IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ANTHONY SHAFFER, Plaintiff, v. DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, *et al.*, Defendants.	)	Civil Action No. 1:10-cv-02119 (RMC)

Exhibit B to Defendants' Second Motion for Summary Judgment

Unclassified Version of Plaintiff's Declaration and Supporting Exhibits

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ANTHONY SHAFFER Plaintiff, v. DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY et al. Defendants.	*	Civil Action No: 10-2119 (RMC)

DECLARATION OF ANTHONY SHAFFER

I, Anthony Shaffer, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am a person over eighteen (18) years of age and competent to testify. I make this Declaration on personal knowledge and in compliance with the Court's Scheduling Order dated February 13, 2013, and its Minute Order dated March 13, 2013.

2. I am an experienced and decorated intelligence officer with 25 years of field experience. I was employed by the defendant Defense Intelligence Agency ("DIA") from 1995 – 2006. I also retired as a Lt. Col. in the U.S. Army Reserves in 2011. Based on my past employment history, I am required by virtue of various secrecy agreements that I executed to submit my writings for prepublication review.[1] In 2001, just after the 9/11 attacks, I returned to

[1] This sworn declaration was, in fact, submitted for prepublication review to defendant Department of Defense ("DoD"). Although the defendants refused to allow me to use a secure governmental computer system in order to draft this declaration and adequately protect any classified information that might be viewed by the government as being within this document (ostensibly for the purposes of securing a litigation advantage and preventing me from providing sufficient detailed information to the Court for its review in this legal challenge), the Federal Reserve Bank, for which I am advising and assisting, authorized me to use its classified secure system for the purpose of creating and transmitting this document and its attachments to the defendants for prepublication review. Thus, any classified information that is determined by the

active duty for a thirty-month period and had two successful combat tours to Afghanistan during which time I participated in the search for senior Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership. In recognition of successful high risk/high gain operations I received a Bronze Star Medal for performance as an Operations Officer overseeing all of DIA's activities in Afghanistan. It is the narrative for this medal that is actually part of the legal dispute in this litigation. I have commanded and directed several key operational intelligence organizations over the span of my thirty-plus year career defending this nation. These include Special Mission Task Force STRATUS IVY, that conducted direct support to DoD compartmented activities (OSD, , Army) which was focused on offensive information operations. In addition, I was in charge of Field Operating Base (FOB) Alpha, a joint DIA unit conducting classified collection and special operations support regarding terrorists just after the 9/11 attacks. During the 1980s, I was a counterintelligence officer. I deployed to Germany to conduct counterterrorism operations in 1985 as part of REFORGER and worked in New York City as part of Army's anti-terrorism efforts during OPSAIL 1986 – the re-opening of the Statue of Liberty. I also worked to monitor visiting the United States during the , as well as a reserve tour with Army Foreign Counterintelligence Activity (FCA) – the premiere Army counterintelligence unit. I transitioned into the Foreign Intelligence (Controlled HUMINT) area of focus with his graduation from "The Farm" in 1988, and his work at where I started my career as a I was brought to active duty by the Army for the first Gulf War in 1991 and transitioned into the Army's Military Intelligence Excepted Career Program (MIECP) where, in 1992, he became the chief of Army's global Controlled HUMINT collection program, and ran specific Special Access Program (SAP)

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defendants to be within this document or the attachments has been properly protected from even inadvertent disclosure.

operations that netted high value information regarding intent and capabilities of a major adversary nation. As a reservist during this period he was the senior HUMINT advisor to the J2/Senior Intelligence Officer of Joint Interagency Task Force East (JIATF-E) that conducted counter-drug operations in the Transit Zone. During this tour he was successful in integrating highly [redacted] human intelligence operations to obtain high value intelligence information to support the operational forces. In 1995, I transitioned to Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), as part of the consolidation of all Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, USMC) HUMINT into the Department of Defense. I became a Senior Intelligence Officer (Operations) and created Task Force STRATUS IVY that conducted the full spectrum of support to Department of Defense, [redacted] and other non-DoD agencies. This included support to the controversial counterterrorism project known as ABLE DANGER – a pre-9/11 offensive operation suite designed to detect, degrade and counter Al Qaeda's global capabilities. In 2001, just after the 9/11 attacks, I was returned to active duty for a 30 month period, during which I commanded a DIA operating base (OB Alpha) and, as previously mentioned, had two successful combat tours to Afghanistan. My last military assignment, before retirement, was to help re-activate the 94th Division (one of Patton's divisions that had fought in the Battle of the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge) at which I served as the G1/G6, Public Affairs and Anti-Terrorism Officer from 2009 to my retirement in 2011.

I am currently a Senior Fellow, Director of External Communications and Special Lecturer at the Center for Advanced Defense Studies in Washington, D.C. and I also appear regularly as an expert commentator on network and cable television and radio, particularly with respect to military and intelligence matters.

3. I am the author of Operation Dark Heart: Spycraft and Special Ops on the Frontlines of

Afghanistan and the Path to Victory (St. Martin's Press, 2010)("Operation Dark Heart"), which is at the heart of this litigation. The Court should be aware from the outset that I am drafting this sworn declaration, which is designed to challenge the impropriety of the defendant's classification determinations, at a severe disadvantage.

4. While the defendants will assert that I need to be specific with unclassified pinpoint citations when I address every sentence or even a single word that has been held by the government to be classified, it has refused to permit me access to an unredacted copy of my own book. Therefore, there will be many instances where I simply cannot be specific because I have absolutely no recollection of what might be redacted from, for example, page 192, line four. I will do my best under the circumstances but clearly this is designed to hamper my ability to present the Court with as much information as possible to enable an informed decision.

5. Of course, the defendants did not hesitate to grant me authorized access on at four occasions to an unredacted copy of Operation Dark Heart when it served the government's interests. Apparently when the defendants want me to provide it information internally the government is more than willing to enable me full and unfettered access, but when it comes to providing the Court with the same level of detail the playing field has been changed.

Background Of The Pre-Publication Review Process Of Operation Dark Heart

6. I was mobilized in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as an Army Reserve Officer from December 2001 to June 2004.

7.. I started writing "The Dark Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan", which was the original title for what was later renamed Operation Dark Heart, in or around February 2007. The book offers a direct, detailed, eyewitness account of the 2003 "tipping-point" of the war in Afghanistan and provides an unemotional examination of the events

and decisions where mistakes were made in strategy. It recommends a detailed, alternate strategy to the current failing Counterinsurgency strategy that could result in victory in Afghanistan. Additionally, the book details protected disclosures that I made to the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission on pre-9/11 intelligence failures (based on information developed through Operation "ABLE DANGER") while in Afghanistan in October 2003. Some of the events described in the book led to my being awarded the Bronze Star.

8. In or around December 2008, I hired a then current *Washington Post* reporter and author, Jacqui Salmon, to serve as my ghost writer. Ms. Salmon actually conducted numerous independent interviews, relied upon unclassified documents, read books on the topic, and created the story line and chapter structure based on the personal observations that I provided her.

9. In February 2009, I entered into an agreement with Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press ("St. Martin's Press" or "publisher") to publish Operation Dark Heart.

10. In March 2009, I notified my Army Reserve chain-of-command that I was writing a detailed book on my experience in Afghanistan and requested guidance on how to comply with all appropriate security and ethical regulations. My Army Reserve leadership consulted with the 80th Training Command and U.S. Army Reserve Command and instructed me on what they understood the proper process to be in order to fully conform to security standards outlined in AR 350-1 so that no classified information would be contained or published in the book.

11. In April 2009, two highly qualified Army Reserve officers – a military attorney with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Paul Raaf whose civilian employment is with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and Colonel (COL) David Strickland,, who works as a civilian contractor for the Director of National Intelligence – were appointed to conduct the review of my book.

12. A copy of my draft manuscript was first submitted in June 2009 to my Army Reserve chain-of-command.

13. In or around October 2009, I made multiple national public announcements on Fox News, MSNBC, and the Jerry Doyle Radio program, all of which it is my understanding are routinely viewed by the defendants, that my book on Afghanistan was nearing completion and undergoing an Army security review for publication in early to mid-2010.

14. By Memorandum dated December 26, 2009, the Staff Judge Advocate for the Headquarters 94th Division (FS), U.S. Army Reserve Center, Fort Lee, Virginia, stated that based on the review of my manuscript it was his understanding that I used only unclassified information and open sources in my memoir. He provided me with a favorable legal opinion that I could accept compensation for his memoir, and I relied upon that opinion in good faith. Exhibit 1, Page 7.

15. By memorandum dated January 4, 2010, the Assistant Division Commander, who was a Colonel, Headquarters 94th Division (FS), U.S. Army Reserve Center, Fort Lee, Virginia, issued a favorable legal and operational security review of the memoir and approved its publication. Exhibit 1, Page 9. Upon receipt of this letter I was told I had complied with all instructions provided by the Army Reserve with respect to any legal obligations I was required to take for a classification review of my manuscript. I relied upon the findings in this letter in good faith. In fact, I completely understood that submission through my then chain-of-command with the U.S. Army Reserve, the governmental entity that held my security clearance, fully complied with any and all pre-publication review requirements that might obligate me at that time.

16. Following my receipt of the final favorable approval of the U.S. Army Reserve's security and ethical reviews, on or about February 23, 2010, a copy of the manuscript was forwarded to

the publisher. A publishing date was then scheduled for August 31, 2010.

17. During Spring 2010, I announced during multiple national interviews on such television networks as Fox News, MSNBC, BBC, Sky News, Alhurra TV, al Jazerra English Language and numerous radio programs, many of I understand are monitored by the defendants, that my book had been formally approved by the U.S. Army Reserve and would be published by August 31, 2010.

18. DIA claims to have first learned of Operation Dark Heart on or about May 27, 2010, but I am confident to state that numerous DIA officials knew of my memoir months before this date.

19. On June 18, 2010, I received a phone call from Brigadier General (BG) Karen LeDoux, my commanding general of the 94th Division – and the senior rater in my military chain of command, and was informed that DIA was demanding access to the already cleared manuscript. I was told that the Division's decision was not to share it with DIA based on its prior retaliatory activities against me (which primarily arose out of my being a national security whistleblower on 9/11 matters such as associated with ABLE DANGER, an operation that included the then cutting edge data mining efforts that were used to identified 9/11 hijacker Mohamed Atta and two of the three al Qaeda cells operating in the United States prior to the attacks), particularly with respect to its ongoing refusal to re-adjudicate my security clearance, and because of concerns that DIA had waited until the very last minute to insinuate itself into the process. The Army Reserve believed that the book had been reviewed and approved as having been completely clear of any classified information.

20. At no time did I ever interfere with or request that the Army Reserve not provide DIA with a copy of Operation Dark Heart. Although DIA was well aware of how to contact me and/or my attorney, at no time did any DIA official ever request a copy of the memoir directly from me,

my attorney, my literary agent or publisher. Had a copy been requested by DIA, I would have willingly and immediately complied.

21. On July 10, 2010, I was requested by my Army Reserve leadership to provide a copy of Operation Dark Heart to the Army and I immediately did so.

