several detailed studies of small-unit actions in Iraq, and three studies on U.S. military innovation in World War II.

Dr. Gregory G. Roberts is a desk officer in the State Department's Office of Afghanistan Affairs. As a Presidential Management Fellow (2014–2016), he served as a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the

Combat Studies Institute, and as a special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Chairman's Action Group. Prior to entering federal service, Dr. Roberts worked as a research associate in national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. In 2013, he earned a PhD in history from Yale University, where his research focused on policing in medieval Italy. He earned an MA and an MPhil in history from Yale in 2010, and a BA in history and a BA in French from Vanderbilt University in 2007. Dr. Roberts has published on OEF in the *SAIS Review of International Affairs* and has a chapter in the forthcoming volume *Makers of Modern Landpower: Post-9/11 Perspectives* (University Press of Kentucky).

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Matthew B. Smith is a graduate of Norwich University where he was commissioned field artillery officer in 1999. His initial assignment was with the 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, in Idar-Oberstein, Germany. As a battery commander, he deployed with his unit to Iraq and assumed the mission for all surface-to-surface guided MLRS (multiple launch rocket system) fires throughout Multinational Corps–Iraq. Colonel Smith was then assigned as a Fires Observer Trainer with the Mission Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Upon graduating the Command and General Staff College, he reported to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, in Fort Drum, New York. He deployed to Paktika Province, Afghanistan, in January 2013 and conducted security force assistance with the ANA. Currently, he is assigned as a strategist on the Army Staff. Colonel Smith holds an MS in management and business from Webster University.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) John R. Stark retired in 2017 as an armor lieutenant colonel after twenty-five years of service. He graduated as a distinguished cadet from West Point in 1991 and earned an MA (2000) and a PhD (2003) in European history from Ohio State University. He has taught history at West Point and Princeton. While in the Army, he served in Iraq in 2006–2007 as operations officer for the 1st Battalion, 37th Armor "Bandits," in Sinjar and Ramadi and in Afghanistan in 2011–2012 for NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission in Kandahar and Kabul. He was an Observer-Controller-Trainer at the Joint Military Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, where the Grizzly team trained forces for Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo in 2007–2008. He served at NATO headquarters in 2013–2014 as a liaison officer for Allied Command Transformation, Capabilities Engineering and Innovation. He continues his service to the nation as a diplomat at the Department of State.

Maj. Miranda M. Summers-Lowe is a curator in the Armed Forces History Division, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, and an officer in the District of Columbia National Guard. She enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2002 and served as a supply sergeant in Iraq in 2005 before commissioning through Officer Candidate School in 2009. Other assignments include state public affairs officer, command historian, and intelligence officer in the District of Columbia National Guard. She most recently served as the deputy director of public affairs for CJTF-Horn of

Africa in Djibouti and as a public affairs adviser in the Office of the Director, Army National Guard. She was selected as an Army Congressional Fellow and a nonresident fellow of the Modern War Institute at West Point in 2019. Her work has been published in *Military Review*, War on the Rocks, and the *New York Times*. She has a BA in history from the College of William and Mary and an MA in public humanities from Brown University.

Col. Victor H. Sundquist, an intelligence officer, enlisted with the 7th Infantry Division in 1988. He was commissioned in the Intelligence Branch from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1995 and transitioned to the Army Strategist Functional Branch in 2014. He holds a MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies and an MS in counterterrorism theory from Henley-Putnam University. He is a 2016 graduate of the Army's Senior Service War College, where he served as a Fellow at Georgetown University in the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy under the School of Foreign Service. During his twenty-eight years in the Army, he has served in various intelligence and strategist positions at all levels of command, including assignments in CENTCOM's J–2 staff; the J–2X at ISAF headquarters; 1st Cavalry Division's G–2; the State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Al Basrah, Iraq; and most recently as deputy director for the Headquarters, Department of the Army's War Plans Division. He has multiple operational and combat tours, including Operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn.

Dr. Colin J. Williams is a historian with the Defense Logistics Agency. A retired Army officer, he has combat experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, and taught military history at the United States Military Academy, and served as a historian with the Contemporary Histories Division of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He studied the political effects of social mobilization in revolutionary New York at the University of Alabama, from which he received a PhD in history in 2013. Dr. Williams has contributed to *Key to the Northern Country: The Hudson River Valley in the American Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013) and to *New York History* (vol. 99, no. 1).

Appendix

U.S. Military Terminology and Definitions



The following terms and definitions, drawn from official Army publications and used in the text of this book, are provided here for the reader's ease of reference.

Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 3–24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency,* 21 April 2009 (selected text)

A *clear-hold-build* operation is a full spectrum operation that combines offense (finding and eliminating the insurgent), defense (protecting the local populace) and stability (rebuilding the infrastructure, increasing the legitimacy of the local government, and bringing the rule of law to the area) operations. Each phase—clear, hold, and build—combines offensive, defensive, and stability operations in varying degrees. In the *clear* phase, offensive operations usually dominate; in the *hold* phase, defensive operations are emphasized; and in the *build* phase, stability operations are preeminent. It is usually a relatively long-term operation and requires the commitment of a large number of forces. Clear-hold-build operations are often preceded by shaping operations to set the proper conditions.

Shape – A shaping operation is an operation at any echelon that creates and preserves conditions for the success of the decisive operation.

Clear – Clear is a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area (FM 3–90). The force does this by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of insurgent combatants and leaders. This task is most effectively initiated by a clear-in-zone or cordon-and-search operation, as well as patrolling, ambushes, and targeted raids.

Hold – After clearing the area of guerrillas, the counterinsurgent force must then assign sufficient troops to the cleared area to prevent their return, to defeat any remnants, and to secure the population. This is the hold task. Ideally, Host Nation security forces execute this part of the clear-hold-build operation. Success or failure depends on effectively and continuously securing the populace and on reestablishing a Host Nation local government. Although offensive and stability operations continue, this phase uses defensive operations to secure the population.

Build – The build phase of clear-hold-build operations consists of carrying out programs designed to remove the root causes that led to the insurgency, improve the lives of the inhabitants, and strengthen the Host Nation's ability to provide effective governance. Stability operations predominate in this phase, with many important activities being conducted by nonmilitary agencies. During this phase, the Host Nation security forces should have primary responsibility for security. Progress in building support for the Host Nation government requires protecting the local populace. People who do not believe they are secure from insurgent intimidation, coercion, and reprisals will not risk overtly supporting counterinsurgent efforts.

Army Doctrine Publication 1–02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, 14 August 2018 (selected text)

aeromedical evacuation – (DOD) The movement of patients under medical supervision to and between medical treatment facilities by air transportation. Also called AE. (JP 4–02)

air assault – (DOD) The movement of friendly assault forces by rotary-wing aircraft to engage and destroy enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. (JP 3–18)

airborne assault – (DOD) The use of airborne forces to parachute into an objective area to attack and eliminate armed resistance and secure designated objectives. (JP 3–18)

airdrop – (DOD) The unloading of personnel or materiel from aircraft in flight. (JP 3–17) See ATP 4–48.

air-ground operations – The simultaneous or synchronized employment of ground forces with aviation maneuver and fires to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. Also called AGO. (FM 3–04)

air movements – (Army) Operations involving the use of utility and cargo rotary-wing assets for other than air assaults. (FM 3–90–2)

all-source intelligence – (DOD) 1. Intelligence products and/or organizations and activities that incorporate all sources of information, most frequently including human intelligence, imagery intelligence, measurement and signature intelligence, signals intelligence, and open-source data in the production of finished intelligence. (FM 3–24)

ambush – An attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy. (FM 3–90–1)

antiterrorism – (DOD) Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include rapid containment by local military and civilian forces. Also called AT. (JP 3–07.2)

area of influence – (DOD) A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander's command or control. (JP 3–0)

area of interest – (DOD) That area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory. This area also includes areas occupied by enemy forces who could jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission. Also called AOI. (JP 3–0)

area of operations – (DOD) An operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and maritime forces that should be large enough to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. Also called AO. (JP 3–0)

area of responsibility – (DOD) The geographical area associated with a combatant command within which a geographic combatant commander has authority to plan and conduct operations. Also called AOR. (JP 1)

ARFOR (Army Forces) – The Army component and senior Army headquarters of all Army forces assigned or attached to a combatant command, subordinate joint force command, joint functional command, or multinational command. (FM 3–94)

Army doctrine – Fundamental principles, with supporting tactics, techniques, procedures, and terms and symbols, used for the conduct of operations and which the operating force, and elements of the institutional Army that directly support operations, guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. (ADP 1–01)

Army personnel recovery – The military efforts taken to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel. (FM 3–50)

Army special operations forces – (DOD) Those Active and Reserve Component Army forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. (JP 3–05)

assign – (DOD) 1. To place units or personnel in an organization where such placement is relatively permanent, and/or where such organization controls and administers the units or personnel for the primary function, or greater portion of the functions, of the unit or personnel. (JP 3–0)

attach – (DOD) 1. The placement of units or personnel in an organization where such placement is relatively temporary. (JP 3–0)

attack – An offensive task that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both. (ADRP 3–90)

base camp – An evolving military facility that supports that military operations of a deployed unit and provides the necessary support and services for sustained operations. (ATP 3–37.10)

battalion – A unit consisting of two or more company-, battery-, or troop-size units and a headquarters. (ADRP 3–90)

battalion task force – A maneuver battalion-size unit consisting of a battalion headquarters, at least one assigned company-size element, and at least one attached company-size element from another maneuver or support unit (functional and multifunctional). (ADRP 3–90)

battery – A company-size unit in a fires or air defense artillery battalion. (ADRP 3–90)

biometrics – (DOD) The process of recognizing an individual based on measurable anatomical, physiological, and behavioral characteristics. (JP 2–0)

block – A tactical mission task that denies the enemy access to an area or prevents his advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach. Block is also an obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or to prevent the attacking force from passing through an engagement area. (FM 3–90–1)

brigade – A unit consisting of two or more battalions and a headquarters company or detachment. (ADRP 3–90)

cache – (DOD) A source of subsistence and supplies, typically containing items such as food, water, medical items, and/or communications equipment, packaged to prevent damage from exposure and hidden in isolated locations by such methods as burial, concealment, and/or submersion, to support isolated personnel. (JP 3–50)

campaign plan – (DOD) A joint operation plan for a series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic or operational objectives within a given time and space. (JP 5–0)

canalize – (Army) A tactical mission task in which the commander restricts enemy movement to a narrow zone by exploiting terrain coupled with the use of obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver. (FM 3–90–1)

capacity building – The process of creating an environment that fosters host-nation institutional development, community participation, human resources development, and strengthening of managerial systems. (FM 3–07)

casualty – (DOD) Any person who is lost to the organization by having been declared dead, duty status – whereabouts unknown, missing, ill, or injured. (JP 4–02)

casualty evacuation – (DOD) The unregulated movement of casualties that can include movement both to and between medical treatment facilities. Also called CASEVAC. (JP 4–02)

center of gravity – (DOD) The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. Also called COG. (JP 5–0)

civil affairs – (DOD) Designated Active and Reserve Component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs operations and to support civil-military operations. Also called CA. (JP 3–57)

clear – A tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area. (FM 3–90–1)

close air support – (DOD) Air action by fixed and rotary wing aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Also called CAS. (JP 3–0)

close combat – Warfare carried out on land in a direct-fire fight, supported by direct and indirect fires, and other assets. (ADRP 3–0)

coalition – (DOD) An arrangement between two or more nations for common action. (JP 5–0)

collateral damage – (DOD) Unintentional or incidental injury or damage to persons or objects that would not be lawful military targets in the circumstances ruling at the time. (JP 3–60)

combatant command – (DOD) A unified or specified command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also called CCMD. (JP 1)

combined arms – The synchronized and simultaneous application of arms to achieve an effect greater than if each arm was used separately or sequentially. (ADRP 3–0)

command and control – (DOD) The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Also called C2. (JP 1)

commander's intent – (DOD) A clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting

commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned. (JP 3–0)

command relationships – (DOD) The interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the operational authority exercised by commanders in the chain of command; defined further as combatant command (command authority), operational control, tactical control, or support. (JP 1)

company – A company is a unit consisting of two or more platoons, usually of the same type, with a headquarters and a limited capacity for self-support. (ADRP 3–90)

concept plan – (DOD) In the context of joint operation planning level 3 planning detail, an operation plan in an abbreviated format that may require considerable expansion or alteration to convert it into a complete operation plan or operation order. Also called CONPLAN. (JP 5–0)

contain – A tactical mission task that requires the commander to stop, hold, or surround enemy forces or to cause them to center their activity on a given front and prevent them from withdrawing any part of their forces for use elsewhere. (FM 3–90–1)

conventional forces – (DOD) 1. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons; 2. Those forces other than designated special operations forces. Also called CF. (JP 3–05)

convoy – (DOD) 2. A group of vehicles organized for the purpose of control and orderly movement with or without escort protection that moves over the same route at the same time and under one commander. (JP 3–02.1)

cordon and search – A technique of conducting a movement to contact that involves isolating a target area and searching suspect locations within that target area to capture or destroy possible enemy forces and contraband. (FM 3–90–1)

core competency – An essential and enduring capability that a branch or an organization provides to Army operations. (ADP 1–01)

counterattack – Attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force, for such specific purposes as regaining ground lost, or cutting off or destroying enemy advance units, and with the general objective of denying to the enemy the attainment of the enemy's purpose in attacking. In sustained defensive operations, it is undertaken to restore the battle position and is directed at limited objectives. (ADP 1–02)

counterinsurgency – (DOD) Comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes. Also called COIN. (JP 3–24)

countermeasures – (DOD) That form of military science that, by the employment of devices and/or techniques, has as its objective the impairment of the operational effectiveness of enemy activity. (JP 3–13.1)

counterterrorism – (DOD) Activities and operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their organizations and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals. Also called CT. (JP 3–26)

debarkation – (DOD) The unloading of troops, equipment, or supplies from a ship or aircraft. (JP 3–02.1)

decisive action – (Army) The continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks. (ADRP 3–0)

decisive point – (DOD) A geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success. (JP 5–0)

defeat – A tactical mission task that occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. The defeated force's commander is unwilling or unable to pursue his adopted course of action, thereby yielding to the friendly commander's will, and can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use. (FM 3–90–1)

delay – To slow the time of arrival of enemy forces or capabilities or alter the ability of the enemy or adversary to project forces or capabilities. (FM 3–09)

demobilization – (DOD) The process of transitioning a conflict or wartime military establishment and defense-based civilian economy to a peacetime configuration while maintaining national security and economic vitality. (JP 4–05)

demonstration – (DOD) 2. In military deception, a show of force in an area where a decision is not sought that is made to deceive an adversary. It is similar to a feint but no actual contact with the adversary is intended. (JP 3–13.4)

denial operations – Actions to hinder or deny the enemy the use of space, personnel, supplies, or facilities. (FM 3–90–1)

deny – A task to hinder or prevent the enemy from using terrain, space, personnel, supplies, or facilities. (ATP 3–21.20)

deployment – (DOD) The rotation of forces into and out of an operational area. (JP 3–35)

destroy – A tactical mission task that physically renders an enemy force combat-ineffective until it is reconstituted. Alternatively, to destroy a combat system is to damage it so badly that it cannot perform any function or be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt. (FM 3–90–1)

detainee – (DOD) Any person captured, detained, or otherwise under the control of Department of Defense personnel. (JP 3–63)

deterrence – (DOD) The prevention of action by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction and/or belief that the cost of action outweighs the perceived benefits. (JP 3–0)

direct action – (DOD) Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. (JP 3–05)

direct fire – (DOD) Fire delivered on a target using the target itself as a point of aim for either the weapon or the director. (JP 3–09.3)

disarmament – (Army) The collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons of former combatants, belligerents, and the local populace. (FM 3–07)

disrupt – 1. A tactical mission task in which a commander integrates direct and indirect fires, terrain, and obstacles to upset an enemy's formation or tempo, interrupt his timetable, or cause enemy forces to commit prematurely or attack in piecemeal fashion. 2. An obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to cause the enemy to break up his formation and tempo, interrupt his timetable, commit breaching assets prematurely, and attack in a piecemeal effort. (FM 3–90–1)

division – An Army echelon of command above brigade and below corps. It is a tactical headquarters which employs a combination of brigade combat teams, multifunctional brigades, and functional brigades in land operations. (ADRP 3–90)

embarkation – (DOD) The process of putting personnel and/or vehicles and their associated stores and equipment into ships and/or aircraft. (JP 3–02.1)

end state – (DOD) The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives. (JP 3–0)

enemy combatant – (DOD) In general, a person engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners during an armed conflict. Also called EC. (DODD 2310.01E)

fix – A tactical mission task where a commander prevents the enemy from moving any part of his force from a specific location for a specific period. Fix is also an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker's movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area. (FM 3–90–1)

force projection – (DOD) The ability to project the military instrument of national power from the United States or another theater, in response to requirements for military operations. (JP 3–0)

force tailoring – The process of determining the right mix of forces and the sequence of their deployment in support of a joint force commander. (ADRP 3–0)

foreign internal defense – (DOD) Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. Also called FID. (JP 3–22)

foreign military sales – (DOD) That portion of United States security assistance authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended. This assistance differs from the Military Assistance Program and the International Military Education and Training Program in that the recipient provides reimbursement for defense articles and services transferred. Also called FMS. (JP 4–08)

fragmentary order – (DOD) An abbreviated form of an operation order issued as needed after an operation order to change or modify that order or to execute a branch or sequel to that order. Also called FRAGORD. (JP 5–0) See FM 6–0.

