



universität  
wien

# MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Counterinsurgency: Reasons for Success and Failure  
U.S. Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan (2001-present)“

verfasst von / submitted by

Naurah Khurshid, BSc.

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2018 / Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt  
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

A 992 940

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt  
Postgraduate programme as it appears on the  
student record sheet:

Internationale Studien / International Studies

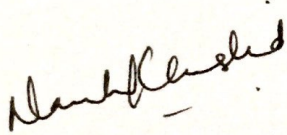
Betreut von / Supervisor:

Professor Markus Kornprobst PhD.



diplomatische  
akademie **wien**  
Vienna School of International Studies  
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Markus Schmid', written in a cursive style.

(signature of student)

## **Abstract**

This thesis identifies the factors behind a successful or a failed counterinsurgency (COIN) by assessing the ongoing war in Afghanistan and the U.S.-led counterinsurgency there. This paper posits that political, cultural, and external factors play a decisive role in determining the successes or failures of counterinsurgency while putting specific emphasis on the external actor aspect. Two academic disciplines, International Relations and History, are incorporated in the research methodology to conduct a chronological analysis of the Afghan war and U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan. The thesis contends that while external actors' support to insurgents can be detrimental, other factors such as internal politics, history, the host country's culture, and regional geography also have a significant influence on counterinsurgency. The United States' complex dynamics with Pakistan will also be focussed on, in order to assess the effect that U.S.-Pakistan relationship has on counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. The nature of conflict and war has evolved from regular aggression between states to irregular or unconventional warfare. These wars are characterised by an asymmetry in the military and economic prowess of the forces involved in the conflict. Though one is clearly superior to the other, the weaker party still poses a threat and persists in waging a war through unconventional means. Although there has been extensive research into unconventional war tactics and counterinsurgency strategies, and the U.S. army is well aware of these tactics, the United States finds itself engaged in a protracted conflict in Afghanistan. Authors who have contributed to theories of counterinsurgency include those who have served in the armed forces or have advised countries involved in counterinsurgencies. While there has been significant research on insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, most of the analysis is based on military strategies and solutions. This thesis discusses political factors in greater detail, and emphasises the role of external actors.

## **Zusammenfassung**

*Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist die Faktoren, die den Erfolg oder das Scheitern einer Aufstandsbekämpfung durch eine Intervention bestimmen, zu identifizieren. Es wird argumentiert, dass politische und kulturelle Faktoren in Zusammenhang mit externer Unterstützung der Rebellen den Erfolg oder das Scheitern der Aufstandsbekämpfung erheblich beeinflussen. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird der Bedeutung externer Akteure gewidmet, wobei argumentiert wird, dass diese zwar einflussreich sind, aber nicht allein den Erfolg oder das Scheitern einer Aufstandsbekämpfung bestimmen. Die Arbeit basiert auf zwei akademischen Disziplinen: Internationale Beziehungen und Geschichte. Es werden eine chronologische Analyse der Ereignisse des US-Afghanistan Krieges, sowie als Fallstudie, die daraus resultierende US-geführte Aufstandsbekämpfung in Afghanistan präsentiert.*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Chapter I</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Theory Formalisation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Chapter II: The Beginning</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Pakistan-U.S. renewed alliance</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Afghan Jihad</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Geopolitics and “Strategic Depth”</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Early Victories and Tora Bora</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Indigenous Governance and Law Enforcement</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter III: Reconstruction</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>The elections: 2004-2005</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Resurgence</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Weak Governance</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Pakistan Sanctuaries and Trust Deficit</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Drone Attacks</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Chapter V: Obama Years and the Surge</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Change in the U.S. Administration</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Obama’s Drone Warfare</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Afghan Elections (2009)</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2011: growing animosity between U.S. and Pakistan</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Osama bin Laden Raid</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Salala Airstrike</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Chapter VI: Withdrawal of Troops and the Current Scenario</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2014 Elections and the general situation in Afghanistan</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Pakistan’s War Against Terrorism</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>“All India all the time”</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Trump’s policy</b>	<b>59</b>

<b>Chapter VII: Conclusion</b>	<b>62</b>
--------------------------------	-----------

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>66</b>
---------------------	-----------

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to address the following question: what are the factors that determine the success or failure of counterinsurgency by an intervening force? I contend that external actors play a pivotal role in influencing the outcome of counterinsurgency. However, while an external actor's support to insurgents may have a detrimental impact on counterinsurgency, insurgencies require internal support systems and favourable indigenous factors to thrive. Counterinsurgency, a form of unconventional warfare, has gained importance as the success ratio of insurgents against a more powerful force has increased in the recent past.<sup>1</sup> Militaries possessing superior conventional warfare tactics, equipment and training have had to unlearn institutionalised practices and change their outlook on war all together. The research question focusses specifically on intervening forces, that is, an occupying country or an external actor, and seeks to identify the underlying forces that affect counterinsurgency.

As the United States went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, there was greater urgency to address the fact that conventional war strategies and tactics were perhaps outdated and would not be able to defeat a weaker but deadly enemy. The US army field manual on counterinsurgency, written under the supervision of America's counterinsurgency expert General Petraeus, defines counterinsurgency as: "military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."<sup>2</sup> It defines insurgency as: "an organised movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict."<sup>3</sup> There have been different terms used in the past to refer to what we now call counterinsurgency. Trinquier, for example, called it 'modern warfare' and 'counterguerrilla operations' while other theorists such as Andrew Mack refer to counterinsurgencies as 'small wars' or 'asymmetric conflict.'<sup>4</sup> In presenting his definition of counterinsurgency, R. Scott Moore

---

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (Summer, 2001): 93-128.

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency* FM 3-24 (December, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: the Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (January, 1975): 175-200, accessed December 21, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009880>.

contends that counterinsurgency must encompass political, economic, social, and security factors.<sup>5</sup> Moreover he states that the objective of counterinsurgency should be to target the root causes of insurgency, stabilise the political, economic and social structures of the country, and provide long-term stability.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, according to some theorists, nation building and winning the hearts and minds of the population is not only an approach to successful counterinsurgency, but a prerequisite of it.

The paper will focus on the Afghanistan War (2001-present) in order to assess United States' counterinsurgency strategy and policies during the sixteen year period. There are various factors that have led up to Afghanistan becoming the longest war the United States has fought. In the current scenario, US administration and armed forces believe that there is still a "terrorist threat to the west" emanating from Afghanistan, and according to Defence Secretary James Mattis, their assistance to Afghan security forces is required in order to "destroy the terrorist hub."<sup>7</sup>

I begin my argument by presenting the current state of literature pertaining to counterinsurgency, following which I formalise my own theory and explain my research methodology. The main body of this paper is a chronological explanation and assessment of the Afghan war from 2001 to 2017, through which I highlight the factors that have influenced U.S. counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. I conclude by presenting an argument answering the research question that this paper poses.

## **Literature Review**

There is a rich collection of research and theoretical literature on counterinsurgency. Although the importance of external actors' support to insurgents is mentioned in literature, however, a deeper insight into the magnitude of the effect of such support in determining the successes or failures of counterinsurgency is lacking. That is one of the aspects that this paper will delve into in order to assess the effect of Pakistan's alleged support to Afghan insurgents on the United States' counterinsurgency policies in Afghanistan. Generally,

---

<sup>5</sup> R. Scott Moore, "The Basics of Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars Journal*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Julian Borger, "Trump to expand US military intervention in Afghanistan," *Guardian*, August, 22, 2017, accessed January 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/21/donald-trump-expand-us-military-intervention-afghanistan-pakistan>.



counterinsurgency literature treats external actors as one of the many factors that influence the outcome of COIN, however, research in this area is scanty. A significant volume of literature on Afghanistan points towards Pakistan as the main reason behind sustained insurgency. However, not a lot of authors and analysts inquire about the dynamics behind this claim or question the extent to which Pakistan's support weakens counterinsurgency. This paper aims to determine how, amongst other things, external actors' actions affect the outcome of counterinsurgency.

One of the pioneers of counterinsurgency theory, David Galula, said that insurgencies thrive when they have a legitimate cause that they can rally behind, for example, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, rights of the proletariat, etc.<sup>8</sup> He stressed the need to control the population in order to eliminate a support base for the insurgents and mobilise the 'favourable minority'.<sup>9</sup> According to Galula, counterinsurgents can be victorious only if they are able to permanently isolate insurgents from the population.<sup>10</sup> Although Galula's work was instrumental in differentiating between conventional wars and counterinsurgencies, it was based on the assumption of limitless resources and unwavering political will of the counterinsurgents. Perhaps that explains the gap between theory and possibility of implementation.

The National Defence Research Institute (RAND) undertook a major research in which thirty historical cases of counterinsurgency, spanning from Nicaragua to Chechnya, were assessed and categorised as 'wins' and 'losses', which led to a framework of fifteen 'good' and twelve 'bad' counterinsurgency practices.<sup>11</sup> While these case studies included both counterinsurgency of states against non-state actors and that of external forces against insurgents of an occupied country, this research was able to identify common factors that facilitate counterinsurgents and those that do not. The 'good' factors included the ability of counterinsurgents to eliminate material support to insurgents, establish a legitimate government, build reliable intelligence networks, force the insurgents out of urban centres to remote parts of the country from where they have to fight as guerrillas,

---

<sup>8</sup> David Galula, 1964.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, 2010.

build a relationship of trust with the population, invest in infrastructure and development, provide basic services to the population, and expand security.<sup>12</sup>

These indicators of successful counterinsurgency are echoed by other authors as well. R. Scott Moore identifies the establishment of rule of law, professional security services, economic growth, infrastructure, an effective government, and some transformation in social beliefs and attitudes as drivers for long term stability and a successful counterinsurgency.<sup>13</sup> 'Bad' factors that were more likely to result in a failed counterinsurgency included disproportionate use of force and collective punishment, displacement of the population by the COIN force, inability to adapt to changing insurgent tactics, poor motivation, difference in the ultimate goals being pursued by the government and the COIN force, and an external actor as the primary COIN force.<sup>14</sup> While most authors acknowledge that every war is different, they tend to agree that certain overriding factors contribute towards the success of counterinsurgency. Winning hearts and minds of the population, engaging with their culture, and building strong relations in order to get sound actionable intelligence about insurgent activity is imperative according to counterinsurgency theorists.<sup>15</sup> Another important aspect that is often discussed as playing a key role is the difference in the will power of the insurgent and counterinsurgent. This asymmetry typically exists when an external actor is the counterinsurgent.

Andrew Mack argues that while insurgents cannot defeat a stronger force through conventional means, they can be successful by destroying the political will of their opponents to wage war.<sup>16</sup> He illustrates his point by giving examples from history when a powerful force faced an insurgency away from home in occupied territory. In Vietnam the United States had essentially lost the political will to keep fighting a relentless insurgency capable of staging deadly attacks (Tet Offensive, 1968), and France under de Gaulle conceded to the insurgents' demands in Algeria.<sup>17</sup> The reason according to Mack, is that for the more powerful counterinsurgent force fighting away from home, the stakes are just not high

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>13</sup> R. Scott Moore.

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, 2010, 86.

<sup>15</sup> David Kilcullen, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Mack, 1975.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 180.

enough to continue fighting a protracted war whereas for the insurgents fighting on and for their homeland, it is a question of survival.<sup>18</sup> Another author made the same point and posited that the external power is less willing to endure political, economic and manpower costs when their survival is not threatened while insurgents tolerate higher casualties and losses.<sup>19</sup> Moore also presents a three-dimensional model of counterinsurgency according to which, a successful counterinsurgency strategy engages with three factors i.e. Structures, Beliefs, and Actions.<sup>20</sup> In other words, counterinsurgency tactics will be effective only when they interact with structural factors such as a stable government, economic development, civil rights, etc., beliefs such as the population's history, culture, opinion and perceptions, and actions that include military and intelligence operations, law enforcement, training and capacity building , and humanitarian assistance.<sup>21</sup>

The emphasis on counterinsurgency tactics in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan prompted the U.S. Army to write a manual on counterinsurgency, titled "Counterinsurgency."<sup>22</sup> In addition to the factors presented by classical theories of counterinsurgency, the manual also highlights the importance of legitimacy, unity of effort, political factors, a sound understanding of the environment, security and rule of law, isolation of insurgents from their support base, and credible intelligence in carrying out a successful counterinsurgency.<sup>23</sup> Former Commander of the U.S. coalition forces in Afghanistan who had also served as Ambassador of the U.S. to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry critiqued this manual. He questioned the efficacy of theoretical frameworks for counterinsurgency when the host government is pursuing different goals and the counterinsurgent, which is an external actor, is viewed as a colonising power despite having "the best of intentions."<sup>24</sup> Eikenberry's critique was based on his experience and assessment of the Afghan war, which he concluded by urging the U.S. to consider and debate their ultimate objectives in Afghanistan and the means

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Major Robert M. Cassidy, "Why Great Powers Fight Small Wars Badly," *Military Review* (September-October, 2002): 41-53.

<sup>20</sup> R. Scott, Moore, "The Basics of Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars Journal*.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>22</sup> Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency FM 3-24* (Washington D.C.: Marine Corps, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan: The Other Side of COIN," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 5 (September/October, 2013): 59-VII.

to achieve those rather than insisting on implementing a formula for successful counterinsurgency.<sup>25</sup>

A strict bifurcation between counterinsurgency conducted by the state and that by an external actor does not exist when discussing effective counterinsurgency practices, however, there are certain cases that stand out because they did not strictly conform to the established counterinsurgency best practices. One such case was Chechnya between 1999 and 2009, where the counterinsurgency force was the Russian state and not an external actor. Amongst the factors that seemed to have worked to weaken the Chechen insurgency were the deployment of indigenous forces fighting on behalf of the Russian state, strict media control by the Russian state, and the insurgents' reliance on indiscriminate violence and targeting of civilians in terrorist attacks.<sup>26</sup> While Mark Kramer has warned against reliance on collective punishment and unrestrained force as a counterinsurgency tactic, some studies have found evidence that indiscriminate violence can lead to deterrence and eventually may even lead to insurgents and the population running out of will to keep fighting.<sup>27</sup> It is important to note here that in Chechnya's case it was the Russian state against secessionist insurgents from a region within the Russian Federation. Therefore, for the counterinsurgents i.e. the Russian state, winning the conflict was a question of survival as a federation as well and political will at 'home' was carefully manoeuvred.

A major strength of counterinsurgency literature is that it is written by practitioners, for example military men who have been an active part of counterinsurgency operations, and by people who have served as military advisers. Therefore most of the theoretical frameworks that have been put forward

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Joss Meakins, "The Other Side of COIN: The Russians in Chechnya," *Small Wars Journal*, January 13, 2017, accessed December 23, 2017, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-other-side-of-the-coin-the-russians-in-chechnya>; Jason Lyall, "Are coethnics more effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War," *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 1 (February, 2010), accessed December 27, 2017, <https://doi-org.uaccess.univie.ac.at/10.1017/S0003055409990323>; Ali Askerov, "The Chechen wars, media, and democracy in Russia," *Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences* 8, no. 2 (May, 2015); Emil A. Souleimanov and Huseyn Aliyev, "Asymmetry of Values, Indigenous forces, and Incumbent Success in Counterinsurgency: Evidence from Chechnya," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 5 (2015): 678-703.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Kramer, "The Perils of Counterinsurgency: Russia's War in Chechnya," *International Security* 29, no. 3 (Winter, 2004/5): 5-62; Jason Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (June, 2009): 331-362, accessed December 29, 2017, <http://jcr.sagepub.com>.

are based on experience on the ground or on a thorough analysis of the kind of counterinsurgency approaches that have worked in the past. U.S. based institutes such as RAND Corporation have quantified measures of COIN successes and failures, making comparative analyses easier. However, COIN literature generally lacks in-depth analyses of historical context and non-military discourse. Another noticeable weakness is that external actors' role is under-analysed. The theoretical part of this paper builds on aspects that are not emphasised sufficiently in existing literature.

### **Theory Formalisation**

*"We still persist in studying a type of warfare that no longer exists and that we shall never fight again.."—Roger Trinquier<sup>28</sup>*

Just as Trinquier expressed a need to move away from studying conventional wars to a different, more unconventional kind of warfare, now it is important to focus on non-military or political solutions to address unconventional opponents. In other words, non-military solutions implemented in order to achieve non-military objectives must be the main focus of counterinsurgency. Counterinsurgency theories mentioned earlier point out that long term stability, and not just militarily defeating insurgents, is the aim of a successful counterinsurgency, however that cannot be achieved without political concessions and compromises. This paper redefines counterinsurgency as the military, economic, and political actions taken by the government and the primary counterinsurgency force in order to regain territorial control from the insurgents, weaken their presence in the country, and establish law and order in the country. While other definitions such as Moore's and Kilcullen's stress on resolving underlying causes of insurgency, promoting social and economic stability, and on using a combination of economic, military, psychological, and political factors to defeat insurgencies, theories based on these definitions do not really expand on the multi-faceted political aspect of counterinsurgency.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, these definitions do not take into account the very real possibility that counterinsurgents might not be successful in entirely defeating an insurgency. In that sense, the

---

<sup>28</sup> Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (London: Pall Mall Press Ltd, 1964).

<sup>29</sup> David Kilcullen, 2010, R. Scott Moore, "The Basics of Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars Journal*.

definition provided by this paper adjusts the aims of counterinsurgency to more achievable targets than the somewhat abstract ideas of 'lasting stability'.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the paper will encompass not only the internal politics of the country and its effect on the outcome of counterinsurgency but also on international, interstate politics.

That is where the role of the external actor will be emphasised. When the primary counterinsurgency force is an external actor, it becomes more important to engage with other states and external actors that may have stakes in the outcome of counterinsurgency. Superpowers may sometimes take it for granted that their power and influence can compel their allies and foes alike to ignore their strategic interests. This may result in causing more regional instability. COIN forces, regardless of how powerful they are, must realise that compromises have to be made not only to accommodate the insurgents, but also the allies. Counterinsurgency tends to reflect the state that is involved in fighting insurgents, or as Kilcullen states, it "mirrors the state."<sup>31</sup> That presents an inherent challenge for counterinsurgents who are not only unfamiliar with the host nation's social structures and values but also, at times, averse to them. In a bid to win the trust and goodwill of the local population, COIN forces tend to assume that their moral and political values will be viewed favourably and adopted unquestionably. The product of these efforts and indigenous norms and values may not be the best possible outcome, therefore, COIN forces should be prepared to compromise much more than they are willing to.

This paper addresses the issue of political engagement as it is often either neglected all together in counterinsurgency discourse or taken for granted that political ideologies and structures are applicable across board with minor adjustments. The central focus of this paper will be on the external factor. When the primary counterinsurgent force is an external actor, there will always be an outsider element that will be exploited by the insurgents. Moreover, other countries bordering the host nation or having stakes in it will have a role, positive or negative, that is shaped by history, their own interests and their relations with the host nation. Bad neighbours, through their deliberate actions, and bad neighbourhoods, due to

---

<sup>30</sup> R. Scott Moore.

<sup>31</sup> David Kilcullen, 2010

spill over effects, can trigger or prolong conflict.<sup>32</sup> However, as counterinsurgency theories suggest, indigenous support is an important prerequisite for insurgencies to survive. Moreover, internal forces and the political elite are primarily responsible for sustained conflict.<sup>33</sup>

One of this paper's fundamental aims is to analyse how, and the extent to which a third country influences the success or failure of counterinsurgency. Seth Jones posits that an outside actor alone cannot win the war against insurgents, but it is important to question if interference by an external actor alone can be responsible for repeated counterinsurgency failures.<sup>34</sup> For example, foreign support and sanctuaries may help insurgents in carrying out attacks on the host country's territory, however, insurgents cannot establish control of and consolidate a significant area of territory without internal support. Typically, weak governance, inefficient security forces, and ethnic conflict go a long way in ensuring that an insurgency thrives. Indigenous political will is imperative in determining how counterinsurgency will be fought. The absence of a singular objective sought by the indigenous government, the COIN force, and other political elite in the host country lead to varying levels of commitment and different visions of success.<sup>35</sup> Some segments of decision makers and influencers may even benefit from prolonging the conflict, and ultimately support the insurgents.<sup>36</sup> According to a RAND research, counterinsurgency could be categorised as a "win" if the government stayed in power after the insurgency was over, and had maintained its territorial sovereignty, but if the government in power had to make "major concessions" to the insurgents then the outcome was categorised as "mixed."<sup>37</sup> Although what is considered successful is dependent to a great degree on individual cases, however, if the government remains under threat by insurgents, if the government is unable to establish its control over the territory, and if

---

<sup>32</sup> Michael E. Brown, "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict," in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 571.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan, "Counterinsurgency Scorecard: Afghanistan in early 2013 relative to insurgencies since WWII," RAND Corporation, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, 2010.

insurgents are still capable of launching attacks within and outside the country then success is still elusive.