22. On July 11, 2010, I was notified by my Army Reserve leadership that the Department of the Army had decided to provide a copy of Operation Dark Heart to DIA but that Army Reserve continued to stand by its approval for the book for publication. I was specifically told by BG Ledoux that there was "tremendous pressure" being brought upon the Army by DIA to withdraw the Reserve's approval for the publication of the book. I was also told by BG Ledoux to be aware there is a "huge target on your back..."

23. By July 14, 2010, DIA had been provided a copy of Operation Dark Heart from the Army's General Counsel's Office and had disseminated copies to, among others, U.S. Special Operations Command, CIA and the NSA. Following its preliminary review DIA claimed to have identified significant classified information contained within the memoir, as I was told did the other entities as well.

24. On July 22, 2010, a DIA public affairs official called me and said that DIA had read the manuscript and claimed it contained "classified information". By this time, however, my publisher had already arranged for numerous pages of the book to be available for the public to review on *Amazon.com*.

25. On August 6, 2010, Lieutenant General Ronald Burgess, Director, DIA, sent a memorandum to Lieutenant General Richard P. Zahner, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2), Department of Army, and requested that the Army take all necessary steps to revoke the favorable operational and security ethics review provided by the 94th Training Division.

Additionally, DIA requested the Army to order me to formally submit my memoir for an information security review by defendant DoD, as well as take all necessary action to direct my publisher to withhold publication pending review. I was later provided with a copy of this letter. Exhibit 2.

26. On or about August 6, 2010, the Department of Army rescinded the Army Reserves' favorable approval for the publication of Operation Dark Heart.

27. On August 10, 2010, I was notified by BG Ledoux via e-mail that the "Department of the Army has concluded that the clearance review conducted by the 94th Division was insufficient, and that you will need to request in writing a review by the Department of the Army."

28. When I was eventually presented with a copy of DIA's August 6, 2010 letter, which I was told was to serve as a "counseling letter" to me, I asked BG Ledoux to reconsider providing me a copy. She appeared shocked by my request but then I explained. As I was then, and am now, a media commentator I explained that based on my professional experience, the DIA letter would serve to both 1) highlight and help draw adverse attention to the very issues and items DIA was now saying were "classified" and 2) if there really is classified information in the book (which I felt then as I do now that there is not) the proper thing to do would be to re-review the book "under the radar" so that no one in the public (or at the publisher) would ever know that anything was classified. To accomplish this, I recommended that the Army go back to DIA and that we all work together on a re-review of the book outside the public eye in order to protect and preserve any classified information that may be in the book.

29. LTC Paul Raaf, and my immediate rater, and COL James Higginbotham also reviewed the DIA letter and agreed with my assessment. COL Higginbotham went so far as to comment that the unclassified DIA letter, that had no dissemination restrictions on it at all, would only

serve to create interest and propel the book's sales "into the roof". I concurred with that judgment and told BG Ledoux that as soon as I would pass the DIA letter to my publisher it was highly likely that it would share the letter with the media as a significant marketing tool.

30. BG Ledoux withdrew the letter and said that she would seek guidance from her Army chain of command. Two days later I was contacted by LtCol Raaf and told that on August 11, 2010, it was decided to give me the DIA letter/counseling statement.

31. Also on August 11, 2010, St. Martin's Press sent the Department of Army a copy of the finished book, which was scheduled for publication in less than three weeks.

32. On Friday, August 13, 2010, just as St. Martin's Press was readying its initial shipment of the book, defendant DoD contacted my publisher to express its concern that publication of Operation Dark Heart could cause damage to U.S. national security. On Monday, August 16, 2010, four DoD officials – three lawyers and a DIA officer, David Ridlon – travelled to New York City to meet with my publisher. John Sergeant, the CEO of my publisher's parent company, called me and stated that the DoD officials claimed that there were "at least four names of operatives" in the book.

33. I was sure that none of the names in my book were "operatives" and that only people who had given me explicit permission to use their name or those who were DIA employees (but not covered by any legal protection) were identified. In fact, DoD's assertion turned out to be completely false as no names of operatives were ever identified in the book, even though I was forced by Mr. Ridlon to make up aliases for all the individuals named in the book. This was notwithstanding the fact that I provided evidence that individuals such as COL Jose Olivero – my supervisor in Afghanistan in 2003 – and who was the officer who nominated me for the Bronze Star – gave permission to use his real name in the book. When I confronted in, August

2010 (during the second review), Mr. Ridlon on this issue and the fact that there were no "operative names" in the book, he admitted "yeah – we just made that up as an excuse to stop publication".

34. Based on the concerns expressed by the government, Mr. Sergeant agreed to temporarily delay publication to allow DoD to engage in discussions with me about the book's contents. No one, least of all me, had any interest in revealing properly classified information.

35. Although a decision was made to delay publication, the defendants were explicitly notified at the outset that several dozen review copies of Operation Dark Heart had already been distributed and that it would be virtually impossible to retrieve those copies, at least not without arousing suspicion. Thus, whether the defendants sought to block publication of or even negotiate redaction of text from the book, it was inevitable that someone would likely post and reveal the alleged "classified" information online.

36. On August 16, 2010, DoD and DIA officials, to include its General Counsel George Peirce, met with representatives of my publisher in New York City to express their continuing concerns regarding publication of Operation Dark Heart.

37. On August 16, 2010, my counsel, Mark S. Zaid, notified defendant DoD's counsel via e-mail that:

> My client and I are more than willing to cooperate with the USGOVT to ensure there is no legitimately classified information within his book. It is in no ones interest for this to occur. That is exactly why Mr. Shaffer timely and properly submitted his manuscript for prepublication review through his Army Reserve chain of command, which held his current clearance, thereby fulfilling his lawful requirement.

That said, I am sure we can argue about the process that led to the initial issuance and then rescission of the approval to publish, and no doubt there will be opportunity to do so in the future, but we would like to focus on the present situation and see if we can arrive at an amicable resolution that would satisfy all concerned and allow the book to be publicly sold with as little delay as possible.

38. Although my attorney informed defendant DoD that he maintained a Secret level clearance and desired to participate in any meetings involving me in order to facilitate any negotiations, the defendants refused to allow his access to the first edition of Operation Dark Heart. DoD did, however, allow my publisher's attorney, who did not even have a security clearance, to participate in classified conversations regarding the contents of the book.

39. I was originally informed that the defendants had identified eighteen items of concern with my book, and I was requested to meet at the Pentagon with officials of the defendants on August 19, 2010, to discuss the specific text. Based on conversations between DoD and the publisher, it was our understanding that the meeting would involve "surgical editing" only to meet as many of the defendants' concerns as possible. In order to be permitted to discuss the alleged "classified" information in my book the defendants reactivated or granted me a temporary security clearance.

40. I fully cooperated with the defendants over the course of three meetings in August and September 2010 to negotiate any classification concerns. We went line by line of the book and I presented reams of open source information, much of which was presented to me by the

government. Contrary to what I was originally told about "surgical editing", the defendants requested significant changes to include modifying information that had been previously declassified, taken completely from open sources or obtained by Ms. Salmon, my ghostwriter.

41. In fact, I offered to bring Ms. Salmon to the meeting so she could share with them the information she found through her own independent research, particularly through her original interviews of Jose Olivero, Rob Culler and [redacted] – three fellow members of the Leadership Targeting Cell during my tour in Afghanistan who cooperated with writing the book. The DoD reviewers, particularly because of Mr. Ridlon, refused to accept my documents or to speak to or review the material found by Ms. Salmon. Indeed, Mr. Ridlon made it very clear that be did not care about my sources and that he was just going to redact anything he did not agree with, and that I would not be permitted to challenge any of his decisions. As part of the negotiations I nevertheless willingly agreed in good faith to modify or delete certain text, and to the extent agreement could not be reached the publisher agreed to redact the text from a revised edition. However, I made it clear to Mr. Ridlon and the DoD classification review folks, at every step that I disagreed with their method and refusal to allow me to present the unclassified sources or for them to speak directly to my ghostwriter.

42. Eventually, approximately 250 pages out of 320 pages of Operation Dark Heart were required to contain redactions in order to allegedly prevent the disclosure of classified information. In my professional opinion, and based on the legal and/or factual circumstances, little to none of this information, however, is now or was at the time actually classified.

43. By on or about September 3, 2010, legal representatives of defendant DoD provided the publisher, without my advance knowledge or consent, with an unclassified copy of Operation Dark Heart that the government had approved for publication in its present form. This version of

the book was accepted for publication.

44. I spent September 9-10, 1010, at my publisher's offices, at my own personal expense, helping to review the manuscript and insure that all the redactions directed by DoD were identified. Interestingly, I found about a dozen instances where the DoD reviewers had missed redacting my [redacted] along with other inconsistencies.

45. On September 9, 2010, my publisher notified DoD that the book was considered complete and the pages were being sent to the printer. Notwithstanding this fact, defendant DoD continued to attempt to have me make modifications or deletions to the text. But by this time, specifically because DoD had provided my publisher with an unclassified copy (and therefore no legal reason not to publish the book in that form), it was totally outside of my control.

46. In or around late September 2010, defendant DoD paid nearly $50,000 to my publisher to destroy 9,500 copies of the first printing of Operation Dark Heart on the basis that publication threatened national security.

47. The publisher printed a second edition of Operation Dark Heart of approximately 50,000 copies with redactions and set a new publication date of September 24, 2010, at which time it was issued. While the book ultimately hit #7 on the *New York Times'* bestseller list – and spent about a month on the extended list – it suffered greatly from the heavy handed government redactions as is evidenced by the dozens of bad *Amazon.com* reviews which clearly harmed the long range sales. This rendered the book an overall commercial failure.

48. Apparently the *New York Times* purchased a review copy of the first edition of my book from an online book seller and on September 9, 2010, it publicly broke the story of the DoD's efforts to suppress the book and the negotiations to purchase and destroy all available copies of the first edition of Operation Dark Heart (*http://www.nytimes.com /2010/09/10/us/10books.html*).

49. At the same time additional copies of the first edition that had been distributed for review started to appear for sale. One copy allegedly sold on E-bay for over $2,000.00. See "eBay Sellers Buck Defense Department & Sell Uncensored Version of Operation Dark Heart" at *http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/ebay-sellers-buck-defense-department-sell-uncensored-version-of-operation-dark-heart_b12647.*

50. On September 18, 2010, the *New York Times* published an article entitled "Secrets in Plain Sight in Censored Book's Reprint" (*http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/ 18/us/18book.html*), in which the following, none of which I have ever confirmed, was claimed to be a list of some of the information that was redacted by the defendants from the first edition of Operation Dark Heart. The redactions allegedly included (and, of course, a review of the unredacted book will easily confirm whether this to be true or not):

- Identification of the National Security Agency's nickname as "The Fort";
- The location of defendant CIA's training facility at Camp Peary, Virginia;
- The name and abbreviation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps;
- The fact that "SIGINT" means "signals intelligence";
- That Shaffer's cover name in Afghanistan was "Chris Stryker," and that the name was derived from John Wayne's character in the 1949 movie "The Sands of Iwo Jima"; and
- A description of a plan by NSA technicians to retrofit an ordinary-looking household electronic device and place it in an apartment near a suspected militant hideout in Pakistan.