fratricide – The unintentional killing or wounding of friendly or neutral personnel by friendly firepower. (ADRP 3–37)

governance – (DOD) The state's ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society, including the representative participatory decision-making processes typically guaranteed under inclusive, constitutional authority. (JP 3–24)

human intelligence – (Army) The collection by a trained human intelligence collector of foreign information from people and multimedia to identify

elements, intentions, composition, strength, dispositions, tactics, equipment, and capabilities. Also called HUMINT. (FM 2–22.3)

imagery intelligence – (DOD) The technical, geographic, and intelligence information derived through the interpretation or analysis of imagery and collateral materials. Also called IMINT. (JP 2–03)

improvised explosive device – (DOD) A weapon that is fabricated or emplaced in an unconventional manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals designed to kill, destroy, incapacitate, harass, deny mobility, or distract. Also called IED. (JP 3–15.1)

indigenous populations and institutions – (DOD) The societal framework of an operational environment including citizens, legal and illegal immigrants, dislocated civilians, and governmental, tribal, ethnic, religious, commercial, and private organizations and entities. Also called IPI. (JP 3–57)

infiltration – (Army) A form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires. (FM 3–90–1)

information operations – (DOD) The integrated employment, during military operations, of information related capabilities in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own. Also called IO. (JP 3–13)

institutional training domain – The Army's institutional training and education system, which primarily includes training base centers and schools that provide initial training and subsequent professional military education for Soldiers, military leaders, and Army Civilians. (ADP 7–0)

instruments of national power – (DOD) All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational and military. (JP 1) See ATP 3–57.60

insurgency – (DOD) The organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself. (JP 3–24)

intelligence – (DOD) 1. The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations. (ADRP 2–0)

interagency – (DOD) Of or pertaining to United States Government agencies and departments, including the Department of Defense. (JP 3–08)

interdict – A tactical mission task where the commander prevents, disrupts, or delays the enemy's use of an area or route. (FM 3–90–1)

intermodal operations – The process of using multimodal capabilities (air, sea, highway, rail) and conveyances (truck, barge, containers, pallets) to move troops, supplies and equipment through expeditionary entry points and the network of specialized transportation nodes to sustain land forces. (ATP 4–13)

intertheater airlift – (DOD) The common-user airlift linking theaters to the continental United States and to other theaters as well as the airlift within the continental United States. (JP 3–17)

in-transit visibility – (DOD) The ability to track the identity, status, and location of Department of Defense units, and non-unit cargo (excluding bulk petroleum, oils, and lubricants) and passengers; patients, and personal property from origin to consignee or destination across the range of military operations. (JP 4–01.2)

intratheater airlift – (DOD) Airlift conducted within a theater with assets assigned to a geographic combatant commander or attached to a subordinate joint force commander. (JP 3–17)

isolate – A tactical mission task that requires a unit to seal off—both physically and psychologically—an enemy from sources of support, deny the enemy freedom of movement, and prevent the isolated enemy force from having contact with other enemy forces. (FM 3–90–1)

joint – (DOD) Connotes activities, operations, organizations, etc., in which elements of two or more Military Departments participate. (JP 1)

joint force – (DOD) A general term applied to a force composed of significant elements, assigned or attached, of two or more Military Departments operating under a single joint force commander. (JP 3–0)

joint force air component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking air forces; planning and coordinating air operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFACC. (JP 3–0)

joint force commander – (DOD) A general term applied to a combatant commander, subunified commander, or joint task force commander authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a joint force. Also called JFC. See also joint force. (JP 1)

joint force land component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking land forces; planning and coordinating land operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFLCC. (JP 3–0)

joint force maritime component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking maritime forces and assets; planning and coordinating maritime operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFMCC. (JP 3–0)

joint force special operations component commander – (DOD) The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for recommending the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking special operations forces and assets; planning and coordinating special operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. Also called JFSOCC. (JP 3–0)

joint task force – (DOD) A joint force that is constituted and so designated by the Secretary of Defense, a combatant commander, subunified commander, or an existing joint task force commander. Also called JTF. (JP 1)

law of war – (DOD) That part of international law that regulates the conduct of armed hostilities. Also called the law of armed conflict. (JP 1–04)

levels of warfare – A framework for defining and clarifying the relationship among national objectives, the operational approach, and tactical tasks. (ADP 1–01)

line of communications – (DOD) A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called LOC. (JP 2–01.3)

main effort – A designated subordinate unit whose mission at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success. (ADRP 3–0)

main supply route – (DOD) The route or routes designated within an operational area upon which the bulk of traffic flows in support of military operations. Also called MSR. (JP 4–01.5)

mission – (DOD) 1. The task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore. (JP 3–0)

mission creep – Tangential efforts to assist in areas of concern unrelated to assigned duties that cripple efficient mission accomplishment. (FM 3–16)

mission-essential task list – A tailored group of mission-essential tasks. Also called METL. (FM 7–0)

mobilization – (DOD) 1. The process of assembling and organizing national resources to support national objectives in time of war or other emergencies. See also industrial mobilization. 2. The process by which the Armed Forces or part of them are brought to a state of readiness for war or other national emergency. Which includes activating all or part of the Reserve Component as well as assembling and organizing personnel, supplies, and materiel. Also called MOB. (JP 4–05)

movement to contact – (Army) An offensive task designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact. (ADRP 3–90)

multimodal –The movement of cargo and personnel using two or more transportation methods (air, highway, rail, sea) from point of origin to destination. (ATP 4–13)

multinational operations – (DOD) A collective term to describe military actions conducted by forces of two or more nations, usually undertaken within the structure of a coalition or alliance. (JP 3–16)

neutralize – (DOD) 1. As pertains to military operations, to render ineffective or unusable. 2. To render enemy personnel or materiel incapable of interfering with a particular operation. 3. To render safe mines, bombs, missiles, and booby traps. 4. To make harmless anything contaminated with a chemical agent. (JP 3–0)

objective – 1. The clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every operation is directed. (JP 5–0) See ADRP 5–0, ATP 3–06.20. 2. The specific target of the action taken which is essential to the commander's plan. See ATP 3–06.20. 3. (Army) A location on the ground used to orient operations, phase operations, facilitate changes of direction, and provide for unity of effort. (ADRP 3–90)

operation – (DOD) 1. A sequence of tactical actions with a common purpose or unifying theme. (JP 1) See FM 3–0, FM 3–09, ATP 3–09.42. A military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission. (JP 3–0)

operational art – (DOD) The cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means. (JP 3–0)

operational control – (DOD) The authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Also called OPCON. (JP 1)

operation order – (DOD) A directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the purpose of effecting the coordinated execution of an operation. Also called OPORD. (JP 5–0)

organic – (DOD) Assigned to and forming an essential part of military organization. Organic parts of a unit are those listed in its table of organization for the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps, and are assigned to the administrative organizations of the operating forces for the Navy. (JP 1)

patrol – A detachment sent out by a larger unit to conduct a specific mission that operates semi-independently and return to the main body upon completion of mission. (ATP 3–21.8)

peace enforcement – (DOD) Application of military force, or threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order. (JP 3–07.3)

peacekeeping – (DOD) Military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an agreement (cease fire, truce, or other such agreement) and support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement. (JP 3–07.3)

platoon – A subdivision of a company or troop consisting of two or more squads or sections. (ADRP 3–90)

port of debarkation – (DOD) The geographic point at which cargo or personnel are discharged. Also called POD. (JP 4–0)

port of embarkation – (DOD) The geographic point in a routing scheme from which cargo or personnel depart. Also called POE. See also port of debarkation. (JP 4–01.2)

propaganda – (DOD) Any form of adversary communication, especially of a biased or misleading nature, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly. (JP 3–13.2)

raid – (DOD) An operation to temporarily seize an area in order to secure information, confuse an adversary, capture personnel or equipment, or to destroy a capability culminating with a planned withdrawal. (JP 3–0)

Rangers – (DOD) Rapidly deployable airborne light infantry organized and trained to conduct highly complex joint direct action operations in coordination with or in support of other special operations units of all Services. (JP 3–05)

redeployment – (DOD) The transfer or rotation of forces and materiel to support another joint force commander's operational requirements, or to return personnel, equipment, and materiel to the home and/or demobilization stations for reintegration and/or outprocessing. (JP 3–35)

reintegration – The process through which former combatants, belligerents, and displaced civilians receive amnesty, reenter civil society, gain sustainable employment, and become contributing members of the local populace. (ADRP 3–07)

relief in place – (DOD) An operation in which, by direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit and the responsibilities of the replaced elements for the mission and the assigned zone of operations are transferred to the incoming unit. (JP 3–07.3)

reserve – (Army) That portion of a body of troops which is withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement, in order to be available for a decisive movement. (ADRP 3–90)

rule of law – A principle under which all persons, institutions, and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, and that are consistent with international human rights principles. (FM 3–07)

rules of engagement – (DOD) Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. Also called ROE. (JP 1–04)

secure – A tactical mission task that involves preventing a unit, facility, or geographical location from being damaged or destroyed as a result of enemy action. (FM 3–90–1)

seize – (DOD) To employ combat forces to occupy physically and to control a designated area. (JP 3–18) See ATP 3–06.20. (Army) A tactical mission task that involves taking possession of a designated area using overwhelming force. (FM 3–90–1)

sensitive-site assessment – Determination of whether threats or hazards associated with a sensitive site warrant exploitation. Also called SSA. (ATP 3–11.23)

sequel – (DOD) The subsequent major operation or phase based on the possible outcomes (success, stalemate, or defeat) of the current major operation or phase. (JP 5–0)

Service component command – (DOD) A command consisting of the Service component commander and all those Service forces, such as individuals, units, detachments, organizations, and installations under that command, including the support forces that have been assigned to a combatant command or further assigned to a subordinate unified command or joint task force. (JP 1)

shadow government – Governmental elements and activities performed by the irregular organization that will eventually take the place of the existing government. Members of the shadow government can be in any element of the irregular organization (underground, auxiliary, or guerrilla force). (ATP 3–05.1)

shaping operation – An operation that establishes conditions for the decisive operation through effects on the enemy, other actors, and the terrain. (ADRP 3–0)

signals intelligence – (DOD) 1. A category of intelligence comprising either individually or in combination all communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and foreign instrumentation signals intelligence, however transmitted. (JP 2–0)

special forces – (DOD) United States Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities. Also called SF. (JP 3–05)

special operations forces – (DOD) Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Service designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF. (JP 3–05)

special operations task force – A temporary or semipermanent grouping of Army special operations forces units under one commander and formed to carry out a specific operation or a continuing mission. Also called SOTF. (ADRP 3–05)

squad – A small military unit typically containing two or more fire teams. (ADRP 3–90)

stability operations – (DOD) An overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental

services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. (JP 3–0)

staging – (DOD) Assembling, holding, and organizing arriving personnel, equipment, and sustaining materiel in preparation for onward movement. See also staging area. (JP 3–35)

standard operating procedure – (DOD) A set of instructions covering those features of operations which lend themselves to a definite or standardized procedure without loss of effectiveness. The procedure is applicable unless ordered otherwise. Also called SOP. (JP 3–31)

status-of-forces agreement – (DOD) A bilateral or multilateral agreement that defines the legal position of a visiting military force deployed in the territory of a friendly state. Also called SOFA. (JP 3–16)

strong point – A heavily fortified battle position tied to a natural or reinforcing obstacle to create an anchor for the defense or to deny the enemy decisive or key terrain. (ADRP 3–90)

supporting effort – A designated subordinate unit with a mission that supports the success of the main effort. (ADRP 3–0)

suppress – A tactical mission task that results in temporary degradation of the performance of a force or weapons system below the level needed to accomplish the mission. (FM 3–90–1)

surveillance – (DOD) The systematic observation of aerospace, surface or subsurface areas, places, persons, or things by visual, aural, electronic, photographic, or other means. (JP 3–0)

tactical control – (DOD) The authority over forces that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Also called TACON. (JP 1)

tactical level of war – (DOD) The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. (JP 3–0)

task organization – (Army) A temporary grouping of forces designed to accomplish a particular mission. (ADRP 5–0)

task-organizing – (DOD) An organization that assigns to responsible commanders the means with which to accomplish their assigned tasks in any planned action. (JP 3–33) See FM 3–98. (Army) The act of designing an operating force, support staff, or sustainment package of specific size and composition to meet a unique task or mission. (ADRP 3–0)

terrorism – (DOD) The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are usually political. (JP 3–07.2)

theater – (DOD) The geographical area for which a commander of a geographic combatant command has been assigned responsibility. (JP 1)

theater distribution system – (DOD) A distribution system comprised of four independent and mutually supported networks within theater to meet the geographic combatant commander's requirements: the physical network; the financial network; the information network; and the communications network. (JP 4–01)

theater of operations – (DOD) An operational area defined by the geographic combatant commander for the conduct or support of specific military operations. Also called TO. (JP 3–0)

throughput – (DOD) 1. In transportation, the average quantity of cargo and passengers that can pass through a port on a daily basis from arrival at the port to loading onto a ship or plane, or from the discharge from a ship or plane to the exit (clearance) from the port complex. (JP 4–01.5)

training objective – A statement that describes the desired outcome of a training activity in the unit. (ADRP 7–0)

troop – A company-size unit in a cavalry organization. (ADRP 3–90)

unit – (DOD) Any military element whose structure is prescribed by competent authority, such as a table of organization and equipment; specifically, part of an organization. (JP 3–33)

unity of command – (DOD) The operation of all forces under a single responsible commander who has the requisite authority to direct and employ those forces in pursuit of a common purpose. (JP 3–0)

unity of effort – (DOD) Coordination, and cooperation toward common objectives, even if the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization, which is the product of successful unified action. (JP 1)

unmanned aircraft – (DOD) An aircraft that does not carry a human operator and is capable of flight with or without human remote control. Also called UA. (JP 3–30)

vehicle-borne improvised explosive device – (DOD) A device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner on a vehicle incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy,

incapacitate, harass, or distract. Otherwise known as a car bomb. Also called VBIED. (JP 3–10)

warfighting function – A group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes), united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives. (ADRP 3–0)