The U.S. has historically been involved in counterinsurgency operations abroad, for example in Iraq, Vietnam and now in Afghanistan. However, years of experience and expert advice have not made COIN a straightforward task, nor have they offered clear cut solutions for wars that go on for too long. Analyses of U.S. policies have focussed most significantly on military strategies and solutions, without acknowledging the fact that sometimes even a COIN force's best attempt is not good enough. U.S. Commander in Afghanistan, General Campbell, attributed the losses in Afghanistan to "poor leadership, inadequate soldier/police care, and poor force management."<sup>38</sup> While these factors may be overwhelmingly important in a certain counterinsurgency phase, different factors, such as political inefficiency, external actor's interference, bad COIN policies, etc. may be more important in other phases. This is not to imply, however, that existing COIN theories and practices disregard all indigenous cultural influences and non-military factors. Quite a few analysts appreciate the need and applicability of hybrid systems of governance that combine the COIN force's ideals and the host country's norms.<sup>39</sup> While these hybrid institutions may legitimise political and judicial processes, they may not be inclusive and may favour the elite who wielded power under the old system.<sup>40</sup> That is indicative of the fact that countries need to evolve and the political system they adopt as a result may not look like what an external actor hoped for. This paper will seek to determine the possible factors that make counterinsurgency by outside actors an almost unachievable task owing to numerous reasons, some of which may be insurmountable.

As for external actors, there may be multiple regional forces having a stake in the host country and wanting their version of the solution to conflict. Not all of these forces have common strategic interests. The COIN force must recognise these interests and involve external actors in the interest of long-term stability. One

---

<sup>38</sup> Franz-Stefan Gady, "Afghan Forces are Suffering Record Losses" *Diplomat*, May 05, 2015, accessed January 21, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/05/afghan-forces-are-suffering-record-losses/>.

<sup>39</sup> Ali Wardak and Humayun Hamidzada, "The Search for Legitimate Rule, Justice and a Durable Peace: Hybrid Models of Governance in Afghanistan." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7, no. 2 (2012): 79-88.

<sup>40</sup> Srinjoy Bose and Nishank Motwani, "The Limits of 'Hybrid Governance' in Afghanistan," *Strategic Analysis* 38, no. 4 (2014): 416-426.



way of dealing with problematic neighbours, who support insurgencies, is to deploy troops along the border in order to deter such behaviour.<sup>41</sup> While that may be an option in some cases, but there are constraints that do make this option non-viable. Firstly, threats of occupation or expanding military operations to the neighbouring state may not always work. Secondly, the COIN force may be unwilling to stretch its resources and troops and to engage in another conflict that will complicate its exit strategy. Thirdly, the presence of nuclear arms and regional vulnerability to terrorist organisations may forbid the deployment of troops. Essentially, this paper argues that while certain military or non-military counterinsurgency options may look good in theory, their applicability may be severely limited on the ground.

Public pressure from the COIN force's home country, pressure from the host country, military leadership, etc. may compel the political leadership of the COIN force to take unilateral action on neighbouring territory. The situation becomes even more complex if the neighbouring force is an ally rather than enemy. Afghanistan is good example of such a scenario where neighbouring Pakistan went from being a 'major non-NATO ally' and recipient of millions of dollars in military and economic aid to being designated as a 'safe haven' for militants in Afghanistan and the target of relentless U.S. drone strikes.<sup>42</sup> The United States coined the term "AfPak" during the Obama years (and later stopped using it) in an attempt to acknowledge the fact that an Afghanistan policy could not really be formulated without the inclusion of a Pakistan policy.<sup>43</sup> If the counterinsurgency force is an external actor fighting away from home, it will naturally be under pressure to achieve some positive outcomes and leave eventually. However, regional stakeholders are geographically bound to stay in proximity to the source of

---

<sup>41</sup> Michael E. Brown, "Internal Conflict and International Action," in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 603-628.

<sup>42</sup> "Bush names Pakistan 'major ally'," BBC News, Last updated, June 17, 2004, accessed February 21, 2018, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3814013.stm>, "Sixty years of US aid to Pakistan: Get the Data," *Guardian*, accessed February 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/jul/11/us-aid-to-pakistan>, Mark Lander and Gardiner Harris, "Trump, Citing Pakistan as a 'Safe Haven' for Terrorists, Freezes Aid," *New York Times*, January 4, 2018, accessed February 21, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/04/us/politics/trump-pakistan-aid.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Josh Rogin, "Team Obama scuttles the term 'AfPak'," *Foreign Policy*, January 20, 2012, accessed February 21, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/20/team-obama-scuttles-the-term-afpak/>.

insurgency and will be directly affected by it, therefore they will want to be in a position to influence outcomes in their favour.

The arguments presented in this part of the paper can be summarised into the following hypothesis that this paper will attempt to test: External actors, political and cultural factors, and historical context are instrumental in determining the outcome of counterinsurgency. If the primary counterinsurgency force is an external actor, it is an inherent advantage for insurgents due to multiple factors such as familiarity with the country, its culture and geography, and having a strong anti-imperialist or anti-occupation ideology.<sup>44</sup> This paper posits that although outside forces that are stakeholders in the host country have more leverage and a more significant impact on counterinsurgency through their policies, it is unlikely that the entire outcome of years of counterinsurgency can be dictated by an external, much weaker, stakeholder. Insurgents rely on external support and safe havens to survive, however, it is unlikely that they are able to claim territory in the host country without indigenous support and counterinsurgency shortcomings.

This paper combines two major disciplines, history and international relations, to study and evaluate the Afghan War. The logic behind doing so is to provide a historical context to the events of the war, and explain the behaviour of the actors involved.

## **Methodology**

This paper will use process tracing in order to conduct an analysis of the different phases in the US-Afghan War during 2001 and 2017. Process tracing is a methodology applied to understand mechanisms involved in causation.<sup>45</sup> It relies on studying events that have occurred and influenced the dependent variable in order to indicate processes in action.<sup>46</sup> This technique would be helpful for the case study selected for this paper, in identifying how certain factors have affected the dependent variable i.e. counterinsurgency. In applying process tracing methods to the case study, certain 'best practices' would be kept in mind, which would include incorporating alternative explanations, testing these alternative explanations

---

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has A Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* (RAND Corporation, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, ed., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

rigorously, being mindful of the subjectivity of sources of evidence, gathering diverse but relevant evidence, being open to the possibility that process tracing might not be conclusive, etc.<sup>47</sup> While factors identified during the course of research may explain the success or failure of counterinsurgency, there may be a fair probability that there are other factors at work as well. The paper will strive to include all possible explanations and incorporate alternative analyses in order to test the hypothesis. For example, although it is specified that political factors and external forces play a pivotal role, these factors may work in combination with geographical conditions, economic issues, etc. Process tracing also entails applying theories to events and gathering evidence from the past in order to identify the mechanisms involved.<sup>48</sup> When the nature of Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan will be discussed, it will be important to understand the origin of the Taliban and extensive U.S.-Pakistan interference in the country prior to 2001. That would provide a more comprehensive picture and a historic context of how Pakistan became a refuge for Taliban insurgents and how the U.S. is perceived in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The paper provides a chronological description of the Afghan War in order to identify factors that led to specific outcomes, favourable or unfavourable, for the counterinsurgent force. Authors like Marc Trachtenberg have discussed the merits of combining history and international relations theory. He argues that while historians are primarily presenting factual evidence without any underlying assumptions, they do have implicit expectations, or “theoretical notions.”<sup>49</sup> However, he also asserts that theory is not the answer in itself, but only a means of analysis that needs to be justified with empirical evidence.<sup>50</sup> Other authors argue that while historians and political scientists use theory differently, both disciplines should borrow from each other in terms of methodology.<sup>51</sup> Trachtenberg suggests that in order to start a project in International History, one must first make use of existing arguments, analyse them within a conceptual framework and then test

---

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, ed., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Matthew Evangelista, “Explaining the Cold War’s end,” in *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, ed., Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>49</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History* (Princeton University Press: 2009), 33.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>51</sup> Jack S. Levy, “Too Important to Leave to the Other: History and Political Science in the Study of International Relations,” *International Security* 22, no. 1 (Summer, 1997): 22-33.

them against empirical data, which should include primary sources.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, while this paper begins with formalising a theory regarding counterinsurgency, it tests this theory against factual evidence presented in the form of a chronological narrative. For this purpose, the Afghan War is divided into phases.

The first phase will be from 2001-2002 when the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S.<sup>53</sup> Process tracing methods will be applied to explain how this decision came about and what were the underlying causes leading up to U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and its immediate repercussions. The second phase from 2002-2004 marks the reconstruction effort by the US, and elections in Afghanistan.<sup>54</sup> During this phase, evidence will be gathered to suggest the motives behind holding elections, and what these elections meant for the political system and indigenous political structures in Afghanistan. The third phase between 2006 and 2009 saw an increase in insurgent attacks and violence.<sup>55</sup> The election of Barack Obama as the president of the United States in 2009 ensued a fresh strategy in Afghanistan, and an eventual withdrawal of the majority of United States forces.<sup>56</sup> The argument behind Obama's strategy in Afghanistan in Pakistan will be evaluated against the results it produced in terms of controlling insurgency. The last phase, from 2014 to 2017, addressed in this paper will assess the situation after US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, and Afghan policy after the election of President Donald Trump. The U.S. pursued different policies, dealt with different situations on the ground, and had different relations with Afghanistan and its neighbouring country, and key US ally, Pakistan, during these phases.

The paper will use primary and secondary sources in order to obtain information regarding U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, the economic and political situation in Afghanistan, and to assess US policy. These sources will include policy statements by presidents of the United States and other key political and military figures. Opinions of people who have spent time in Afghanistan in an official

---

<sup>52</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History*, 169-182.

<sup>53</sup> Council of Foreign Relations, "The US War in Afghanistan," accessed January, 20, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>.

<sup>54</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Council of Foreign Relations, "The US War in Afghanistan," accessed January, 20, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>.

<sup>56</sup> Council of Foreign Relations, "The US War in Afghanistan," accessed January, 20, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>.

capacity will be incorporated in order to get a deeper understanding of the complexities of the situation. This will be done through unstructured interviews. Figures pertaining to Afghanistan will be obtained from government and non-government sources. Classical and contemporary theories of counterinsurgency, and expert opinions will be relied on in order to assess the success or failure of the dependent variable i.e. counterinsurgency.

## **Chapter II: The Beginning**

On 21 September, 2001, nine days after the most blatant terrorist attack on United States' soil, President George W. Bush addressed a joint session of the Congress and the people of the U.S.<sup>57</sup> While his speech was clearly written to cater to the raw sentiments of the American public, President Bush also made certain statements that contained U.S.A.'s political objective in Afghanistan. He said, "Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen."<sup>58</sup> True to the words spoken by President Bush, the U.S. war in Afghanistan has been the longest war that the country has ever fought.

The U.S. and Britain began their military campaign in Afghanistan on October, 7, 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and the Pentagon.<sup>59</sup> After the initial U.S. bombardment of Afghanistan, it was clear that the war had multiple goals from the very beginning. The first goal could be identified in President Bush's statement that, "these carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime."<sup>60</sup> He later added, "today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader."<sup>61</sup> This particular statement was an indication that there was certainly a possibility of more attacks on countries other than Afghanistan on the pretext of the war on terror. However, apart from these objectives, the U.S. also pursued a longer term political objective from the very outset. This was evident in Rumsfeld's statement, "the effect we hope to achieve through these raids, which together with our coalition partners we have initiated today, is to create conditions for sustained anti-terrorist and humanitarian relief

---

<sup>57</sup> "State of the Union address: Text of George Bush's speech," *Guardian*, September 21, 2001, accessed March 9, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>.

<sup>58</sup> "State of the Union address: Text of George Bush's speech," *Guardian*, September 21, 2001, accessed March 9, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>.

<sup>59</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Patrick Tyler, "A Nation Challenged," *New York Times*, October, 8, 2001, accessed March 9, 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/08/world/nation-challenged-attack-us-britain-strike-afghanistan-aiming-bases-terrorist.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

operations in Afghanistan.”<sup>62</sup> He added that one of the goals sought by U.S. operations in Afghanistan was, “to provide humanitarian relief to Afghans suffering truly oppressive living conditions under the Taliban regime.”<sup>63</sup> The mention of a “sustained” effort in Rumsfeld’s statement was consistent with President Bush’s earlier claim that this was going to be a long engagement in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the Defense Secretary spoke about freeing the Afghan people from the brutal Taliban regime, which was clearly a non-military objective requiring long-term effort and dedication of resources from the United States. The retaliatory statements made by Osama bin Laden in the aftermath of U.S. occupation of Afghanistan are also crucial in order to understand the nature of this war. “I swear to God that America will not live in peace before peace reigns in Palestine, and before all the army of infidels depart the land of Muhammad, peace be upon him,” he said.<sup>64</sup> The leader of al-Qaeda, the organisation held responsible for 9/11 attacks, referred repeatedly to the victimisation of the “Islamic nation” at the hands of the west, and the U.S. in particular.<sup>65</sup> The ideology that motivated al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban’s resistance to the U.S. was based on religious war, opposition to western imperialism, and martyrdom. All of these elements proved to be a strong rallying cry for the recruitment of young people in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan who were opposed to the occupation of Afghanistan. In his speeches, Osama bin Laden not only threatened the U.S. and the west in general, but conveyed a strong message to Muslims that his fight was sanctioned by the Quran as the “infidel” had yet again occupied Muslim land.<sup>66</sup> The enemy was not only the U.S., but also every country, regime, and religious leader that supported the U.S., including and especially the U.S.-installed government in Afghanistan headed by Hamid Karzai.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> “Text: Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld,” *Washington Post*, October 7, 2001, accessed March 9, 2018, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/rumsfeld\\_100801.htm](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/rumsfeld_100801.htm).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Patrick Tyler, “A Nation Challenged,” *New York Times*, October, 8, 2001, accessed March 9, 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/08/world/nation-challenged-attack-us-britain-strike-afghanistan-aiming-bases-terrorist.html>.

<sup>65</sup> “Bin Laden: America ‘filled with fear’,” CNN World, October 7, 2001, accessed March 9, 2018, <http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/central/10/07/ret.binladen.transcript/index.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Scheuer, *Osama Bin Laden* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 129-161.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

According to David Galula, if insurgents have an ideology or a “well-grounded cause”, the probability of counterinsurgency success decreases.<sup>68</sup> Although the U.S. had a strong justification for attacking Afghanistan, that is, revenge for 9/11 and the Taliban government’s refusal to hand over Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and al Qaeda appealed to a much deeper, and stronger sentiment. The war with the U.S. became not only a question of survival for the insurgents, but also a means through which they could partake in holy war and achieve martyrdom. The war between U.S. and Afghanistan quickly engulfed neighbouring Pakistan, making it a key ally for the U.S.

### **Pakistan-U.S. renewed alliance**

In the days following the 9/11 attacks, the United States had already started planning for a war in Afghanistan and had presented Pakistan with a list of demands that included providing the U.S. with “blanket overflight and landing rights” for military operations, and halting provision of intelligence, stopping aid and support to the Taliban.<sup>69</sup> According to the 9/11 Commission report, Pakistan agreed to all demands made by the U.S.<sup>70</sup> However, in 2006, President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf claimed that after 9/11 U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage had called Musharraf’s Intelligence Director and threatened to bomb Pakistan “back to the Stone Age” if it did not fully cooperate with the U.S.<sup>71</sup> Regardless of the authenticity of this threatening phone call, it became evident with time that Pakistan was not going to be an easy ally for the U.S. Pakistan-U.S. relations have been complicated and erratic throughout the period that the U.S. has been in Afghanistan. The multi-faceted bilateral relations between the two countries have a long history, although for the purpose of this paper, it is most important to understand U.S.-Pakistan alliance during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the emergence of the Taliban.

---

<sup>68</sup> David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 1964).

<sup>69</sup> National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, “9/11 Commission Report.”

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Reuters, “Pakistani Leader Claims U.S. Threat After 9/11,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2006, accessed March 10, 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/22/world/asia/22pakistan.html>.



## Afghan Jihad

While she was Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton spoke to the Congress about the role United States had played in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region after Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan in 1979. She is recorded to have said the following words, ‘...it was President Reagan, in partnership with the Congress, led by Democrats, who said, “You know what? Sounds like a pretty good idea! Let’s deal with the ISI and the Pakistani military, and let’s go recruit these Mujahedin! That’s great! Let’s get some to come from Saudi Arabia and other places, importing their Wahhabi brand of Islam, so that we can go beat the Soviet Union!”’<sup>72</sup> Clinton’s words are consistent with multiple analysts’ and authors’ assessment of the situation post 1979 occupation of Afghanistan.

When the Soviet Union, locked in a cold war with the U.S., invaded Afghanistan, the U.S. saw it as an expansion of Soviet influence in the region and countered it by importing the Jihadist ideology of people like Osama bin Laden into the region, funding the Afghan Mujahideen, and funding religious seminaries (*Madressas*) in Pakistan that trained fighters and sent them across the border into Afghanistan to fight Soviet forces.<sup>73</sup> *Afghan Jihad* and people’s extreme religious sentiments were used as a tool to secure the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. When U.S. national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was asked if he regretted funding and arming Islamic fundamentalists, he said, “what is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some agitated Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?”<sup>74</sup> While the U.S. was in a position to disengage from the region once their objective was achieved in 1989, Pakistan had perhaps not considered the fallout of the pivotal role it had played in enabling the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Again, in Hillary Clinton’s words, ‘we said, “Ok, fine. You deal with the Stingers that we’ve left all over your country. You deal with the mines that are along the border.”’<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the U.S. supported armed *jihad* against Soviet forces, while Pakistan

---

<sup>72</sup> Akbar Ganji, “U.S.-Jihadist Relations (Part 1): Creating the Mujahideen in Afghanistan,” *Huffington Post*, 7 February, 2014, accessed March 14, 2018, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/akbar-ganji/us-jihadist-relations\\_b\\_5542757.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/akbar-ganji/us-jihadist-relations_b_5542757.html).

<sup>73</sup> Michael Scheuer, *Osama Bin Laden* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 48-48; Ahmed Rashid, “The Taliban: Exporting Extremism,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 1999): 22-35.

<sup>74</sup> Akbar Ganji, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

provided the manpower and training to make it a success. However, once the Soviet Union withdrew, both Pakistan and Afghanistan had to contend with armed and trained groups who espoused extreme religious beliefs. It was no coincidence that the 9/11 attacks were planned in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where members of al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden found refuge.

It is also important to understand the nature of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, and Pakistan's interests in its western neighbor.

### **Geopolitics and "Strategic Depth"**

Pakistan's status is not limited to that of a neighbouring country, but one that was and remains culturally, ethnically and strategically, firmly invested in Afghanistan. The 2,430 km long Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan was established in 1893 by the British.<sup>76</sup> This mountainous and porous border dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan's Pakhtun majority Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has historically been of great geostrategic importance.<sup>77</sup> After the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, various factions of Taliban escaped to Pakistan, where they were given asylum by other Pakhtun tribes in accordance with their honour code, *Pakhtunwali*.<sup>78</sup> Mullah Omar, head of the deposed Taliban government in Afghanistan, planned and organised his activities from the south of Pakistan's tribal areas, where he had set up his Quetta *Shura*, while the Haqqani network set up its base in North and South Waziristan areas of Pakistan.<sup>79</sup> In addition to the cultural, ethnic and ideological linkages that provided a conducive environment and a reliable support base to the Taliban in Pakistan, Pakistan's military establishment's pursuit of "strategic depth" made matters more complicated.