51. On or about September 29, 2010, The Federation of American Scientists posted on its website at *http://www.fas.org/blog/secrecy/2010/09/behind_the_censor.html* comparison copies of pages from the unredacted first edition side-by-side to the second edition that contained redactions thereby permitting anyone to completely identify what was redacted allegedly as constituting "classified" information. A side-by-side comparison of the redacted vs. unredacted index of the book was posted on October 5, 2010, at *http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2010/09/dark-index.pdf*. I have also never commented on the accuracy of these pages.

52. On September 29, 2010, the *HuffingtonPost.com* posted an article at *http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/29/operation-dark-heart-comp_n_744123.html* entitled "'Operation Dark Heart': Comparing The Censored Version With The Real Thing", which stated that "Among the more unnecessary redactions: the name of 'Deliverance' star Ned Beatty – 'which is not properly classified in any known universe' -- but is blacked out on page 15 of the book. Overall, the national security classification exemplified in the new book 'does not exactly command respect,' writes [Steve] Aftergood [of the Federation of American Scientists]." Again, I have never confirmed the accuracy of this statement.

53. On October 4, 2010, the *Army Times* published an article entitled "Censored book masks sensitive operations", which is available at *http://www.armytimes.com/news /2010/10/army-book-100410w/*, and undertook a before and after analysis of the information redacted from the revised edition of Operation Dark Heart. I have never confirmed the accuracy of the article's analysis.

54. On August 3, 2012, I requested that DoD perform an updated review of the previous redactions in my book so that it could be translated into the Turkish language for subsequent publication. I was notified via letter dated September 11, 2012, that an updated review was

underway and that I would be notified, if classified information is identified, of an opportunity to discuss the revisions and any proposed substitute language, as well as be permitted to "present any relevant, publicly available, or open source materials showing that classified information has been officially released to the public or otherwise properly declassified."

55. By letter dated September 17, 2012, I was notified that a meeting between me and DoD officials was set for September 26, 2012, although this date was rescheduled.

56. On October 17, 2011, I met with several DoD and DIA officers to discuss the alleged classified portions of Operation Dark Heart. I was given a "temporary" clearance to allow me to review and discuss classified information. Only one member of the original review team from the August 2010 review was present. Prior to our meeting, the DIA security officer had already pre-approved – and now notified me of – the release of a significant portion of the redactions made during the August 2010 review.

57. During this working session we reviewed the book line by line. There were several instances in which the DIA security officer specifically asked me "do you know why Mr. Ridlon said this was classified?" My answer was invariably "no" and that I had tried at the time (Aug 2010) to argue the point. Ms Beth Fitzgibbons, the DoD officer who had been present for the August 2010 sessions said several times during the October 2010 meeting that she felt that most of the items being "cleared" in the October 2012 session were "never" classified and she did not understand why Mr. Ridlon had made the claim that they were classified in the first place. Ms Fitzgibbons stated directly during the October 2012 review session that she had "disagreed" with many of Mr. Ridlon's claims, in August 2010, regarding many items that Ridlon was saying were "classified". She went on to say she did not understand why Mr. Ridlon had forced them (the DoD team) to ignore the unclassified documents that I had provided in August 2010. Indeed,

it was made very clear to me during our October 17, 2012 session that the vast majority of the original redactions had nothing to do with security.

58. Per my agreement with DoD, I submitted various public source documents on December 10, 2012, to demonstrate that additional was unclassified. The submitted materials are attached as Exhibit 3 (zip file).

59. By letter dated December 19, 2012, DoD wrote that "[b]y providing a list of publications without identifying specific information in those publications, your submission is too general and does not allow the pertinent agencies to conduct a meaningful review of the submitted material. We therefore ask that you supplement the submission with pinpoint citations, including specific reference to the relevant page numbers. Additionally, we ask that you provide any materials showing that your Bronze Star Medal narrative has been officially released." Exhibit 4.

60. I responded to DoD on December 20, 2012, and reminded it that "we discussed at length the text in question that corresponded with publicly released information. The members of your team who participated in that meeting took detailed notes regarding these discussions and I identified for them the specific text in question and what the public source information was that I relied upon for my book." I further explained "I obviously did not retain any detailed notes from the meeting other than to note the open source reference or document that would be matched to the area or item in Operation DARK HEART that the Government continues to claim are "classified". It was my understanding that the material I provided would be matched to the specific areas of my book that remain in contention based on the discussions we had at the meeting." Exhibit 3.

61. On January 18, 2013, I received DoD's decision regarding the updated review of Operation Dark Heart. DoD claimed I had "accepted the classification status of 212 passages,

agreeing to replace 73 of them with our suggested substitute language and delete altogether the other 139." DoD further asserted that only "23 passages remained unresolved after the meeting" and that my submission of December 10, 2012, was intended to address this information but was unpersuasive. Exhibit 5. A spreadsheet accompanied the letter purporting to identify the decisions set forth above. Exhibit 6.

62. The DoD assertions regarding any purported agreements we reached concerning the number of redactions, any substituted language or what remained in contention is inaccurate. At no time did I agree to what is claimed, although there were certainly a large number of changes we did agree upon.

ANALYSIS OF THE DEFENDANTS' CLASSIFICATION DETERMINATIONS OF MY BOOK

63. For whatever relevance it is worth, it is my belief that DIA engaged in a deliberate effort in 2010 to render my book Operation Dark Heart unreadable through abuse of the classification system. This was part of a continuing retaliatory behavior that started in 2005 when I first made protected disclosures to the DoD Office of Inspector General and Congressional oversight committees concerning DIA and its leadership's failures to act on pre-9/11 intelligence regarding the al Qaeda hijackers.

64. I will detail, to the best of my ability, as many specific portions of text that has been redacted in my book as classified.

My Bronze Star Medal

65. The Bronze Star Medal ("BSM") citation and nomination narrative served as the primary document that was used as the basis for Operation Dark Heart. The BSM packet consisted of two

unclassified documents that were given to me by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joe Shoemaker, Joint Field Support Activity ("JFSC"). CW3 Shoemaker helped me prepare for deployment and also handled my return from [redacted] I received the BSM in Afghanistan while [redacted] , and CW3 Shoemaker helped coordinate and supervise the transfer of the award from [redacted] I provided him with the award when I returned from Afghanistan in December 2003.

66.Over the next four months the award was processed via official Army channels and returned to me on April 1, 2004. It was signed by the acting Secretary of Defense, John Brownlee, and along with the award citation and orders, [redacted], the narrative for the justification of the award was stated. [redacted] was redacted from the narrative. This was considered to be an unclassified document package – the citation and narrative – [redacted] . I was nominated by COL (now retired) Jose Olivero (COL Juan Negro in the book) in October 2003, for the award of the BSM for my work in support of his Leadership Targeting Cell, CJTF 180, and JTF-[redacted]. The original BSM award, approved and signed by then Brigadier General (BG) (now US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander) Lloyd Austin, III This was awarded in a ceremony at Bagram Air Base Afghanistan, by COL Olivero. Exhibit 7. COL Olivero has been contacted on this issue several times by the government over the past three years, and is willing to be contacted to verify any information or issues regarding the BSM award; further COL (ret) Olivero would further stipulate that it is his judgment that the BSM narrative was when he signed it in 2003, as it is today, an unclassified document. Upon return from my first of two tours to Afghanistan, in December 2001, I turned all [redacted] documents and materials in to the Joint Field Support Center (CW3 Shoemaker) who then processed the documents via the [redacted] within the DoD [redacted] system.

67. On or about 15 April 2004, the BSM packet, that included the BSM certificate and the BSM narrative signed by COL Olivero (page 5 and 6 of Exhibit 1) was presented to me by CW3 Shoemaker at the JFSC facility near the BWI airport in Maryland. In addition to the BSM documents the unclassified letter, 15 November 2003, Subject: Statement of Direct Support, shows that I was attached to Task Force (TF) , (this memo was originally given to me while in Afghanistan, in November 2003, by the TF- J1) changed from to was provided (Exhibit 8). From the point in time this packet of documents (the BSM in Exhibit 1 and the TF Support Memo in Exhibit 8)

DoD Letter, Request for Pre-Publication Review of Operation DARK HEART (18 Jan 2013)

68. I dispute the defendant (government's) stipulation to the Court that states "little is in dispute". Three key issues remain in dispute and a number of specific items of redactions in the book as well.

69. First is their draconian first (Aug 2010) redactions of unclassified information and violations of my First amendment rights and the use of the unclassified core document I used and relied upon as the basis of my book, as outlined supra.

70. Second is the use of my Bronze Star Medal (BSM) award as the primary reference and foundation for Operation DARK HEART – an award which the government now contends, nearly ten years after the fact, is "classified". In addition, the unclassified letter, 15 November 2003, Subject: Statement of Direct Support, shows that I was attached to Task Force (TF) I

have been prohibited from using this fact, and force to change TF- to TF-1099 against my will.

71. Third is the refusal of the defendant to allow me to use DoD Cleared Testimony that I delivered to Congress in February of 2006 that is public information for the full unredaction of Chapter 14, ABLE DANGER, of DARK HEART. All of the information I put in Chapter 14 is contained in my written and public (open) testimony that was cleared by DoD back in February 2006. The defendant denied my use of this testimony - here is what the government (defendant) said in their 18 Jan 2012 letter (Exhibit 5, para 7):

> In any event, none of the source materials show a relevant official release of any kind. The Internet links do not lead to congressional testimony by Government officials, and the information at issue does not appear in any of the personnel documents. Moreover, while you did submit your prepared testimony for review prior to testifying in the ABLE DANGER hearings, the testimony was never cleared for public release and neither was the BSM narrative. The Government's determination must therefore stand, and the 23 passages must be deleted pri to publication.

Once DoD clears testimony for a public (open) hearing, there is no presumption that I cannot use it because "it was not cleared for public release" as stated in paragraph 7 of Exhibit 5; once testimony is cleared by DoD for my use on Capitol Hill, there is no law or regulation that permits DoD (the defendant) to make any claim of privilege or restriction. The written testimony was cleared by DoD in February 2006 – here is the testimony as cleared:

http://www.abledangerblog.com/2006/02/lt-col-shaffers-written-testimony.html and my questions and answers given during questioning by members of congress is available at:

http://www.abledangerblog.com/hearing.pdf

Therefore there is no "national security" reason that can be given to justify the removal of details from my book, in Chapter 14, that are openly and freely available to the public – and that were words that I authored or said during OPEN PUBLIC HEARINGS in 2006. Therefore, this action and position by the defendant is, in my judgment, a clear infringement of not only my right to use this information that was cleared by DoD in 2006, it is a deliberate attempt to keep specific embarrassing (but not classified) facts out of the public's purview. There is no issue or item here, within my testimony or what I originally put in Chapter 14 of DARK HEART that could be expected to cause damage to national security.