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Key Terms

Text Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command.
CIA	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMH	U.S. Army Center of Military History
COMISAF	Commander, ISAF
CSA	Chief of Staff, Army
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan
DoD	Department of Defense
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
HIG	Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin
HMMWV	High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
IED	improvised explosive device
IJC	ISAF Joint Command
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MLRS	multiple launch rocket system
MMAS	Master of Military Art and Science
MRAP	mine-resistant, ambush-protected
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OP	operation
RC	Regional Command
RFF	request for forces
SEAL	Navy Sea-Air-Land element
SIGINT	signals intelligence
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TF	Task Force
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USFOR-A	United States Forces–Afghanistan

Foreign Terms

al-Qaeda	the foundation or the base [*organization name*]
amir	ruler, chief, or commander
arbakai	local Afghan militia formations
Atal	Hero [*ANA corps name*]
Baaz Tsuka	Falcon Summit [*operation name*]
Ebrat	Lesson [*operation name*]
Inteqal	Transition [*operation name*]
jihad	struggle, in the sense of a holy war waged on behalf of Islam
jirga	larger tribal assembly
kandak	Afghan battalion-sized unit
Khanjar	Strike of the Sword [*operation name*]
Lal Masjid	Red Mosque [*place name*]
layeha	code of conduct
loya jirga	grand assembly, akin to a national convention
madrassa	religious educational institution
Moshtarak	Together [*operation name*]
mujahideen	holy warriors
Nasrat	Victory [*operation name*]
Naweed	Good News [*operation name*]
Oqab	Eagle [*operation name*]
Oqab Etehab	Eagle Unity [*operation name*]
Oqab Hamkari	Eagle Teamwork [*operation name*]
Pamir Hamkari	Mountain Teamwork [*operation name*]
Panchai Palang	Panther's Claw [*operation name*]
pashtunwali	ancient Pashtun code of conduct that includes a strong tradition of hospitality
Sailab	Flood [*ANA corps name*]
Shafafiyat	Transparency [*task force name*]
Shaheen	Falcon [*ANA corps name*]
sharia	Islamic religious law
shona ba shona	shoulder-to-shoulder
shura	a local consultative council or assembly
Taliban	students of Islam [*organization name*]
Tandar	Thunder [*ANA corps name*]
tashkil	organization, in the sense of an official list
Tolo Hamkari	Dawn of Cooperation [*operation name*]
Zafar	Victory [*ANA corps name*]
Zarb-e-Azb	Swift and Conclusive Strike [*operation name*]

Selected U.S. Military Staff Designations

CJ–2	Combined (Coalition) joint intelligence
CJ–3	Combined (Coalition) joint operations
CJ–4	Combined (Coalition) joint logistics
CJ–35	Combined (Coalition) joint future operations

CJ–5	Combined (Coalition) joint planning
CJ–55	Combined (Coalition) joint future plans
CJ–7	Combined (Coalition) joint training
G–3/7	Army operations and training
G–3/5/7	Army operations, plans, and training
J–2	Joint staff intelligence
J–3	Joint staff operations
J–4	Joint staff logistics
S–2	Battalion or brigade intelligence

Map Symbols and note terms

Map Symbols

Function	
Armor	
Brigade Special Troops Battalion	
Cavalry (Armored)	
Cavalry (Motorized)	
Cavalry (Motorized, Mountain)	
Cavalry (Air Assault, Motorized)	
Cavalry (Rotary Wing, Air)	
Commando	
Field Artillery	
Field Artillery (Air Assault)	
Infantry	
Infantry (Airborne)	
Infantry (Air Assault)	
Infantry (Air Assault with Organic Lift)	
Infantry (Headquarters or Headquarters Element)	
Infantry (Mechanized, Amphibious)	
Infantry (Mechanized, Armored)	
Infantry (Mountain)	
Infantry (Wheeled, Armored)	
Infantry (Wheeled, Armored with Gun System)	
Maneuver Enhancement	
Military Police	
Reconnaissance, Cavalry, or Scout	

Reconnaissance (Battlefield Surveillance)	
Reconnaissance (Wheeled, Armored)	
Reconnaissance (Wheeled, Armored with Gun System)	
Special Forces	
Rifle/Automatic Weapon (Enemy)	
Light Machine Gun (Enemy)	
Mortar (Enemy)	
Attack by Fire Position	
Support by Fire Position	
Mortar, 60mm or less	
Mortar, greater then 60mm but less than 107mm	
Antitank missle launcher	

Size

Team	⌀
Squad	.
Section	..
Platoon or Detachment	...
Company, Battery, Troop	I
Battalion or Squadron	II
Regiment or Group	III

Example

3d Battalion, 103d Armor



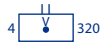
3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry



2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry



4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery



Polish Air Assault Infantry



22d Marine Expeditionary Unit



Company A, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry



504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade



Special Forces ODA 586



3d Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army



Enemy Infantry Platoon



Country Flag

Australia



Denmark



France



Georgia



Germany



Italy



Poland



Romania



Spain



Turkey



United Kingdom



United States



Note terms

ANA	Afghan National Army
ARCENT	U.S. Army Central Command
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CIA	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CINCCENT	Commander in Chief, CENTCOM
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMH	U.S. Army Center of Military History
DoD	Department of Defense
EO	Executive Order
FM	Field Manual
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
GO	General Orders
Grp	Group
Hist Files	Historians Files
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MHD	Military History Detachment
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSA GWU	National Security Archive, George Washington University
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OEF Study Grp	Operation Enduring Freedom Study Group
OMC-A	Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan
OPORD	Operation Order
PEP	Personal experience paper
RC	Regional Command
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SEP	Student experience paper
SF	Special Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TF	Task Force
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
UN	United Nations

Index

A–10 Thunderbolt II, 97–98, 301
Abbottabad, 62, 336
Abdul Ghani Baradar, Mullah. *See* Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani.
Abdul Qayyum Zakir, Mullah. *See* Zakir, Mullah Abdul Qayyum.
Abdul Rahim Wardak. *See* Wardak, Abdul Rahim.
Abdul Raziq. *See* Raziq, Abdul.
Abdullah Abdullah, 194, 263–64, 434
Abizaid, General John P., 48, 63, 87, 122, 127, 259
Abu Ghraib, 305
Abu Hamza al Rabia. *See* al Rabia, Abu Hamza.
AC–130 gunships, 116, 391
Acquisitions Corps, 425
Afghan Border Police, 94, 155, 174, 373, 414, 416, 439
Afghan Development Zone, 77–78, 128, 130, 135, 154, 157
  build, clear, and hold, 132
  Nangarhar Inc., 138, 146–47, 183
Afghan Hands program. *See* AfPak Hands.
Afghanistan National Highway 1, 95, 97, 157, 207, 215
  Ring Road, 39, 52, 78, 207, 211–12, 215, 274, 323, 380
Afghan Local Police (ALP), 227, 315, 317, 320–22, 379, 408, 414–16, 447
Afghan National Army (ANA), 35–37, 40, 45, 91, 99, 102, 104, 107–09, 119, 155, 168, 182, 184, 257, 260, 281, 296, 307, 309, 316, 328, 335, 364–65, 367–69, 371, 374, 391, 398, 401, 408–09, 412, 414, 416, 427, 430, 434, 436, 448–49, 471–72, 487
  201st Corps, 73, 95, 141, 215, 330, 439, 447
  203d Corps, 69, 72–73, 114, 134–35, 141, 143, 330, 417, 439–40
  205th Corps, 68, 84, 86, 94, 101, 141, 143, 272, 280, 330
  207th Corps, 68, 86, 100, 141, 330
  kandak(s), 43, 86, 141–44, 301–02, 312, 314, 318, 320, 329–31, 366, 406, 419, 425, 446, 447
  Operation 1391. *See* Afghan National Army (ANA), Operation Naweed.
  Operation Naweed, 293, 372–73, 405
Afghan National Army Special Mission Wing, 374–75
  Afghan National Army Special Operations Command, 374
Afghan National Police (ANP), 35, 39, 91, 94, 132, 141, 155, 297, 302, 314, 320, 364–66, 371–72, 412, 414, 416, 425, 432, 436, 439, 487
  British support, 89
  in Operation Mountain Eagle, 116
  training, 36, 40, 45–51, 106–09
Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), 36, 75, 84, 126–27, 139, 141, 143, 207, 212, 215, 228, 232, 237, 259, 270, 273, 278, 304, 316–17, 352, 359, 363–65, 377, 388, 393, 395, 427, 439–40, 448
  and elections, 432, 434
  and insurgency, 334–35
  and Task Force 33, 116
  and Task Force Fury, 132–33
  assault by Haqqani fighters, 398
  development, 38, 41, 128, 153, 155, 157, 165–66, 176, 179, 184,

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—*Continued*
development—*Continued*
197, 204, 211, 219, 236, 292, 309–15, 339, 343, 350, 414–17, 424, 435, 441, 443, 481
funding, 424–25
HAMKARI Phase I, 296
INTEQAL campaign, 345, 357–58, 405–09
Operation 1392, 414
Operation MAIWAND, 133
Operation NAWEED, 372–75
providing security, 182
RC South, 243, 248–49, 272
staffed checkpoints, 104
sustainability, 411–13, 426
taking over security responsibility, 366–68, 370, 378, 405, 410, 420, 432, 434–37, 446, 447, 479
Taliban attacks, 402–04
Village Stability Platforms, 319–20, 322
Afghan Uniformed Police, 49, 139, 317, 364–65, 368, 373, 414, 416, 434, 439
Afghanistan Compact, 39–40, 46, 110, 123, 140
AfPak Hands, 226, 483
AH–1W Super Cobra gunships, 173
AH–64 Apache gunships, 85, 116, 168, 258–59, 301, 371, 391, 403, 463
Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force–Afghanistan, 9th, 372, 427
Air Force, U.S., 20, 41, 111, 222, 333–34, 383–84, 416, 427
Airborne Brigades and Brigade Combat Teams
173d Airborne Brigade, 41, 78, 146–47, 170, 229. *See also* Task Forces, U.S., BAYONET.
173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 24, 135, 137. *See also* Task Forces, U.S., BAYONET, RAPTOR.
Airborne Corps, XVIII, 440, 442
Airborne Division, 82d, 22, 24, 41, 69, 72, 115, 121, 124–25, 129, 157, 219, 246, 297, 299, 362, 370, 397, 400. *See also* Combined Joint Task Force 82 (CJTF-82)
Airborne Division, 82d, units
1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 124, 154, 297, 474
1st Brigade Combat Team, 41
2d Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 397–98
2d Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 124, 297, 299, 370
2d Brigade Combat Team, 22
3d Brigade Combat Team, 397
4th Brigade, 115, 121, 157, 246, 276, 297, 299
4th Brigade Combat Team, 24, 150, 362, 370
4th Squadron, 73d Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 124, 297
Combat Aviation Brigade, 125, 244, 281, 283
Airborne Division, 101st, 9, 137, 162–64, 166, 205, 213, 218–19, 273, 299, 366, 402, 416–18
1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 162, 219
1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 299–301
1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 299
1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 162, 416, 418
1st Brigade Combat Team, 402
1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade

Combat Team, 162
1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 299
2d Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 299
2d Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 162
2d Brigade Combat Team, 273
2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 137, 403
3d Brigade Combat Team, 366
4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 162, 416
4th Brigade, 213, 218–19
4th Brigade Combat Team, 162, 417
801st Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 162
Combat Aviation Brigade, 163
Aircraft, fixed-wing, 240, 384, 402. *See also* A–10 Thunderbolt II; AC–130 gunships; AV–8B Harrier II; C–5 Galaxy transport; C–12 Huron transport; C–17 Globemasters; C–130 Hercules; F–15E Strike Eagle fighters; MiG fighters; Predator drones; RQ–5A Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle; RQ–7A Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle.
Aircraft, miscellaneous. *See* MV–22 Osprey; Predator drones; RQ–5A Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle; RQ–7A Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle.
Aircraft, rotary-wing, 93, 209, 217, 255, 278, 281, 365, 367. *See also* Helicopters.
Akhtar Mansour. *See* Mansour, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed.
Akhtar Mohammed Mansour, Mullah. *See* Mansour, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed.
Akhtar Mohammed Osmani. *See* Osmani, Akhtar Mohammed.
Akhund, Mullah Dadullah, 59, 104, 295
Akhund, Mullah Obiadullah, 104
Akhundzada, Sher Mohammed, 88, 90
Al Anbar, 220, 223, 343
Al Basrah, 343
al Ottabi, Lt. Col. Nasser, 116
al Rabia, Abu Hamza, 202
Al Udeid Air Base, 384
Al-Badr campaign. *See* Operations, enemy.
al-Maliki, Nouri, 199, 233, 338, 343
al-Qaeda, 44, 59, 122, 125, 182, 187, 233–35, 270, 318, 360–61, 476, 481, 484
Baitullah Mehsud associations, 152
drone strikes against, 202, 355, 478, 482
funding, 104
Haqqani Network, 55, 113, 149, 344
Hazrat Omar, 159
in Pakistan, 54, 61–62, 191, 195–96, 202, 344, 349, 355, 470, 483
Operation Freedom's Sentinel, 481
"Shock and Awe" method, 485
Sunni tribes against, 198, 343
ties to Hekmatyar, 68–69
ties to Sheikh Dost Mohammed, 139
al-Zawahiri, Ayman, 62
Allen, General John R., 350, 360, 373, 387, 390, 397, 405, 409–11, 414, 424
Allen, Lt. Col. Steven L., 246
Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, 76
Allred, Lt. Col. John C., 162
Amir, 336
ALP. *See* Afghan Local Police (ALP).
ANA. *See* Afghan National Army (ANA).
Anaconda Strategy, 293–94
Andar District, 134
Andersen, Lt. Col. Reik C., 219, 290
Anderson, Lt. Gen. Joseph T., 440
ANP. *See* Afghan National Police (ANP).
ANSF. *See* Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

Apaches. *See* AH–64 Apache gunships.
Applegate, Lt. Col. Gregory S., 297
Aqineh, 381
Arabian Sea, 381
Arahnas, 159, 161
Arbakai, 317–18, 320, 352, 431
ARCENT. *See* Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT).
Arghandab, 54, 97, 101–02, 252–53, 276–77, 297, 299, 301, 484
Arghandab District, 174, 251–52, 274, 295, 299–301, 448
Arghandab River, 78, 96, 104, 274
Armored Battalions
  1st, 66th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 297, 299
  3d, 103d Armored Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 138
  4th, 70th Armored Regiment, 170th Infantry Brigade, 365
Armored Brigade Combat Teams
  1st, 1st Armored Division, 27
  3d, 1st Armored Division, 365
  4th, 1st Armored Division, 362
Armored Division, 1st, 27, 29, 190, 362, 365, 459, 465
Armored Regiments
  66th, 297, 299
  70th, 365
  103d, 138, 164
Army Campaign Plan, 26
Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN), 13, 15, 16, 19, 22–23, 26, 29, 459
Army Sustainment Command. *See* U.S. Army Sustainment Command.
Arroyo, S. Sgt. Israel, 290
Arsallah Jamal. *See* Jamal, Arsallah.
Asadabad, 52, 72, 158, 447
Asadullah Khalid. *See* Khalid, Asadullah.
Ashraf Ghani. *See* Ghani, Ashraf.
Asif Ali Zadari. *See* Zadari, Asif Ali.
Assistance Platform Chamkani, 416–18
Atal, 141
Atmar, Mohammed Hanif, 451
Austin, General Lloyd J. III, 443
AV–8B Harrier II, 173, 402
Aviation Regiment (Special Operations), 160th, 31, 43, 330
Aviation units. *See also* Aviation Regiment (Special Operations), 160th.
  Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, 63
  Combat Aviation Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 125, 244, 281, 283
  Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, 163
Ayman al-Zawahiri. *See* al-Zawahiri, Ayman.
Azrah (District), 417