---

<sup>76</sup> A.Z. Hilali, "Contemporary Geopolitics of FATA: An Analysis of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26, no. 4 (2013): 595-638.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid; Feroze Hassan Khan, "The Durand Line," in *Culture, Conflict, and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Thomas Johnson and Barry Zellen (Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2014).

<sup>78</sup> Brian Fisherman, "The Taliban in Pakistan: An Overview," in *Talibanisation: Negotiating the Borders Between Terror, Politics, and Religion*, ed. Katherine Tiedemann and Peter L. Bergen (Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

The doctrine of strategic depth dictates that a country cannot have adversaries both on its eastern and western borders.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, given Pakistan's deep-rooted, and perpetual animosity with India, it could not afford the possibility of having an unfavourable government on its western border too.<sup>81</sup> Pakistan's alliance with U.S. in perpetuating anti-Soviet jihad during the 1980s, and its support of the Taliban government in Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal were consistent with Pakistani security establishment's pursuit of strategic depth.<sup>82</sup> Having established that Pakistan had clear strategic interests in Afghanistan, it is important to question whether these goals were pursued even after Pakistan had become a U.S. ally in the war on terror, which meant that it had to wage war against the Taliban. Did Pakistan's security establishment change its long held ideology and completely part ways with the people that it had once considered strategic assets? As the paper progresses, this question may have different answers depending on the phases of counterinsurgency, Pakistan's own security, and its relations with the U.S. Regardless, Pakistan's role as an external actor would remain pivotal throughout.

### **Early Victories and Tora Bora**

According to numerous accounts of the early days of the Afghan War, the United States was successful in swiftly toppling the Taliban and sending Taliban and al Qaeda fighters to the mountains through overwhelming air power.<sup>83</sup> The Afghan model, a doctrine led by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Gen. Tommy Franks, entailed deploying a minimum possible number of troops on the ground and relying on intelligence, aerial bombardment and special forces to carry out limited operations.<sup>84</sup> The logic behind this was to minimise American casualties, and prevent the alienation of Afghans that might lead to an

---

<sup>80</sup> A.Z. Hilali, "Contemporary Geopolitics of FATA: An Analysis of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26, no. 4 (2013): 595-638.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> A.Z. Hilali, "Contemporary Geopolitics of FATA: An Analysis of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26, no. 4 (2013): 595-638; Feroze Hassan Khan, "The Durand Line," in *Culture, Conflict, and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Thomas Johnson and Barry Zellen (Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2014); Alexander Evans, "Pakistan and the Shadow of 9/11," *RUSI Journal* 156, no. 4 (2011): 64-70.

<sup>83</sup> US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, November 30, 2009.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 2.

insurgency.<sup>85</sup> It was later argued by military and intelligence officials deployed in Afghanistan that this plan might have led to the escape of Osama bin Laden, other al Qaeda and Taliban fighters, and Mullah Omar, who would lead the insurgency against American troops and the Afghan government.<sup>86</sup> In this initial phase of the war, it is important to assess the operation that took place at Tora Bora, its results, and significance for an insurgency that has survived for sixteen years. While it is impossible to accurately hypothesize about what could have happened had Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omer been eliminated in 2001, it can be said that a successful operation at Tora Bora would have changed the face of Afghan insurgency.

Tora Bora is a part of *Spin Ghar* (White Mountains) of Afghanistan, comprising valleys and high peaks, situated close to the border with Pakistan.<sup>87</sup> The United States relied on local non-Pashtun, anti-Taliban militias and air strikes in order to bombard Tora Bora and fight the al Qaeda fighters hiding there.<sup>88</sup> Requests by U.S. military and intelligence command in Afghanistan such as the head of special operations for the CIA, Henry Crumpton, and CIA director George Tenet, to increase U.S. troops on the ground were rejected because it would negate Rumsfeld and Franks' strategy of maintaining a "light footprint."<sup>89</sup> The most glaring loopholes in this strategy were that the local militias fighting at Tora Bora were ill-trained, hostile towards each other, and possibly even sympathetic to al Qaeda and Taliban.<sup>90</sup>

Michael Scheuer of the CIA commented, "the people we bought, the people Mr. Tenet said we would own, let Osama bin Laden escape from Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan into Pakistan."<sup>91</sup> Not only were requests to deploy American troops along the border in order to prevent the movement of al Qaeda and Taliban

---

<sup>85</sup> US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, November 30, 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Michael E. O'Hanlon, "A Flawed Masterpiece," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (March/April, 2002).

<sup>87</sup> US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, November 30, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> United States Special Operations Command History, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., *Global War on Terrorism: Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan*.

<sup>89</sup> US Committee on Foreign Relations, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*.

<sup>90</sup> United States Special Operations Command History, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., *Global War on Terrorism: Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan*; US Committee on Foreign Relations, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*.

<sup>91</sup> US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*.

into Pakistan rejected, Pakistan's request for U.S. helicopters to move its security forces to the border was also denied.<sup>92</sup> According to Pakistan's director-general for military operations, he got to know about the operation at Tora Bora through the television.<sup>93</sup> Moreover President Musharraf of Pakistan told the head of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), General Franks, that, "you are flushing these guys out and there are one hundred and fifty valleys for them to move through. They are pouring into my country," and he asked for help in order to airlift security forces and deploy them on the border.<sup>94</sup> This request was denied because the United States could not provide helicopters required for this purpose.<sup>95</sup>

Pakistan, as a key ally of the U.S., and strategically located in the region, was not taken on board before launching an operation to drive out hardened militants from an area located at very close proximity to Pakistan. In the absence of the help that Pakistan required during Tora Bora operation, Pakistan got drawn deeper into U.S. war in Afghanistan by becoming home to Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omer. Pakistan would be the place from where the leaders of Afghan insurgency would plan and execute attacks, and Pakistan would also become one of the primary targets of Jihadi terrorism for being a U.S. ally. There are alternative descriptions of the events that occurred in Tora Bora as well. One being that the U.S. never had sound intelligence of Osama bin Laden's presence in the caves at Tora Bora. Another one was that given the rugged and tough terrain of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border it would have been extremely risky to drop troops in time.<sup>96</sup> However, according to various accounts, the U.S. did possess strong intelligence indicating the presence of Osama bin Laden in the caves of Tora Bora, and that the U.S. had just shifted focus from Afghanistan after capturing major cities like Kabul and Kandahar and toppling the Taliban.<sup>97</sup> According to journalist and author, Bob Woodward, President Bush had instructed Rumsfeld to "get

---

<sup>92</sup> US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*, Steve Coll, *Directorate S* (U.S.: Penguin Random House, 2018).

<sup>93</sup> Steve Coll, *Directorate S*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 109.

<sup>95</sup> Steve Coll, *Directorate S*; US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*.

<sup>96</sup> Peter John Paul Krause, "The Last Good Chance A Reassessment of U.S. Operations at Tora Bora," *Security Studies* 17, no. 4 (2008): 644-684.

<sup>97</sup> Peter John Paul Krause, "The Last Good Chance A Reassessment of U.S. Operations at Tora Bora"; US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*; United States Special Operations Command History, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., *Global War on Terrorism: Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan*.

started on” Iraq, and even remove Saddam Hussein in order to “protect America” as early as November, 2001.<sup>98</sup> President Bush was staying on the course he had laid out earlier in his speech after the 9/11 attacks, stating that their war would not be limited to Afghanistan.

Several things stand out in the assessment of events following the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Ironically, the U.S. is faced with the thing that some of the military command were adamant on avoiding by not deploying troops on ground - an insurgency. Although counterinsurgency theory emphasises not using disproportionate force, it does not rule out the use of force all together, especially when it is required. The U.S. used ample air power, including a 15,000 pound bomb, at Tora Bora, but not enough troops were committed on the ground to fight and stop the infiltration of al Qaeda and Taliban into Pakistan.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps the United States considered occupying major cities and installing a handpicked government more important goals and underestimated the power of ideology for sustaining an insurgency. The fact that Mullah Omar and Osama bin Laden were alive meant that they were still in a position to influence *Jihadi* ideology, and even lead the insurgency against U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Moreover, the fact that they, along with hundreds of trained fighters, were in Pakistan would have lasting repercussions on Pakistan’s own existential fight against terrorism. It would also influence the overall perception of the U.S. in Pakistan. According to Pew Global, in 1999/2000 only 23% of Pakistanis had a favourable view of the U.S., which dropped a further 13 percentage points in 2002 with only 10% viewing the U.S. favourably in Pakistan.<sup>100</sup> The U.S. lost interest in Afghanistan quite early on in the war, and focused instead on Iraq, which eventually led to U.S forces having to deal with two extremely deadly and determined insurgencies, in two very volatile regions.

In this paper’s assessment of the entire period of the Afghan War, the reluctance to commit troops, the inability or unwillingness to stop al Qaeda and Taliban from crossing over into Pakistan, and the diversion of resources to Iraq

---

<sup>98</sup> US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*.

<sup>99</sup> US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*, November 30, 2009.

<sup>100</sup> Pew Research Center, “Views of a Changing World 2003,” June 3, 2003, accessed March 26, 2018, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2003/06/03/chapter-1-post-war-opinions/>.

would probably remain crucial factors in shaping the nature of insurgency in Afghanistan. As for the political aspect of the war, the U.S. and international forces made a substantial effort in order to install an indigenous, democratic, and foreign-assisted government in Afghanistan.

### **Indigenous Governance and Law Enforcement**

The United States rightly realised that to minimise the impact of foreign occupation and the consequent resistance, there had to be an Afghan government and indigenous law enforcing agencies in place. The Bonn process (2001-2005) that was intended to internationally broker peace and stability in Afghanistan by establishing interim administration, a supreme court and a commission to convene a *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council), specifically recognised the Afghan *jirga* system in judicial, constitutional and governance matters.<sup>101</sup> Hamid Karzai, who was Afghanistan's interim leader, was elected by the *Loya Jirga* as President in 2002.<sup>102</sup> Karzai, a Pashtun, not only had Afghan tribal elders' support, he had also become the United States' leader of choice due to his enmity with the Taliban, who had murdered his father.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the beginning of the American project to bring a legitimate government and stability to Afghanistan looked promising. The Taliban had escaped, al Qaeda was also on the run, a President was elected through the consensus of the Afghan elite, and reconstruction and training of Afghan security forces was underway.

The Afghan National Police (ANP) underwent three years of training by German trainers, and the Afghan National Army (ANA) was trained by the U.S. and its allies.<sup>104</sup> The competence of ANA, evidenced by its conduct of counterinsurgency operations, improved steadily despite the lack of finances and an Afghan air force.<sup>105</sup> However, this does not imply that training law enforcement and security forces was without serious challenges. For example, Afghanistan's border force was incapable of policing the border with Pakistan, the police force

---

<sup>101</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010; Ali Wardak and Humayun Hamidzada, "The Search for Legitimate Rule, Justice and a Durable Peace: Hybrid Models of Governance in Afghanistan." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7, no. 2 (2012): 79-88.

<sup>102</sup> "Loya Jirga elects Hamid Karzai," *Guardian*, June 13, 2002, accessed March 27, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jun/13/afghanistan>.

<sup>103</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "How Obama Lost Karzai," *Foreign Policy*, February 21, 2011, accessed March 27, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/21/how-obama-lost-karzai-2/>.

<sup>104</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2008.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

was riddled with corruption and vulnerable to the influence of powerful drug lords, and the army did not have adequate equipment.<sup>106</sup> Counterinsurgency theory stresses on the importance of reliable intelligence in getting information about insurgent support systems and movement, however, this becomes quite difficult when the local population remains loyal to insurgents. This was observed in Afghanistan, where the rural areas bordering Pakistan i.e. the south and east, remained loyal to the Taliban and the warlords due to the weakness of central government.<sup>107</sup>

Despite a serious effort by coalition forces to provide legitimacy to government and judicial institutions, the law and order condition in Afghanistan did not improve significantly and government institutions kept performing rather poorly.<sup>108</sup> Indigenising the judicial system made governance more difficult by decentralizing it, and ceding control to the elite who would safeguard their own interests.<sup>109</sup> This is where the gap between theory and application becomes evident. Despite efforts by counterinsurgency forces to check all boxes on the good COIN list, there are certain ground realities, historical factors, and socio-political forces that work to counter these efforts. Had the U.S. not taken Afghan *Jirga* system on board before installing a government, the results would possibly have been worse. The U.S. would have imposed imported governance structures on a society that had no fundamentals to support such structures. Given social realities and power hierarchies, the Afghan people had to choose between a weak central government backed by an occupying force who would leave eventually, and local warlords who traditionally possessed power and influence. In the warlord dominated east and south of Afghanistan, governmental control was even weaker. The jihadist ideology of al Qaeda had been accepted in Afghanistan previously, and was the driving force behind Soviet withdrawal. The same ideology was being used to recruit insurgents against U.S. forces this time. Jihad and anti-imperialism would be the agenda based on which the Taliban would put up an insurgency.

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 75-77.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid; World Bank, *Aggregate Governance Indicators Dataset, 1996–2006*, (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2007).

<sup>109</sup> Srinjoy Bose and Nishank Motwani, "The Limits of 'Hybrid Governance' in Afghanistan," *Strategic Analysis* 38, no. 4 (2014): 416-426.



Recognising the need to rebuild a war-ravaged Afghanistan, the U.S. and its international allies embarked on an expensive and lengthy process of reconstruction.

### **Chapter III: Reconstruction**

*“In an sense, my taking on this additional job-I continued to serve as the department’s comptroller and chief financial officer-said much about the administration’s evolving priorities. Afghanistan was yesterday’s news..” Dov Zakheim (Civilian Coordinator for Reconstruction of Afghanistan).<sup>110</sup>*

After sending the Taliban and al Qaeda into retreat, the next step for the U.S. was to work on the reconstruction of a war-torn country. However, the United States had not envisioned for itself to be the sole donor, committing the required funds for nation building. The IMF, World Bank, and the European Union, among others, had pledged to donate funds, however the required aid never came through.<sup>111</sup> Dov Zakheim, U.S. Department of Defense’s coordinator for reconstruction in Afghanistan, described trying to get funds from allies “like pulling teeth.”<sup>112</sup> In fact, at \$60 per person, the average financial assistance in Afghanistan during the first two years of the war was lower than other reconstruction missions for example in Somalia, Haiti, East Timor, Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia, etc.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, the United States and allies were not only reluctant to commit troops to Afghanistan in order to avoid an insurgency, they were also keeping a tight budget on the reconstruction efforts. If Zakheim, and other U.S. officials are to be believed, the lack of funds was to be attributed to the Iraq war. Ashraf Ghani, who was the Afghan finance minister, expressed the need to train bureaucrats and the border police, and for the countries that had pledged funds in Tokyo in 2002 to come through on their commitments.<sup>114</sup>

While U.S. allies in the Gulf and Europe were to be blamed partially for not adequately funding Afghan reconstruction, the U.S. administration’s attitude was also not recognizant of Afghan needs. After his first trip in 2002, Zakheim understood that Afghanistan “needed constant monitoring, constant assistance, constant attention” although his colleagues and he had other responsibilities back

---

<sup>110</sup> Dov S Zakheim, *A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2011), 7.

<sup>111</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 120-122.

<sup>114</sup> Dov S Zakheim, *A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan*.

in the U.S. due to which they “did not pay Afghanistan the attention it required.”<sup>115</sup> Lack of U.S. commitment to the Afghan war would be troublesome not only for the Afghan population, but also for neighbouring Pakistan. It would continue to foster mutual distrust that U.S. and Pakistan had for each other, and reinforce Pakistani military establishment’s belief that the U.S. would jeopardise Pakistan’s strategic interests. General Kayani, the Chief of Army Staff in Pakistan, told U.S. ambassador to Pakistan in 2007, “If you think we are going to turn the Taliban and Haqqanis and others into mortal enemies of ours and watch you walk out the door, you are completely crazy. Are we hedging our bets? You bet we are.”<sup>116</sup>

The military establishment had not changed its view of the U.S. as a fickle ally, who had abandoned Pakistan once their interests were served. General Kayani admitted that that Pakistan’s military establishment considered it against national interest to go after the Haqqani network and other factions of Afghan Taliban and becoming a target of their violence. It is important to question then, what would be the probability of counterinsurgency success if the COIN forces were not fully committed? Moreover, what would be the prospects of success if a crucial neighbour was distrustful of the counterinsurgency force and provided refuge to insurgents on its territory? Both these factors had an adverse effect on the efficacy of counterinsurgency operations carried out by international forces and Afghanistan’s national security forces. The insurgents, who comprised multiple factions, had started attacking the Pashtun majority southern part of Afghanistan as early as 2003, attempting even to seize control of Kandahar.<sup>117</sup> Amongst these factions were Jalaluddin Haqqani a member of the toppled Taliban government, Hekmatyar Gulbuddin’s Hezb-i-Islami who had allied with the Taliban, and other groups who wanted more power in the new political set up of Afghanistan.<sup>118</sup> Although all these sources of insurgency cannot be blamed entirely on the lack of funds, resources, and commitment by the U.S. and its international allies, but these factors along with Pakistan’s reluctance to take

---

<sup>115</sup> Dov S Zakheim, *A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan*, 181.

<sup>116</sup> Dan De Luce, “Is Trump Ready to Dump Pakistan?” *Foreign Policy*, March 26, 2018, accessed March 29, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/26/is-trump-ready-to-dump-pakistan/>.

<sup>117</sup> Scott Steward Smith, *Afghanistan’s Troubled Transition: Politics, Peacekeeping, and the 2004 Presidential Elections* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011), 81.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 81-82.

decisive action against the Taliban seeking refuge on its territory certainly made the problem worse.

### **The elections: 2004-2005**

Holding elections in an ethnically diverse country like Afghanistan that has seen decades of conflict can be a gamble. It can potentially lead to peace as all ethnic groups would have a stake in electing the government, or be disastrous for a fragile society that is going through radical changes in a very short span of time.<sup>119</sup> There were four leading candidates for presidency in the 2004 elections: Hamid Karzai, representative of the Pashtuns, Yunis Qanooni, representative of the Tajiks; Mohammad Mohaqqiq, representing his ethnic group, the Hazaras; and General Rashid Dostum, representing the Uzbeks of Afghanistan.<sup>120</sup> Karzai won the election on October 9, 2004, with 55.4 percent of the total vote.<sup>121</sup> Despite the abduction of three foreign nationals, the UN panel formed for examining complaints of irregularities concluded that the elections were carried out without major instances of violence or fraud that would alter the result of the election.<sup>122</sup> The elections of 2004 were not only a landmark in Afghanistan's political history, they were also deeply meaningful for a country that had never before known transfer of political power through elections. Although people voted along ethnic lines, and tribal affiliations, a 70 percent pf registered voter turnout indicated the willingness of the Afghan people to be part of the political system.<sup>123</sup> Afghans in Pakistan and Iran were also able to vote, with 75 percent voter turnout in Pakistan and 50 percent in Iran.<sup>124</sup> Despite criticism that the whole exercise to import democracy to Afghanistan was forced and only carried out to legitimise a U.S.-

---

<sup>119</sup> Arif Sahar, "Ethnicizing Masses in Post-Bonn Afghanistan: The Case of the 2004 and 2009 Presidential Elections," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 22, no. 3 (August, 2014): 289-314.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> "Karzai declared Afghan president," BBC News, last updates, November 3, 2004, accessed April 10, 2018, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3977677.stm>.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Arif Sahar, "Ethnicizing Masses in Post-Bonn Afghanistan: The Case of the 2004 and 2009 Presidential Elections"; "Afghanistan Presidential Election Result-2004," Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, accessed April 13, 2018, [http://www.iec.org.af/public\\_html/Election%20Results%20Website/english/english.htm](http://www.iec.org.af/public_html/Election%20Results%20Website/english/english.htm); "Afghanistan's First Presidential Election Not Perfect, But Sets Stage for Journey Towards Vigorous Democracy, Security Council Told," October 12, 2004, accessed April 13, 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sc8216.doc.htm>.