72. In the government's 18 Jan 2013 memo (Exhibit 5, paragraph 9) they state that:

> **To avoid public disclosure of classified information, we remind you that all paper and electronic copies of classified documents that might be in your possession, such as the unredacted manuscript, the Bronze Star Medal narrative, and your deployment orders to Afghanistan, must be destroyed.**

As stipulated in paragraphs 65 and 66 above, the Bronze Star Medal narrative and any related documents were processed by proper DIA authorities and provided to me as "unclassified" at the time (2004) by officials of the Joint Field Support Center (JFSC) for my personal use – these documents were reviewed and processed by security and [redacted] professionals and provided to me after review – and in the case of the Bronze Star narrative, my [redacted] was removed before the narrative was provided back to me and this fact is observable when one reads the document. Once provided to me as an unclassified document by DIA authorities I used them as the starting point of my book. In my judgment, the defendant now is trying to 'change the rules' to benefit them and their efforts to continue their retaliation against me and prevent me from telling the complete story of my experiences and successes in Afghanistan. Therefore,

based on both the previous review of the BSM narrative by DoD officials at several points – when the BSM narrative was given to me in 2004, when the BSM narrative was given to Army personnel for purposes of clearing the book in 2009 and when the BSM narrative was again provided to DoD personnel for the second review of DARK HEART in 2010 it was never considered "classified". Further – the document has been well proliferated to members of the media since it was given to me and there has been no damage to national security since given to me in 2004 to be unclassified by the DIA [redacted] rsonnel who are familiar with and handle classified information on a daily basis.

73. The Bronze Star Medal narrative (Exhibit 1, page 6) has been provided freely, by me, to both U.S. and international media by me and my representatives as part of the "bona fides" of my book and my work in the intelligence community. Copies of the BSM narrative have been provided to multiple members of Congress and the Senate, and such notable U.S. reporters to include Scott Shane of the New York Post, Catherine Herridge of Fox News as well as international news outlets such as dozens of producers at the BBC, Sky News, Al Jazeera, Al Hurra and French and Germany documentary producers who have done specials on 9/11 to include my work in ABLE DANGER. Therefore, there is no possible way to 'destroy all copies' of the BSM narrative as they have been proliferated at a global level based on the fact that they were provided to me as unclassified documents.

74. The defendant's recent clearance of whole sections of the book as stated in their 18 January 2013 letter (Exhibit 5 and 6) does not fix their heavy handed and adversarial efforts to suppress my first amendment rights as they did during the August 2010 second review of my book and, as I have stipulated above, their continued and expanded effort to prevent me from using the core document, and information contained within, regarding my BSM (Exhibit 1). The

BSM documents were provided by authorized government officers to me for my personal use – in my judgment my personal use must include my right to publish a memoir and exercise my first amendment rights. In this instance, the defendant has worked, and continues to work, in bad faith to suppress information, not for purposes of security, but for purposes of retaliation. I ask that the Court find in my favor against the defendant on all issues.

75. The BSM citation in question was presented, by me, to the Army review team (LTC Raaf and COL Stickland) as part of the first review in 2009, as well as provided to the DIA/DoD classification reviewers (Mr. Ridlon and Ms. Fitzgibbons) in August 2010 – and while it was reviewed in each instance, no government personnel ever made the claim that the document was "classified". Only now (January 2013), nine years after the actual events (late 2003), and two subsequent reviews of the information (2009 and 2010), is the government (defendant) now making a claim that it contains "classified" information.

76. The defendant/government's current augment regarding the BSM has nothing to do with security, and everything to do with refusing to admit liability regarding the violation of my first amendment rights, in that the majority of the remaining redactions in DARK HEART would be removed based on the content of the unclassified BSM narrative and would underscore how baseless their efforts were in 2010 – in other words, they are only now trying to stipulate that the BSM narrative is classified because the majority of the remaining "redactions" the defendant wishes to retain – two thirds of them – would be reversed and "permitted" based on the information in the BSM narrative. Until now there has been no security concern expressed to me about the content of the BSM narrative, and only now, when it is a core issue that the defendant cannot ignore, is the defendant now attempting to stipulate that it is 'classified'. Please note – there is nothing in the BSM narrative that has to do with any current or ongoing operations, and

the basic facts contained in the BSM have to do with specific verification of my actions in combat that justified the award of the BSM ; nor does the BSM narrative contain any information that would materially affect future plans or intentions that is not already been released or is available to the public regarding DoD or intelligence methodology. The BSM narrative is a factually relevant historic document that was given to me for my use based on my performance in combat.

77. Specifically, I would be allowed to have, back in my book (and would prove they should never have been "redacted" in the first place) the following points major points and issues based on their inclusion in the unclassified Bronze Star Narrative:

a) [redacted]

b) **The inclusion of TF-** . I was attached to TF- (or JTF-) as the Chief of the HUMINT Support Element (HSE) – this is both noted in the first chapter of my book – DARK HEART – as well as in Exhibit 8, the letter from JTF - noting that I was attached to them for combat operations. I was forced, against my will, by Mr. Ridlon to replace "JTF- "in the book to "JTF-1099". TF- no longer exists – and its nickname was changed in March 2003 to – and the nickname of this element has changed more than a dozen times since 2003. There is no possibility of damage to national security what so ever by the open discussion of an element that conducted operations in Afghanistan in 2003.

c). **Missions.** Most of the operations I personally conducted/lead were in support of There is no possible reason for this information to be "classified" as it simply notes that I supported a key and critical intelligence gathering effort, and did so while in command and while protecting the personnel under my charge. The primary goal here of the government is not security, but to discredit my combat performance and insure these facts of favorable work are not included in my book.

d) **Amalgamation of the importance of the overall content of information in the BSM narrative**. The defendant did not seek to "redact" only those portions of the BSM narrative that they might consider "classified'. Instead the defendant's recent 17 Jan 2012 letter that claims that there is "classified" information in the BSM narrative and intends to prevent my use of the *whole* narrative. Even in DARK HEART, the defendant "redacted" portions of the book, and did not work to prevent my use of the elements that even they felt were "unclassified"; in this case they intend a major overstep of their authority as the government is now claiming the WHOLE

BSM narrative is now "classified". They stipulate in paragraph 9 of Exhibit 5 that copies of the BSM narrative, that was provided as unclassified, must be destroyed – here is the paragraph:

> **To avoid public disclosure of classified information, we remind you that all paper and electronic copies of classified documents that might be in your possession, such as the unredacted manuscript, the Bronze Star Medal narrative, and your deployment orders to Afghanistan, must be destroyed.**

This directive from the defendant is meant to destroy evidence of my credible record of service to our nation and will do nothing to protect or ensure national security, nor does it comply or comport with any current DoD legal authority to attempt to destroy or re-write the details of one's career or decorated service to our nation. This letter is further evidence of the defendant's interest in working to discredit and remove evidence of my successful work in defending this nation – they did not identify within, or attempt to offer a "redacted" copy that would have a "surgical" use of redactions to allow me to have a version of the BSM narrative – simply put they want the amalgamation of information that is favorable to me, to be stricken from the record. The basic acronyms contained in the BSM narrative, and the actions detailed in the BSM narrative are now all part of the history of our nation's efforts in Afghanistan, therefore, there is no possible "security" reason the defendant can use to justify the removal of this document from my possession and from the public record.

78. Further, as to the deployment orders to Afghanistan that the defendant has directed in their 17 Jan 2013 letter, in paragraph 9 (Exhibit 5); the deployment orders in question were provided to me, unclassified, as a record of my deployment and they are legal documents that I must have to show for a valid record of service for my DD-214 – record of service – which will impact on my ability to have Veterans Services and other benefits. I must have records of my deployment to the combat zone to be able to maintain an accurate accounting to the Veterans

Administration and the Department of Defense for both the maintenance of my credible years of service, and deployment into a combat zone.

x. What the defendant is likely trying to direct me to do in their 17 January 2012 letter is to destroy the [redacted] deployment orders [redacted] – which I have retained as they were then, and are now, unclassified documents. A copy of the [redacted] deployment order is located in Exhibit 3. I still have [redacted] of [redacted] and [redacted] used for a limited time to protect the individual for the period of their deployment or deployments. Many individuals who I served with in Afghanistan, who first met me while in [redacted]. Many individuals who I have maintained personal contact with over the past ten years knew me [redacted] Therefore, there is no security justification, or any potential harm that come to our national defenses, by [redacted] since many individuals still think of me [redacted] These [redacted] eployment orders were complimented by [redacted] unclassified orders, issued by [redacted] experts at the JFSC and given to me, also, as legal and unclassified documents. Therefore, the defendant's directive that I "*destroy my deployment orders to Afghanistan*" is imprecise at best imprecise – as I am speculating here but I think they meant [redacted] orders. Further, their directive is not only is unjustified, it is an illegal order as they have no authority to direct me, as a retiree, to give up official documents that are records of my service or that are unclassified. If I comply with this directive of the defendant, and destroy all copies of my deployment orders [redacted] it will likely hamper my ability to justify and seek Veterans benefits should I need them in the future. This directive from the defendant has nothing to do with preserving national security – as there are dozens of intelligence officers

like me who have been deployed to the combat zone and maintain unclassified records of their deployment to the combat zone for purposes of record keeping and future Veterans Affairs benefits – these other intelligence officers are given similar unclassified deployment orders and normally retain [redacted] copies. The defendant's directive that I destroy these orders is unfair and beyond the scope of any "national security" authority of DoD to direct me, a retiree from the Army Reserve, to take actions that might adversely affect my or my family's future wellbeing regarding benefits and proving the fact that I did deploy to Afghanistan or the region of conflict. It is public knowledge that I deployed to Afghanistan – I have testified under oath to Congress and made repeated sworn statements confirming that I deployed to Afghanistan. This fact being well known to the public is not a "security issue" therefore there can be no "national security" rational for the directive to "destroy your deployment orders to Afghanistan".

78. The Defendant's own disclosure of classified information as part of this process is imbedded in their guidance to me. As an example, at item 70 of Exhibit 6 the defendants have said that using the replacement term "CIA Station" to be permissible in place of the redacted information. This identifies a major problem in both the manner in which they conducted the second (Aug 2010) review of DARK HEART and what they are now trying to do to mitigate their mistakes made in the 2010 review. Exhibit 6 is an unclassified document that was e-mailed to me via unclassified channels. Yet, the defendant is aware that there are unredacted copies of the book currently in public circulation. Once the information is changed in the next "cleared" edition of DARK HEART, the fact that the government has identified a specific location as a "**CIA station**" would confirm something –and expose a security breach – that was not cause by the original release of DARK HEART in either its first (unredacted) or second (redacted) versions. In other words, the release of this new "unredacted" information would confirm to the

world a specific location was, indeed, a CIA facility. I provided a verbal security warning to the DIA and DoD personnel in the 17 October 2012 review session that they were NOT looking at the full scope and issues of what SHOULD be kept secret and warned them that their willingness to simply "replace" original text without understanding context could actually expose classified information to the public. In this case, a named location was not identified as a CIA station – but once the new book comes out, based on these changes being "binding" as stipulated in paragraph 8 of Exhibit 5, the defendant would possibly be conducting a security violation. Here is the expert of that paragraph:

> Accordingly, ***Operation Dark Heart*** **is CLEARED AS AMENDED for public release. This determination is based on the text of the September 2010 edition of the book. The enclosed spreadsheet—which lists the 433 redacted passages, identified by the page and line numbers where they appear in that edition—provides the agreed upon amendments for each classified passage (i.e., deletion or the specific substitute language) and the unredacted text for each passage that has been declassified. The publication also must include the following disclaimer: "The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense of the U.S. Government." All amendments are binding.**

Therefore, as they have made this "binding" they have put me into a position of possibly violating national security by their own requirement that these replacements, even when they may violate or expose secret information in errors they have made, must be used.