Babaji, 211
Badakhshan Province, 359
Badghis Province, 52, 330
Baghdad, 9, 22, 343
Baghlan Province, 334–35, 359
Baghran (town in Helmand), 90
Baghran District, 84
Baghran Valley, 85–86
Bagram, 63, 84, 115, 130, 209, 358, 380, 384, 388, 393, 422, 439, 442, 449, 486
Bagram Air Base, 63, 116, 305, 423, 440–41
Bahadur, Maulawi, 335
Bahram Chah, 241
Baker, Lt. Col. Clinton J., 217, 219
Baker, Lt. Col. Steven A., 124, 129, 151
Baker, Lt. Col. Vernon L., 64
Bales, S. Sgt. Robert, 369–70
Balkans, 5, 8, 81, 225, 473
Balkh Province, 141, 335, 347, 381
  Hairatan, 381
Balochistan, 381
Bamyan Province, 109, 130, 213, 347
Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani, 352, 431
Baraki Barak, 157
Barg-e Matal, 254, 256–57, 260, 262

Barno, Lt. Gen. David W., 44, 77, 115, 215, 472
Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), 33, 190, 330–31, 375, 379, 421, 423
Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak base complex, 401, 439. *See also* Camps, Bastion; Camps, Leatherneck; Camps, Shorabak.
Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, 525th, 273
Bauguess, Maj. Larry J. Jr., 150
Bayanzi, 96
Bazar-e Panjwa'i, 94, 96
Beck, General Gerhard, 76, 115
Beck, Lt. Col. Christopher G. 297
Belambai village stability platform, 369
Benchoff, Lt. Col. Peter N., 299
Benton, Col. Gus, II, 328–31
Bergdahl, Pfc. Beaudry R., 217–19, 256–57, 260
Berlin, 37
Berry, Glyn R., 78
Berryman, Lt. Col. Craig, 297
Bhutto, Benazir, 152
Biden, Joseph R. Jr., 193, 267, 271, 290–91
Bierman, Lt. Col. James, 64
Bihsud, 158
Bilanday, 175
Bills, Maj. Gen. Michael A., 437
bin Laden, Osama, 61–62, 252, 336, 344, 480
Black Hawks, 464. *See also* MH–60 Black Hawks; UH–60 Black Hawks.
Blackburn, Col. James R. Jr., 289
Bohnemann, Col. Edward T., 365
Bolduc, Col. Donald C., 95, 116, 319, 330–31, 333
Bolger, Lt. Gen. Daniel P., 366–67
Bomb, 58, 254, 301–02, 360, 402–03, 485
  500-pound, 301
Bonn Process, 5, 35–37, 49, 182–83, 471, 473
Bonner, Lt. Col. James, 129–30, 163
Boor, Brig. Gen. Margaret W., 326
Bosnia and Herzegovina, 103, 198, 437, 473
BRAC. *See* Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).
Bradley, Lt. Col. Charles D., 162
Bradley fighting vehicles. *See* M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV).
Bratislava, 224
Brennan, Maj. Gen. John T., 41, 46–47
Bricker, Col. Paul W., 281
Brostrom, Lt. Jonathan, 170
Brown, Gordon, 264
Brown, Lt. Col. Robert B. "Brad", 219, 255–57, 260
Burleson, Col. Willard M. III, 365
Bush, George W., 30, 123, 149, 177, 193, 208, 270, 294, 337, 472
  11 September 2001, 469
  administration, 4–5, 22, 28–29, 36–38, 40, 122, 141, 150, 172, 181, 184, 191, 195–96, 202, 206, 209, 240, 246, 267, 455, 466, 470–71, 473, 475, 482–83
  Status of Forces Agreement, 187
  the surge, 5, 122, 188, 338
Bushey, Lt. Col. David A., 64
Butler, Brig. Gen. Edward A., 89, 91, 105–06

C–5 Galaxy transport, 383
C–12 Huron transport, 402
C–17 Globemasters, 383–84
C–130 Hercules, 399, 402
Cabaniss, Lt. Col. Christian G., 244
Caldwell, Lt. Gen. William B., IV, 231, 310–16, 367, 395
Campbell, General Charles, 170
Campbell, General John F., 429–30, 449, 451
Campbell, Lt. Col. Robert, 219
Camps
  Bastion, 89, 401–02, 480, 486. *See also* Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak base complex.
  Blessing, 137, 162, 167–68, 170

Camps—*Continued*
Eggers, 41, 48, 130, 310
John Pratt, 393
Leatherneck, 401, 439. *See also* Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak base complex.
Mackall, North Carolina, 32
Qargha, 445
Shorabak, 401. *See also* Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak base complex.
Cannon, 25-mm., 97
Carey, Lt. Col. Casimir III, 273
Carlisle Barracks, 9
Carpenter, Brig. Gen. Scottie D., 380
Carter, Ashton B., 390
Carter, Maj. Gen. Nicholas P., 242, 272–74, 276–77, 281, 285–86, 288, 299, 301
Casey, General George W. Jr., 23, 27, 176, 226–27, 453–54
Cavalry Division, 1st, 8–9, 27, 246, 437
Cavalry Regiments
2d (Stryker), 289
3d, 439–40
4th, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163
10th, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 297
17th, 101st Airborne Division, 137, 259, 403
61st, 162, 219, 255, 260
71st, 64, 84, 211, 254, 273, 297
73d, 124, 297
75th, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 299
91st, 137, 254
Cavalry Squadrons
1st, 38th Cavalry, 273
1st, 40th Cavalry, 219
1st, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 162
1st, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 273, 297
1st, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 299
1st, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 137, 254
2d, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, 137, 403
3d, 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker), 299, 302
3d, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 219, 260
3d, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, 64, 84, 211, 254
4th, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment, 273
4th, 73d Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 124, 297
6th, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163
7th, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 297
7th, 17th Cavalry Regiment
Cavoli, Lt. Col. Christopher G., 64, 72
CENTCOM. *See* U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).
CFC-A. *See* Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A).
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 123, 152, 195, 392, 469–70, 480
CH–47 Chinooks, 73, 80, 263, 281, 330, 391, 417–18
Chahar Chinah Valley, 86
Chahar Darah District, 335
Chalekor Valley, 85
Chaman, 381
Charkh District, 157
Chawkay, 72
Chemical units
23d Chemical Battalion, 129, 163
48th Chemical Brigade, 129
83d Chemical Battalion, 163

Cheney, Richard B., 104, 119
Chiarelli, Maj. Gen. Peter W., 9, 18–19
Chief of Staff, Army (CSA). *See* Casey, General George W. Jr.; Odierno, General Raymond T.; Schoomaker, General Peter J.
Chinooks. *See* CH–47 Chinooks.
Chore Mandeh Valley, 86
Christmas, Lt. Col. Brian S., 282
CIA. *See* Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
Civil Affairs Brigade, 95th, 31
Civil-Military Campaign Plan, 206, 228, 292
Clark, Lt. Col. William, 246
Clinton, Hillary R., 193, 197, 217, 254, 264, 268–69, 480
Comanches, 26
Combat Outpost
  BELLA, 167–68, 214
  KEATING, 254–62
  RANCH HOUSE, 159, 214
  SANGSAR, 370. *See also* Green-on-blue incidents.
Combined Arms Center, 8–9
Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A), 20, 36, 44–45, 48, 64, 66, 68, 77, 88, 109, 115, 123–24, 126, 182, 215, 472
Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, 68, 317, 319, 321–22, 327–28, 330, 332, 369
Combined Joint Interagency Task Force
  435, 20, 306–07, 410, 441
  Afghanistan, 442
  SHAFAFIYAT, 410, 442
Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF)–Afghanistan, 34, 41, 68, 84, 86, 103, 105, 116, 143, 319–20, 327–30, 332, 446, 448, 450
Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)
  76, 35, 41, 43–45, 63–64, 66–69, 72, 79, 81, 83–84, 91, 94, 103, 105–06, 111, 113–15, 117, 123–24, 135
  82, 124, 127–30, 134, 145, 147, 150, 154–55, 158, 165–66, 219, 255
  101, 145, 162–67, 175–76, 205, 207, 209, 212, 216, 227
  180, 125, 358, 470
  Afghanistan, 164
  MOUNTAIN, 470
  PALADIN, 441
Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A), 20, 48, 50–51, 107–09, 139, 144, 164–65, 179, 205, 209, 231, 309, 368, 374, 414, 424, 426
Combined Task Force
  AEGIS, 64, 66, 76, 79. *See also* Task Force AEGIS.
  STRIKE, 273. *See also* Task Force STRIKE.
Cone, Maj. Gen. Robert W., 109, 164
Corps
  Acquisitions. *See* Acquisitions Corps.
  Allied Rapid Reaction. *See* Allied Rapid Reaction Corps.
  I, 247, 253, 288, 409
  III, 425
  V, 371, 409, 420, 425, 459
  XVIII Airborne. *See* Airborne Corps, XVIII.
Craddock, General Bantz J., 231
Crane, Conrad C., 9
CSTC-A. *See* Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A).
Custer, Lt. Col. Scott D., 124–25, 129, 153

Dadullah Akhund, Mullah. *See* Akhund, Mullah Dadullah.
Damadola, 202
Daniel, Lt. Col. Patrick, 163
Daoud, Mohammed, 88–89, 91
Davidson, Janine A., 10
Davis, Col. Gordon B., 229
Davis, Lt. Col. Johnny K., 299

Daychopan District, 85, 334
Daykundi Province, 285, 347
de Hoop Scheffer, Jaap, 122, 231
de Kruif, General Mart, 220, 224, 248–51, 273, 285
Defense Department. *See* Department of Defense (DoD).
Deh Yak, 157
Dellinger, Lt. Col. David L., 163
DeMartino, Lt. Col. Anthony G., 162
Dempsey, General Martin E., 391, 453–54
Denny, Lt. Col. Bryan E., 299
Department of Defense (DoD), 3–4, 7, 10, 16, 20, 25–26, 33, 36–37, 63, 111, 141, 170, 204, 222, 259, 322, 364, 395, 420, 435, 444, 453, 469, 471–72, 477–78, 483, 485
Department of the Army Field Manual
  1 *The Army*, 453–54
  3–0 *Operations*, 7, 8, 453–54
  3–07 *Stability Operations and Support Operations*, 8, 9
  3–07.22, Interim, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 8, 67
  3–24 *Counterinsurgency*, 9–11, 199, 206–07, 229, 247, 249, 259–61
  5–0 *The Operations Process*, 11, 12
  90–8 *Counterguerrilla Operations*, 247
  100–5 *Operations*, 454
  100–20 *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflicts*, 8
DoD. *See* Department of Defense (DoD).
Donahue, Col. Patrick J., II, 41
Dost Mohammed, Sheikh. *See* Mohammed, Sheikh Dost.
Drinkwine, Col. Brian M., 297, 362
Drones. *See* Predator drones; RQ–5A Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle; RQ–7A Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle.
Drushal, Col. Jeffrey W., 393
Dunford, General Joseph F. Jr., 405, 408, 410–14, 425–26, 429, 443, 449
Durbin, Maj. Gen. Robert E., 47–48, 50, 108–09
Dussault, R. Adm. Kathleen M., 326
Dzadran District, 157

Edwards, Col. James D., 273
Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, 33, 190, 330
Eide, Kai, 264
Eikenberry, Karl W.
  Ambassador, 194, 263, 268–69, 322–23
  Lt. Gen., 35–36, 40, 43–44, 48, 52, 61, 63, 66, 75, 87, 111, 115, 117, 119, 123, 141, 143, 182, 213, 317
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 271
Ell, Lt. Col. David J.
Engineer Battalion, 46th, 111, 364, 379, 418, 442, 458
Estevez, Alan F., 394

F–15E Strike Eagle fighters, 258, 391
Faizabad, 51
Fallon, Admiral William J., 126–27
Farah, 49, 51, 110, 86, 373
Faryab Province, 359, 381, 432
  Aqineh, 381
FATA. *See* Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).
Fazal Hayat. *See* Hayat, Fazal.
Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), 57, 60–61, 113, 191, 344
Fenty, Lt. Col. Joseph M., 64, 72–73, 254
Ferrell, Brig. Gen. Terry R., 460
Field Artillery Battalions
  1st, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163
  1st, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 299, 301
  2d, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 95
  2d, 321st Field Artillery Regiment, 124, 297

3d, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 246
4th, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 64, 211
4th, 42d Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 297
4th, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 137
4th, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 162, 416
5th, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 66
Field Artillery Regiments
6th, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163
25th, 64, 66, 95, 211
42d, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 297
319th, 137
320th, 162, 299, 301, 416
321st, 124, 297
Flournoy, Michèle A., 10, 227
Flynn, Lt. Col. David S., 299, 301
Flynn, Maj. Gen. Michael T., 226, 239–40
Focused District Development, 139–40, 318
Foreign units
1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, 65
1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, 93, 96, 297
3 Royal Marine Commando Brigade, 92
3d Parachute Battalion, 89, 92
Royal Air Force, 263
Formica, Maj. Gen. Richard P., 164, 310
FORSCOM. *See* U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM).
Forsythe, Lt. Col. Michael J., 219
Forts
Benning, 459
Bliss, 32, 190, 459
Bragg, 32–33, 124, 190, 297, 330, 397
Campbell, 32, 384, 419, 441
Carson, 297, 364
Drum, 79
Hood, 130, 437
Irwin, 30, 33, 246, 248, 460
Knox, 190, 459
Leavenworth, 7–9, 170, 200, 453
Lewis, 23, 32, 129, 137, 246, 287–89, 369
McNair, 354–55
Polk, 33, 65, 163, 363
Riley, 190, 363, 365
Sill, 459
Stewart, 23
Forward Operating Bases
Bostick, 137, 256
Fenty, 64, 72–73, 137, 254, 259, 402–03
Gamberi, 439–40
Gardez, 417–18
Kalagush, 137
Lightning, 439
Mehtar Lam, 138
Orgun-E, 380
Salerno, 380
Shank, 419
Sharana, 256
Fragmentary Order (FRAGO)
07–769, 386
07–778, 390
081–2013, 411
11–072, 379
11–228, 386
408, 327–28
Fraser, Brig. Gen. David, 64, 66, 76, 79, 84, 89, 92–95, 98–103, 105–106
Freakley, Maj. Gen. Benjamin C., 63, 65–66, 68–69, 72–73, 79, 83–84, 86, 89, 91, 94–95, 98, 100, 105–06, 111, 113–15, 119, 121, 124, 183
French, Lt. Col. Jeffrey W., 246, 274, 287
Fuhr, Lt. Col. Daniel J., 162
Fulda Gap, 484
Future Combat System (FCS), 26