<sup>124</sup> "Afghanistan's First Presidential Election Not Perfect, But Sets Stage for Journey Towards Vigorous Democracy, Security Council Told," October 12, 2004, accessed April 13, 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sc8216.doc.htm>.

backed leader, Afghan participation in the elections despite security threats is evidence that the local population wanted a decision-making role in determining their political future. Vibrant voter turnout and an election free of major irregularities did in fact provide legitimacy to the presidency of Hamid Karzai as he was elected by popular vote and not just through consensus of the ruling elite. Critics like Karl Eikenberry rightly point out that elections do not necessarily entail an accountable, and legitimate government with an empowered electorate and Karzai's government did not succeed in serving the Afghan people's interest.<sup>125</sup> However, that does not render the exercise of holding elections useless. It might take decades for Afghan democracy to evolve into a system that serves Afghanistan's political realities the best, but the 2004 elections were not a meaningless beginning.

Parliamentary elections were held later in 2005, which were more complex and on a larger scale than the presidential elections.<sup>126</sup> These elections proved to be much more problematic than the previous ones owing to a cost overrun of an estimated \$15 million, hasty vetting of the candidates many of whom were warlords, and the lack of independent institutions to ensure the accountability and transparency of the electoral process.<sup>127</sup> Voter turnout fell from 70 percent in the presidential election to 50 percent in the parliamentary elections, however female voter turnout remained above 40 percent as in the presidential election.<sup>128</sup> There were a few reasons due to which there was a such a significant fall in voter turnout, which included the population's general disappointment with Karzai's performance and that candidates running for the parliament were warlords and criminals accused of serious human rights violations.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, the Wolesi Jirga (the lower house of the national assembly) was divided amongst the pro-government political parties with 81 seats, the opposition parties with 84 seats, and non-aligned parties with 84 seats.<sup>130</sup> Despite a disappointing fall in voter turnout, a far from ideal list of candidates, and allegations of widespread fraud and corruption,

---

<sup>125</sup> Karl W. Eikenberry, 2013.

<sup>126</sup> Scott Steward Smith, *Afghanistan's Troubled Transition: Politics, Peacekeeping, and the 2004 Presidential Elections*.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 242-243.

<sup>128</sup> Andrew Wilder, *A House Divided? Analysing the 2005 Afghan Elections* (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2005), accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47c3f3c01b.pdf>.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

there were certain positive outcomes of the elections. Women's participation in the electoral process as candidates and voters was remarkable and quite meaningful in a country where they had been kept devoid of their fundamental rights under the Taliban regime. 30 percent of the women who were elected in the Wolesi Jirga elections did not have to avail quota seats.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, it is fair to argue that the elections in Afghanistan were not merely a cosmetic effort to provide legitimacy to a U.S. installed government. Despite being imperfect and fraught with challenges, the fact that the presidential and parliamentary elections could be held without a major security debacle was a victory. Once democratic processes are established, albeit hastily and imperfectly, it is not easy to reverse them and disenfranchise the electorate.

---

<sup>131</sup> Andrew Wilder, *A House Divided? Analysing the 2005 Afghan Elections*.

## **Chapter IV: Resurgence**

In the aftermath of the U.S. occupation and the consequent ouster of the Taliban, followed by elections, Afghan insurgency could be loosely classified into the following groups: the Taliban, who concentrated their activities in southern Afghanistan; Hezb-i-Islami, who were active in northern Afghanistan; the Haqqani network and foreign fighters, who carried out attacks in central Afghanistan; and different tribes and criminal groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>132</sup> All of these groups had leaders and bases in Pakistan's tribal areas, and its provinces Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan.<sup>133</sup> Although insurgency had begun as early as 2002, but by 2006, the attacks had become much more frequent, and claimed many more casualties. Fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks increased sharply from 288 in 2005 to 755 in 2006.<sup>134</sup> Pakistan also felt the blowback of joining the war on terror and becoming a key U.S. ally. Pakistani cities and security forces became prime targets for jihadists who now saw the country as their enemy. Among the targets were; the U.S. consulate in Karachi, Pakistan's then President Pervez Musharraf who escaped suicide terrorist attacks multiple times, and Pakistan's major cities such as Karachi.<sup>135</sup> Both Afghanistan and Pakistan had to face a radical and brutal onslaught of terrorist attacks that relied on suicide bombers as one of their weapons. The U.S. continued to be viewed unfavourably by the Pakistani population, as majority of the population opposed U.S. led war on terror and wanted NATO to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.<sup>136</sup> Moreover Musharraf's support within Pakistan declined significantly from 76 percent in 2002 to 34 percent by mid-2007.<sup>137</sup> In 2006, the U.S. had over 20,000 troops in Afghanistan, which was still considered "a light footprint" given the rising violence and the magnitude of challenges that Afghanistan was facing.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 38-39.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*; RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents, <http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search.php>.

<sup>135</sup> Matthew Ward, "A timeline of terror in Pakistan," *Guardian*, May 13, 2011, accessed April 14, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/13/timeline-terror-pakistan>.

<sup>136</sup> Richard Wike, "Musharraf's Support Shrinks, Even As More Pakistanis Reject Terrorism...and the U.S.," Pew Research Center, August 8, 2007, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2007/08/08/pakistanis-increasingly-reject-terrorism-and-the-us/>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Alan McLean and Archie Tse, "American Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq," *New York Times*, accessed April 15, 2018,

There were numerous reasons due to which the Taliban and other insurgent groups were able to find their way back to Afghanistan. Some of these reasons can be attributed to U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, some to failing Afghan governance, while others could simply not be controlled by the U.S. and Afghan security forces. According to some authors, the Afghan insurgency did not originate due to ethnic strife, which existed amongst the ethnically diverse population of Afghanistan, nor did the insurgency function like a business venture motivated by greed.<sup>139</sup> The Taliban, they believe, were driven by ideology and motivated by *jihad*, which not only enabled them to recruit fighters from Pakistan, Central Asia and other Muslims countries, but also attracted financial support from those who were sympathetic to the Afghan cause.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, for extremists, the war in Iraq further justified the need to wage holy war to expel foreign, non-Muslim forces from Muslim lands.<sup>141</sup> The insurgency drew strength and longevity from its sound ideological foundation, which could not be countered with superior weapons, and western allies' military might. Counterinsurgency theorists talk about the asymmetry of willingness to fight, and assert that insurgents benefit from having more valuable stakes in the war. This theory holds in Afghanistan's case, where although initially the U.S. was motivated by vengeance, but as more time passed, insurgents simply had a more valuable objective i.e. survival.

### **Weak Governance**

Another factor that worked in favour of the insurgents was the inability of Karzai's government to govern and retain territorial control. According to a report commissioned by the chief of Afghanistan's intelligence agency, National Directorate of Security (NDS), Amrullah Saleh, "the villages are gradually emptied of pro-government political forces and individuals. These rural areas become sanctuaries for the Taliban and the population is left with no choice but to become sympathizers of the insurgents."<sup>142</sup> He also lamented that, "when villagers and rural

---

<http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/06/22/world/asia/american-forces-in-afghanistan-and-iraq.html>; Seth G. Jones, 2010.

<sup>139</sup> Kareem Kamel, "Understanding Taliban Resurgence: Ethno-Symbolism and Revolutionary Mobilization," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (April, 2015): 66-82; Seth G. Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (Spring, 2008): 7-40.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Kareem Kamel, "Understanding Taliban Resurgence: Ethno-Symbolism and Revolutionary Mobilization."

<sup>142</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010, 164.



communities seek protection from the police, either it arrives late or arrives in a wrong way.”<sup>143</sup> The inability of the Afghan government and security forces to provide security to its informants and collaborators resulted in entire families and pro-government forces vacating the villages, due to which the rural areas of Afghanistan became “sanctuaries for the Taliban.”<sup>144</sup> Out of the list of advantages based on which insurgencies thrive, the Afghan insurgents had multiple factors working in their favour, from exercising control over certain segments of the population, to building reliable information networks in rural areas.

Between 2007 and 2009, Afghanistan was ranked one of the most corrupt countries in the world.<sup>145</sup> There were also reports that the population, particularly people living in the lawless areas of Afghanistan, had lost faith in the government, in its ability to protect them from criminal gangs and to provide employment to the people.<sup>146</sup> While inability to protect people, corruption, and the population’s declining trust in state institutions such as the police and army could be attributed to the inefficiency of Karzai’s government, there were certain unavoidable complications that facilitated the resurgence of Taliban. One of these was the complete absence of infrastructure and the need to build everything from the ground up. The Afghan Police, for example, lacked the basic infrastructure and training to provide security to the people, and training them took too long.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, the U.S. was frustrated by the insufficient efforts of its allies, such as Germany and South Korea, to train and provide infrastructure to the Afghan Police.<sup>148</sup>

Opium production had increased on Karzai’s watch, and his own government officials were a part of the drug trafficking business. In 2007, 193,000 hectares were under poppy cultivation, as compared 8,000 hectares in 2001.<sup>149</sup> In

---

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010 , 164.

<sup>145</sup> Corruption Perceptions Index, 2007, [https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2007/0](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2007/0); Corruption Perceptions Index, 2008, [https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2008/0](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2008/0), Corruptions Perception Index, 2009, [https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2009/0](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2009/0).

<sup>146</sup> Kathy Gannon, “Taliban Comeback Traced to Corruption,” *Washington Post*, November 24, 2006, accessed April 15, 2018, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/24/AR2006112400381\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/24/AR2006112400381_pf.html).

<sup>147</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2010.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> “Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016,” UNODC/MCN, December, 2016, accessed April 15, 2018, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2016\\_cultivation\\_production.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_opium_survey_2016_cultivation_production.pdf).

2005, the Governor of Helmand's office was raided by the Afghan Counternarcotics Police, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, who found over 9 metric tons of opium there.<sup>150</sup> Other allegations included government ministers and police commanders being involved in bribing and drug trafficking.<sup>151</sup>

Apart from internal and infrastructural limitations, there was also the issue of external support to the Afghan Taliban.

### **Pakistan Sanctuaries and Trust Deficit**

In a 2006 interview to Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), NDS Chief Amrullah Saleh claimed that , “the ongoing insurgency along our borders, and particularly in southern Afghanistan, has its command headquarters in Pakistan, not inside Afghanistan. They have their financial networks there; they have their training camps there; and the leadership are based in Pakistan.”<sup>152</sup> Referring to the Pakistan's willingness to go after Taliban leadership, Saleh claimed, “they do not have the strong will and determination to fight it.”<sup>153</sup> Saleh also believed Osama bin Laden to be hiding in Pakistan, and asserted that Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan would stay “uneasy”.<sup>154</sup> Pakistan was considered United States' ally in the war on terror and was witnessing a brutal insurgency on its own territory that cost thousands of lives and financial loss, however, its relations with both Afghanistan and the U.S. suffered from a serious trust deficit. As evident by Saleh's statements, Pakistan was considered the root cause of Afghanistan's problems. Although Hamid Karzai was more cautious in directly blaming Pakistan for the insurgency, he too was critical of Pakistan's role. He claimed that Afghanistan's neighbours wanted to destabilise the country after it had become a sovereign and progressive entity post U.S. occupation, and stated that in “Pakistan they are creating propaganda that there is no Islam in Afghanistan...that the Afghan people are becoming hungry and facing calamity.”<sup>155</sup> However, Karzai also asserted that “the Afghan government does not say that the source of terrorism is in Pakistan.”

---

<sup>150</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2008.

<sup>151</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2008.

<sup>152</sup> Amrullah Saleh, interview by “Frontline,” PBS, October 3, 2006, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/interviews/saleh.html#3>.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Hamid Karzai, interview by Akbar Ayazi, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 9, 2006, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1072624.html>.

He sympathised with Pakistan over the terrorist attacks across the country, and thanked Pakistan for welcoming Afghan refugees for over 30 years.<sup>156</sup>

In 2006, Karzai's approach towards Pakistan was much more subtle and conciliatory than Saleh's. However, the underlying tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan were no secret as both Musharraf and Karzai had expressed their frustration with each other openly. Despite assurances by Pakistani authorities that Pakistani security forces were doing everything to curb militant movements on the border, Karzai blamed Pakistan for the frequent insurgent attacks in Afghanistan.<sup>157</sup> President Musharraf of Pakistan was also extremely critical of Karzai's handling of the insurgency in Afghanistan. In March 2006, he told CNN that Karzai was "oblivious of what is happening in his own country."<sup>158</sup> Musharraf also denied the alleged presence of Taliban leader Mullah Omar in Pakistan.<sup>159</sup>

Despite repeated denials by Pakistani leadership, the truth was that many of the leaders of Afghan insurgency had safe havens in Pakistan. Major Pakistani cities such as Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi hosted various factions of insurgents.<sup>160</sup> According to multiple sources, the Afghan Taliban and other associated groups used Pakistani seminaries as recruiting grounds for their terrorist operations, had sources of funding and support in Pakistani political parties such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam, and were not targeted by Pakistani security forces.<sup>161</sup> Jalaluddin Haqqani, for example, was based in one of the agencies of Pakistani tribal areas, North Waziristan, which bordered the Afghan provinces of Paktia, Paktika, and Khost and several Afghan Taliban leaders moved freely between Pakistan's cities.<sup>162</sup> Even when the Pakistani security forces targeted al Qaeda and Pakistani Taliban, who were launching attacks against Pakistan, in the tribal areas, they seemed to spare the Afghan Taliban.<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Salman Masood and Carlotta Gall, "Karzai in Pakistan to Mend Ties," *New York Times*, December 27, 2007, accessed April 15, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/27/world/asia/27pakistan.html>.

<sup>158</sup> "Pakistan president blasts Afghan leader," CNN, March 5, 2006, accessed April 16, 2018, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/03/05/musharraf/>.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2008.

<sup>161</sup> Seth G. Jones, 2008; Khalid Hodayun Nadiri, "Old Habits, New Consequences: Pakistan's Posture toward Afghanistan since 2001," *International Security* 39, no. 2 (November, 2014): 132-168; Ezra Schriker, "The search for rebel interdependence: A study of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1 (2017): 16-30.

<sup>162</sup> Khalid Hodayun Nadiri, 2014.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, the resurgence of the Taliban and increased violence in Afghanistan could partially be attributed to Afghanistan's internal weaknesses, and its government's inability to provide basic necessities and security to its people. However, the fact that Afghan insurgency's leaders had homes, training camps, and unhindered support in Pakistan was also a significant advantage for the insurgents.

It is important to question why it would be in Pakistan's interest to keep the Afghan Taliban as assets. In 2007, General Kayani asked U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Ryan Crocker, "How long are you staying this time? Because you come and go."<sup>164</sup> He was referring to U.S. interest in the region, which Kayani thought was temporary and once it fades, the U.S. would abandon Pakistan like it did after Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. General Kayani's question encapsulates what was at the heart of Pakistan's strategy to use Afghan Taliban as assets -- a deep rooted distrust of the United States. Pakistan's relationship with the U.S. became more problematic in the forthcoming years as the U.S. began relying on unilateral attacks on Pakistan's territory.

## **Drone Attacks**

The first C.I.A operated Predator drone strike carried out in Pakistan killed Nek Muhammad, an al Qaeda operative who also supported militants in Pakistan and was marked as a target by the Pakistani state.<sup>165</sup> Drone attacks were protested by the Pakistani foreign ministry as an unlawful encroachment of Pakistan's sovereignty, however, according to leaked U.S. cables and President Musharraf's own admission, the U.S. had Pakistani authorities' approval to carry out these attacks.<sup>166</sup> In 2013 during an interview to CNN, Pervez Musharraf admitted that he had allowed drone strikes on Pakistani territory "only on a few occasions, when a

---

<sup>164</sup> Dan De Luce, "Is Trump Ready to Dump Pakistan?" *Foreign Policy*, March 26, 2018, accessed March 29, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/26/is-trump-ready-to-dump-pakistan/>.

<sup>165</sup> Mark Mazzetti, "A Secret Deal on Drones, Sealed in Blood," *New York Times*, April 6, 2013, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/world/asia/origins-of-cias-not-so-secret-drone-war-in-pakistan.html>.

<sup>166</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Airstrike by U.S. Draws Protest from Pakistanis," *New York Times*, January 15, 2006, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/15/world/asia/airstrike-by-us-draws-protests-from-pakistanis.html?mtrref=www.google.at&gwh=3812BE59BF5450224D7B6CB19FCAD890&gwt=pa>; Jon Boone and Peter Beumont, "Pervez Musharraf admits permitting 'a few' US drone strikes in Pakistan," *Guardian*, April 12, 2013, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/12/musharraf-admits-permitting-drone-strikes>.

target was absolutely isolated and (there was) no chance of collateral damage.”<sup>167</sup> He justified his statement by saying that, “you can’t delay action. These ups and downs kept going....it was a very fluid situation, a vicious enemy...mountains, inaccessible areas.”<sup>168</sup> Other reports include the assertion that the C.I.A. used Pakistani airstrips to launch Predator drone strikes in the initial years.<sup>169</sup>

It was not surprising that the U.S. drone programme in Pakistan had explicit or covert support of the Pakistani authorities, however, Pakistani government and military kept up the façade of being outraged by the violation of its territorial sovereignty for the people. In the years following the Bush era, there was a sharp increase in drone attacks, which shaped Pakistani opinion about the war and the U.S. The government and military establishment played into the popular narrative as Pakistan-U.S. relations became increasingly strained after 2009, when the U.S. administration and its strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan changed.

---

<sup>167</sup> Ibid; Jennifer Rowland, “Ex-president Musharraf admits approving CIA drone strikes,” *Foreign Policy*, April 12, 2013, accessed April 16, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/12/ex-president-musharraf-admits-approving-cia-drone-strikes/>.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Greg Miller and Bob Woodward, “Secret memos reveal explicit nature of U.S., Pakistan agreement on drones,” *Washington Post*, October 24, 2013, accessed April 16, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/top-pakistani-leaders-secretly-backed-cia-drone-campaign-secret-documents-show/2013/10/23/15e6b0d8-3beb-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.7dbef627b89b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/top-pakistani-leaders-secretly-backed-cia-drone-campaign-secret-documents-show/2013/10/23/15e6b0d8-3beb-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7dbef627b89b).

## **Chapter V: Obama Years and the Surge**

This is perhaps the most important period of the Afghan war not only because the U.S. renewed its interest in Afghanistan, but also because U.S. strategy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan became more aggressive. Moreover, this period is marked by certain important incidents that directly affected U.S. counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and U.S.- Pakistan relations. According to NATO, violence in Afghanistan rose by 31 percent in 2008 due to an increase in insurgent activity in southern and eastern parts of the country.<sup>170</sup> Incidents of U.S. led airstrikes bombing weddings and villages leading to scores of civilian deaths also turned public opinion against the Afghan government and the U.S., which was in its eighth year of the war.<sup>171</sup>

### **Change in U.S. Administration**

In 2009, after spending two terms in office, President Bush was replaced by President Barack Obama who was elected in November 2008, and sworn into office in January 2009.<sup>172</sup> In March 2009, Obama announced his strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, in which he acknowledged that 2008 had been the deadliest year since the war began and that al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists were still in a position to attack the U.S. on its soil.<sup>173</sup> He clearly stated the strategic objective, which was to “disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return in either country in the future.”<sup>174</sup> While Obama expressed the need to continue military aid to Pakistan, he also urged the Congress to authorise \$1.5 billion in civilian and developmental aid over five years under the Kerry-Lugar Bill.<sup>175</sup> However, he urged Pakistan to “demonstrate

---

<sup>170</sup> Jason Burke, “Nato figures show surge in Afghanistan violence,” *Guardian*, January 31, 2009, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/31/afghanistan-nato-violence>.

<sup>171</sup> “World Report, 2008,” Human Rights Watch, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2009/country-chapters/afghanistan>.

<sup>172</sup> Carl Hulse, “Obama Is Sworn In as the 44<sup>th</sup> President,” *New York Times*, January 20, 2009, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/21/us/politics/20web-inaug2.html?mtrref=www.google.at&gwh=DA9BDCCFF90BE23B4485A9B99D3B134B&gwt=pay>.

<sup>173</sup> “Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan,” The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, March 27, 2009, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

commitment to rooting out al Qaeda and the violent extremists within its borders.”<sup>176</sup>

Obama had authorised additional troops to Afghanistan in March 2009, and in December 2009, on the request of his military commander in Afghanistan General McChrystal, he announced 30,000 more troops.<sup>177</sup> Obama also stated that, “after 18 months, our troops will begin to come home” before comparing U.S. troops levels in Iraq and Afghanistan and claiming that “years of debate over Iraq and terrorism have left our unity on national security issues in tatters.”<sup>178</sup> Obama’s foreign policy and his Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy was defined by this single decision of announcing a surge in troops. It was debated whether it was wise to announce the time period within which these troops would be withdrawn and the efficacy of sending thousands of additional troops to curb the insurgency was argued as well.