79. Exhibit 3 contains copies of the documents I provided the defendant based on discussions in the October 2012 meeting at which they asked me to provide supporting documentation. These documents – as well as the BSM narrative, were provided to me for my personal use. These were not "classified" – the system of classification has been put in place to prevent the release of information that could reasonably be thought to cause grave or severe damage to national security. Arguably, not a single unclassified document the government itself provided me that at the moment it was provided was unclassified could possibly be seen as to potentially cause any level of "damage" to national security. These are all historic and foundational

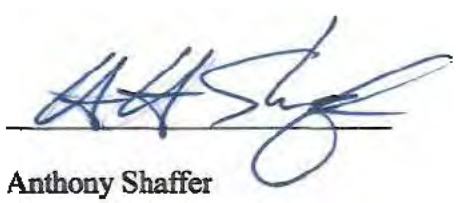
references that, in my case, make for great fact-based story telling as an author, and as an expert provides 'bona fides' to confirm my experience and background. How can there be any expectation that an unclassified document provided to me by the government that the government had "cleared" could later be "restricted" simply because they did not "clear it for public release"? This issue regarding Operation DARK HEART and the documents that were provided to me as unclassified are about preventing embarrassment rather than preserving security. I believe I have the irrevocable right of use, under the First Amendment, of any unclassified information the government provides me, and to use this unclassified information in any manner I see fit – especially when it regards my personal performance and service to our nation. Anything less would begin to erode the free expressions and speech and begin a slippery slope of government control of ANY information that it finds to be distasteful or embarrassing after the fact of its release; in short, this would put us on the course of George Orwell's book "1984" and the concept of "thought crime" and moves the defendant (and our nation) one step closer to having a "*Ministry of Truth*" that they would use to work to shape *not* the truth, but the version of past events they find politically acceptable for a new "*government approved*" version of the truth.

80. Were I to have access to my original (unredacted) book for preparation of this affidavit I could provide more details and specifically address each sentence, but at this point I cannot. Instead I offer the categories and issues above as the core issues that display how specific unclassified source documents were used for the preparation and writing of DARK HEART that now the defendant wishes to make "classified" after the fact to disadvantage me in my lawsuit.

81. In the end, because I have worked to abide by my agreements with the government regarding their right to review my books, I have become disadvantaged by my cooperation with the defendant. Other military authors, who have signed the same security agreements as I have, publish books without allowing a DoD review – such as the Mark Bissonnette book – "No Easy Day" a book that became a sensational best seller. No Easy Day was not reviewed by DoD and it is a book that Ms Beth Fitzgibbon (of the DoD team who has been working on reviewing my book) admitted to me, on the 17th of October of 2012, she and the DoD office of review did read the book and confirmed to me that the book contains "real classified information". Yet, Mr. Bissonnette received no negative consequences for his refusal to submit his book for pre-publication review. Therefore, there is a negative incentive and chilling effect created by the defendant's lack of clear standards and lack of enforcement of the basic requirements to enforce the review process fairly. Further, by the defendant attempting to suppress information that is unclassified, but may be interpreted as embarrassing or inconvenient to the government, they limit and suppress information the public's right to know regarding the use of their taxpayer dollars and the work of their intelligence community to protect them.

I do solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury and upon personal knowledge that the contents of the foregoing paper are true to the best of my knowledge.

Date: March 22, 2013



Anthony Shaffer

Exhibit 1

Page 1

Memorandum for the Record 28 July 2010

Subject: **Operation DARK HEART: Spycraft and Special Ops on the Frontlines of Afghanistan – and the Path to Victory**

1. The subject book is due to be released, nationally, by **Thomas Dunne Books/St Martins Press** on **31 August 2010**. It is now listed in Amazon and available for pre-release order.

2. It is a direct, detailed, eyewitness account of the 2003 **"tipping point"** of the war in Afghanistan by a Bronze Star recipient, and nationally recognized expert on Afghanistan, LtCol Tony Shaffer, (USAR).

3. While there is some new information about the war, it is one of many in this genre, and provides an unemotional examination of the events and decision points where mistakes were made in strategy.

4. His book concludes with a detailed, well researched, **new alternate strategy** to the current, failing, Counterinsurgency Strategy that could result in victory in Afghanistan.

5. His protected disclosures made to the 9/11 Commission Staff on pre-9/11 intelligence failures (Operation ABLE DANGER), while in Afghanistan in **October 2003**, are also contained in the book.

6. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) retaliated against him for his disclosures to the 9/11 Commission DIA by using three false allegations to suspend and revoke his clearance in **June 2004**.

7. Army Reserve discounted the DIA allegations and promoted LtCol Shaffer to his current rank in **February 2005**.

8. Based on a second protected disclosure on pre-9/11 Intel failures in front of the House Armed Services Committee (**February 2006**), in open and closed (Top Secret) sessions, DIA fired LtCol Shaffer from his civilian (GS-14) position in **November 2006** and has continued its retaliation by preventing the Army from re-adjudicating his security clearance for the past four years.

9. His book is highly critical of DIA and its leadership detailing several instances of their wrongdoing.

10. LtCol Shaffer remains in the Army Reserve, in good standing, and works in his civilian capacity as the Director of External Communications for the Center for Advanced Defense Studies (CADS), a defense focused think-tank which he represents and appears on national media several times per week.

11. The book, largely based on the events that won him the Bronze Star (**Encl A**) while on active duty with the Army, was purchased by Thomas Dunne Books in **February 2009**, working title: The Dark Side of the Force (name changed by publisher in March 2010, to Operation DARK HEART).

Exhibit 1
Page 2

12. The purchase of LtCol Shaffer's book by Dunne Books was publicly announced by his agent, Deborah Grosvenor, on **6 April 2010** in Publishers Marketplace.

13. In **March 2009**, LtCol Shaffer notified his Army Reserve chain of command on his intent to write the detailed book on his experience in Afghanistan and requested guidance on how to comply with the security and ethical regulations that he was required to comply. His Army Reserve leadership, after consulting with U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) provided him a clearance process that conformed to security standards outlined in AR 350-1 Operations Security, and would ensure no classified information would be contained or published in the book.

14. In **April 2009** two highly qualified Army Reserve officers, with the appropriate background and security clearances, conducted the detailed review of the book – LtCol Paul Raaf (USAR), was the reviewing lawyer, who serves in his civilian life as a US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) lawyer, and COL David Strickland (USAR), who is in his civilian life a civilian member of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) working in a classified program.

15. LtCol Shaffer, using a paid research assistant, Ms Jacqui Salmon, to structure the book and conduct detailed research, submitted the draft manuscript for review starting in **June 2009** to his Army Reserve chain of command. Ms Salmon had to find unclassified sources to validate and enhance the content of the book.

16. During the **October 2009** timeframe, LtCol Shaffer made multiple national public announcements of his book during multiple on-air appearances on Fox News, MSNBC, and the Jerry Doyle Radio program. In these nationally broadcast interviews he informed the public that his book on Afghanistan was nearing completion and was undergoing an Army security review and would be published sometime in mid 2010.

17. **26 December 2009** LTC Raaf issued his Legal and Ethical guidance on the book (**Encl B**). The guidance was accepted and incorporated into the manuscript.

18. **4 January 2010** COL Strickland, after directing and ensuring mandatory changes were made to remove all information that was classified or critical defense information, issued the overall Legal, Security/Classification Review Approval for the book to be published (**Encl C**).

19. **23 February 2010** LtCol Shaffer forwarded both documents to his attorney, Mark Zaid, Esq, and to the publisher, Thomas Dunne Books. With the Army Reserve's final approval, the publisher established a publishing date for the book of **31 August 2010**.

20. **February-March 2010** LtCol Shaffer announced during multiple national interviews on Fox News, MSNBC, BBC, Sky News, Alhurra TV, al Jazerra English Language and multiple radio venues, the fact that his book was now cleared by the Army for release and the release date was **31 August 2010**.

Exhibit 1
Page 3

21. On 18 June 2010, LtCol Shaffer received a phone call from his commanding general, the commander of the 94th Division, Brigadier General (BG) Karen LeDoux. In this conversation she informed LtCol Shaffer that DIA was demanding access to the already cleared manuscript – and that she had decided to not share it with DIA based on their retaliations against him, and continued refusal to allow for his clearance to be re-adjudicated. She had concerns also that DIA had waited until the very last minute to insinuate itself into the process and that the Army Reserve would resist providing DIA a copy of the manuscript as she felt that the book was reviewed and cleared to have no classified information in it by qualified officers.

22. On 10 July 2010, LtCol Shaffer was requested by his Army Reserve leadership to provide them a copy of the transcript to be forwarded to Army JAG for them to provide to DIA. LtCol Shaffer complied and provided the copy.

23. On 11 July 2010 BG Karen Ledoux spoke to LtCol Shaffer and notified him that Army had decided to provide a copy of the transcript to DIA but that the Army Reserve was standing by its approval for the book to be published. She added in the conversation with LtCol Shaffer that there was "tremendous pressure" being brought on the Army, by DIA, to withdraw its approval for the publishing of the book and she told LtCol Shaffer to be aware there is a "huge target on your back".

24. On 22 July 2010 DIA public affairs called LtCol Shaffer and informed him that they had read the manuscript and claimed that DIA had "found classified information" in his manuscript. LtCol Shaffer informed the DIA officer that he had complied with all clearance requirements of the Army and had received written permission to publish and that DIA should take up any differences of opinion regarding content with the Army.

25. On 27 July 2010, LtGen Pat Hughes, former Director of DIA, who had previously read and provided an endorsement of the manuscript, contacted LtCol Shaffer via e-mail and notified him that DIA planned to take undefined adverse action against him due to their concerns about content in the book and planned to withdraw his endorsement of the manuscript unless DIA was permitted to conduct a formal classification review before the book's release. LtCol Shaffer shared with LtGen Hughes the approval documents and a written explanation of the Army Reserve's review process that removed all classified information – and the fact that he had no ability to legally stop the book's publishing.

26. Conclusion: LtCol Shaffer sought and received guidance on how to proceed to clear and publish his book with the proper approvals and oversight. The book contains information that may be controversial, embarrassing, but is not classified or would in any way jeopardize national security. Every major issue addressed in the book is already in the public domain, and Army Reserve used a professional and well defined clearance process to review and ensure no classified information was contained in the final manuscript. It is clear that the DIA actions are part of their continued retaliation against LtCol Shaffer for his disclosures to the 9/11 Commission regarding DIA's pre-9/11 intelligence failures and that DIA's only concern is to prevent embarrassing information from being

Exhibit L
Page 4

published regarding DIA personnel. The book was announced publicly months ago on national media. It is clear by DIA's choice to insinuate itself into the process at this late hour, with only days left before the book's release, shows intent to interfere with the publishing process and attempt to forestall the disclosure of embarrassing, but unclassified, information.