Gabel, Lt. Col. Michael P., 211

Gallahue, Lt. Col. Kimo C., 211
Gamble, Brig. Gen. Duane A., 422
Gardez, 51–52, 69, 128, 157–58, 332, 358, 439
Gardner, Lt. Col. David W., 397–98
Garm Ser, 173, 241, 244
Gates, Robert M., 23–24, 29, 31, 122–24, 128, 136, 149, 189, 194–95, 197–98, 203, 220, 222, 225–27, 230–32, 236–37, 264, 269, 271, 291, 310, 458, 466
Gaydon, Lt. Col. Patrick, 246, 288
Gaylord, Lt. Col. James, 273
George, Col. Randy A., 219, 255–56, 260
Geren, Pete, 145
Ghani, Ashraf, 194, 263–64, 434, 450
Ghani Baradar, Mullah Abdul. *See* Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani.
Ghaziabad District, 447
Ghazni Province, 49, 51, 69, 80, 113–114, 127–28, 132, 134, 153, 157, 163, 213, 347, 439
  Andar District, 134
  Deh Yak District, 157
Ghor Province, 359
Giap, Vo Nguyen, 9
Gibbs, S. Sgt. Calvin R., 287–89
Girishk, 89, 173, 211, 241
Global War on Terrorism, 7, 34–35, 54, 122, 189, 195, 336, 466, 470, 475, 482, 485
Gold Book, 19
Goldthorpe, Lt. Col. Daniel P., 211
Gonzalez, Lt. Col. Alberto C., 137
Gor Teppah, 335
Green, Lt. Col. Andrew, 273
Green Zone, 251, 253, 301
Green-on-blue incidents, 353, 368, 370–72, 415, 431, 481
  insider attacks, Combat Outpost Sangsar, 370
  Quran burnings, 369–71, 486
Greene, Maj. Gen. Harold R., 424–25, 445–46
Grenada, 8
Grow the Army, 7, 28–30, 181, 345, 364, 458, 462
Haas, Brig. Gen. Christopher K., 322
Hadley, Stephen J., 119, 122
Hagel, Charles T., 391
Hagenbeck, Maj. Gen. Franklin L., 470
Haight, Col. David B., 209, 211–12, 215
Hairatan, 381
Haji Mohammed Qassam. *See* Qassam, Haji Mohammed.
Hale, Lt. Col. Anthony R., 273
Hall, Lt. Col. Richard D., 173
Hanif Atmar, Mohammed. *See* Atmar, Mohammed Hanif.
Hanlin, Capt. Max, 276
Haqqani Network, 45, 54–55, 57, 60–62, 69, 113, 115, 139, 149, 152, 154, 183, 190, 335, 344, 351, 366, 398–401, 416–18, 431, 440, 450–52, 471
Haqqani, Anas, 450
Harmon, Lt. Col. Robert J. Jr., 300, 302
Harward, V. Adm. Robert S., 306
Hastings, Michael M., 290
Havens, Capt. Carl A., 279
Hayat, Fazal, 151
Hazrat Omar. *See* Omar, Hazrat.
Hekmatyar, Gulbuddin, 54–55, 57, 68. *See also* Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).
Helicopters, 26, 73, 76, 80, 85, 91–92, 159, 173–74, 189, 217, 240, 244, 255–58, 260, 263, 278, 281, 301–02, 330, 334, 369, 371, 373, 391, 399–400, 402–03, 417–418, 434, 448, 463–64. *See also* AH–1W Super Cobra gunships; AH–64 Apache gunships; Aircraft, miscellaneous; Aircraft, rotary-wing; Black Hawks; CH–47 Chinooks; CH–53 Sea Stallions; Comanches; MH–60 Black Hawks; Mi–17 cargo helicopter; OH–58 Kiowas; UH–60 Black Hawks.
Hellfire missile, 203, 301, 400
Helmand Province, 49, 51–52, 78–79, 81, 87–88, 104–06, 110, 118, 121, 143, 163, 170, 175, 183, 190, 209, 219–20, 223, 232, 236, 240, 248,

272, 283, 294, 323, 331, 335, 373, 379, 439–40, 448
Baghran, 84–86
Bahram Chah, 241
Garm Ser, 173, 241, 244
Girishk, 89, 173, 211, 241
Khan Neshin, 241, 244
Lashkar Gah, 54, 84, 89, 173, 191, 210–11, 241–42, 244, 278, 282, 285, 347
Marjah, 90, 241–44, 273, 277–82, 295–96
Musa Qal'ah, 90–92, 171–72
Nad 'Ali, 173, 241–42, 273, 278, 280, 282
Nawah-ye Barakza'i, 173, 241, 244
Now Zad, 91, 241, 434
Sangin, 90–91, 173, 241, 263, 282, 434
Helmand River, 90, 173, 211, 440
Helmand River Valley, 54, 89, 220, 241, 243–44, 272, 440
Herat Province, 51, 141, 347, 381, 436, 449
Toraghundi, 381
Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), 44, 54–55, 57, 62, 68–69, 73, 75, 183, 237, 334, 471
HIG. *See* Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).
High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), 4, 403
Hindu Kush, 380–81
HMMWV. *See* High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV).
Holbrooke, Richard C., 194, 198, 210, 228, 263–64
Hope, Col. Ian, 65, 77, 79, 85, 90, 93, 271, 318
Horn of Panjwa'i, 302
Horvath, Lt. Col. Jan S., 8
Howard, Col. Bart, 123
Howard, Col. Michael L., 219
Howitz, Lt. Col. Michael C., 66
Howitzers, 26, 66, 95, 416–18, 458
Huber, Lt. Gen. Keith M., 306, 410
Huff, Lt. Col. William, 297
Hurlbut, Lt. Col. Daniel S., 163, 175
Hussein, Saddam, *See* Saddam Hussein.
Hyat, General Ahsan, 150

I Corps. *See* Corps, I.
I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), 283, 285
IEDs. *See* Improvised explosive devices (IEDs).
II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), 437
III Corps. *See* Corps, III.
IJC. *See* ISAF Joint Command (IJC).
Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), 4, 50, 53–55, 57–59, 85, 91, 93, 127, 171, 175, 187, 210–11, 213, 241–42, 244, 248, 251–52, 263, 272, 274, 278–82, 290, 295, 300–301, 304, 334–35, 366, 398, 408–09, 441
India, 59, 62, 184, 191, 401
Infantry Battalions
1st, 4th Infantry Regiment, 81
1st, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 219, 290
1st, 17th Infantry Regiment, 246, 251, 276, 280, 286
1st, 22d Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 297
1st, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163
1st, 32d Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, 64, 164, 211
1st, 87th Infantry Regiment, 335
1st, 102d Infantry Regiment, 80
1st, 158th Infantry Regiment, 137
1st, 178th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 162, 219
1st, 187th Infantry Regiment, 300, 302

Infantry Battalions—*Continued*
1st, 501st Infantry Regiment, 217, 219, 400
1st, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 299
1st, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 162, 416, 418
1st, 508th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 124, 154, 297, 474
2d, 1st Infantry Regiment, 246, 274, 286–87
2d, 2d Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163, 175, 219
2d, 3d Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, 369
2d, 4th Infantry Regiment, 65, 95, 101
2d, 12th Infantry Regiment, 219
2d, 22d Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, 310
2d, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, 65, 115
2d, 87th Infantry Regiment, 64, 99, 102, 211
2d, 187th Infantry Regiment, 135
2d, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 299
2d, 503d Infantry Regiment, 137, 168
2d, 505th Infantry Regiment, 397–98
2d, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 162
2d, 508th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 124, 297, 299, 370
3d, 141st Infantry Regiment, 80
3d, 509th Infantry Regiment, 219
4th, 23d Infantry Regiment, 246, 280, 286–87
Infantry Brigade Combat Teams
1st, 4th Infantry Division, 297, 364
2d, 1st Infantry Division, 365
2d, 3d Infantry Division, 23
3d, 1st Infantry Division, 163
3d, 2d Infantry Division. 369
4th, 2d Infantry Division, 23
4th, 4th Infantry Division, 255, 290, 402
4th, 25th Infantry Division, 219, 366, 400–401
5th, 2d Infantry Division, 246
33d, 162
172d, 27
Infantry Brigades
1st, 1st Infantry Division, 363
1st, 34th Infantry Division, 22
4th, 4th Infantry Division, 219
4th, 25th Infantry Division, 213
162d, 363
170th, 365
172d, 365
218th, 24
Infantry Divisions
1st, 27, 163, 189–90, 363, 365
2d, 23, 246–47, 252, 369, 460
3d, 23, 27, 440, 442
4th, 219, 255, 290, 297, 364, 402, 437
25th, 213, 219, 366, 400
34th, 22
Infantry Group, 207th, 100
Infantry Regiments
1st, 246, 274, 286–87
2d, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163, 175, 219
3d, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 2d Infantry Division, 369
4th, 65, 81, 95, 101
12th, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, 219, 290

17th, 246, 251, 276, 280, 286
22d, 297, 310
23d, 246, 280, 286–87
26th, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, 163
30th, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, 65, 115
32d, 64, 164, 211
87th, 64, 99, 102, 211, 335
102d, 80
141st, 80
158th, 137
178th, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 162, 219
187th, 135, 300, 302
501st, 217, 219, 400
502d, 299
503d, 137–38, 168
505th, 397–98
506th, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, 162, 416, 418
508th, 124, 154, 297, 299, 370, 474
Ingram, Cpl. Michael K., 290
INTEQAL Process. *See* Joint Framework for INTEQAL.
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), 4–6, 44, 48, 52, 57, 59–62, 72, 85, 94, 109, 113, 115, 119, 127, 134, 143, 150, 159, 163, 168, 183, 188, 190, 200–201, 207, 215, 220, 226–27, 230–31, 239–41, 248, 251, 266, 269, 277, 288, 296–97, 299–302, 304, 313, 315, 323, 337–39, 343–45, 353, 385, 387, 390, 408, 431, 461, 475–78, 483, 486. *See also* ISAF Joint Command (IJC); ISAF Theater Tactical Reserve.
Afghan relations, 368–70
American leadership of, 125–26, 176, 179, 204
and IEDs, 58, 281
and SOF, 43, 104, 321, 327–34, 448
anticorruption, 325–27
April 2014 elections, 432
August 2009 elections, 263–64
British leadership of, 87–89, 291
change in mission, 224–25
Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, 317–18
drawdown and transition, 347–49, 357–59, 363, 370, 378–83, 392, 398, 416, 419–23, 426–27, 429–30, 432, 435–39, 442–43, 449–50, 459, 472–74, 479–82
in Helmand Province, 211, 272, 283
in Kandahar Province, 272, 295
in Marjah, 242, 273, 282
infrastructure, 398–404
intelligence collection, 351
lack of reserve force, 124
OP TOLO, 206
Operation HAMKARI, 295–306
Operation MEDUSA, 95–102
Operation MOSHTARAK, 278
Operation NAWEED, 372–75
Operation PANCHAI PALANG, 244
Operation Plan 38302, 206, 229, 232, 350, 426
Operational Coordination Centers, 316
Provincial Reconstruction Teams, 110, 147, 320, 358–59
RC East, 114, 117–18, 164–67, 212, 257, 259, 323
RC South, 45, 64–66, 69, 76–79, 81–84, 86, 92, 103–06, 110, 170–74, 212, 223, 246, 273
RC Southwest, 272
RC West, 37, 45, 110
security, 37–38, 40, 53, 121, 141, 145, 191, 292, 309, 320, 355, 366, 405–06, 415–16, 424
Supreme Allied Commander Europe's Operations Plan 10302, 75
surge detentions, 305–07
targeting insurgents, 153–54, 167,213, 233–34, 236, 265, 285–86, 293, 295, 334–35,

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)—*Continued*
targeting insurgents—*Continued*
367, 424–25, 441, 474
training, 309–12, 314, 352, 443–46
Unified Implementation Plan, 409–13
unity of effort, 181–82, 205, 224–25, 228, 237–38
Iraq, 3–5, 8–10, 14–15, 17, 19–21, 26–34, 36–38, 40, 43, 48, 57–58, 62, 111, 122–24, 126, 129, 136, 154, 163, 177, 181–82, 184, 187–88, 190, 194, 199–200, 204, 207, 209–10, 216, 220, 222–23, 225–26, 237, 240, 246–47, 260–61, 271, 294, 330, 333, 337–39, 345–46, 351, 354, 362, 364–65, 378, 380, 453, 455–56, 461–65, 470–72, 474–76, 478, 482–83, 485, 488
ISAF. *See* International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).
ISAF Joint Command (IJC), 231, 237–39, 253, 257, 285, 293, 310, 317, 321–23, 327, 371–72, 379, 388, 391, 394, 409–11, 419, 425, 436, 442–43, 449, 459
ISAF Theater Tactical Reserve, 172, 474
Islamabad, 57, 60–62, 149–53, 183, 191, 344, 355, 383, 391–92, 401, 480–81, 484
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, 57, 139, 334, 344, 451
Ives, Col. Jonathan G., 130

Jacobson, Brig. Gen. Carsten, 352
Jacoby, General Charles H. Jr., 287
Jaghatu District, 157
Jaji District, 417
Jalalabad, 51–52, 128, 137–38, 154, 158, 402, 432, 439, 449
Airfield, 130
Jamal, Arsallah, 153
Jenio, Lt. Col. Frank, 297
Jenkinson, Lt. Col. Brett C., 163
Jihad, 55, 60–62, 150, 152, 190–91, 201, 352
Jinnah International Airport, 450
Jirga, 320, 413, 450
Johnson, Col. John P., 162, 219
Joint Force Engineer Command–Afghanistan, 442
Joint Forces Command–Brunssum, 76, 115, 126
Joint Framework for Inteqal, 345, 357–58, 360, 405, 409–11
Joint Operational Corps Headquarters, 419–20
Joint Readiness Training Center, 8, 22, 33, 461
Joint Task Force 435. *See* Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435.
Joint Task Force 3, 440
Jones, Lt. Col. Guy, 297
Jones, General James L., 76, 197
Jordan, 144, 437
Jowzjan Province, 359

Kabul, 4–5, 39, 49, 51–52, 55, 58, 68–69, 77, 108, 113, 115–16, 125, 128, 130, 137, 141, 143, 154, 157, 159, 161, 184, 191, 193–94, 208, 210, 212, 214–16, 227, 230, 244, 254, 264–65, 277, 282, 293, 306, 310, 315, 334, 352–53, 358–59, 368, 370, 395, 401–02, 408, 415, 429, 431–32, 439, 441–42, 446, 448, 450, 470–71, 473, 476, 479
Sarobi District, 213, 347
Kabul International Airport, 353
Kaiser, Lt. Col. Richard G., 64
Kajaki hydroelectric facility (Band-e Kajaki), 52, 91
Kamdesh District, 68, 254–55
Kamiya, Maj. Gen. Jason K., 41, 43–45, 63, 68
Kandahar, 49, 64, 66, 69, 81, 85–86, 96, 98, 105, 130, 141, 220, 236, 240–41, 246, 251, 273, 282, 285, 299–300, 302, 323, 358, 369, 373, 379, 381, 422, 437, 471
Kandahar Airfield, 84, 380, 384, 393–94

Kandahar City, 54, 65, 78–79, 84, 93–95, 104, 121, 127, 170–71, 173–76, 183–84, 188, 295–97, 304, 364
Kandahar Province
Baghran Valley, 85–86
Bazar-e Panjwa'I, 94, 96
Bilanday, 175
Chore Mandeh Valley, 86
Khod Valley, 86
Maywand District, 175, 251, 274
Nakhune, 175
Panjwa'i District, 93–97, 103–04, 170, 173, 251, 274, 295, 299, 302, 304
Pashmul, 93–97, 102–03
Zharey District, 93, 104, 170, 173, 251, 290, 295, 302
Kandak(s). *See* Afghan National Army (ANA).
Kandarian, Col. Arthur A., 273, 299–302
Kapisa Province, 116–17, 166, 183, 213
Karachi, 184, 381, 383–84, 392, 450
Karzai, Hamid, 47–50, 59, 62, 77, 87–88, 91, 94, 113, 118, 134, 139, 153, 158, 161, 167, 171, 174, 182, 184, 191, 193–194, 206, 210, 224, 228, 239, 256, 263–65, 268, 270, 277, 281–82, 294, 296–97, 317, 319–22, 332, 338, 345, 347, 353, 359, 361–62, 399, 413, 415, 434, 442, 445, 475, 477
Kashmir, 60, 62
Kassulke, Capt. Joel R., 276
Kayani, General Ashfaq, 150
Kazakhstan, 381
Kelly, Col. Jeffrey P., 163
Kem, Jack D., 312
KHALID BIN WALEED. *See* Operations, enemy.
Khalid, Asadullah, 94
Khalilzad, Zalmay M., 118
Khaliq, Maj. Gen. Abdul, 134
Khan, Imran, 421, 423
Khan Neshin, 241, 244
Khar, Hina Rabbani, 392
Kharwar District, 157
Khatabah, 332
Khiali Valley, 151
Khod Valley, 86
Khosrow Sofla, 301
Khost Province, 52, 55, 64, 69, 83, 109, 113, 128, 153, 158, 163, 213, 215, 359, 366, 373, 380, 399, 439
Sperah District, 157
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region, 151, 421–22
Khyber Pass, 381, 392
Kiowas. *See* OH–58 Kiowas.
Kitson, Frank, 9
Knaggs, Col. Charles P. H., 89
Kolenda, Col. Christopher D., 137, 229, 254
Koran. *See* Quran.
Korangal, 73, 160–61, 484
Kosovo, 473
Kraft, Col. James E., 329–30
Krepinevich, Andrew F., 28
Kruse, Charles, 145
Kunar Province, 57, 68, 83, 109, 111, 128, 135, 137, 139, 147, 164, 211, 213, 259, 359, 373
Asadabad, 52, 72, 158, 447
Chawkay, 72
Ghaziabad District, 447
Korangal, 73, 160–61, 484
Kunduz Province, 110, 334, 448
Chahar Darah District, 335
Qizil Qal'ah, 381
Kuwait, 4, 22, 223, 380, 384, 422, 484