There were disagreements within the Obama administration regarding the surge, most notably, Vice President Joe Biden’s dissenting opinion that the U.S. should stick to counter-terrorism operations and train the Afghan security forces to conduct counterinsurgency.<sup>179</sup> Obama took the middle course between General McChrystal’s request for an open-ended commitment of more troops and his own team members’ advice that the U.S. should not expand its engagement in Afghanistan.<sup>180</sup> According to a Gallup poll, 35 percent of Americans wanted 40,000 more troops to be deployed in Afghanistan, while 44 percent wanted a draw down in the number of troops.<sup>181</sup> The difference of opinion between Democrats and Republicans was stronger, with 60 percent of Democrats preferring a reduction in troops as compared to 57 percent of Republicans who wanted an increase.<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> The White House, 2009; Peter Spiegel, Jonathan Weisman and Yochu J. Dreazen, “Obama Bets Big on Troop Surge,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 2, 2009, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB125967363641871171>.

<sup>178</sup> “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, December 1, 2009, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

<sup>179</sup> Peter Baker, “Biden No Longer Lone Voice on Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, October 13, 2009, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/14/world/14biden.html>.

<sup>180</sup> Kelly McHugh, “A Tale of Two Surges: Comparing the Politics of the 2007 Iraq Surge and the 2009 Afghanistan Surge,” *SAGE Open* (October-December, 2015): 1-16.

<sup>181</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, “Americans Split on Afghanistan Troops Increase vs. Decrease,” Gallup, November 12, 2009, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/124238/americans-split-afghanistan-troop-increase-decrease.aspx>.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.



One of the ways in which the surge provided clarity was that it proved that a military solution to the Afghan insurgency would not be enough. It also proved that sometimes, nothing a counterinsurgent force does is enough to alter ground realities and make them work in their favour. Later in 2010, Obama replaced General McChrystal with General Petraeus as the top military commander in Afghanistan due to the former's public expression of differences with Obama and his administration to a magazine.<sup>183</sup> General Petraeus was considered to be the U.S.A.'s counterinsurgency expert because of his experience in Iraq, and one of the main contributors of U.S. Army's counterinsurgency manual in 2007.<sup>184</sup> The surge increased 68,000 U.S. troops to over 100,000, and focused on targeting Taliban strongholds in Helmand and Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.<sup>185</sup>

There were different opinions regarding the success of the surge. Some argued that announcing a time for withdrawal of the additional troops gave the Taliban a time frame after which they could stage a come-back, while others asserted that the U.S. troops had done their jobs and it was now up to Afghan security forces to ensure that the gains were not reversed.<sup>186</sup> According to General Petraeus's testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2011 he believed that , "while the security progress achieved over the past year is significant, it is also fragile and reversible. Moreover, it is clear that much difficult work lies ahead with our Afghan partners to solidify and expand our gains in the face of the expected Taliban spring offensive."<sup>187</sup> One of the commanders of the Afghan National Army claimed that , "our troops are in a very good position to fight the Taliban independently."<sup>188</sup> General Kayani of Pakistan was skeptical of the U.S. approach of targeting Kandahar and Helmand as the "centre of gravity" where most of Taliban activity was concentrated.<sup>189</sup> Kayani warned the U.S. military command

---

<sup>183</sup> Kelly McHugh, 2015.

<sup>184</sup> Michael Evans, "From Patton to Petraeus: American Generalship and the Art of War Since 1941," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 186-204.

<sup>185</sup> Rod Nordland, "Troop 'Surge' in Afghanistan Ends With Mixed Results," *New York Times*, September 21, 2012, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/22/world/asia/us-troop-surge-in-afghanistan-ends.html?mtref>

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Chris Good, "Petraeus: Gains in Afghanistan 'Fragile and Reversible'; Afghans Will Take Over in Select Provinces," *Atlantic*, March 15, 2011, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/03/petraeus-gains-in-afghanistan-fragile-and-reversible-afghans-will-take-over-in-select-provinces/72507/>.

<sup>188</sup> Rod Nordland, 2012.

<sup>189</sup> Steve Coll, 2018.



that their counterinsurgency policy “will become a revolving door in the south – you’ll go in and out, the Taliban will go in and out.”<sup>190</sup> However, relations between the U.S. and Pakistan, especially their respective military commands, were not in a position where either was willing to accept advice from the other.<sup>191</sup> U.S.-Pakistan relations would become even more strained as the Obama administration significantly increased unilateral drone strikes on Pakistan’s territory.

### **Obama’s Drone Warfare**

The number of civilian casualties resulting from drone strikes are a highly disputed figure, however, the Pakistani government and people in general have remained deeply resentful about unilateral drone strikes in the areas bordering Afghanistan. Their main concern has been the violation of Pakistan’s territorial integrity by the U.S. From 2009 to 2012, the U.S. relied heavily on drone strikes to target leaders of Afghan Taliban and al Qaeda.<sup>192</sup> However, some high value targets for the Pakistani state, such as the leader of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Hakeemullah Mehsud was also killed in a drone strike in November, 2003.<sup>193</sup> Pakistan’s foreign and interior ministries have repeatedly condemned these strikes, calling them “totally illegal” and “a violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty.”<sup>194</sup> Despite statements expressing outrage by the Pakistani state, there were speculations regarding Pakistan’s tacit approval of the strikes. According to confidential cables from 2008, that were leaked and widely reported in the media, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Yusuf Raza Gilani was reported as telling his Interior Minister Rehman Malik, “I don’t care if they do it as long as they get the right people. We’ll protest in the National Assembly and then ignore it.”<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>190</sup> Steve Coll, 2018, 369.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Bill Roggio, “Senior al Qaeda, Taliban, and allied Jihadist leaders killed in US airstrikes in Pakistan, 2004-2017,” last updated June 14, 2017, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes-hvts>.

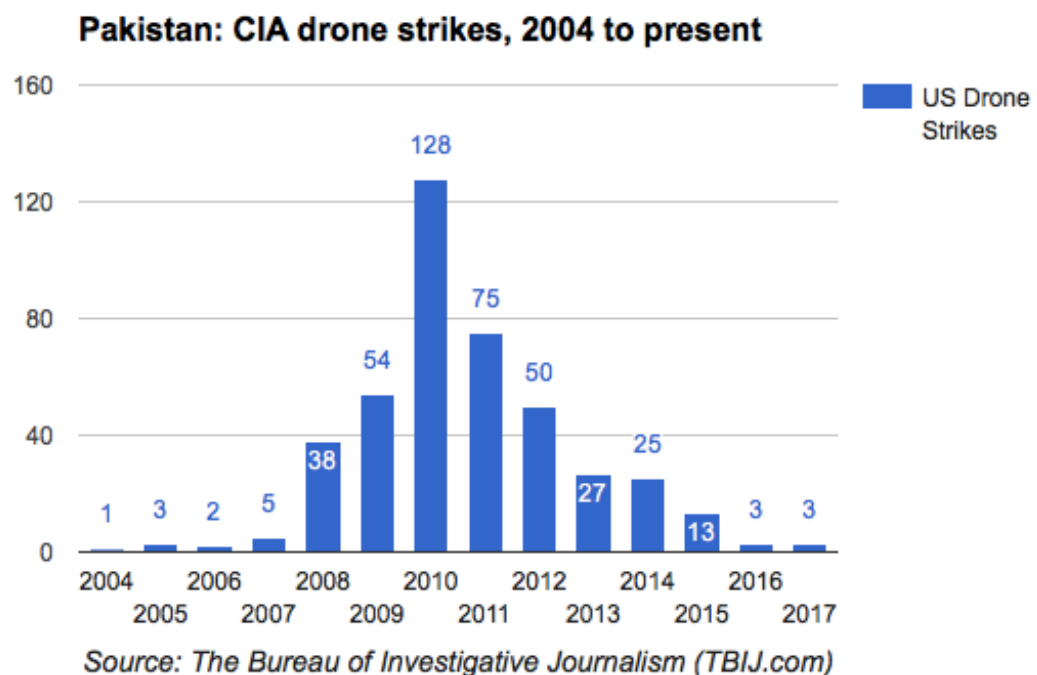
<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Zahir Shah Sherazi and Mateen Haider, “Pakistan protests fresh drone strikes in South Waziristan,” *Dawn*, October 30, 2014, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1141332>; Jon Boone, “Pakistan condemns US drone strike that killed Taliban leader Mansoor,” *Guardian*, May 24, 2016, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/24/pakistan-condemns-us-drone-strike-that-killed-taliban-leader-mansoor>.

<sup>195</sup> “US embassy cables: Pakistan backs US drone attacks on tribal areas,” *Guardian*, November 30, 2010, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/167125>.

According to a poll conducted in 2014, 66 percent of the people in Pakistan opposed drone strikes.<sup>196</sup>

The following graph shows a significant increase in drone strikes during the surge years, demonstrating that the Obama administration had a corresponding policy for Pakistan when they announced an increase in troop levels in Afghanistan. According to some estimates, drones killed at least a hundred civilians in 2009.<sup>197</sup>



Given the lack of transparency regarding civilian casualties, it is hard to determine the actual loss of civilian lives, however multiple non-governmental sources have claimed that the Obama administration grossly underreported civilian

<sup>196</sup> "Widespread opposition to drones," Pew Research Center, July 11, 2014, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/global-opposition-to-u-s-surveillance-and-drones-but-limited-harm-to-americas-image/pg-2014-07-14-balance-of-power-0-01/>.

<sup>197</sup> "Pakistan Drone Statistics Visualised," The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, July 2, 2012, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2012-07-02/pakistan-drone-statistics-visualised>.

casualties from drone strikes.<sup>198</sup> Regardless of the success the U.S. had with eliminating top Taliban and al Qaeda leadership in these strikes, the fact that they were so unpopular with the local population increased resentment towards the U.S. The Pakistani government was not going to admit to ceding territorial sovereignty because they were aware of the potential blowback from the locals in general, and from the religious pressure groups in particular. According to one research, drone strikes may reduce violence carried out by insurgents and terrorists in the targeted areas, but there is possibility of escalated violence in neighbouring areas.<sup>199</sup> Moreover, while drone strikes are an effective tactical means of reducing violence in the short term, their strategic impact and efficacy is debatable.<sup>200</sup>

U.S. drone strikes did highlight certain facts. Firstly, their primary targets were the Afghan Taliban leadership, who were not particularly targeted by Pakistan. This meant that although Afghanistan and Pakistan were allies in the war on terror, both had different priorities regarding whom to target and how. As admitted by General Kayani and stated in multiple analyses, Pakistan still believed in the utility of protecting Afghan Taliban, just as long as they would not target Pakistan. Secondly, Pakistani government and the military establishment did not want to be seen as collaborating with the U.S. on drone strikes because that would damage them domestically therefore they went along with the public's anti-American sentiments. Drone strikes became yet another item in the growing list of contentious subjects between the U.S. and Pakistan.

### **Afghan Elections (2009)**

This was the second round of presidential elections since 2001, and these elections were carried out by Afghan institutions with the help of international bodies.<sup>201</sup> The official voter turnout was 38 percent as opposed to 70 percent in

---

<sup>198</sup> Micah Zenko, "Do Not Believe the U.S. Government's Official Numbers on Drone Strike Civilian Casualties," *Foreign Policy*, July 5, 2016, accessed April 19, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/05/do-not-believe-the-u-s-governments-official-numbers-on-drone-strike-civilian-casualties/>.

<sup>199</sup> Patrick B. Johnston and Anoop K. Sarbahi, "The Impact of US Drone Strikes on Terrorism in Pakistan," *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (2016): 203-219.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> "Presidential and Provincial Council Elections," European Union Election Observatory Mission, August 20, 2009, accessed April 19, 2018, [http://www.eods.eu/library/2010\\_election\\_observation\\_afghanistan\\_final\\_report\\_0809\\_en.pdf](http://www.eods.eu/library/2010_election_observation_afghanistan_final_report_0809_en.pdf).

the 2004 elections.<sup>202</sup> According to the preliminary results, Karzai won over 54 percent of the vote, followed by Dr. Abdullah Abdullah with 27.75 percent.<sup>203</sup> However, nearly a quarter of the vote was declared fraudulent, three-quarters of which were for Karzai.<sup>204</sup> Dr. Abdullah withdrew from the run-off elections scheduled for November 1, 2009 citing non-transparency of the election implementing institutions, leading to Hamid Karzai winning his second presidential term.<sup>205</sup> The general environment leading up to the elections was insecure, which was cited as one of the primary reasons for the low turnout. According to the European Union Election Observatory Mission report, “Campaigning took place in an environment characterised by serious de facto limitations on the freedoms of movement and assembly caused by ongoing military operations, particularly in the south, and by an increased number of attacks by the Taliban aimed at disrupting the elections and deterring participation.”<sup>206</sup> The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported intimidation tactics such as killings and abductions, particularly in the south and southeast regions, and “at least 29 attacks against polling centres...14 attacks against convoys carrying election-related materials or Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) escorts of these convoys.”<sup>207</sup> Women were disenfranchised in many parts of the country partially due to the security situation, but also due to cultural factors that forbade women to vote.<sup>208</sup> Women’s participation as candidates was also deterred by increased violence and threats of violence against them by religious leaders, their own family members, and insurgents.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> Shan Carter, Matthew Ericson and Archie Tse, “Setting the Stage for the Recount,” *New York Times*, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/09/21/world/asia/0921-afghan-election-analysis.html#tab=1>.

<sup>203</sup> “Joint Monitoring of Political Rights,” AIHRC-UNAMA (1 August-21 October, 2009), accessed April 19, 2018, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/3rdPRMAug-Oct2009.pdf>.

<sup>204</sup> Archie Tse, “Audit Finds Almost a quarter of Afghan Vote is Fraudulent,” *New York Times*, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/10/20/world/asia/1020-afghan-recount-analysis.html#tab=1>.

<sup>205</sup> European Union Election Observatory Mission, 2009.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> AIHRC-UNAMA, 2009.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> European Union Election Observatory Mission, 2009.

The elections of 2009 were disappointing as compared to those held in 2004 and were evidence of the encroachments made by insurgents into Afghan life. However, not all aspects of this problematic election can be attributed to insurgency. Other factors such as poor performance of the institutions responsible for conducting elections, public distrust in government institutions, and fraudulent electoral practices significantly affected the election. The 2004 elections were an encouraging sign of democratic political processes taking root in Afghanistan, and indicated a successful political aspect of counterinsurgency. The elections in 2009 were evidence of how the political environment had regressed instead of maturing over the years.

### **2011: Growing animosity between U.S. and Pakistan**

2011 was a remarkable year in terms of U.S. counterinsurgency and U.S.-Pakistan relations. In January, Raymond Davis, a CIA operative, was arrested in Lahore, Pakistan for shooting and killing two alleged robbers on the road.<sup>210</sup> A third Pakistani was killed by a US consulate vehicle, while it was rushing to pick up Davis.<sup>211</sup> The U.S. claimed that Davis was an employee of the consulate and had diplomatic immunity, while Pakistani law enforcing agencies suspected him to be a CIA agent.<sup>212</sup> This entire episode ended with facilitation by Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and payment of blood money to the slain men's relatives after which Davis was immediately flown back to the U.S.<sup>213</sup> Although the matter had been settled, it did result in further tensions between U.S. and Pakistan's intelligence agencies, and more importantly, it sparked widespread public protests in Pakistan against the U.S.<sup>214</sup> The public took this incident to be evidence of the impunity enjoyed by the U.S. on Pakistani soil. The Raymond Davis affair added yet another layer to the foundation of distrust between Pakistan and the U.S., which would only get worse as the year 2011 progressed.

---

<sup>210</sup> "US official Raymond Davis on Lahore murder charges," BBC News, January 28, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12305049>.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Mark Mazzetti, "How a Single Spy Helped Turn Pakistan Against the United States," *New York Times*, April 9, 2013, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/magazine/raymond-davis-pakistan.html?mtrref>

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

## The Osama bin Laden Raid

At 11:35 P.M. on May 1, 2011, President Obama addressed the American public and announced that, “the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden.” On Pakistan’s involvement in the raid that killed the most wanted terrorist, Obama said that, “over the years, I’ve repeatedly made clear that we would take action within Pakistan if we knew where bin Laden was. That is what we’ve done. But it’s important to note that our counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan helped lead us to bin Laden and the compound where he was hiding.”<sup>215</sup> In his remarks immediately after the raid, President Obama seemed to appreciate Pakistan’s role in providing information and cooperation that enabled the raid rather than implying Pakistan’s complicity in hiding bin Laden. However, the ensuing analysis questioned whether Pakistani authorities knew about the raid and if they were hiding Osama bin Laden (OBL). In a closed door briefing held a couple of days after the OBL raid, CIA Director Leon Panetta said, “either they were involved or incompetent. Neither place is a good place to be.”<sup>216</sup> A Republican member asserted that ,” there is no way that people in the ISI and military did not know that Osama bin Laden has been living there for quite some time.”<sup>217</sup>

Doubts expressed by the very top tier of U.S. intelligence apparatus regarding complicity of Pakistan’s military establishment in housing OBL were proof of the enduring mistrust between the two countries’ military and intelligence agencies. Much of the skepticism was based on the proximity of OBL’s compound to Pakistan’s military academy in Abbottabad. OBL’s expansive fortress-like compound was not located in the tribal areas of Pakistan, it was in a town situated 30 miles away from the capital Islamabad.<sup>218</sup> However, the general consensus among top U.S. officials was that Pakistan was not aware of OBL’s presence in Abbottabad. This was reflected in President Obama’s statement at a summit where he said that, “we had no evidence that Pakistan was aware of his presence – that

---

<sup>215</sup> Macon Phillips, “Osama Bin Laden Dead,” The White House, May 2, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead>.

<sup>216</sup> Dana Bash, “Sources: Panetta to Congress-Pakistan either incompetent or involved,” CNN, May 3, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/05/03/sources-panetta-to-congress-pakistan-either-incompetent-or-involved/>.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Rob Crilly, “Did Pakistan know about the Osama Bin Laden raid?” *Telegraph*, May 19, 2015, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/11616752/Did-Pakistan-know-about-the-Osama-bin-Laden-raid.html>.

is something that we looked at.”<sup>219</sup> Former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, also stated that, “Those who claimed that Pakistan knew about the whereabouts of bin Laden were wrong.”<sup>220</sup>

The killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan brought questions regarding other al Qaeda operatives and terrorist groups to the fore. In a hearing of the subcommittee on counterterrorism and intelligence Frederick Kagan, a terrorism expert, stated that, “Pakistan’s ruling elite will have to come to a consensus that supporting some militant Islamist groups as proxies either in Afghanistan or in India is a failing strategy.”<sup>221</sup> In the aftermath of the raid and statements implying the complicity of the Pakistani state, Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff, General Kayani stated that, “any similar action violating the sovereignty will warrant a review of military, intelligence cooperation with the US.”<sup>222</sup> It was a sign of complete lack of trust that the U.S. did not inform their Pakistani counterparts about the intelligence they had regarding OBL, and the unilateral nature of the raid. Evidently, Pakistan was caught off guard not only by the fact that OBL was living with his family in Pakistan for a number of years but also by the U.S. operation that was conducted well within Pakistan’s territory. It not only discredited Pakistan’s military establishment internationally, but also led to internal criticism by the population who questioned the competence of intelligence agencies and the ability of the armed forces to identify an incursion into Pakistani territory.<sup>223</sup>

Pakistan’s relations with the U.S. worsened later in 2011, after an incident which came as the strongest blow to U.S.- Pakistan cooperation in Afghanistan.

---

<sup>219</sup> “Obama says Pakistan did not know whereabouts of Bin Laden,” *Dawn*, December 01, 2017, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1374059>.

<sup>220</sup> Shahbaz Rana, “Pakistan did not know about OBL’s whereabouts: Munter,” *Express Tribune*, January 18, 2017, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1299363/pakistan-not-know-obl-residing-abbottabad-munter/>.