Exhibit 1
Page 5

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING: THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 24 AUGUST 1962 HAS AWARDED

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO

MAJOR ANTHONY A. SHAFFER
UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR meritorious service from 23 July 2003 to 1 December 2003 as Operations Officer, Human Intelligence Support Detachment, Combined/Joint Task Force 180, while deployed to Afghanistan, in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Major Shaffer's leadership, selfless service, and commitment to mission accomplishment under the most extreme of circumstances greatly contributed to the success of Operation Enduring Freedom. Major Shaffer's performance of duty in a combat zone reflects great credit upon himself, the Combined/Joint Intelligence Task Force 180 and the United States Central Command.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 16TH DAY OF APRIL 2004

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

DA FORM 4650-1, JAN 2000, PREVIOUS EDITION IS OBSOLETE

[redacted]
Exhibit 1
Page 6

NARRATIVE
BRONZE STAR MEDAL
MAJOR , UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE

Major served with great distinction in the CJTF-180 HUMINT support detachment from 23 Jul 03 to 1 Dec 03 while deployed to Afghanistan during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. As the Operations Officer MAJ made an immediate and lasting positive impact on DHS operations where his experience, insight, and operational approach were ideal for the environment. MAJ began improving DHS' contribution to CJTF-180 and JTF- operations immediately. The result was a growing appreciation by the J2's and J3's for HUMINT capabilities. CJTF-180 and TF now actively seek HUMINT input for their operational planning and COA determination. MAJ had a major impact on OPERATION MOUNTAIN VIPER, during which his actions contributed to CJTF-180 killing or capturing more than 100 Taliban fighters. He prepared, coordinated and successfully implemented a complex and HUMINT collection plan that explicitly laid out DHS collection in support of CJTF-180 decisive operations. As Mountain Viper unfolded, MAJ worked long hours with the J2/3 planners to ensure DHS had a clear picture of the changing battle space and to interject HUMINT into the intelligence template. On several occasions, MAJ rapidly refocused DHS assets as combat and operational situations developed. In one instance, MAJ and DHS are credited with locating several hundred Taliban terrorist insurgents before they could re-engage US forces. JSTARS proved the veracity of the information. Two companies of US and Coalition forces were brought to bear against this threat.

MAJ served as the DHS representative to CJTF-180's Leadership Targeting Cell (LTC), the group focused on interdicting high value targets (HVTs) within Afghanistan, including Usama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar. He quickly integrated into the LTC and enhanced the already good relationship between the two organizations. MAJ worked several joint special projects with the LTC, to include an all-source collection operation targeted against numerous HVT locations inside Pakistan. MAJ planned the HUMINT collection mission, which served as the initial phase of the operation. He also suggested the use of controlled assets for delivery and emplacement of in the target area. MAJ volunteered to deploy to a forward combat area to participate in a joint FBI-DHS debrief of a suspected terrorist facilitator. Working with the FBI, MAJ quickly determined the detainee was a US person and not involved with terrorist activity. He gathered biographic and related data and assessed the suitability of the person for future HUMINT operations. His information indicates the US person may be useful for controlled operations against and the lead was passed to HQ DHS.

MAJ participated in more than 20 SIGINT reconnaissance missions in and around the Kabul area of operations, serving as the mission commander on the vast majority of these missions. As such, he was responsible for ensuring the safety of NSA and DHS personnel and successful mission completion. As a result of this effort NSA has a complete and up-to-date communications infrastructure map of Kabul and the surrounding area.

MAJ is an outstanding intelligence collection officer whose skill, leadership, tireless efforts, and unfailing dedication were instrumental to the success of the CJTF-180's mission and the continued strategic success of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. His performance reflects great credit upon him, CJTF-180, the United States Army, and the Department of Defense.

Jose R. Olivero
Colonel, United States Army
Director, Leadership Targeting Cell

~~Exhibit~~ Exhibit 1
Page 7

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 94TH DIVISION (FORCE SUSTAINMENT)
GENERAL LEONARD T. GEROW U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER
2501 MAHONE AVENUE
FORT LEE, VIRGINIA 23801-6060

REPLY TO

ARRC-TVA-LECG

26 December 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR LTC Anthony Shaffer, 2501 Mahone Avenue, Fort Lee, VA 23801

SUBJECT: The Darker Side of the Force

1. References:

a. 5 C.F.R. Part § 2635, Standards for Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.

b. DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation.

2. Purpose: The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide a legal review of the proposed novel titled *The Darker Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan*. It is the opinion of the Undersigned that, subject to the below comments, it is would be legally permissible for LTC Shaffer to accept compensation for writing *The Darker Side of the Force*.

3. The facts as I understand them are as follows:

a. That then Major Anthony Shaffer was mobilized in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as an Army Reserve Officer from December 2001 to June 2004.

b. That Mr. Shaffer began writing *The Darker Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan* in February 2007.

c. That in February 2009, Mr. Shaffer entered into an agreement with a publishing company to publish for compensation *The Darker Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan*.

4. Discussion:

a. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.807(a)(2)(i)(E)*(1)* and *(2)* provide the general rule that a regular employee is prohibited from accepting compensation for writing a book about matters on which he is presently assigned or had been assigned during the previous one-year period, or about ongoing or announced agency policies, programs and operations. Under part one, Mr. Shaffer can receive compensation since the subject matters he writes about occurred well beyond the past year. Mr.

Exhibit 1

Page 8

ARRC-TVA-LECG
SUBJECT: The Darker Side of the Force

Shaffer can also receive compensation under part two since his writing is primarily based on his own background and experience and is not specifically focused on Department of the Army policies, programs, or operations that were not available to the public.

b. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.807(b) provides that an employee may use their military grade, title, or position in a writing when the information is given as a biographical detail and the information is given no more prominence than other significant biographical details. Furthermore, the writing must contain an appropriate disclaimer. According, LTC Shaffer may use his military grade to identify himself in his writing so long as his grade is accompanied by a reasonably prominent disclaimer stating that the views expressed in his writing do not necessarily represent the views of the Army or the United States.

c. The Undersigned has addressed numerous security issues with LTC Shaffer, and based on those discussion, it is the Undersigned's understanding that LTC Shaffer used only unclassified information and open sources when he wrote *The Darker Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan*. Furthermore, the Undersigned has advised LTC Shaffer that AR 360-1, para 6-6(c) provides that it is his responsibility to ensure security is not compromised.

d. Lastly, the Undersigned advised LTC Shaffer that AR 530-1, para 2-1(g) provides that all Army Reserve Soldiers will consult with their immediate supervisor and their OPSEC Officer for an OPSEC review prior to publishing or posting information in a public forum.

5. Conclusion: It is the opinion of the Undersigned that LTC Shaffer can receive compensation from publishing *The Darker Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan*. Furthermore, so long as LTC Shaffer includes the necessary disclaimer, he can use his military grade as a biographical detail.

6. POC for this review is Mr. Paul Raaf at 432-5204 or electronically at paul.a.raaf@soc.mil.

/Original signed/
PAUL A. RAAF
LTC, JA, USAR
Staff Judge Advocate

[redacted]

Exhibit 1

Page 9

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 94TH DIVISION (FORCE SUSTAINMENT)
GENERAL LEONARD T. GEROW U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER
2501 MAHONE AVENUE
FORT LEE, VIRGINIA 23801-6000

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

ARRC-TVA-LEAC

4 January 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Legal and Operational Security Review of "The Dark Side of the Force" Manuscript

1. References:

a. AR 350-1, Operations Security (OPSEC), 19 April 2007.

b. 5 C.F.R. Part § 2635, Standards for Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.

c. DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation.

d. Memorandum, Subject: The Dark Side of the Force, LTC Paul Raaf, 26 Dec 2009.

2. In accordance with references stated in paragraph 1 of this memorandum, I have read the DRAFT manuscript, "The Dark Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan" to conduct an initial OPSEC/Security Scan and review for ethical standards.

3. I have contacted LTC Paul Raaf, Staff Judge Advocate 94th Division, in regard to his memo dated 26 Dec 2009. I concur with his finding as well. In accordance with Paragraph 2-1, AR 350-1, I found no obvious security or legal issues in the DRAFT manuscript provide for review.

4. Based on this review, I interpose no objection on legal or operational security grounds for the publication of your book, "The Dark Side of the Force: A Spy's Chronicle of the Tipping Point in Afghanistan." In my judgment, I find it sufficient for publication. Accept the comments in reference d. supra as guidance in your next step to publication of this manuscript.

5. POC this action is the undersigned, (571) 289-5305 / (804) 836-6569, *john.david.stricklandiii@us.army.mil*.

JOHN D. STRICKLAND III
Colonel, GS
Assistant Division Commander

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

AUG 06 2010

To: Lieutenant General Richard P. Zahner, USA
Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2)
Headquarters, Department of the Army
1000 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-1000

Subject: Harm to National Security from Unauthorized Disclosure of Classified Information by U.S. Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Anthony Shaffer in His Book "Operation Dark Heart"

This correspondence addresses potential harm to national security presented by the unauthorized disclosure of classified national security information contained within the manuscript that United States Army Reserve LTC Anthony Shaffer apparently intends to have published on August 31, 2010, entitled "Operation Dark Heart." The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) learned of LTC Shaffer's efforts on May 27, 2010, and engaged in efforts to obtain a copy of the manuscript, which was finally obtained by the Army's General Counsel (GC) on July 14, 2010, and provided to DIA the same day. This manuscript was obtained from [redacted] to which LTC Shaffer is assigned.

DIA's preliminary classification review of this manuscript has identified significant classified information, the release of which I have determined could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to national security. I have also been informed that United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) have determined that the manuscript contains classified information concerning their activities. In the case of NSA, this includes information classified at the TOP SECRET level.

I am informed that the [redacted] provided favorable operational security and ethics reviews of LTC Shaffer's manuscript. However, no information security review was conducted by the Army as required by DoD policy. In light of the DIA determination, and of the agencies mentioned above, that the manuscript provided to DIA contains classified information, I request the Army immediately take all necessary steps to revoke the favorable operational security and ethics review provided by the 94th Training Div Sto, and LTC Shaffer be ordered to formally submit the manuscript for an information security review, in accordance with the procedures set forth in DoD Directive 5230.09, Clearance of DoD Information for Public Release, and that he be further ordered to take all necessary action to direct his publisher to withhold publication of the book pending this review.

#2

4. My point of contact for this matter is Mr. James Schmidli, Deputy General Counsel for Operations, 202-231-6895.

RONALD L. BURGESS, JR.
Lieutenant General, USA
Director

cc:
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs
General Counsel, Department of the Army

Subject: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARK HEART
From: "Tony Shaffer" <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>
Date: Mon, Dec 10, 2012 10:22 am
To: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>
Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>
Attach: Agencies Unite Article Mar 2004.pdf

Darrell/Beth -

In a series of e-mails to you both I will provide the unclassified background we agreed I'd provide at the last meeting at DIA.