LaCamera, Maj. Gen. Paul J., 437
Laghman Province, 68, 109, 128, 135, 138, 147, 164, 213, 318, 359, 439
Lal Masjid. *See* Red Mosque.
Landes, Col. Mark H., 365
Lashkar Gah, 54, 84, 89, 173, 191, 210–11, 241–42, 244, 278, 282, 285, 347
Lavoie, Lt. Col. Omer H., 93–98
Layeha, 200, 201
Law, Lt. Col. Robert A., 219
Lemon, Lt. Col. Rodger, 297, 299, 301
Lenin, Vladimir, 9
Leonard, Lt. Col. Steven M., 9

Letcher, Lt. Col. Michelle M. T., 394, 397
Lillibridge, Col. Reynolds J., 366
Linder, Brig. Gen. James B., 321
Logar Province, 55, 113, 128, 153, 163, 177, 208–09, 211–14, 227, 247, 365, 373, 398, 408, 419, 439
  Azrah (District), 417
  Baraki Barak, 157
  Charkh District, 157
  Kharwar District, 157
  Jaji District, 417
Longo, Maj. Gen. Richard C., 410
Loya Jirga, 413. *See also* Jirga.
  Constitutional, 450
Loya-Paktia region, 55
Luong, Brig. Gen. Viet, 437
Lute, Lt. Gen. Douglas E., 65, 177, 191, 193, 195, 259, 268, 475
Lynch, Lt. Col. John M., 137

M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank (MBT), 4
M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV), 4, 364–65
M1120 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck Load Handling Systems (HEMTT), 417
MacDill Air Force Base, 122, 332
MacFarland, Maj. Gen. Sean B., 27, 411
Machine gun, 57, 168, 371, 391, 400, 402
Madrassa, 55, 58, 62, 103, 151–52, 295
Malaya, 9
Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 1st, 163, 213
Manning, Spc. Bradley E., 194, 461
Manning, Chelsea E. *See* Manning, Spc. Bradley E.
Mansour, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed, 352, 431
Maranian, Lt. Col. Stephen J., 137
Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–0, *Marine Corps Operations*, 222
Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan, 220, 222–23, 241, 244, 272, 277, 283, 437
Marine Corps, U.S., 4, 6–7, 9–10, 68, 173, 199, 208, 219, 220, 222–23, 240–41, 244, 272, 281–83, 285–86, 390, 425, 456, 483, 486
Marine Corps units. *See also* Marine Expeditionary Brigade–Afghanistan.
  1st Battalion, 3d Marines, 64, 72
  1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 244
  1st Battalion, 6th Marines, 173, 278, 280
  2d Battalion, 7th Marines (Reinforced), 173
  2d Battalion, 8th Marines, 244
  3d Battalion, 6th Marines, 282
  3d Battalion, 8th Marines, 173, 209
  3d Marine Air Wing (Forward), 402
  24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 121, 163, 173
  I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), 283, 285
  II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), 437
  Regimental Combat Team–7, 280
  Retrograde and Redeployment In Support of Reset and Reconstitution Operations Group, 390
Marjah, 90, 241–44, 273, 277–82, 295–96
Markert, Lt. Col. James C., 163
Martindale, Col. Jeffrey R., 297, 364
Martins, Brig. Gen. Mark A., 326
Ma'sum Ghar, 94, 96
Materiel Recovery Element, 388, 390–91, 393–94, 397, 416, 420
Matlock, Col. Patrick E., 365
Mattis, General James N., 304, 390, 467
Maulawi Bahadur. *See* Bahadur, Maulawi.
Maulawi Mohammed Osman, Mullah. *See* Osman, Mullah Maulawi Mohammed.
Maya, 391–92
Mazar-e Sharif, 51, 347, 381, 393, 436, 449
McAteer, Lt. Col. Timothy J., 124, 134

McBride, Col. Douglas M. Jr., 397
McCaffrey, General Barry, 312
McChrystal, General Stanley A., 188, 203, 226–37, 239–40, 242–43, 247, 253, 255–56, 259–62, 267–69, 272–74, 276–77, 282–83, 285, 288, 290–93, 306, 310, 318, 321, 323, 327, 330–33, 337–38, 461, 475–78
McCullough, Lt. Col. William F., 244
McDonnell, Lt. Col. Frederick M., 211
McFayden, Lt. Col. Thomas N., 299
McGinnis, David L., 463
McHale, Maj. Gen. Timothy P., 378, 386
McHugh, John M., 19, 287–88, 466
McKiernan, General David D., 6, 176–77, 179, 182, 184, 187–88, 197, 200, 203, 205–13, 216–17, 219–20, 224–30, 232, 240–41, 243, 246, 251, 291, 293, 318, 322, 327, 337, 475, 486
McMaster, Brig. Gen. Herbert R., 325–26, 410, 467, 483
McNeill, General Dan K., 6, 109, 121, 123, 125–27, 130, 140–41, 149–50, 154, 170, 176, 182–83, 213, 358, 470, 474, 486
McRaven, V. Adm. William H., 332
Mehsud, Baitullah, 149–50, 152
Mehsud, Hakimullah, 355, 421
Mehtar Lam, 318, 347
Mennes, Lt. Col. Brian J., 124, 154, 162, 474
Metternich, Lt. Col. Ronald J., 65, 115
Metz, Steven K., 9
MH–60 Black Hawks, 334. *See also* Black Hawks; UH–60 Black Hawks.
Mi–17 cargo helicopter, 448
Mialkowski, Lt. Col. Conrad J., 297
Milestone 2013, 405–06, 411, 439, 442
Milhorn, Lt. Col. Jeffrey O., 137, 154
Military intelligence, 16, 29, 31, 129, 352
Military Intelligence Battalions
  319th, 273
  519th, 273
Military police, 16, 130, 137, 297, 364, 369, 446
Military Police Battalions
  504th, 297
  519th, 163
  535th, 368
Miller, Brig. Gen. Austin S. "Scott", 226, 319, 322, 332–33
Milley, Lt. Gen. Mark A., 212, 216, 425
Mills, Maj. Gen. Richard P., 283, 285
Milner, Maj. Gen. Dean J., 425
Minalga, Lt. Col. Peter, 219
Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, 4, 189, 252, 299, 301, 383, 397, 400, 418
Ministry of Interior, 46–47, 51, 109, 317–18, 320–22, 368, 374, 405, 408, 412, 414–15, 427
Miran Shah, 55, 202, 400
Mitchell, Lt. Col. Charles, 297
Moder, Capt. John A., 278–79
Modularity, 14, 21, 26–29, 181, 218, 463, 465, 485
Mohammadi, General Bismillah Khan, 73, 150
Mohammed Akhundzada, Sher. *See* Akhundzada, Sher Mohammed.
Mohammed Douad. *See* Douad, Mohammed.
Mohammed Hanif Atmar. *See* Atmar, Mohammed Hanif.
Mohammed Mansour, Mullah Akhtar. *See* Mansour, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed.
Mohammed Omar, Mullah. *See* Omar, Mullah Mohammed.
Mohammed Osman, Mullah Maulawi. *See* Osman, Mullah Maulawi Mohammed.
Mohammed Osmani, Akhtar. *See* Osmani, Akhtar Mohammed.
Mohammed Qassam, Haji. *See* Qassam, Haji Mohammed.
Mohammed, Sheikh Dost, 139
Mohmand, 392
Moon, Ban-Ki, 264
Mortars, 57, 103, 161, 168, 257, 301–02,

391, 403, 409, 416, 418–19
Mountain Division, 10th, 7, 27, 38, 44, 62–66, 69, 104, 114–15, 117, 121, 128, 138, 164, 209, 211, 213, 219, 247, 254, 310, 365, 379–80, 401, 409, 439–40
Mountain Division, 10th, units
1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 64, 164, 211
1st Brigade, 27, 365
2d Battalion, 22d Infantry Regiment, 310
2d Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 65, 115
2d Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 64, 99, 102, 211
3d Brigade, 7, 121, 128, 213, 219
3d Brigade Combat Team, 63, 164, 177, 209, 211, 247, 254
3d Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 64, 84, 211, 254
4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 64, 211
4th Brigade Combat Team, 62–66, 79, 83, 104, 115
710th Support Battalion, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 64
Combat Aviation Brigade, 63
Moses, Maj. Bradley D., 318
MRAP. *See* Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles.
Mujahideen, 55, 73, 78, 93, 113, 201
Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. *See* Baradar, Mullah Abdul Ghani.
Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir. *See* Zakir, Mullah Abdul Qayyum.
Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Mansour. *See* Mansour, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed.
Mullah Dadullah Akhund. *See* Akhund, Mullah Dadullah.
Mullah Fazlullah. *See* Hayat, Fazal.
Mullah Maulawi Mohammed Osman. *See* Osman, Mullah Maulawi Mohammed.
Mullah Mohammed Omar. *See* Omar, Mullah Mohammed.
Mullah Obiadullah Akhund. *See* Akhund, Mullah Obiadullah.
Mullen, Admiral Michael G., 123, 177, 197, 209–10, 225–27, 229–32, 268, 291, 323, 454
Multinational Brigade South, 79
Multinational Division North, 27
Multi-National Force–Iraq, 4, 20
Multinational Security Transition Command–Iraq, 9
Munguia, Ricardo, 51
Murad, Satar, 116
Murray, Maj. Gen. John M., 440
Musa Qal'ah, 90–92, 171–72
Musharraf, Pervez, 59–60, 118–19, 151–52, 202
MV–22 Osprey, 281, 333, 402
Myers, General Richard B., 36

Nad 'Ali, 173, 241–42, 273, 278, 280, 282
Nakhune, 175
Nagl, Lt. Col. John A., 28
Nangarhar Inc., 138, 146–47, 183
Nangarhar Province, 55, 57, 68, 83, 109, 135, 146–47, 183, 213, 373, 381, 398
Bihsud District, 158
Jalalabad District, 51–52, 128, 130, 137–38, 154, 158, 402, 432, 439, 449
National Defense Strategy, 453, 455
National Guard. *See* U.S. Army National Guard.
National Security Council, 40, 177, 191, 197, 243, 267–68, 270, 391, 469, 472, 475
National Training Center, 22, 33, 246–48, 460
National Unity Government, 434, 450
NATO. *See* North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
NATO Air Command–Afghanistan, 409, 427

NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan, 375, 409, 427
NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan, 231, 237, 309–12, 314, 316, 320–21, 365–66, 368, 375, 395, 4019, 414, 424–26, 442–43
Navy Sea-Air-Land elements (SEALs), 73
Navy, U.S., 111, 326, 330, 332
Nawah-ye Barkaza'i District, 173, 241, 244
Netherlands, 76, 103, 224, 379
Neumann, Lt. Col. Jonathan A., 251, 286
Neumann, Ronald E., 35–36, 40, 47, 50, 67, 277, 317
New York Army National Guard, 393
Nicholson, Brig. Gen. John W. Jr., 63–64, 72, 113–14, 125, 250
Nicholson, Brig. Gen. Larry D., 277, 280–81, 283
Nimroz Province, 51, 272, 285, 347, 373, 439
North Atlantic Council, 37–38, 126, 224, 232, 236, 285, 309, 326, 350, 410, 426
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 4–6, 37–38, 40, 45, 60, 64–67, 69, 75–76, 78–81, 84–87, 90, 94, 96, 98, 104–06, 113–15, 119, 121–22, 125–26, 143, 150, 172, 174–76, 182–84, 207, 220, 228, 231–34, 236–39, 248, 253, 263, 265, 270, 282, 310–12, 314–16, 320–21, 323, 326–27, 345, 349–50, 353, 357, 361–62, 365, 368, 372, 375, 378, 381, 385, 387, 395, 409–10, 413, 424–27, 436, 440, 442, 445, 449, 451, 472–74, 476, 478, 481, 483, 486. *See also* NATO Air Command–Afghanistan; NATO Special Operations Command–Afghanistan; NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan.
North Waziristan, 57, 60–61, 139, 149, 151, 202, 355, 450
Northern Distribution Network, 381, 383–84, 397
Northwest Frontier Province, 62, 151
Nouri al-Maliki. *See* al-Maliki, Nouri.
Now Zad, 91, 241, 434
Nuristan Province, 45, 57, 68–69, 72–73, 83, 109, 111, 121, 128, 135, 137, 139, 147, 158, 160–61, 213, 229, 253–54, 256, 259, 373
  Kamdesh, 68, 254–55
  Shoryak River Valley, 73

Obama, Barack H., 5, 177, 187–88, 193–98, 202–04, 208–09, 213, 219, 225, 227, 235, 238, 240, 262–64, 267–70, 290–92, 294, 309, 313, 329, 337–38, 344, 347, 349–50, 354, 361, 429–30, 452, 454–55, 457, 467, 469, 475–78, 482–84
  West Point, speech at, 271, 377
  retrograde operations, 343, 355, 377–80, 385–88, 390–93, 395, 397–98, 401, 410, 413, 418, 420–21, 423, 432, 434, 479–81
Obiadullah Akhund, Mullah. *See* Akhund, Mullah Obiadullah.
Oclander, Lt. Col. David, 297
ODAs. *See* Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs).
Odierno, General Raymond T., 346, 454–56, 466
Odom, Lt. Col. David L., 209
Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan. *See* Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A).
OH–58 Kiowas, 332, 400, 403, 463
OIF. *See* Operations, U.S., IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF).
Olson, Admiral Eric T., 321, 327
Omar, Hazrat, 159–60
Omar, Mullah Mohammed, 10, 55, 85, 90–91, 127, 152, 201, 294, 336, 352, 431
OP TOLO, 206–207, 216

Operation TOLO. *See* OP TOLO.
Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs), 43, 68, 73, 85, 94–95, 99, 116, 129, 369, 398
Operations, enemy
AL-BADR campaign, 344
EBRAT, 173, 190
KHALID BIN WALEED offensive, 415
KHAYBAR offensive, 431
NASRAT, 191
Operations, U.S.
1391. *See* Afghan National Army (ANA), Operation NAWEED.
1392. *See* Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), Operation 1392.
ACHILLES, 172
ANACONDA, 103, 135, 211, 443, 470
ATHENA, 64, 93
BAAZ TSUKA. *See* FALCON SUMMIT.
CLEAN SWEEP–AFGHANISTAN, 386–87
COMMANDO WRATH, 144
DESERT STORM, 7, 222–23, 464–65, 479
DRAGON STRIKE, 302
DRUMBEAT, 419–21, 423, 434
EAGLE STRENGTH, 132
EASTERN RESOLVE II, 244
FALCON SUMMIT, 104
FOCUS HOLD, 252
FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, 349, 413, 429–30, 481
HAMKARI, 294–97, 299, 302, 307, 335
HELMAND SPIDER, 280
IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), 4–5, 20–21, 27, 30, 181, 187, 223, 362, 457, 462, 479
KHANJAR, 244, 246
MAIWAND, 133–35, 153, 183
MEDUSA, 92, 94–98, 101–04, 121, 170, 183, 251, 299, 474
MOSHTARAK, 188, 236, 244, 272–73, 276–78, 280–283, 293–96, 307
MOUNTAIN EAGLE, 69, 111, 115–16, 132, 183
MOUNTAIN FURY, 69, 83, 94, 111, 113–14
MOUNTAIN LION, 68–69, 72–73, 81, 83, 111, 114, 470
MOUNTAIN THRUST, 69, 81, 83–86, 91, 93, 105
MOUNTAIN VICTORY, 69
NAWEED. *See* Afghan National Army (ANA), Operation NAWEED.
NEW DAWN, 384–85
NEWBURGH, 43
OPPORTUNITY HOLD, 252–53
OQAB, 405, 410, 412, 414
OQAB ETEHAB, 132
OQAB HAMKARI, 130, 132–33, 155
PAMIR HAMKARI, 154–55, 158
PANCHAI PALANG, 244
READY EAGLE, 397–98
RESOLUTE SUPPORT, 349, 413, 423, 425–26, 429–30, 434, 436, 439–40, 442–44, 449, 451, 481, 484, 487
ROCK AVALANCHE, 160–61
SARDIQ SARBAZ, 171
SECURE PROSPERITY, 44
SELAB, 373
SEMOURGH, 417
SUSTAIN HOLD, 252
ZARB-E-AZB, 450
Opium, 85, 87–88, 92, 147, 211, 241, 244, 352, 471
Ordnance Group (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), 52d, 441
Osman, Mullah Maulawi Mohammed, 159–60, 168
Osmani, Akhtar Mohammed, 104
O'Steen, Lt. Col. Thomas W., 162
Ostlund, Lt. Col. William B., 137, 158–61, 167, 170
Owens, Col. Kevin C., 41, 64, 78–79, 229