<sup>221</sup> Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, “The Threat to the U.S. Homeland Emanating from Pakistan,” Cong. 112, 1st Session, May 3, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018.

<sup>222</sup> Irfan Ghauri, “After Osama: Breaking silence, Army asks US to reduce troops,” *Express Tribune*, May 6, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/162469/military-admits-shortcomings-on-bin-laden-intel/>.

<sup>223</sup> Declan Walsh, “Pakistan still reeling one month after raid that killed Osama bin Laden,” *Guardian*, June 1, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/01/pakistan-osama-bin-laden-military>.



## Salala Airstrike

On November 26, 2011, a NATO airstrike on a Pakistani border check post of Salala killed 24 Pakistani soldiers and injured 12.<sup>224</sup> According to an official based in Kabul, the air strike came after U.S.-Afghan forces were attacked in Afghanistan's Kunar province.<sup>225</sup> However, Pakistani authorities called the attack "unprovoked and indiscriminate" and a military official stated that, "the latest attack by Nato forces on our post will have serious repercussions as they without any reasons attacked on our post and killed soldiers asleep."<sup>226</sup> In response to the attack, Pakistan blocked NATO's supply routes entering Afghanistan and told U.S. forces to vacate their Shamsi airbase in Baluchistan, from where they operated drones.<sup>227</sup> U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan relied on supply routes running through Pakistan, but these routes were closed until a formal apology for the Salala incident was issued by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in July, 2012.<sup>228</sup> While NATO supply routes were closed in Pakistan, the U.S. had to utilise the Northern Distribution Network, which were roads connecting Central Asia to Northern Afghanistan.<sup>229</sup> However, these alternative routes were much more expensive and inconvenient, costing the U.S. an additional \$ 100 million per month.<sup>230</sup> The incident at Salala not only harmed the already fragile U.S.- Pakistan relations, it was an indication of how Pakistan could withdraw support and cooperation from the U.S., and negatively impact the war in Afghanistan.

This was not only a matter of Pakistan losing valuable lives in an attack carried out by its allies, but also about Pakistan's prestige at home and abroad. After the OBL raid, Pakistanis had questioned the impunity with which the raid was carried out and Pakistani forces' inability to retaliate. For them, Salala was yet another example of U.S. impunity on Pakistani soil.

---

<sup>224</sup> Iftikhar Firdous, "24 soldiers killed in NATO attack on Pakistan check post," *Express Tribune*, November 26, 2011, accessed April 21, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/297979/nato-jets-attack-checkpost-on-pak-afghan-border/>.

<sup>225</sup> Jon Boone, "Nato air attack on Pakistan troops was self-defence, says senior western official," *Guardian*, November 27, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/26/nato-air-attack-pakistan-soldiers>.

<sup>226</sup> "Pakistan outrage after 'Nato attack kills soldiers'," BBC News, November 26, 2011, accessed April 20, 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15901363>.

<sup>227</sup> Jon Boone, 2011; BBC News, 2011.

<sup>228</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Stuck in the Mud," *Foreign Affairs*, July 18, 2012, accessed April 21, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2012-07-18/stuck-mud>.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.



The events of 2011 reaffirmed Pakistani military establishment's perception that the U.S. had very little trust in Pakistan's willingness to fight terrorism, despite the fact that Pakistan had lost thousands of lives in this fight. Their belief that the U.S. did not regard Pakistan's sovereignty too highly was reinforced.

## **Chapter VI: Withdrawal of Troops and the Current Situation**

The years following the Afghan surge and the eventual phased withdrawal of U.S. troops saw an increase in the frequency of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. According to a U.N. expert on Afghanistan, “..with the pull back of U.S. troops after the surge, it emerged that the IS (Islamic State) had gained a foothold in Afghanistan.”<sup>231</sup> He believed that, “after Obama ordered the military surge, the Taliban were not defeated, they had not even lost ground.”<sup>232</sup> Some of this increase in violence can possibly be attributed to the fact that the Taliban and other insurgent groups knew when the U.S. troops would begin withdrawing, as Obama had announced their withdrawal timetable publicly, and just waited until they could operate again. Other theories claim that the Afghan Taliban had simply retreated to Pakistan and when the U.S. started withdrawing from Afghanistan, they became more active especially in the south and south eastern regions of the country.<sup>233</sup>

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan had become principle targets of terrorist activity worldwide. In 2012, Pakistan had 1,404 terrorist attacks and Afghanistan had 1,023, however, Afghanistan had the highest number of casualties from these attacks with an estimated number of 2,632 people killed.<sup>234</sup> Regarding withdrawal of troops, Vice President Joe Biden went on record to say that, “We’re starting it in July of 2011 and we’re going to be totally out of there, come hell or high water, by 2014.”<sup>235</sup> However, President Obama later announced that the U.S. would maintain a 9,800 strong troop presence in Afghanistan throughout 2014, and by 2016 U.S. military presence would “draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul with a security assistance component.”<sup>236</sup> Clearly, Afghanistan was in no condition to be handed to local security forces by 2014, leading Obama to prolong U.S.

---

<sup>231</sup> Interview with a U.N. expert on Afghanistan, April 15, 2018.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Thomas F. Lynch III, “After ISIS: Fully Reappraising U.S. Policy in Afghanistan,” *Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2015): 119-144, 124.

<sup>234</sup> “Statistical Information on Terrorism in 2012,” National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, May 2013, accessed April 22, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210288.pdf>.

<sup>235</sup> Toby Harnden, “Joe Biden says troops will leave Afghanistan by 2014 ‘come hell or high water’,” *Telegraph*, December 20, 2010, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8214868/Joe-Biden-says-troops-will-leave-Afghanistan-by-2014-come-hell-or-high-water.html>.

<sup>236</sup> Spencer Ackerman, “Obama announces plan to keep 9,800 US troops in Afghanistan after 2014,” *Guardian*, May 27, 2014, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/27/obama-us-afghanistan-force-2014>.

presence. It was also evident that one could not have a time frame for a war like the one in Afghanistan, because the situation was persistently unstable.

## **2014 Elections and the general situation in Afghanistan**

Before the 2014 presidential elections, the three major insurgent groups based in Pakistan i.e. Quetta *shura*, Peshawar *shura*, and the Haqqanis in Miranshah were opposed to elections in Afghanistan because they claimed it was a means to establish a U.S. puppet government.<sup>237</sup> However, as the elections came closer there was debate within the new Taliban of Peshawar *shura* to accept the electoral process and back a favourable candidate.<sup>238</sup> The elections created a wedge between those Taliban who wanted to back one of the presidential candidates and those who did not want the election to take place, however, a majority of the Taliban were not against the elections.<sup>239</sup> Eventually, the pro-election Taliban chose to back Ashraf Ghani, who was elected as the president and formed a fragile unity government with his rival Abdullah Abdullah.<sup>240</sup> Given the security situation, voter turnout in these elections was remarkably high at an estimated 60 percent, signifying Afghan people's enthusiasm for a peaceful democratic transition.<sup>241</sup> On election day, NATO reported 390 security incidents and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported 382.<sup>242</sup>

The factors that stood out most in these elections were; the Taliban were showing an inclination to accept democratic political practices in the country and even a willingness to negotiate and be part of this process, insecurity and insurgent threat could not deter people from exercising their right to vote, and lastly, although the Afghan people had demonstrated their willingness to lend legitimacy to a democratically elected government, the political elite kept failing the population by bickering and fraudulent activities. Eventually, the two main opponents agreed to

---

<sup>237</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, "The Taliban and the 2014 presidential elections in Afghanistan," *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 6 (2016): 557-573, 550-561.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 568.

<sup>240</sup> Rod Nordland, "After Rancor, Afghans Agree to Share Power," *New York Times*, September 21, 2014, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/22/world/asia/afghan-presidential-election.html>.

<sup>241</sup> Srinjoy Bose, "An Election Observer's View and Appraisal of the 2014 Afghan Elections," *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research* 2, no. 1 (2015), 9.

<sup>242</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, 2016, 560.

share power but the unity government formed by President Ghani and his Chief Executive Officer, Abdullah remains weak and prone to infighting.<sup>243</sup>

The government in Kabul has made multiple attempts to negotiate a solution with the Taliban. They have held multilateral talks in which the U.S., China, Pakistan and Qatar have participated, taken up Russia's offer to host talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, and reached out to *Hezb-i-Islami* leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, giving him full amnesty.<sup>244</sup> The economy of Afghanistan remains largely dependent on foreign aid and in the absence of economic reforms it is highly unlikely to have a functioning economy without aid.<sup>245</sup> Despite seventeen years of foreign aid and assistance in education, health, and development sectors, Afghanistan has consistently performed poorly in terms of development. Although economic and social development was better as compared to the Taliban years, but it was not a remarkable improvement. According to a Human Rights Watch, two-thirds of Afghan girls are still out of school.<sup>246</sup> The security situation, lack of basic facilities in schools such as water and toilets, absence of transportation, and cultural norms all play a significant role in girls dropping out of school.<sup>247</sup> Moreover, there was a 3 percent increase in poverty from 2011-12 to 2013-14, with 46 percent youth unemployment.<sup>248</sup> There was an increase in opium cultivation in Afghanistan after 2001, especially in the north-eastern region where opium cultivation grew by 77 percent from 2013 to 2014.<sup>249</sup>

---

<sup>243</sup> Daud Khattak, "Afghanistan's Bloody Week Lays Bare Rifts in the 'Unity Government'," *Diplomat*, June 06, 2017, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://thedi diplomat.com/2017/06/afghanistans-bloody-week-lays-bare-rifts-in-the-unity-government/>.

<sup>244</sup> Kathrin Hille, "Russia offers to host talks between Afghan government and Taliban," *Financial Times*, January 17, 2018, accessed April 24, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/ba435934-fb8f-11e7-9b32-d7d59aace167>; Mikhail Konarovsky, "Afghanistan After 2014," *International Organisations Research Journal* 12, no. 3 (2017): 242-253, 245.

<sup>245</sup> Mikhail Konarovsky, "Afghanistan After 2014," *International Organisations Research Journal* 12, no. 3 (2017): 242-253.

<sup>246</sup> "Afghanistan: Girls Struggle for an Education," Human Rights Watch, October 17, 2017, accessed April 24, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/17/afghanistan-girls-struggle-education>.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> "Poverty in Afghanistan Rose Amidst Troop Withdrawal, Report Says," World Bank, May 8, 2017, accessed April 24, 2018, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/05/08/poverty-afghanistan-rose-amidst-troop-withdrawal-poverty-update-2017>.

<sup>249</sup> "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014: Cultivation and Production," UNODC & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics, accessed April 24, 2018, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan-opium-survey-2014.pdf>.

According to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan, the U.S. had given \$109 billion in aid to Afghanistan by 2014.<sup>250</sup> Despite years of nation-building and billions of dollars in aid, Afghanistan's government, economy, security, and security forces remain fragile. This is both a reflection of the counterinsurgency strategy pursued by the U.S., and the fact that long term stability in countries like Afghanistan is not easily achievable. The Taliban have been increasing their influence steadily, with 40-45 percent of Afghan territory directly controlled or contested by the Taliban.<sup>251</sup>

The Islamic State (ISIS), and multiple other terrorist groups, emerged in Afghanistan almost as soon as the bulk of U.S. troops withdrew in 2014 and set up camp along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.<sup>252</sup> Afghanistan's security forces were unable to stop the increasing influence of the Taliban and the emergence of extremely violent terrorist groups who not only threatened the stability of Afghanistan but also Pakistan and the entire region. Incidents such as the bombing by U.S. forces of a Doctors Without Borders hospital, which killed 30 people, and the 2018 bombing by Afghan forces of a seminary in Kunduz, killing 60 people including children, do not bolster support for the security forces among locals.<sup>253</sup> While election turnouts are evidence that the people desire a change at a governmental level, it cannot be denied that forces like the Taliban and local war lords have to be accommodated in the political system. More importantly, an external actor i.e. Pakistan, cannot be alienated because it has long term national interests in Afghanistan and can affect the stability of Afghanistan.

---

<sup>250</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan, "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress," July 30, 2014, 5, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2014-07-30qr.pdf>

<sup>251</sup> Bill Roggio and Alexandra Gutowski, "LWJ Map Assessment: Taliban controls or contests 45 % of Afghan districts," *Long War Journal*, September 26, 2017, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/09/lwj-map-assessment-taliban-controls-or-contests-45-of-afghan-districts.php>; Idrees Ali, "Taliban increases influence, territory in Afghanistan: U.S. watchdog," *Reuters*, October 31, 2017, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-militants/taliban-increases-influence-territory-in-afghanistan-u-s-watchdog-idUSKBN1D026N>.

<sup>252</sup> Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, "Afghanistan in 2015," *Asian Survey* 56, no. 1 (January/February, 2016): 187-198, 191.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid; Najim Rahim and Mujib Mashal, "Afghan Leaders Admit Civilians Were Killed in Anti-Taliban Bombing," *New York Times*, April 3, 2018, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/03/world/asia/afghanistan-airstrike-civilians.html>

## Pakistan's War Against Terrorism

Pakistan could not possibly remain unaffected by terrorism while it was occurring with such frequency in neighbouring Afghanistan. Moreover, Pakistan's own policy of facilitating the U.S. in the war on terror and its policies in the past, which led to the recruitment and training of *mujahideen*, came back to haunt the country in the form of terrorist attacks and an alarming increase in *Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's* (TTP) influence in the areas bordering Afghanistan. According to multiple reports, the war on terror had killed an estimated 80,000 people in Pakistan between 2005 and 2013.<sup>254</sup> South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) reports that the worst of the violence occurred between 2008 and 2013, after which there was a reduction in violence from 2014 to 2017.<sup>255</sup>

Pakistan has launched multiple military operations on its territory since 2001, such as Operation *Al Mizan* which deployed 70,000-80,000 armed forces along the border to target foreign fighters fleeing from Afghanistan.<sup>256</sup> Pakistan Army tried to appease the militants as well in order to mitigate the blowback towards security personnel, however, that did not decrease violence.<sup>257</sup> Throughout the period from 2002-2017, Pakistan's military has been involved in carrying out operations not only in the tribal areas i.e. South Waziristan, but also in cities such as Swat.<sup>258</sup> In 2017, Pakistan Army announced the country-wide Operation *Radd-ul-Fasaad*, aimed at "indiscriminately eliminating residual/latent threat of terrorism, consolidating gains of operations made thus far and further ensuring security of the borders."<sup>259</sup> According to the economic survey carried out by the Ministry of Finance, Pakistan has lost an estimated \$123.13 billion in the

---

<sup>254</sup> Anwar Iqbal, "Terror war killed 80,000 during 2005-13: report," *Dawn*, March 31, 2015, accessed April 22, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1172931>; Physicians for Social Responsibility, "Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 years of the "War on Terror"," March 2015, accessed April 22, 2018, [http://www.ippnw.de/commonFiles/pdfs/Frieden/Body\\_Count\\_first\\_international\\_edition\\_2015\\_fin\\_al.pdf](http://www.ippnw.de/commonFiles/pdfs/Frieden/Body_Count_first_international_edition_2015_fin_al.pdf).

<sup>255</sup> "Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2000-2018," South Asia Terrorism Portal, Last updated April 22, 2018, accessed April 22, 2018, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>.

<sup>256</sup> Seth G. Jones and Christine C. Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 46.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, 50-55.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

<sup>259</sup> "Army's Press Release Archive," ISPR, February 22, 2017, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-archive.php?cat=army&dt=2017-02-22>.

years 2001-2017 due to terrorism.<sup>260</sup> Therefore, considering the massive financial, economic, social, and human loss that the country has suffered, it would be disingenuous to argue that Pakistan has not been a victim of regional insecurity and war. Despite being selective in targeting terrorist groups, it has borne the brunt of its partnership with the U.S. Logically, instability and violence in Afghanistan would not be in Pakistan's national interest, however that does not disprove the fact that Pakistan has serious apprehensions regarding India's growing influence in Afghanistan and an unfriendly government in Kabul.

### **“All India all the time”**

When U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke met Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Kayani and the head of I.S.I General Pasha to hear their “strategic terms” in Afghanistan, he said that “It was all India all the time,” and that “the Pakistanis see everything through the prism of India.”<sup>261</sup>

Pakistan's strategic concerns in Afghanistan revolved around their disputes with India, which included the disputed territory of Kashmir, and having a friendly government in Kabul.<sup>262</sup> U.S. foreign policy expert and analyst Bruce Riedel said in 2013 that, “the Pakistani army remains obsessed with India... It sees no way of ever defeating India conventionally, having tried and failed. And therefore, has come up with two strategies to try to even the playing field. One is building nuclear weapons, and Pakistan today has the fastest-growing nuclear arsenal in the world, probably in excess of 200 nuclear weapons. And second, is what they refer to euphemistically is asymmetric warfare, which is a fancy term for supporting terrorists.”<sup>263</sup> The fact that U.S. foreign policy advisers and analysts are unable to comprehend Pakistan's obsession with curtailing Indian influence in Afghanistan and ensuring that they are not left to contend with a hostile government in Kabul is central to Pakistan's distrust of the U.S. Pakistan is very unlikely to change its

---

<sup>260</sup> “Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-17,” Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 280, accessed April 23, 2018, [http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters\\_17/Annex\\_IV\\_War.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_17/Annex_IV_War.pdf).

<sup>261</sup> Steve Coll, *Directorate S* (U.S.: Penguin Random House, 2018), 406.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> The Brookings Institution, “The United States, India, and Pakistan: To the Brink and Back,” Washington D.C., February 26, 2013, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/20130226\\_India\\_pakistan\\_armageddon\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/20130226_India_pakistan_armageddon_transcript.pdf).



stance on India or perceive it as less of a threat, which means that it will probably keep its Afghanistan policy unchanged.

By 2009, President Karzai had become increasingly wary of the U.S. and Pakistan, implying to his aides and ministers that the U.S. had a national interest in keeping Afghanistan unstable and prolonging their stay there.<sup>264</sup> He was also frustrated by civilian casualties, U.S. forces' night raids and his portrayal in the U.S. as an inefficient president.<sup>265</sup> Recently, Karzai has even suspected the U.S. of using ISIS as a tool to keep Afghanistan unstable.<sup>266</sup> In addition to the U.S., Karzai also blamed Pakistan for fueling the insurgency in Afghanistan, arguing in 2008 that, "the war on terror cannot be fought in Afghan villages. Instead, a regional approach was and is needed. It must be concentrated on the sanctuaries of those who train, equip, and motivate the extremists and send them out to hurt us all."<sup>267</sup>

Karzai's statements, and Afghanistan's troubled relationship with Pakistan were the embodiment of Pakistan's military establishment's fears – having adversaries on both its eastern and western borders. Pakistan's prime interest, since the very beginning of the war in Afghanistan, had been India. Ensuring that India would not see the instability on its western border as an opportunity to expand its influence. That is why when I.S.I. chief General Pasha offered Karzai his support and a peace agreement, it was conditional upon the reduction or elimination of Indian presence in Afghanistan.<sup>268</sup> In 2010, General Kayani handed a paper to President Obama that explained Pakistani military establishment's stance on the Afghan War.<sup>269</sup> In this paper, Kayani and Pasha argued that the I.S.I. needed to maintain close ties and correspondence with the Afghan Taliban in order to get intelligence, just as the C.I.A. or any other intelligence agency would need to maintain communication channels with such groups.<sup>270</sup> Therefore, there was an

---

<sup>264</sup> Steve Coll, *Directorate S* (U.S.: Penguin Random House, 2018), 371-387.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Samuel Ramani, "Hamid Karzai and the Russia Connection," *Diplomat*, November 3, 2017, accessed April 27, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/hamid-karzai-and-the-russia-connection/>.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid; Hamid Karzai, "Seven Years in Afghanistan," *Guardian*, November 13, 2008, accessed April 27, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/nov/13/afghanistan-terrorism-al-qaida>.

<sup>268</sup> Steve Coll, 2018, 453.

<sup>269</sup> Vali Nasr, "The Inside Story of How the White House Let Diplomacy Fail in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, March 4, 2013, accessed April 27, 2018, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/04/the-inside-story-of-how-the-white-house-let-diplomacy-fail-in-afghanistan/>; Steve Coll, 2018, 460.