These documents are all unclassified - and were used as source documents regarding the content of Operation DARK HEART.

First - here is the link to the unclassified testimony, regarding ABLE DANGER, cleared by your office in 2006:

http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2006_hr/021506shaffer.pdf

Next, there were questions regarding the use of "STRATUS IVY" - which was already provided to the public in an unclassified supplement cleared, again, by your office and provided to Capitol Hill:

http://www.abledangerblog.com/2006/03/stratus-ivy-holdings-of-able-danger.html

You all will have access to the entire supplemental and can review as necessary.

Here is my verbal testimony before a subcommittee of the House Government Reform Committee, from 13 Feb 2006:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJvABLaMUT8

My next e-mail will contain the civilian appraisals and related job information in the form of attachments that will complete my submission of information that we agreed I'd provide.

Attached to this e-mail is one of the key articles used for the basis of DARK HEART from 15 March 2004: Agencies Unite to Find Bin Laden, from the Washington Times by Rowan Scarborough (attached).

Note: The following books were used as well as reference/source information for DARK HEART (i.e. examined for same "type" or "similar" information that we considered "open source" and usable for DARK

HEART:

Horse Soldiers, by Doug Stanton
Ghost War, by Steven Coll
JAWBREAKER, by Gary Berntsen
Kill Bin Laden, by Dalton Fury
All books regarding NSA by author James Bamford
The Men, The Mission and Me, by Peter Blaber
Never Surrender, by LtGen Jerry Boykin

Regarding the last book - I spoke this past week, face to face, with General Boykin about his book - Never Surrender. He confirmed to me that there was no adverse action taken against him even though he admits that specific items and information in his book were considered "classified" by DoD.

We did consider any reference made in my cleared testimony or these books to be "open source" and therefore permitted to be included in Operation DARK HEART.

V/R

Anthony A. Shaffer
Director for External Communications
Center for Advanced Defense Studies
Suite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DC

Office: (202) 289-3332

Cell: (571) 426-1013

tony.shaffer@c4ads.org

www.c4ads.org

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: RE: Book Review: No Easy Day and Additional Documents for DARK HEART
From: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>
Date: Fri, December 07, 2012 4:43 pm
To: Tony Shaffer <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>
Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>

LTC Shaffer,

My office did not review "No Easy Day" so we would be unable to evaluate your comments against the book. I forwarded your Book Review to OUSD(I) for them to review and return results to me. As soon as they respond, we will advise you.

BTW, I will be on leave next week so if you must contact us, please get in touch with Ms. Fitzgibbons.

Darrell Walker

-----Original Message-----
From: Tony Shaffer [mailto:tony.shaffer@c4ads.org]
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2012 10:54 AM
To: Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD
Cc: Kasen, Brandon M.; Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD
Subject: RE: Book Review: No Easy Day and Additional Documents for DARK HEART
Importance: High

Darrell - hope you are well!

Two items:

First - I have not heard back from you all on the attached Book Review that I did for No Easy Day -- so am I to take that you and your office have no problems with anything I say in the review?

Second - I will provide, via PDF, the additional unclassified references that are due to you tomorrow (7 December) that were discussed in the last review at DIA. They are all unclassified - and will include references to my testimony on ABLE DANGER, as well as additional unclassified appraisals. Let me know if this will be acceptable - otherwise we can arrange a drop off time and location sometime next week.

V/R

Anthony A. Shaffer
Director for External Communications
Center for Advanced Defense Studies
Suite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DC

Office: (202) 289-3332

Cell: (571) 426-1013

tony.shaffer@c4ads.org

www.c4ads.org

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Book Review: No Easy Day
From: "Tony Shaffer" <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>
Date: Wed, October 31, 2012 10:10 am
To: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>
Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>

Darrell -

I am sorry for the delay in following up with your staff - I've been pulled off on working the issues regarding Benghazi (as you may have seen in the media).

Attached is my book review of "No Easy Day" - Mark Zaid recommended I submit it to you prior to my submitting it to National Military Intelligence

Association (NIMA) for them to publish in one of their publications. Please let me know if there is another address I should send this short (just over two pages) review to for security review/clearance.

I will also submit, this week, via the normal channel the manuscript of "The Last Line" - the novel that Bill Keith and I wrote over the past year. You all should expect that within the week.

I will try to get the promised follow-up material regarding Operation DARK HEART to your office within the next week as well.

V/R

Anthony A. Shaffer
Director for External Communications
Center for Advanced Defense Studies
Suite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DC

Office: (202) 289-3332

Cell: (571) 426-1013

tony.shaffer@c4ads.org

www.c4ads.org

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: DARK HEART Review Meeting
From: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>
Date: Tue, October 16, 2012 10:54 am
To: <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>
Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, Beth

CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>

LTC Shaffer,

Please be at the DIAC Main/Visitor Entrance, outside security, at 0900. Mr. Kasen and Ms. Fitzgibbons will meet you there and accompany you to the review room.
Darrell Walker

Subject: RE: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARK HEART
From: "Tony Shaffer" <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>
Date: Mon, Dec 10, 2012 11:43 am
To: "Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>, "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>
Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>

All sent.
Some were very big attachments - my AF info was 9 MB.
If anything gets bounced, please let me know - and I'll put all the attachments on a thumb drive and drop it off to the Pentagon later this week - I am on the road to St. Louis for the next three days - so I could drop it, if need be, Thursday or Friday.
Thanks!
V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DC
Office: (202) 289-3332
Cell: (571) 426-1013
tony.shaffer@c4ads.org
www.c4ads.org_____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer.
-------- Original Message --------Subject: RE: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARKHEARTFrom: "Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>Date: Mon, December 10, 2012 10:46 amTo: Tony Shaffer <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>, "Walker, Darrell CIVWHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>Mr. Shaffer,Received part 1 !Regards,Beth A. FitzgibbonsDepartment of DefenseOffice of Security ReviewCongressional Review BranchRoom 2A534(703) 614-4924Beth.fitzgibbons@whs.milhttp://www.dtic.mil/whs/esd/osr/index.htm-----Original Message-----From: Tony Shaffer [mailto:tony.shaffer@c4ads.org] Sent: Monday,

December 10, 2012 10:22 AMTo: Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD; Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESDCc: Kasen, Brandon M.Subject: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARK HEARTDarrell/Beth - In a series of e-mails to you both I will provide the unclassified background we agreed I'd provide at the last meeting at DIA.These documents are all unclassified - and were used as source documents regarding the content of Operation DARK HEART.First - here is the link to the unclassified testimony, regarding ABLE DANGER, cleared by your office in 2006:http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2006_hr/021506shaffer.pdf Next, there were questions regarding the use of "STRATUS IVY" - which was already provided to the public in an unclassified supplement cleared, again, by your office and provided to Capitol Hill:http://www.abledangerblog.com/2006/03/stratus-ivy-holdings-of-able-danger.html You all will have access to the entire supplemental and can review as necessary.Here is my verbal testimony before a subcommittee of the House Government Reform Committee, from 13 Feb 2006:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJvABLaMUT8 My next e-mail will contain the civilian appraisals and related job information in the form of attachments that will complete my submission of information that we agreed I'd provide.Attached to this e-mail is one of the key articles used for the basis of DARK HEART from 15 March 2004: Agencies Unite to Find Bin Laden, from the Washington Times by Rowan Scarborough (attached).Note: The following books were used as well as reference/source information for DARK HEART (i.e. examined for same "type" or "similar" information that we considered "open source" and usable for DARK HEART:Horse Soldiers, by Doug StantonGhost War, by Steven CollJAWBREAKER, by Gary BerntsenKill Bin Laden, by Dalton FuryAll books regarding NSA by author James Bamford The Men, The Mission and Me, by Peter Blaber Never Surrender, by LtGen Jerry BoykinRegarding the last book - I spoke this past week, face to face, with General Boykin about his book - Never Surrender. He confirmed to me that there was no adverse action taken against him even though he admits that specific items and information in his book were considered "classified" by DoD. We did consider any reference made in my cleared testimony or these books to be "open source" and therefore permitted to be included in Operation DARK HEART.V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DCOffice: (202) 289-3332Cell: (571) 426-1013tony.shaffer@c4ads.orgwww.c4ads.org_____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer.-------- Original Message --------Subject: RE: Book Review: No Easy Day and Additional Documents for DARKHEARTFrom: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Date: Fri, December 07, 2012 4:43 pmTo: Tony Shaffer <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, BethCIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>LTC Shaffer,My office did not review "No Easy Day" so we would be unable to evaluate your comments against the book. I forwarded your Book Review to OUSD(I) for them to review and return results to me. As soon as they respond, we will advise you.BTW, I will be on leave next week so if you must contact us,

please get in touch with Ms. Fitzgibbons.Darrell Walker-----Original Message-----From: Tony Shaffer [mailto:tony.shaffer@c4ads.org]Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2012 10:54 AMTo: Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESDCc: Kasen, Brandon M.; Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESDSubject: RE: Book Review: No Easy Day and Additional Documents for DARK HEARTImportance: HighDarrell - hope you are well!Two items:First - I have not heard back from you all on the attached Book Review that I did for No Easy Day -- so am I to take that you and your office have no problems with anything I say in the review?Second - I will provide, via PDF, the additional unclassified references that are due to you tomorrow (7 December) that were discussed in the last review at DIA. They are all unclassified - and will include references to my testimony on ABLE DANGER, as well as additional unclassified appraisals. Let me know if this will be acceptable - otherwise we can arrange a drop off time and location sometime next week.V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DCOffice: (202) 289-3332Cell: (571) 426-
1013tony.shaffer@c4ads.orgwww.c4ads.org_____
_____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer.-------- Original Message --------Subject: Book Review: No Easy DayFrom: "Tony Shaffer" <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>Date: Wed, October 31, 2012 10:10 amTo: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons,Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>Darrell -I am sorry for the delay in following up with your staff - I've been pulled off on working the issues regarding Benghazi (as you may have seen in the media).Attached is my book review of "No Easy Day" - Mark Zaid recommended I submit it to you prior to my submitting it to National Military Intelligence Association (NIMA) for them to publish in one of their publications. Please let me know if there is another address I should send this short (just over two pages) review to for security review/clearance.I will also submit, this week, via the normal channel the manuscript of "The Last Line" - the novel that Bill Keith and I wrote over the past year. You all should expect that within the week.I will try to get the promised follow-up material regarding Operation DARK HEART to your office within the next week as well.V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DCOffice: (202) 289-3332Cell: (571) 426-
1013tony.shaffer@c4ads.orgwww.c4ads.org_____
_____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete

the original message and any copy of it from your computer.-------- Original Message ---------Subject: DARK HEART Review MeetingFrom: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Date: Tue, October 16, 2012 10:54 amTo: <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, BethCIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>LTC Shaffer,Please be at the DIAC Main/Visitor Entrance, outside security, at 0900. Mr. Kasen and Ms. Fitzgibbons will meet you there and accompany you to the review room.Darrell Walker

Subject: **Re: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARK HEART**
From: **tony.shaffer@c4ads.org**
Date: **Mon, Dec 10, 2012 2:34 pm**
To: **"Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>, "Darrell CIV WHS/ESD Walker" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>**
Cc: **"Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>**