Padgett, Lt. Col. Clay, 297
Paganini, Lt. Col. John M., 273, 297
Pakistan, 43–45, 54–55, 57–62, 103–04, 113, 115, 118, 121, 123, 125,

127, 137, 139, 147, 149–53, 155, 162, 165, 167, 183–84, 190–91, 193–200, 202–03, 207, 209, 212, 214–15, 226, 237–39, 241–42, 254, 263, 268–70, 294–96, 305, 334, 336–37, 344–45, 349, 351–52, 354–55, 380–81, 383, 391–92, 394, 397, 400–401, 421–23, 450–51, 470–71, 475–76, 478, 480, 482–84
Balochistan, 381
Damadola, 202
Islamabad, 57, 60–62, 149–53, 183, 191, 344, 355, 383, 391–92, 401, 480–81, 484
Kashmir, 60, 62
North Waziristan, 57, 60–61, 139, 149, 151, 202, 355, 450
Northwest Frontier Province, 62, 151
Peshawar, 57, 381, 423
Quetta, 62, 104, 351, 381
South Waziristan, 60, 152
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, 421, 423
Paktika Province, 51, 55, 69, 83–84, 109, 113–14, 127–30, 153, 157, 163, 213, 217, 256, 365–66, 380, 399, 439
Sharan, 128, 157
Ster Giyan, 157
Paktiya Province, 51, 55, 69, 83, 109, 113, 128, 141, 157, 163, 213, 358–59, 366, 373, 398–99, 419, 439
Dzadran District, 157
Gardez, 51–52, 69, 128, 157–58, 332, 358, 439
Shwak District, 157
Zurmat District, 157
Panetta, Leon E., 401
Panjshir Province, 109, 130, 213, 347, 351, 359
Panjwa'i, 93–97, 103–04, 170, 173, 251, 274, 295, 299, 302, 304
Parker, Lt. Gen. Nicholas R., 291
Parwan Province, 109, 166, 213, 305–07, 347, 360, 368, 441
Pashmul, 93–97, 102–03
Pashtun, 54, 61, 90, 160, 208–09, 240–41, 244, 263, 285, 296, 334–35, 344–45, 351, 359, 380, 415, 446, 471
Pashtunwali, 57
Pearl, Lt. Col. Brian L., 219
Pech River, 158
Pech River Valley, 68, 137–38, 158, 160, 167, 214
Pentagon, 4, 36–38, 63, 197, 208, 210, 222–23, 227, 231–32, 235, 240, 267–69, 271, 319, 338, 469, 476
Persian Gulf, 149
Peshawar, 57, 381, 423
Peterman, Lt. Col. Michael P., 124
Petraeus, General David H., 9, 188, 197–200, 204–05, 209–10, 216, 219, 223, 225–27, 230–31, 236–37, 263, 267–69, 291–94, 299, 301, 304–05, 321, 323, 338–39, 350, 360, 477–78
Petronzio, Col. Peter, 163, 173
Petrovia, Lt. Col. Salvatore J., 163
Picardo, Lt. Col. Patrick W., 297
Pitts, Lt. Col. Steve, 212
Preble, Lt. Col. Alan R., 299
Predator drones, 94, 418
Preysler, Col. Charles A., 135–38, 158
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. *See* Foreign units.
Provincial Reconstruction Teams, 35, 40, 43, 64–65, 68, 75, 78–80, 86, 89, 109–11, 117, 128, 130, 135, 145–47, 161–62, 179, 210, 254–55, 261, 319–20, 322–23, 334, 343, 355, 358–59, 380, 472, 478–80
Agriculture, 40, 111, 210, 323, 472
counterinsurgency, counternarcotics, and long-term development, 37, 146–47, 210

Qalat, 84
Qassam, Haji Mohammed, 94
Qatar, 378, 384
Qizil Qal'ah, 381
Quetta, 62, 104, 351, 381

Quetta Shura Taliban, 54, 113, 200, 237, 334, 344
Quick, Col. Marue R., 441
Quran, 57, 369–71, 486. *See also* Green-on-blue incidents, Quran burnings.

Radulski, Lt. Col. Stephen M., 138, 163
Rafiqullah, 446
Ranger Regiment, 75th, 31, 329, 330, 332–33, 402–03
  2d Battalion, 402
  3d Battalion, 403
Rapp, Maj. Gen. William E., 386–88, 390, 395, 421
Raschid, Hafiz, 450
Rasmussen, Anders Fogh, 236, 263
Raziq, Abdul, 94, 174, 300–301
Ready and Resilient Campaign. *See* Suicide.
Red Book, 18–19
Red Mosque, 151
Reeder, Col. Edward M. Jr., 68, 73, 143–44, 317–19, 327, 329, 331–33, 427
Regional Commands (RCs), 27, 45, 63–64, 75, 79, 81, 113, 115, 121, 124, 126, 128, 141, 165–66, 183, 203, 205–06, 211, 213, 216, 225–27, 230, 237, 239, 283, 285, 323, 327–30, 373, 379, 410–11, 427, 435–36, 439, 442, 449, 473
  Capital, 116, 363, 436
  East, 5–6, 38, 41, 43–45, 51, 61, 63, 66–69, 73, 75–76, 83–84, 94, 103, 109, 111, 113–17, 121, 123–24, 126–30, 132, 135–36, 139, 143, 149–50, 153–55, 157–58, 161–67, 170–71, 176–77, 183–84, 190, 205, 208–09, 211–19, 216, 237, 248, 253–54, 256–57, 259, 300, 302, 323, 331, 334, 353, 366, 380, 394, 397–98, 405, 417, 436, 439–40, 473
  North, 176, 331, 363, 365, 436
  South, 5–6, 38, 41, 43, 45, 51, 63–67, 69, 75–76, 78–79, 81, 83–87, 89–90, 92, 94, 98, 100, 103–06, 110–11, 113–15, 118–19, 121, 127, 135, 154, 163, 170–71, 173, 176–77, 182–83, 188, 190, 205, 208–09, 211–13, 219–20, 222–26, 236, 240, 242–44, 246–51, 253, 272–74, 276, 283, 285, 289, 293, 297, 299–300, 302, 329, 331, 334, 353, 365, 379–81, 388, 394, 401, 409, 434, 436, 473
  Southwest, 205, 272, 285, 334, 353, 379–80, 388, 390, 401, 436–38, 486
  West, 37–38, 110, 176, 246, 297, 329, 331, 363, 436
Regional Development Zones, 77
Regionally Aligned Forces, 456–57
Reid, John, 87
Request for forces (RFF), 177, 208–09, 217, 219
Rice, Condoleezza, 122
Richards, Lt. Gen. David J., 75–78, 89, 92, 94–95, 98, 102, 106, 114–15, 119, 125, 182
Richardson, Col. James M., 163
Riedel, Bruce O., 195, 197–99, 216, 235, 238, 262, 267, 309, 337–38
Ring Road. *See* Afghan Highway 1.
Roberson, Col. Patrick B., 446
Rocket-propelled grenades, 57, 97, 103, 161, 168, 257, 300, 400
Rockets, 55, 57, 95, 97, 103, 149, 161, 168, 248, 257, 263, 300–301, 371, 400, 402–03, 416
Rodriguez, Lt. Gen. David M., 121, 124, 126, 128–29, 155, 157, 231, 235, 237, 253
Rolling Stone magazine, 289–90
Romesha, S. Sgt. Clinton L., 254
Rose, Col. Michael S., 63
Royal Air Force. *See* Foreign units.
Royal Canadian Regiment. *See* Foreign units.
RQ–5A Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle, 4

RQ–7A Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle, 4
Rule of law, 54, 110, 132, 171, 210, 325–27, 408, 410, 426, 441–42
Rule of Law Field Force–Afghanistan, 326, 441
Rumsfeld, Donald H., 13, 36–38, 118–19, 122–23, 455, 466–67
Ryan, Lt. Col. James R., 137
Ryan, Col. Kurt J., 393

Saddam Hussein, 10, 472
Salala, 480
Salang Tunnel, 381
Samangan Province, 347
Samarra', 5
Sangin, 90–91, 173, 241, 263, 282, 434
Sarkozy, Nicolas, 353
Sarobi District, 213, 347
Sarposa prison, 174, 184
Sayyidabad, 281
Scaparrotti, Maj. Gen. Curtis M., 219, 255, 288, 388, 390, 409
Scheffer, Jaap de Hoop. *See* de Hoop Scheffer, Jaap.
Schloesser, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J., 163–65, 167, 170, 212–13, 216, 219
Schoomaker, General Peter J., 13, 16, 23, 26, 462
Schweikert, Col. A. Kent, 66, 79, 81, 100
Schweitzer, Col. Martin P., 121, 124–25, 127, 129, 134
Scott, Capt. Benjamin E., 416–18
SEALs. *See* Navy Sea-Air-Land elements (SEALs).
Sears, Lt. Col. Stephen C., 297
Sedwill, Mark P., 265
Shah Wali Kot, 286
Shahi Kot, 113
Shamsi Airfield (Shamsi Air Base), 392, 480
Sharan, 128, 157
Sharia, 55, 326
Sharif, Nawaz, 152
Shearer, Lt. Col. Eugene A., 211–12
Sheikh Dost Mohammed. *See* Mohammed, Sheikh Dost.
Sher Mohammed Akhundzada. *See* Akhundzada, Sher Mohammed.
Shields, Lt. Col. Burton K., 246, 280
Shields, Col. Michael H., 27–28
Shona ba shona, 312, 427
Shoryak River Valley, 73
Shura, 54, 85, 111, 113, 117, 132, 134, 158–59, 200, 237, 281, 320, 334, 344
Shwak District, 157
Sidwell, Maj. Gen. King, 145
Signals intelligence (SIGINT), 29, 129, 364–65, 414
Siyah Choy, 101–02
Slaugenhaupt, Lt. Col. Karl E., 286
Smith, Lt. Col. Dennis, 246
Smith, Lt. Col. Matthew D., 219
Smith, Lt. Col. Stephen, 219
Snow, Col. Jeffrey J., 27–28
SOAR, 160th. *See* Aviation Regiment (Special Operations), 160th.
SOF. *See* Special Operations Forces (SOF).
Sonntag, Col. Kurt L., 239
South Waziristan, 60, 152
Southern European Task Force, 44, 135
Soviet Union, 387
Special Forces units
  1st Special Forces Group, 331, 398
  1st Special Forces Regiment, 33, 68, 398, 403, 446, 448
  2d Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, 331
  3d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group, 331, 448
  3d Special Forces Group, 68, 143–44, 328, 330–31, 403, 446, 448
  5th Special Forces Group, 448
  7th Special Forces Group, 33–34, 43, 68, 190, 319, 329–31, 448
Special Operations Aviation Regiment, 160th. *See* Aviation Regiment (Special Operations), 160th.
Special Operations Command (Forward)–Pakistan, 334
Special Operations Forces (SOF), 7, 31–32, 41, 43, 68, 73, 84, 86, 95,

Special Operations Forces (SOF)—*Continued*
98–100, 104, 115–16, 143–44, 165, 174, 205, 237, 239, 300, 302, 304, 306, 312, 318–20, 327, 329–32, 335–36, 374–75, 402, 404, 408, 446, 447–49, 471, 478, 480, 485
Special Operations Task Forces
12, 331
31, 95
33, 116, 331
73, 84
81, 331
202, 73, 84
Special Troops Battalions, 64, 130, 162, 166, 212, 219, 246, 288, 297, 299
1st Brigade, 297
3d Brigade Combat Team, 163
4th Brigade Combat Team, 65, 124, 129, 150
101st Airborne Division, 163, 166
173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 137
Special Warfare Center, 32
Spellmon, Col. Scott A., 163, 213
Spenard, Lt. Col. Thomas M., 299
Sperah District, 157
Sperwan Ghundey, 99–101, 104
Spin Boldak, 174, 300, 381, 422
Spiszer, Col. John M., 163, 211, 219
Ster Giyan, 157
Stone, Maj. Gen. Douglas M., 305–06
Strmecki, Marin J., 118–19
Sturek, Lt. Col. Frank D., 65, 79, 81, 84–86, 95, 115
Suicide, 16–19, 346,
rates, service members, 18
Ready and Resilient Campaign, 346
Suicide bombers, 57–59, 78, 85, 151, 174–75, 191, 295, 304, 334–35, 415, 431–32, 450
Sullivan, Lt. Col. Michael P., 448
Support Battalions, 31, 66, 219, 297, 299, 417
4th, 297
18th, 394
88th, 163
94th, 66
173d, 137
201st, 163
297th, 100
402d, 246
427th, 393
528th, 31
710th, 64, 212
782d, 124
801st, 162
Support Command (Forward), 1st, 422
Support units. *See also* Support Battalions.
1st Support Command (Forward). *See* Support Command (Forward), 1st.
43d Support Group, 129
219th Support Group, 129
401st Army Field Support Brigade, 378, 393
402d Army Field Support Brigade, 423
Supreme Allied Commander Europe, 38, 75–76, 147, 231
Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 126
Sustainment units. *See also* U.S. Army Sustainment Command.
10th Sustainment Brigade, 63, 393–94
45th Sustainment Brigade, 393–94
101st Sustainment Brigade, 163
311th Sustainment Command, 380
528th Sustainment Brigade, 31
593d Sustainment Brigade, 397
Syria, 294

Tagab Nawah, 116
Tajikistan, 334, 381
Takhar Province, 334, 347
Taliban, 4–6, 10, 45, 47, 52, 54–55, 57–59, 62, 65, 67, 69, 78, 80–81, 84–104, 107, 109, 113, 115–18, 121, 123, 125, 137, 139, 141–43, 147, 150, 152–53, 171–75, 179, 182–84, 190–91, 200–202, 208, 210–11, 217, 224, 227, 230, 232–33, 237, 241–44, 251, 253, 255–58, 263,