<sup>270</sup> Steve Coll, 2018, 460.



effort from Pakistan's side to explain their stance of having close ties with militants to the U.S.

To summarise the discussion above, Pakistan's obsession with India is rooted in history and the fear that the U.S. would destabilise the region and leave just as they had done in the past. Pakistan wanted to be instrumental to a solution in Afghanistan, and in a position where they could control India's involvement. Whether the U.S. liked it or not, that was Pakistan's strategic interest in Afghanistan and evidently, the U.S. could never reconcile with it. An expert on Afghanistan believes that Pakistan's interest in having a solution of its choice in Afghanistan is not unfounded because, "all countries have national interests. Pakistan has an interest in what happens in Afghanistan, foreign powers have to deal with that."<sup>271</sup> However, these interests have soured relations between U.S. and Pakistan, and Pakistan and Afghanistan, and have often also existed at the expense of Pakistan's internal stability.

### **Trump's policy**

In 2017, when Obama left office, there were well over 10,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan.<sup>272</sup> The Taliban were still able to carry out massive attacks, like the one in Kabul, which killed 150 people, and U.S. Defense Secretary admitted that they were "not winning" the war in Afghanistan.<sup>273</sup>

Once President Donald Trump took office in 2017, he carried out a review of U.S. policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and announced his policy in August 2017. He stated that, "a hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and Al-Qaeda, would instantly fill just as happened before September 11<sup>th</sup>....We cannot repeat in Afghanistan the mistake our leaders made in Iraq."<sup>274</sup> Although Trump stated that he would not announce the number of troops or a time table, it was known that the U.S. would send an additional 3,500 troops

---

<sup>271</sup> Interview with a U.N. expert on Afghanistan, April 15, 2018.

<sup>272</sup> Julian Borger, "US troops in Afghanistan: here's what to expect from Donald Trump's speech," *Guardian*, August 21, 2017, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/21/us-troops-afghanistan-donald-trump>.

<sup>273</sup> Phil Stewart and Idrees Ali, "U.S. 'not winning' in Afghanistan, Defense Secretary tells Congress," *Reuters*, June 13, 2017, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-idUSKBN1941Y1>.

<sup>274</sup> Nora Kelly, "Full Transcript: Donald Trump Announces His Afghanistan Policy," *Atlantic*, August 21, 2017, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/full-transcript-donald-trump-announces-his-afghanistan-policy/537552/>.

to Afghanistan, bringing the total to 14,500.<sup>275</sup> He emphasised that the U.S. was “not nation building again,” in Afghanistan, and was there to “stop the resurgence of safe havens that enable terrorists to threaten America.”<sup>276</sup>

Trump’s Pakistan policy was openly aggressive and threatening. He stated, “Pakistan has also sheltered the same organizations that try every single day to kill our people. We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars. At the same time, they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change. And that will change immediately.”<sup>277</sup> Referring to India, Trump said that, “We appreciate India’s important contributions to stability in Afghanistan, but India makes billions of dollars in trade with the United States—and we want them to help us more in Afghanistan, especially in the area of economic assistance and development.”<sup>278</sup> Trump spoke of Pakistan as a troublesome country that was once an ally, but is now responsible for U.S. failures in Afghanistan. He was appreciative of India’s alliance with the U.S. and envisioned a greater role for them in Afghanistan.

Later, in one of his tweets, President Trump took an even more hostile tone. In his first tweet of the year 2018, Trump stated, “the United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies and deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools.”<sup>279</sup> Following this statement by the President, the Trump administration announced that it would withhold aid worth \$255 million from Pakistan.<sup>280</sup> Pakistani officials dismissed U.S. allegations and claimed that Pakistan was being scapegoated for U.S. failures in Afghanistan, and that it was time for the U.S. to do more. Pakistani Defense Minister, Khurram Dastagir Khan responded to Trump’s statement by saying that, “Pakistan as anti-terror ally has given free to U.S.: land and air communication, military bases & intel cooperation that decimated Al-Qaeda over

---

<sup>275</sup> Ibid; “U.S. to send 3,500 additional troops to Afghanistan,” *Reuters*, September 6, 2017, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-military/u-s-to-send-3500-additional-troops-to-afghanistan-idUSKCN1BH2KW>.

<sup>276</sup> Nora Kelly, 2017.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Anwar Iqbal and Iftikhar A. Khan, “Trump’s tweet on Pakistan sparks war of words,” *Dawn*, January 2, 2018, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1380174>.

<sup>280</sup> Harriet Agerholm, “US will withhold \$255m of aid to Pakistan over alleged state-sponsored terrorism,” *Independent*, January 3, 2018, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/us-pakistan-aid-stop-nikki-haley-money-stop-terrorism-funding-state-donald-trump-twitter-a8139876.html>.

last 16 years, but they have given us nothing but invective and mistrust.”<sup>281</sup> Pakistani Foreign Minister, Khawaja Asif told a private television channel in Pakistan that Trump was “again and again displacing his frustrations on Pakistan over failures in Afghanistan as they are trapped in dead-end street in Afghanistan.”<sup>282</sup>

Pakistan’s relationship with the U.S. had been challenging in the past, however, the exchange of undiplomatic language through unconventional channels of communication ushered a new low in the bilateral relationship. Ex-Ambassador of the U.S. to Pakistan, Richard Olson wrote in the New York Times about U.S. strategy to deal with Pakistan. He stated that, “Pakistan has greater leverage over us than many imagine,” and that, “the keys to understanding Pakistan’s policy and the limitations of American options lie in geography and history.”<sup>283</sup> He further noted that, “we may not agree with how Pakistan assesses the threat from India, but in my experience, almost all Pakistanis perceive India as an existential threat.”<sup>284</sup> Even if the whole population does not feel threatened by India, the people responsible for Pakistan’s security affairs and strategic policy i.e. the Pakistani military establishment, certainly does. Olson spoke about decreasing Pakistani reliance on U.S. aid and said that, “China has invested around \$62 billion in Pakistani infrastructure under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” which would “dwarf anything the United States has ever undertaken.”<sup>285</sup> Olson rightly pointed out that historical and geographical factors explain much of Pakistan’s behavior and its anxieties. More importantly, these factors provide a context, which needs to be understood by the U.S., and which must be treated like a framework within which future options for Afghanistan need to be discussed.

---

<sup>281</sup> Anwar Iqbal and Iftikhar A. Khan, 2018.

<sup>282</sup> Mythili Sampathkumar, “Trump’s first tweet of 2018 sparks crisis in Pakistan as it summons US Ambassador,” *Independent*, January 2, 2018, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-pakistan-us-tweet-crisis-ambassador-security-meeting-latest-a8138561.html>.

<sup>283</sup> Richard G. Olson, “How Not To engage With Pakistan,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2018, accessed April 28, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/opinion/pakistan-trump-aid-engage.html>.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter VII: Conclusion**

This paper's aim was to identify the factors that result in counterinsurgency successes or failures, focusing specifically on the role of external actors in influencing the outcome of such wars. There is hardly ever a single factor that results in the success or failure of counterinsurgency, as there is always a combination of factors that come into play. However, there is usually one aspect or a few aspects of insurgencies that overwhelm the others and decide the outcome of counterinsurgencies.

This research focused on the external actor aspect, and based on the evidence gathered through studying the Afghan War, it can be argued that external actors' actions cannot be solely responsible for undoing over seventeen years of counterinsurgency by a force as strong as the U.S. As hypothesised by this paper, external actors influence the outcome of counterinsurgency only in combination with political and cultural factors prevalent in the host state. Moreover, it is vital to take into account the historical and geographical context within which any war takes place and disregarding these factors can be a mistake for the counterinsurgency force. For example, the United States expected Pakistan to halt all support of the Taliban once war started in 2001. However, it failed to take into consideration the fact that Afghanistan-Pakistan history did not begin in 2001.

The *mujahideen* who won the war for the Americans against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan were natives of this region, they were trained and taught *jihadi* ideology there, and most importantly, they believed in this ideology. In 2001, just because the U.S. were on the opposite side did not mean that the insurgents had stopped believing in *jihad*. The U.S. was simply unable to comprehend or counter the attraction of the insurgents' ideological base. Another issue that contributed to, and continues to affect, the outcome of the war is the unwillingness of the U.S. to understand and cater to Pakistan's strategic interests. They wanted Pakistani military establishment to abandon their India-specific interests, while Pakistan's Afghanistan policy essentially revolved around those interests. That does not imply that the U.S. should have played into Pakistan's India-centric paranoia and not questioned their support for Afghan insurgents. However, the mercurial state of U.S.-Pakistan relations required greater commitment to continuous political dialogue. Pulitzer prize winning journalist and author Steve Coll

spoke about the current U.S. policy of threatening Pakistan and said, “just taking military action and signaling that you’re never going to leave and putting pressure on Pakistan by withholding aid is very, very unlikely to succeed.”<sup>286</sup>

Therefore, when the COIN force fails to deal with external actors and allies in a way that does not alienate them, the result is a prolonged war that will most likely frustrate the COIN force more than the external actor. It must be argued that although external actor related issues are important, but they typically function in combination with indigenous issues as well. The fact that Afghanistan’s government failed to establish territorial control cannot be attributed only to Pakistan’s alliance with the Haqqanis and Afghan Taliban. Infighting and the influence of warlords over Afghanistan are issues that are organic and have existed since before the war. Moreover, the existence of multiple terrorist groups that threaten regional and possibly even global stability cannot be attributed to Pakistani patronage. Counterinsurgencies are very complicated wars, and often when there are multiple sources of violence there is no right way to fight such wars.

It is easier to analyse what should have been done or what may have been effective in hindsight. Would the war have looked different had the U.S. deployed more forces on the ground in the initial phase of the war when al Qaeda and Taliban leaders were still hiding in Afghanistan? Would the U.S. be in the situation they find themselves today had they not occupied Iraq in 2003 and diverted attention from Afghanistan? There are no absolute answers for these questions, just like there are no absolute, formula-based solutions for insurgencies. Strategies that work in one country may not work at all in another due to various factors including history, geography, the nature of insurgency, etc. For example, the mountainous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan was an advantage for the Afghan insurgents as the terrain made insurgent movements almost impossible to fully monitor.

Apart from geographical factors, there are other reasons such as poor governance and non-availability of basic needs that fuel insurgencies. In Afghanistan, endemic corruption, and an economy that is dependent on opium cultivation and drug trade have also been significant factors in financing the

---

<sup>286</sup> Steve Coll, interview by Isaac Chotiner, February 6, 2018, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/02/is-there-any-hope-for-the-u-s-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan.html>.

insurgents.<sup>287</sup> There are numerous things that could have been done differently that may have changed the war, however, it cannot be said with certainty what could have prevented United States' current situation in Afghanistan. Protracted wars are almost always complicated, and rarely end in a definitive outcome. Such wars in conflict ridden regions also have the potential to last for decades before being resolved. It is important to assess if the U.S., Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other stakeholders such as China, Iran, India, and Russia have the patience to tolerate conflict in a volatile region.

In presenting possible future courses of action, analysts stress that the U.S. should be prepared to accept that it is an “unwinnable” war in Afghanistan.<sup>288</sup> Having admitted that, there are several ways that the situation can unfold in Afghanistan. Some suggest that the U.S. should accept a weak central government and allow Afghanistan's political system to evolve on its own, which will possibly entail Taliban strongholds in rural areas.<sup>289</sup> Others point out the merits of allowing customary councils and power structures to thrive alongside more formal political institutions in order for conflict to be minimised.<sup>290</sup> Whatever the future political dispensation, it is clear that the U.S. cannot rely on military solutions to the problems in Afghanistan. The answer to Afghanistan's woes does not lie in more or fewer foreign troops, and it most certainly does not lie in the worsening U.S.- Pakistan relations. International forces already recognise the fact that the Taliban are political stakeholders in Afghanistan's future and have to be accommodated.

The extent to which the current political administration in Afghanistan would have to compromise in order to make space for the Taliban and other insurgent groups remains to be seen. The apparent inevitability of negotiating with the Taliban leads the Pakistani military establishment to believe that they have an indispensable role to play in Afghanistan's future, therefore, threatening behavior by the U.S. can potentially be counterproductive. The U.S. would have to find a

---

<sup>287</sup> Alfred W McCoy, “How the heroin trade explains the US-UK failure in Afghanistan,” *Guardian*, January 9, 2018, accessed April 29, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jan/09/how-the-heroin-trade-explains-the-us-uk-failure-in-afghanistan>.

<sup>288</sup> Max Fisher, “In Afghanistan's Unwinnable War, What's the Best Loss to Hope For?” *New York Times*, February 1, 2018, accessed June 5, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/01/world/asia/afghanistan-war.html>.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Jennifer Murtazashvili, “Informal federalism: self-governance and power sharing in Afghanistan,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 44, no. 2 (2014): 324-343.

way to save face in Afghanistan, and they would probably try to leave the country more stable, even if marginally, than before.

Afghanistan's case is a prime example of how intervening forces are at a disadvantage and have a higher probability of losing in protracted conflicts. It demonstrates the fact that any viable solution to such conflicts must incorporate regional actors who have leverage and national interests in the host country. Counterinsurgency strategies practiced in one country cannot be generalised and replicated exactly in another. However, it can be concluded from the case study that a counterinsurgency force must take into consideration the weight of historical context and socio-political factors before devising policies. Sometimes the longer a counterinsurgency force stays in order to justify an outcome as a victory, the more unwinnable a war becomes.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

“Obama says Pakistan did not know whereabouts of Bin Laden.” *Dawn*, December 01, 2017. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1374059>.

“State of the Union address: Text of George Bush’s speech.” *Guardian*, September 21, 2001. Accessed March 9, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>.

“Text: Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld.” *Washington Post*, October 7, 2001. Accessed March 9, 2018. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/rumsfeld\\_100801.htm](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/rumsfeld_100801.htm).

“U.S. to send 3,500 additional troops to Afghanistan.” *Reuters*, September 6, 2017. Accessed April 28, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-military/u-s-to-send-3500-additional-troops-to-afghanistan-idUSKCN1BH2KW>.

“US embassy cables: Pakistan backs US drone attacks on tribal areas.” *Guardian*. November 30, 2010. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/167125>.

Ackerman, Spencer. “Obama announces plan to keep 9,800 US troops in Afghanistan after 2014.” *Guardian*, May 27, 2014. Accessed April 23, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/27/obama-us-afghanistan-force-2014>.

Agerholm, Harriet. “US will withhold \$255m of aid to Pakistan over alleged state-sponsored terrorism.” *Independent*, January 3, 2018. Accessed April 28, 2018. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/us-pakistan-aid-stop-nikki-haley-money-stop-terrorism-funding-state-donald-trump-twitter-a8139876.html>.



AIHRC-UNAMA. "Joint Monitoring of Political Rights." 1 August-21 October, 2009. Accessed April 19, 2018. <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/3rdPRMAug-Oct2009.pdf>.

Ali, Idrees. "Taliban increases influence, territory in Afghanistan: U.S. watchdog." *Reuters*, October 31, 2017. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-militants/taliban-increases-influence-territory-in-afghanistan-u-s-watchdog-idUSKBN1D026N>

Amrullah Saleh. Interview by "Frontline," PBS. October 3, 2006. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/interviews/saleh.html#3>.

Baker, Peter. "Biden No Longer Lone Voice on Afghanistan." *New York Times*, October 13, 2009. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/14/world/14biden.html>.

Bash, Dana. "Sources: Panetta to Congress-Pakistan either incompetent or involved." CNN, May 3, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/05/03/sources-panetta-to-congress-pakistan-either-incompetent-or-involved/>.

BBC News. "Karzai declared Afghan president." Last updated, November 3, 2004. Accessed April 10, 2018. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3977677.stm>.

BBC News. "Pakistan outrage after 'Nato attack kills soldiers'." November 26, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15901363>.

BBC News. "US official Raymond Davis on Lahore murder charges." January 28, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12305049>.

Boone, Jon and Peter Beumont. "Pervez Musharraf admits permitting 'a few' US drone strikes in Pakistan." *Guardian*, April 12, 2013. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/12/musharraf-admits-permitting-drone-strikes>.

Boone, Jon. "Nato air attack on Pakistan troops was self-defence, says senior western official." *Guardian*, November 27, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/26/nato-air-attack-pakistan-soldiers>.

Boone, Jon. "Pakistan condemns US drone strike that killed Taliban leader Mansoor." *Guardian*, May 24, 2016. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/24/pakistan-condemns-us-drone-strike-that-killed-taliban-leader-mansoor>.

Bose, Srinjoy. "An Election Observer's View and Appraisal of the 2014 Afghan Elections." *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research* 2, no. 1 (2015).

Burke, Jason. "Nato figures show surge in Afghanistan violence." *Guardian*, January 31, 2009. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/31/afghanistan-nato-violence>.

Carter, Shan, Matthew Ericson and Archie Tse. "Setting the Stage for the Recount." *New York Times*. Accessed April 19, 2018. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/09/21/world/asia/0921-afghan-election-analysis.html#tab=1>.

CNN World. "Bin Laden: America 'filled with fear'." October 7, 2001. Accessed March 9, 2018. <http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/central/10/07/ret.binladen.transcript/index.html>

CNN. "Pakistan president blasts Afghan leader." March 5, 2006. Accessed April 16, 2018. <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/03/05/musharraf/>.

Corruption Perceptions Index, 2007.  
[https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2007/0](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2007/0).

Corruption Perceptions Index, 2008.  
[https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2008/0](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2008/0).

Corruptions Perception Index, 2009.  
[https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2009/0](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2009/0).

Crilly, Rob. "Did Pakistan know about the Osama Bin Laden raid?" *Telegraph*, May 19, 2015. Accessed April 20, 2018.  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/11616752/Did-Pakistan-know-about-the-Osama-bin-Laden-raid.html>.

European Union Election Observatory Mission. "Presidential and Provincial Council Elections." August 20, 2009. Accessed April 19, 2018.  
[http://www.eods.eu/library/2010\\_election\\_observation\\_afghanistan\\_final\\_report\\_0809\\_en.pdf](http://www.eods.eu/library/2010_election_observation_afghanistan_final_report_0809_en.pdf).

Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "Stuck in the Mud." *Foreign Affairs*, July 18, 2012. Accessed April 21, 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2012-07-18/stuck-mud>.

Firdous, Iftikhar. "24 soldiers killed in NATO attack on Pakistan check post." *Express Tribune*, November 26, 2011. Accessed April 21, 2018.  
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/297979/nato-jets-attack-checkpost-on-pak-afghan-border/>.

Gall, Carlotta. "Airstrike by U.S. Draws Protest from Pakistanis." *New York Times*, January 15, 2006. Accessed April 16, 2018.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/15/world/asia/airstrike-by-us-draws-protests-from-pakistanis.html>

Ghauri, Irfan. "After Osama: Breaking silence, Army asks US to reduce troops." *Express Tribune*, May 6, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/162469/military-admits-shortcomings-on-bin-laden-intel/>.

Giustozzi, Antonio. "The Taliban and the 2014 presidential elections in Afghanistan." *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 6 (2016): 557-573.

Good, Chris. "Petraeus: Gains in Afghanistan 'Fragile and Reversible'; Afghans Will Take Over in Select Provinces." *Atlantic*, March 15, 2011. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/03/petraeus-gains-in-afghanistan-fragile-and-reversible-afghans-will-take-over-in-select-provinces/72507/>.

Hamid Karzai. "Seven Years in Afghanistan." *Guardian*, November 13, 2008. Accessed April 27, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/nov/13/afghanistan-terrorism-al-qaida>.

Hamid Karzai. Interview by Akbar Ayazi. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 9, 2006. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1072624.html>.

Harnden, Toby. "Joe Biden says troops will leave Afghanistan by 2014 'come hell or high water'." *Telegraph*, December 20, 2010. Accessed April 23, 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/8214868/Joe-Biden-says-troops-will-leave-Afghanistan-by-2014-come-hell-or-high-water.html>.

Hille, Kathrin. "Russia offers to host talks between Afghan government and Taliban." *Financial Times*, January 17, 2018. Accessed April 24, 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/ba435934-fb8f-11e7-9b32-d7d59aace167>.

Hulse, Carl. "Obama Is Sworn In as the 44<sup>th</sup> President." *New York Times*, January 20, 2009. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/21/us/politics/20web-inaug2.html>

Human Rights Watch. "Afghanistan: Girls Struggle for an Education." October 17, 2017. Accessed April 24, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/17/afghanistan-girls-struggle-education>.

Human Rights Watch. "World Report, 2008." Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2009/country-chapters/afghanistan>.

Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. "Afghanistan Presidential Election Result-2004." Accessed April 13, 2018. [http://www.iec.org.af/public\\_html/Election%20Results%20Website/english/english.htm](http://www.iec.org.af/public_html/Election%20Results%20Website/english/english.htm)

Iqbal, Anwar and Iftikhar A. Khan. "Trump's tweet on Pakistan sparks war of words." *Dawn*, January 2, 2018. Accessed April 28, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1380174>.

Iqbal, Anwar. "Terror war killed 80,000 during 2005-13: report." *Dawn*, March 31, 2015. Accessed April 22, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1172931>.

ISPR. "Army's Press Release Archive." February 22, 2017. Accessed April 23, 2018. <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-archive.php?cat=army&dt=2017-02-22>.

Johnston, Patrick B. and Anoop K. Sarbahi. "The Impact of US Drone Strikes on Terrorism in Pakistan." *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (2016): 203-219.

Jones, Jeffrey M. "Americans Split on Afghanistan Troops Increase vs. Decrease." Gallup, November 12, 2009. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://news.gallup.com/poll/124238/americans-split-afghanistan-troop-increase-decrease.aspx>.

Jones, Seth G. and Christine C. Fair. *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010.

Kelly, Nora. "Full Transcript: Donald Trump Announces His Afghanistan Policy." *Atlantic*, August 21, 2017. Accessed April 28, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/full-transcript-donald-trump-announces-his-afghanistan-policy/537552/>.

Khattak, Daud. "Afghanistan's Bloody Week Lays Bare Rifts in the 'Unity Government'." *Diplomat*, June 06, 2017. Accessed April 23, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/afghanistans-bloody-week-lays-bare-rifts-in-the-unity-government/>.

Konarovsky, Mikhail. "Afghanistan After 2014." *International Organisations Research Journal* 12, no. 3 (2017): 242-253.

Lynch III, Thomas F. "After ISIS: Fully Reappraising U.S. Policy in Afghanistan." *Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2015): 119-144.

Masood, Salman and Carlotta Gall. "Karzai in Pakistan to Mend Ties." *New York Times*, December 27, 2007. Accessed April 15, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/27/world/asia/27pakistan.html>

Mazzetti, Mark. "A Secret Deal on Drones, Sealed in Blood." *New York Times*, April 6, 2013. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/world/asia/origins-of-cias-not-so-secret-drone-war-in-pakistan.html>.

Mazzetti, Mark. "How a Single Spy Helped Turn Pakistan Against the United States." *New York Times*, April 9, 2013. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/magazine/raymond-davis-pakistan.html?mtrref>

McLean, Alan and Archie Tse. "American Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq." *New York Times*. Accessed April 15, 2018. <http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/06/22/world/asia/american-forces-in-afghanistan-and-iraq.html>

Murtazashvili, Jennifer Brick. "Afghanistan in 2015." *Asian Survey* 56, no. 1 (January/February, 2016): 187-198.

Nasr, Vali. "The Inside Story of How the White House Let Diplomacy Fail in Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy*, March 4, 2013. Accessed April 27, 2018. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/04/the-inside-story-of-how-the-white-house-let-diplomacy-fail-in-afghanistan/>.

National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States. "9/11 Commission Report."

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. "Statistical Information on Terrorism in 2012." May 2013. Accessed April 22, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210288.pdf>.

Nordland, Rod. "After Rancor, Afghans Agree to Share Power." *New York Times*, September 21, 2014. Accessed April 23, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/22/world/asia/afghan-presidential-election.html>.

Nordland, Rod. "Troop 'Surge' in Afghanistan Ends With Mixed Results." *New York Times*, September 21, 2012. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/22/world/asia/us-troop-surge-in-afghanistan-ends.html?mtrref>

Olson, Richard G. "How Not To engage With Pakistan." *New York Times*, January 9, 2018. Accessed April 28, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/opinion/pakistan-trump-aid-engage.html>.

Pew Research Center. "Widespread opposition to drones." July 11, 2014. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/global-opposition-to-u-s-surveillance-and-drones-but-limited-harm-to-americas-image/pg-2014-07-14-balance-of-power-0-01/>.

Phillips, Macon. "Osama Bin Laden Dead." The White House, May 2, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-dead>.

Physicians for Social Responsibility. "Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 years of the "War on Terror"." March 2015. Accessed April 22, 2018. [http://www.ippnw.de/commonFiles/pdfs/Frieden/Body\\_Count\\_first\\_international\\_edition\\_2015\\_final.pdf](http://www.ippnw.de/commonFiles/pdfs/Frieden/Body_Count_first_international_edition_2015_final.pdf).

Rahim , Najim and Mujib Mashal. "Afghan Leaders Admit Civilians Were Killed in Anti-Taliban Bombing." *New York Times*, April 3, 2018. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/03/world/asia/afghanistan-airstrike-civilians.html>

Ramani, Samuel. "Hamid Karzai and the Russia Connection." *Diplomat*, November 3, 2017. Accessed April 27, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/hamid-karzai-and-the-russia-connection/>.

Rana, Shahbaz. "Pakistan did not know about OBL's whereabouts: Munter." *Express Tribune*, January 18, 2017. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1299363/pakistan-not-know-obl-residing-abbottabad-munter/>.

RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents. <http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search.php>.

Reuters. "Pakistani Leader Claims U.S. Threat After 9/11." *New York Times*, September 22, 2006. Accessed March 10, 2018. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/22/world/asia/22pakistan.html>.



Roggio, Bill and Alexandra Gutowski. "LWJ Map Assessment: Taliban controls or contests 45 % of Afghan districts." *Long War Journal*, September 26, 2017. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/09/lwj-map-assessment-taliban-controls-or-contests-45-of-afghan-districts.php>

Roggio, Bill. "Senior al Qaeda, Taliban, and allied Jihadist leaders killed in US airstrikes in Pakistan, 2004-2017." Last updated June 14, 2017. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes-hvts>.

Rowland, Jennifer. "Ex-president Musharraf admits approving CIA drone strikes." *Foreign Policy*, April 12, 2013. Accessed April 16, 2018. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/12/ex-president-musharraf-admits-approving-cia-drone-strikes/>.

Sampathkumar, Mythili. "Trump's first tweet of 2018 sparks crisis in Pakistan as it summons US Ambassador." *Independent*, January 2, 2018. Accessed April 28, 2018. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-pakistan-us-tweet-crisis-ambassador-security-meeting-latest-a8138561.html>.

Security Council. "Afghanistan's First Presidential Election Not Perfect, But Sets Stage for Journey Towards Vigorous Democracy, Security Council Told." October 12, 2004. Accessed April 13, 2018. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sc8216.doc.htm>.

Shah Sherazi, Zahir and Mateen Haider. "Pakistan protests fresh drone strikes in South Waziristan." *Dawn*, October 30, 2014. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1141332>

South Asia Terrorism Portal. "Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2000-2018." Last updated April 22, 2018. Accessed April 22, 2018. <http://www.satp.org/satporqtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>.

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan. "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress." July 30, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2014-07-30qr.pdf>

Spiegel, Peter, Jonathan Weisman and Yochu J. Dreazen. "Obama Bets Big on Troop Surge." *Wall Street Journal*, December 2, 2009. Accessed April 18, 2018. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB125967363641871171>.

Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. "The Threat to the U.S. Homeland Emanating from Pakistan." Cong. 112, 1st Session, May 3, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018.

Steve Coll. Interview by Isaac Chotiner. February 6, 2018. Accessed April 30, 2018. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/02/is-there-any-hope-for-the-u-s-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan.html>.

The Brookings Institute. "The United States, India, and Pakistan: To the Brink and Back." Washington D.C. February 26, 2013. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/20130226\\_India\\_pakistan\\_armageddon\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/20130226_India_pakistan_armageddon_transcript.pdf).

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism. "Pakistan Drone Statistics Visualised." July 2, 2012. Accessed April 19, 2018. <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2012-07-02/pakistan-drone-statistics-visualised>.

The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan." December 1, 2009. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. "Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan." March 27, 2009. Accessed April 17,

2018. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History*. Princeton University Press: 2009.

Tse, Archie. "Audit Finds Almost a quarter of Afghan Vote is Fraudulent." *New York Times*. Accessed April 19, 2018. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/10/20/world/asia/1020-afghan-recount-analysis.html#tab=1>.

Tyler, Patrick. "A Nation Challenged." *New York Times*, October, 8, 2001. Accessed March 9, 2018. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/08/world/nation-challenged-attack-us-britain-strike-afghanistan-aiming-bases-terrorist.html>.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. "Afghanistan: protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." Kabul, 2017. Accessed January 21, 2018. [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict\\_midyear\\_report\\_2017\\_july\\_2017.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_midyear_report_2017_july_2017.pdf).

United Nations Office on Drugs and Corruption. "Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2017." Accessed January 21, 2018. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2017\\_cult\\_prod\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan_opium_survey_2017_cult_prod_web.pdf).

United States Special Operations Command History, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. *Global War on Terrorism: Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan*.

UNODC & Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics. "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014: Cultivation and Production." Accessed April 24, 2018. <https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan-opium-survey-2014.pdf>.

UNODC/MCN. "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016." December, 2016. Accessed April 15, 2018. <https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop->

[monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan opium survey 2016 cultivation production.pdf](#).

US Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden And Why It Matters Today*. 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, November 30, 2009.

Walsh, Declan. "Pakistan still reeling one month after raid that killed Osama bin Laden." *Guardian*, June 1, 2011. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/01/pakistan-osama-bin-laden-military>.

Ward, Matthew. "A timeline of terror in Pakistan." *Guardian*, May 13, 2011. Accessed April 14, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/13/timeline-terror-pakistan>

Wike, Richard. "Musharraf's Support Shrinks, Even As More Pakistanis Reject Terrorism...and the U.S." Pew Research Center. August 8, 2007. Accessed April 14, 2018. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2007/08/08/pakistanis-increasingly-reject-terrorism-and-the-us/>

Wilder, Andrew. *A House Divided? Analysing the 2005 Afghan Elections*. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2005. Accessed April 14, 2018. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/47c3f3c01b.pdf>.

World Bank. "Poverty in Afghanistan Rose Amidst Troop Withdrawal, Report Says." May 8, 2017. Accessed April 24, 2018. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/05/08/poverty-afghanistan-rose-amidst-troop-withdrawal-poverty-update-2017>.

Zenko, Micah. "Do Not Believe the U.S. Government's Official Numbers on Drone Strike Civilian Casualties." *Foreign Policy*, July 5, 2016. Accessed April 19, 2018. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/05/do-not-believe-the-u-s-governments-official-numbers-on-drone-strike-civilian-casualties/>.

## Secondary Sources

Alexander, John. " 'Decomposing' an Insurgency." *RUSI Journal* 157, no. 4 (2012): 48-54.

Alwyin-Foster, Brigadier Nigel. "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations." *Military Review* (November-December, 2005).

Armitage, Richard L., Samuel R. Berger, and Daniel S. Markey, *U.S. Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2010.

Arreguín-Toft, Ivan. "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict." *International Security* 26, no. 1 (Summer, 2001): 93-128.

Askerov, Ali. "The Chechen wars, media, and democracy in Russia." *Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences* 8, no. 2 (May, 2015).

Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel, ed. *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Bose, Srinjoy and Nishank Motwani, "The Limits of 'Hybrid Governance' in Afghanistan." *Strategic Analysis* 38, no. 4 (2014): 416-426.

Brooks, Stephen G., G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth. "Don't Come Home America: The Case Against Retrenchment." *International Security* 37, no. 3 (Winter 2012/13): 7-51.

Brown, Michael E. "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict." In *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, edited by Michael E. Brown. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996.

Brown, Michael E. "Internal Conflict and International Action." In *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, edited by Michael E. Brown. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996.

Cassidy, Major Robert M. "Why Great Powers Fight Small Wars Badly." *Military Review* (September-October, 2002): 41-53.

Coll, Steve. *Directorate S*. U.S.: Penguin Random House, 2018.

Council on Foreign Relations. "The US War in Afghanistan." Accessed January, 20, 2018. <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>.

De Luce, Dan. "Is Trump Ready to Dump Pakistan?" *Foreign Policy*, March 26, 2018. Accessed March 29, 2018. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/26/is-trump-ready-to-dump-pakistan/>.

Department of the Army. *Counterinsurgency FM 3-24*. Washington D.C.: Marine Corps, 2006.

Eikenberry, Karl W. "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan: The Other Side of COIN." *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 5 (September/October, 2013): 59-VII.

Evangelista, Matthew "Explaining the Cold War's end." In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, ed., Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Evans, Alexander. "Pakistan and the Shadow of 9/11." *RUSI Journal* 156, no. 4 (2011): 64-70.

Evans, Michael. "From Patton to Petraeus: American Generalship and the Art of War Since 1941." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 186-204.

Fisher, Max. "In Afghanistan's Unwinnable War, What's the Best Loss to Hope For?" *New York Times*. February 1, 2018. Accessed June 5, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/01/world/asia/afghanistan-war.html>.

Fisherman, Brian. "The Taliban in Pakistan: An Overview." In *Talibanisation: Negotiating the Borders Between Terror, Politics, and Religion*, ed. Katherine Tiedemann and Peter L. Bergen. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Fitzgerald, David. *Learning to Forget: US Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Practice from Vietnam to Iraq*. California: Stanford University Press, 2013.

Galula, David. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 1964.

Ganji, Akbar. "U.S.-Jihadist Relations (Part 1): Creating the Mujahideen in Afghanistan." *Huffington Post*, 7 February, 2014. Accessed March 14, 2018. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/akbar-ganji/us-jihadist-relations\\_b\\_5542757.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/akbar-ganji/us-jihadist-relations_b_5542757.html).

Gannon, Kathy. "Taliban Comeback Traced to Corruption." *Washington Post*, November 24, 2006. Accessed April 15, 2018. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/24/AR2006112400381\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/24/AR2006112400381_pf.html)

Giustozzi, Antonio. "The Taliban and the 2014 Presidential Elections in Afghanistan." *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 6 (2016): 557-573.

Greene, Samuel R. "Pathological counterinsurgency: the failure of imposing legitimacy in El Salvador, Afghanistan, and Iraq." *Third World Quarterly* 38, no.3 (2017): 563-579.

Hassan Khan, Feroze. "The Durand Line." In *Culture, Conflict, and Counterinsurgency* ed. Thomas Johnson and Barry Zellen. Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2014.

Hilali, A.Z. "Contemporary Geopolitics of FATA: An Analysis of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26, no. 4 (2013): 595-638.

Johnson, Thomas H. and Barry Scott Zellen, ed. *Culture, Conflict, and Counterinsurgency*. Palo Alto: Stanford Security Studies, 2014.

Jones, Seth G. *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008.

Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.

Kamel, Kareem. "Understanding Taliban Resurgence: Ethno-Symbolism and Revolutionary Mobilization." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (April, 2015): 66-82.

Kelly, Terrence K., Nora Bensahel, and Olga Olikier. *Observations About Recent SFA Efforts in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts*. RAND Corporation, 2011.

Kilcullen, David. *Counterinsurgency*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Kissinger, Henry A. "The Viet Nam Negotiations," *Foreign Affairs* 47, no. 2 (January, 1969): 211-234.

Kramer, Mark. "The Perils of Counterinsurgency: Russia's War in Chechnya." *International Security* 29, no. 3 (Winter, 2004/5): 5-62.

Krause, Peter John Paul. "The Last Good Chance A Reassessment of U.S. Operations at Tora Bora." *Security Studies* 17, no. 4 (2008): 644-684.



Lander, Mark. "The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama." *New York Times*. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 19, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/01/world/asia/obama-afghanistan-war.html>.

Levy, Jack S. "Too Important to Leave to the Other: History and Political Science in the Study of International Relations." *International Security* 22, no. 1 (Summer, 1997): 22-33.

Lyll, Jason. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (June, 2009): 331-362. Accessed December 29, 2017. <http://jcr.sagepub.com>.

Lyll, Jason. "Are coethnics more effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War." *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 1 (February, 2010). Accessed December 27, 2017. <https://doi-org.uaccess.univie.ac.at/10.1017/S0003055409990323>.

Mack, Andrew. "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: the Politics of Asymmetric Conflict." *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (January, 1975): 175-200. Accessed December 21, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009880>.

McCoy, Alfred W. "How the heroin trade explains the US-UK failure in Afghanistan." *Guardian*, January 9, 2018. Accessed April 29, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jan/09/how-the-heroin-trade-explains-the-us-uk-failure-in-afghanistan>.

McHugh, Kelly "A Tale of Two Surges: Comparing the Politics of the 2007 Iraq Surge and the 2009 Afghanistan Surge." *SAGE Open* (October-December, 2015): 1-16.

Meakins, Joss. "The Other Side of COIN: The Russians in Chechnya." *Small Wars Journal*, January 13, 2017. Accessed December 23, 2017. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-other-side-of-the-coin-the-russians-in-chechnya>.

Moore, R. Scott. "The Basics of Counterinsurgency." *Small Wars Journal*.

Murtazashvili, Jennifer. "Informal federalism: self-governance and power sharing in Afghanistan." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 44, no. 2 (2014): 324-343.

Nadiri, Khalid Homaun. "Old Habits, New Consequences: Pakistan's Posture toward Afghanistan since 2001." *International Security* 39, no. 2 (November, 2014): 132-168.

O'Hanlon, Michael E. "A Flawed Masterpiece," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (March/April, 2002).

Paul, Christopher , Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan. *Counterinsurgency Scorecard: Afghanistan in early 2013 relative to insurgencies since World War II*. RAND Corporation, 2013.

Paul, Christopher, and Colin P. Clarke. *Counterinsurgency Scorecard Update: Afghanistan in Early 2015 Relative to Insurgencies since World War II*. RAND Corporation, 2016.

Paul, Christopher, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill. "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Cases." RAND Corporation, 2010.

Paul, Christopher, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill. *Victory Has A Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*. RAND Corporation, 2010.

Pew Research Center. "Views of a Changing World 2003." June 3, 2003. Accessed March 26, 2018. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2003/06/03/chapter-1-post-war-opinions/>.

Rashid, Ahmed. "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism." *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 1999): 22-35.

Rogin, Josh. "Team Obama scuttles the term "AfPak"." *Foreign Policy*, January 20, 2012. Accessed February, 21, 2018. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/20/team-obama-scuttles-the-term-afpak/>.

Roxborough, Ian. "Counterinsurgency." *Contexts* 6, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 15-21.

Russell, James A. "Counterinsurgency American Style: Considering David Petraeus and twenty-first century irregular war." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 24, no. 1 (2014): 69-90.

Sahar, Arif. "Ethnicizing Masses in Post-Bonn Afghanistan: The Case of the 2004 and 2009 Presidential Elections." *Asian Journal of Political Science* 22, no. 3 (August, 2014): 289-314.

Scheuer, Michael. *Osama Bin Laden*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Schricker, Ezra. "The search for rebel interdependence: A study of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban." *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1 (2017): 16-30.

Seth G. Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (Spring, 2008): 7-40.

Smith, Scott Steward. *Afghanistan's Troubled Transition: Politics, Peacekeeping, and the 2004 Presidential Elections*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

Souleimanov, Emil A., and Huseyn Aliyev. "Asymmetry of Values, Indigenous forces, and Incumbent Success in Counterinsurgency: Evidence from Chechnya." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 5 (2015): 678-703.

Stevenson, Jonathan. "US Afghanistan policy: regional aspects." *Strategic Comments* 23, no. 9 (2017): iv-v.

Trinquier, Roger. *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*. London: Pall Mall Press Ltd, 1964.

Wardak , Ali and Humayun Hamidzada. "The Search for Legitimate Rule, Justice and a Durable Peace: Hybrid Models of Governance in Afghanistan." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7, no. 2 (2012): 79-88.

Zakheim, Dov S. *A Vulcan's Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2011.