270–74, 277, 280–82, 286, 289, 294–96, 299–302, 304, 306, 318, 320, 326, 331, 334–35, 338–39, 343–45, 351–53, 355, 362, 370–71, 381, 398–99, 401–04, 408, 414–15, 421, 431–32, 434, 447, 450–51, 470–71, 473–76, 478–83, 485, 487. *See also* Operations, enemy.
Musa Qal'ah, 90–92, 171–72
Sarposa Prison, 174, 184
South Korean missionaries, 460
Tampa, 122, 220, 222–23
Tanks. *See* M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank (MBT); M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV).
Tarok Kolache, 301
Tashkil, 45–46
Task Forces, Foreign
CALUGENARI, 79
HELMAND, 79, 80–81, 89, 92, 106, 437
KANDAHAR, 79, 93, 297
LAFAYETTE, 213, 405
ORION, 65, 79, 81, 84, 93, 105
URUZGAN, 79
WHITE EAGLE, 213
Task Forces, U.S.
1 FURY, 124, 162, 172
1 GERONIMO, 219
2 FURY, 124, 130, 134
3 FURY, 124, 134
3 GERONIMO, 219
3-06, 94, 97–98
8, 116
9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force–Afghanistan, 372, 427
33, 116
2010, 326
AEGIS, 83, 86, 98, 105. *See also* Combined Task Force AEGIS.
BAYONET, 41, 64, 78, 135–38, 155, 158, 162–63, 164
BLACKSMITH, 219
BLUE SPADER, 163
CATAMOUNT, 64, 84–85, 95, 111, 113, 129, 211
CENTAUR, 163
CENTURION, 219
CHOSIN, 64, 72, 111, 164, 211
CINCINNATUS, 129–30, 155, 163
CURRAHEE, 162–63, 219
DAHLONEGA, 219
DENALI, 219
DESTINY, 163
DESTROYER, 219
DEVIL, 41
DIABLO, 124, 130, 137
DIAMONDBACK, 137
DUKE, 163–64, 167, 170, 175, 211, 213, 219
FALCON, 63
FURY, 115, 121, 124, 127–29, 132, 134–35, 153, 155, 157–58, 162, 297, 362, 364
GLADIATOR, 163
GLORY, 162
GRIZZLY, 100–101
KING, 137
LIFELINER, 163
MOHAWK, 101, 280, 283
MOUNTAIN WARRIOR, 219
MOUNTAINEER, 162
MULESKINNER, 63
ORION, 64–65, 79, 81, 84, 93, 105
OUT FRONT, 137
PACESETTER, 138
PANTHER, 162–63
PEGASUS, 125
PHOENIX, 142–43, 162, 362, 427, 471
PROFESSIONALS, 124, 129, 153
RAIDER, 163, 297, 364
RAMROD, 163
RAPTOR, 137, 154
RED CURRAHEE, 162
RED WARRIORS, 219
ROCK, 137, 158–60, 167–68
SABER, 137
SHAFAFIYAT, 325, 410, 442
SPARTAN, 7, 63–64, 67, 69, 72–73, 81, 113–15, 117, 121, 124, 127–29, 132, 135, 137–38, 162, 211, 213–15, 219
SPARTAN STEEL, 219

Task Forces—*Continued*
SPARTANS, 124
SPOTLIGHT, 326
STEEL, 219
STRENGTH, 66, 162
STRIKE, 299, 301–02. *See also* Combined Task Force STRIKE.
SUMMIT, 335
SUPPORT, 64, 163, 212
TITANS, 64, 72–73, 111, 211
TOP GUNS, 301
VALIANT, 163
VANGUARD, 64, 212
WARRIOR, 65, 79, 81, 84–85, 95, 105, 111, 113, 115, 213, 219
WHITE CURRAHEE, 162
WILD BOAR, 115
WOLFPACK, 64, 211
YUKON, 219
Tehrik-i-Nezaf Shariat Muhammad, 57
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), 57, 152, 344, 355
Termiz, 381
Terry, Lt. Gen. James L., 371, 409–10, 425
Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), 390, 394, 420
Thomas, Col. Kelly J., 125
Thompson, Robert, 9
TOLO HAMKARI. *See* OP TOLO.
Toner, Lt. Col. Christopher R., 64, 84–85
Tootal, Lt. Col. Stuart, 80–81, 89, 91
Tor Kham, 381
Tora Bora, 154, 470
Toraghundi, 381
Tovo, Lt. Gen. Kenneth E., 424
TOW missile launcher. *See* Tube-launched, optically tracked wire-guided (TOW) missile launcher.
Townsend, Maj. Gen. Stephen J., 439
TRADOC. *See* U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).
Train, Advise, and Assist Command, 435–40, 443, 449
Tranche 5. *See* Milestone 2013.
Transportation Brigade, 595th, 422
Transportation Command. *See* U.S. Transportation Command
Trikh Zabur Canal, 281
TTP. *See* Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).
Tube-launched, optically tracked wire-guided (TOW) missile launcher, 168
Tucker, Maj. Gen. Michael S., 212, 216, 460
Tunnell, Col. Harry D. IV, 246–53, 273–74, 276, 280, 286–89, 299–301
Turkey, 109
Turkmenistan, 381
Twitty, Brig. Gen. Stephen M., 288

U.S. Agency for International Development, 9–10, 52, 109–11, 117, 146, 278, 323, 472
U.S. Air Force. *See* Air Force, U.S.
U.S. Army Accessions Command, 459
U.S. Army Central Command. *See* Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT).
U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, 286–87
U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), 129–30, 170, 247, 462
U.S. Army Materiel Command, 378, 387, 390. *See also* Materiel Recovery Element.
U.S. Army National Guard, 3, 14, 16, 21–22, 24–25, 29, 31, 80, 100, 129, 137–38, 145, 162, 181, 188–89, 345–46, 362, 364, 393, 420–21, 458, 463–65
U.S. Army Reserve, 3, 14–16, 20–21, 24–25, 28–29, 31, 130, 181, 188–89, 345–46, 364, 420–21, 458, 462–66
U.S. Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, 422–23
U.S. Army Sustainment Command, 380, 423

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), 453–54
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), 19, 22, 48, 64–65, 88, 126–27, 164, 170, 177, 199–200, 204–05, 208, 216, 218, 226, 231–33, 237, 247–48, 257, 263, 268, 305, 327–28, 349, 353, 378, 384–86, 388, 390–93, 397, 416, 420, 422, 443, 467, 469, 472, 477, 486
U.S. Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A), 176, 182, 200, 205, 216, 220, 225, 227, 237, 288, 306, 319, 326, 328, 378–79, 386–88, 390, 393–95, 397, 405, 419–20, 423–24, 434, 440, 442, 475, 486
U.S. Marine Corps. *See* Marine Corps, U.S.
U.S. Navy. *See* Navy, U.S.
U.S. Transportation Command, 383–84, 387, 395, 422
UH–60 Black Hawks, 281, 463. *See also* Black Hawks; MH–60 Black Hawks.
UN Security Council. *See* United Nations (UN).
UN. *See* United Nations (UN).
Unified Implementation Plan, 409–11, 419–20
United Arab Emirates, 116, 328
United Kingdom (U.K.), 37, 64, 79, 87, 224, 328, 392, 476
United Nations (UN), 39, 46, 58, 206, 263–64, 357, 384, 413, 470, 472, 483
  Security Council, 39, 58, 384, 413
United States Military Academy at West Point. *See* West Point.
Unity of effort, 77, 81, 86, 105, 123, 126, 176, 181–82, 205–06, 225, 237, 285, 309, 327, 409, 425, 486
Unmanned aerial vehicles. *See* Predator drones; RQ–5A Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle; RQ–7A Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle.
Uruzgan Province, 49, 51, 54, 65, 69, 78–79, 84–86, 90, 285, 332, 379
USFOR-A. *See* U.S. Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A).
Uzbekistan, 57, 334, 344, 381, 451

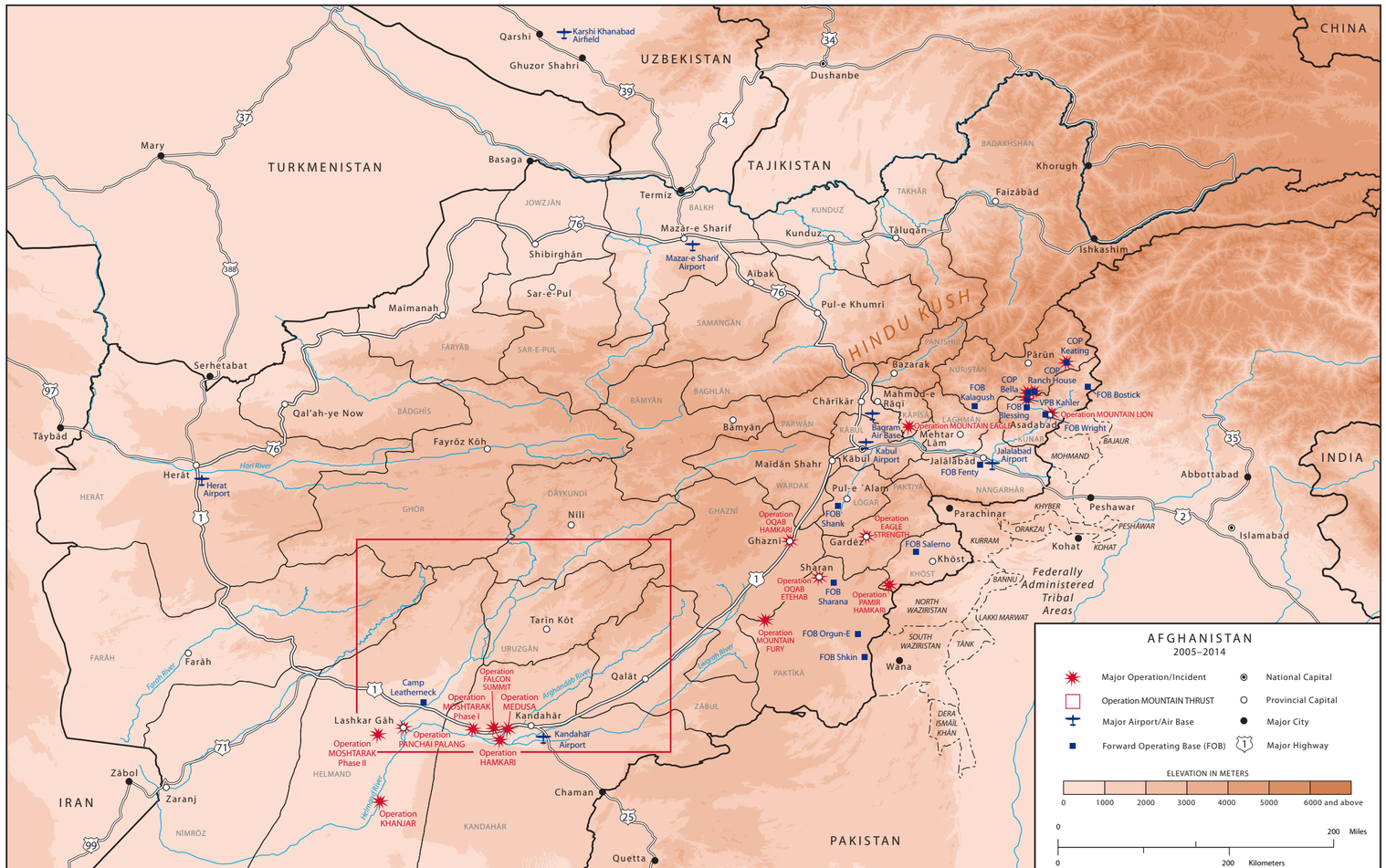
V Corps. *See* Corps, V.
VALLEY FORGE directive, 43
van Loon, Maj. Gen. Ton, 103–04
Vance, Brig. Gen. Jonathan H., 297
Vaughn, Lt. Gen. Clyde, 145
Vehicle Patrol Base KAHLER, 168
Veterans Administration, 15, 17
Vietnam, 8, 89, 244, 445, 462, 484
Village Stability Operations, 319–22, 331, 333, 366, 369, 432, 447
Voorhees, Lt. Col. John G., 297
Votel, Brig. Gen. Joseph L., 150

Wahhabism, 57, 73
Wanat, 121, 162, 167–68, 170, 184, 207, 214, 486
Wanat, Battle of, 170, 256
Wardak, Abdul Rahim, 72, 360
Wardak Province, 55, 109, 130, 157, 163, 177, 208–09, 211–15, 228, 247, 318, 365, 439
  Jaghatu District, 157
Washington, D.C., 43–44, 118, 177, 227, 232–33, 256, 264, 291, 354–55
Watapur Valley, 160
Wawrzyniak, Lt. Col. Michael, 297
Waygal Valley, 121, 159–160, 167, 170, 184
Waziristan, 57, 60–61, 150–51, 202, 355, 450
Webb, James H., 170
Wendel, Maj. Gen. Kevin R., 424–27
West Point, 9, 271, 291, 377
White, Lt. Col. Bradley A., 163
White, Col. Duffy W., 173
Whitson, Lt. Col. Anthony K., 162
Williams, Col. R. Steven, 100–101
Wilsbach, Maj. Gen. Kenneth S., 427
Wolters, Maj. Gen. Tod D., 372
Wood, William B., 123
Woods, Lt. Col. David J., 124, 134
Worldwide Individual Augmentation System, 20, 363–64
Worth, Lt. Col. Calvert L. Jr., 280

Wyche, Col. Larry D., 63

XVIII Airborne Corps. *See* Airborne Corps, XVIII.

Zabul Province, 49, 54, 65, 69, 78–79, 84–86, 105, 110, 251, 285, 297, 333–34, 373, 448
  Daychopan District, 85, 334
  Chalekor Valley, 85
Zadari, Asif Ali, 270
Zakir, Mullah Abdul Qayyum, 295, 352, 431
Zedong, Mao, 9
Zharey District, 93, 104, 170, 173, 251, 290, 295, 302
Zurmat District, 157


AFGHANISTAN
2005–2014
Major Operation/Incident
Operation MOUNTAIN THRUST
Major Airport/Air Base
Forward Operating Base (FOB)
National Capital
Provincial Capital
Major City
Major Highway
ELEVATION IN METERS
0
1000
2000
3000
4000
5000
6000 and above
200 Miles
200 Kilometers
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
CHINA
IRAN
PAKISTAN
INDIA
HINDU KUSH
Federally Administered Tribal Areas
Qarshi
Karshi Khanabad Airfield
Ghuzor Shahri
Dushanbe
Mary
Basaga
Termiz
Khorugh
Faizābād
Ishkashim
Mazar-e Sharif
Mazar-e Sharif Airport
Shibirghān
Aibak
Kunduz
Tāluqān
Sar-e-Pul
Maimanah
Pul-e Khumri
Serhetabat
Qal'ah-ye Now
Taybād
Fayroz Koh
Herāt
Herat Airport
Hari River
Bāmyān
Chārikār
Bazarak
Mahmūd-e Rāqi
Bagram Air Base
Kabul Airport
Kābul
Maidān Shahr
Jalālābād
Jalalabad Airport
FOB Fenty
Asadabad
FOB Bostick
FOB Wright
Operation MOUNTAIN LION
Operation MOUNTAIN EAGLE
Mehtar Lām
Abbottabad
Peshawar
Islamabad
Parachinar
Kohat
Pārūn
COP Keating
COP Ranch House
COP Bella
FOB Blessing
FOB Kalagush
VPB Kahler
Nili
Ghazni
Gardez
Pul-e 'Alam
FOB Shank
Operation OQAB HAMKARI
Operation EAGLE STRENGTH
FOB Salerno
Khōst
Sharan
Operation OQAB ETEHAB
FOB Sharana
Operation PAMIR HAMKARI
Operation MOUNTAIN FURY
FOB Orgun-E
FOB Shkin
Wana
Tarin Kōt
Qalāt
Farāh
Camp Leatherneck
Operation FALCON SUMMIT
Operation MOSHTARAK Phase I
Operation MEDUSA
Kandahār
Kandahar Airport
Lashkar Gāh
Operation PANCHAI PALANG
Operation MOSHTARAK Phase II
Operation HAMKARI
Operation KHANJAR
Helmand River
Arghandāb River
Arghastān River
Tarnak River
Zābol
Zaranj
Chaman
Quetta
BADAKHSHĀN
TAKHĀR
KUNDUZ
BALKH
JOWZJĀN
SAMANGĀN
FARYĀB
SAR-E-PUL
BĀDGHĪS
BĀMYĀN
BAGHLĀN
PARWĀN
KĀPISA
LAGHMĀN
KŪNAR
NŪRISTĀN
PANJSHĪR
BAJAUR
MOHMAND
NANGARHĀR
KHYBER
ORAKZAI
PESHAWAR
KOHAT
KURRAM
BANNU
LAKKI MARWAT
NORTH WAZIRISTAN
SOUTH WAZIRISTAN
TĀNK
DERA ISMĀIL KHĀN
KHŌST
PAKTIYĀ
LŌGAR
WARDAK
GHAZNĪ
DĀYKUNDĪ
GHŌR
HERĀT
FARĀH
URUZGĀN
ZĀBUL
PAKTIKĀ
HELMAND
KANDAHĀR
NĪMRŌZ





OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM STUDY GROUP

PIN 208379–000