Oh - an here is the interview from last week on FNC with LTG Jerry Boykin after my conversation with him, about his book, in the FNC DC green room: http://video.foxnews.com/v/2016562323001/what-challenges-are-ahead-if-us-takes-action-against-syria/?playlist_id=903226511001V/RTony ShafferSent via BlackBerry from T-Mobile-----Original Message-----From: "Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>Date: Mon, 10 Dec 2012 10:46:27 To: Tony Shaffer<tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>; Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD<darrell.walker@whs.mil>Cc: Kasen, Brandon M.<brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>Subject: RE: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARK HEARTMr. Shaffer,Received part 1 !Regards,Beth A. FitzgibbonsDepartment of DefenseOffice of Security ReviewCongressional Review BranchRoom 2A534(703) 614-4924Beth.fitzgibbons@whs.milhttp://www.dtic.mil/whs/esd/osr/index.htm-----Original Message-----From: Tony Shaffer [mailto:tony.shaffer@c4ads.org] Sent: Monday, December 10, 2012 10:22 AMTo: Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD; Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESDCc: Kasen, Brandon M.Subject: Part 1 Additional Documents and Sources of Info for DARK HEARTDarrell/Beth - In a series of e-mails to you both I will provide the unclassified background we agreed I'd provide at the last meeting at DIA.These documents are all unclassified - and were used as source documents regarding the content of Operation DARK HEART.First - here is the link to the unclassified testimony, regarding ABLE DANGER, cleared by your office in 2006:http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2006_hr/021506shaffer.pdf Next, there were questions regarding the use of "STRATUS IVY" - which was already provided to the public in an unclassified supplement cleared, again, by your office and provided to Capitol Hill:http://www.abledangerblog.com/2006/03/stratus-ivy-holdings-of-able-danger.html You all will have access to the entire supplemental and can review as necessary.Here is my verbal testimony before a subcommittee of the House Government Reform Committee, from 13 Feb 2006:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJvABLaMUT8 My next e-mail will contain the civilian appraisals and related job information in the form of attachments that will complete my submission of information that we agreed I'd provide.Attached to this e-mail is one of the key articles used for the basis of DARK HEART from 15 March 2004: Agencies Unite to Find Bin Laden, from the Washington Times by Rowan Scarborough (attached).Note: The following books were used as well as reference/source information for DARK HEART (i.e. examined for same "type" or "similar" information that we considered "open source" and usable for DARK HEART:Horse Soldiers, by Doug StantonGhost War, by Steven ColllJAWBREAKER, by Gary BemtsenKill Bin Laden, by Dalton FuryAll books regarding NSA by author James Bamford The Men, The Mission and Me, by Peter Blaber Never Surrender, by LtGen Jerry BoykinRegarding the last book - I spoke this past week, face to face, with General Boykin about his book - Never Surrender. He confirmed to me that there was no adverse action taken against him even though he admits that specific items and information in his book were considered "classified" by DoD. We did consider any reference made in my cleared testimony or these books to be "open source" and therefore permitted to be included in Operation DARK HEART.V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DCOffice: (202) 289-3332Cell: (571) 426-1013tony.shaffer@c4ads.orgwww.c4ads.org _____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer.------- Original Message -------Subject: RE: Book

Review: No Easy Day and Additional Documents for DARKHEARTFrom: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Date: Fri, December 07, 2012 4:43 pmTo: Tony Shaffer <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, BethCIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>LTC Shaffer,My office did not review "No Easy Day" so we would be unable to evaluate your comments against the book. I forwarded your Book Review to OUSD(I) for them to review and return results to me. As soon as they respond, we will advise you.BTW, I will be on leave next week so if you must contact us, please get in touch with Ms. Fitzgibbons.Darrell Walker-----Original Message-----From: Tony Shaffer [mailto:tony.shaffer@c4ads.org]Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2012 10:54 AMTo: Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESDCc: Kasen, Brandon M.; Fitzgibbons, Beth CIV WHS-ESDSubject: RE: Book Review: No Easy Day and Additional Documents for DARK HEARTImportance: HighDarrell - hope you are well!Two items:First - I have not heard back from you all on the attached Book Review that I did for No Easy Day -- so am I to take that you and your office have no problems with anything I say in the review?Second - I will provide, via PDF, the additional unclassified references that are due to you tomorrow (7 December) that were discussed in the last review at DIA. They are all unclassified - and will include references to my testimony on ABLE DANGER, as well as additional unclassified appraisals. Let me know if this will be acceptable - otherwise we can arrange a drop off time and location sometime next week.V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DCOffice: (202) 289-3332Cell: (571) 426-
1013tony.shaffer@c4ads.orgwww.c4ads.org_____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer.-------- Original Message --------Subject: Book Review: No Easy DayFrom: "Tony Shaffer" <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>Date: Wed, October 31, 2012 10:10 amTo: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons,Beth CIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>Darrell -I am sorry for the delay in following up with your staff - I've been pulled off on working the issues regarding Benghazi (as you may have seen in the media).Attached is my book review of "No Easy Day" - Mark Zaid recommended I submit it to you prior to my submitting it to National Military Intelligence Association (NIMA) for them to publish in one of their publications. Please let me know if there is another address I should send this short (just over two pages) review to for security review/clearance.I will also submit, this week, via the normal channel the manuscript of "The Last Line" - the novel that Bill Keith and I wrote over the past year. You all should expect that within the week.I will try to get the promised follow-up material regarding Operation DARK HEART to your office within the next week as well.V/RAnthony A. ShafferDirector for External CommunicationsCenter for Advanced Defense StudiesSuite 450, 1100 H Street (NW), Washington, DCOffice: (202) 289-3332Cell: (571) 426-
1013tony.shaffer@c4ads.orgwww.c4ads.org_____IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICEThis e-mail and any files or documents transmitted with it is from Anthony Shaffer, Center for Advanced Defense Studies. This e-mail is confidential and may also contain information which is legally privileged or otherwise protected by work product immunity or other legal rules. If you are not the intended recipient or a person responsible for delivering it thereto, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, dissemination or distribution of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the person whose name appears above and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer.-------- Original Message --------Subject: DARK HEART Review MeetingFrom: "Walker, Darrell CIV WHS-ESD" <darrell.walker@whs.mil>Date: Tue, October 16, 2012 10:54 amTo: <tony.shaffer@c4ads.org>Cc: "Kasen, Brandon M." <brandon.kasen@dodiis.mil>, "Fitzgibbons, BethCIV WHS-ESD" <beth.fitzgibbons@whs.mil>LTC Shaffer,Please be at the DIAC Main/Visitor Entrance, outside security, at 0900. Mr. Kasen and Ms. Fitzgibbons will meet you there and accompany you to the review room.Darrell Walker

Washington Times
March 15, 2004
Pg. 1

Agencies Unite To Find Bin Laden

Task Force 121 tightens 'loop'

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

Task Force 121, the secret manhunting unit formed for the war on terrorism, is a blend of warriors, aviators, CIA officers and deep-cover intelligence collectors who nabbed Saddam Hussein and now hope to grab Osama bin Laden.

"This is tightening the sensor-to-shooter loop," said a senior defense official. "You have your own intelligence right with the guys who do the shooting and grabbing. All the information under one roof."

The Pentagon refuses to discuss the group's makeup. Its members in Afghanistan and Iraq avoid reporters. New information was obtained through interviews with knowledgeable defense officials.

Elements of 121 have moved from Iraq to Afghanistan for a U.S. spring offensive, named "Mountain Storm," against Taliban and al Qaeda fighters now reorganizing in Pakistan. If the flushing action pinpoints bin Laden, who is believed to be moving in Pakistan's lawless tribal areas, Task Force 121 would likely infiltrate the country and try to kill or capture the terrorist who orchestrated the September 11 attacks.

Task Force 121's composition includes four major elements:

*Grey Fox, a deep-cover organization based at Fort Belvoir in Northern Virginia. Members specialize in spying and intercepting communications. They carry hardware that can tap into electronic-eavesdropping satellites and that can splice fiber-optic cables.

Grey Fox maintains a fleet of aircraft at Baltimore-Washington International Airport. On occasion, members enter countries on "non-official cover" using assumed identities.

Created principally to combat international drug smugglers, Grey Fox has turned out to be the perfect unit for Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's demand for "actionable intelligence" to kill or capture al Qaeda operatives and other terrorists.

The Army once maintained Grey Fox, but after September 11 the Pentagon shifted direct control to Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) at Fort Bragg, N.C. Ultimately, Grey Fox reports to U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Fla.

Although officials still refer to the intelligence unit as Grey Fox, a defense source said its code name was changed during the war on terrorism. The source asked that the new designation not be reported. Grey Fox has operated under a number of different code words. In the early 1990s, for example, it was called "Capacity Gear."

*JSOC: This is the headquarters for an elite 800-member group of Army Delta Force and Navy SEALs who specialize in counterterrorism. Left mostly on the shelf pre-September 11, JSOC is today the most active it has ever been.

JSOC was the bulk of Task Force 11 in Afghanistan that hunted bin Laden, Mullah Mohammed Omar and other high-value targets. It then reinvented itself as Task Force 121 in Iraq. Sources say it's likely the task force will take on a new designating number now that it is back in Afghanistan.

JSOC and Grey Fox make up the "black" world of special operations. The "white" units — which operate more publicly — include Green Berets and civil-affairs officers.

*CIA Special Activities Division: These are CIA paramilitaries who can aid Task Force 121 by setting up networks of sources in Iraq and Afghanistan, and provide intelligence directly to the warriors.

*The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment: This fleet of Black Hawk, Chinook and AH-6 "Little Bird" helicopters ferries the Delta Force and SEALs where they need to go, quickly, at night, at low altitudes. Saddam was loaded onto a "Little Bird" Dec. 13 and taken to Tikrit after Task Force 121 and a 4th Infantry Division unit found him hiding in a hole on a farm.

Task Force 121 would not be the first joint operation between the CIA and armed forces. In the Afghanistan war, the Pentagon transferred scores of special operations troops to the CIA's Special Activities Division to infiltrate the country and set up links to anti-Taliban forces.

Asked generally about the CIA-military relationship, Mr. Rumsfeld told Reuters uews service, "We've taken them for cooperative arrangements. They've taken some of our people sometimes. They may be doing something where it requires some competence that we have distinctively, so we've worked very cooperatively with them."

Task Force 121 is augmented, as needed, by conventional forces, as it was on Dec. 13, the day Saddam was captured.

Elements of Task Force 121 are moving to the Afghanistan theater because of a planned spring offensive, and because the military and CIA are picking up better intelligence on bin Laden.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in recent months has put thousands of troops into the ungoverned border area with Afghanistan to weed out al Qaeda. More boots on the ground means more contacts with locals, who are providing information.

Meanwhile, the CIA and the U.S.-led coalition task force based at Bagram, north of Kabul, has learned lessons from the hunt for Saddam.

That search showed the value of "link-analysis" — listing the names of every person who has contacts with the target, or contacts with friends or family of the target, and then finding them for questioning. The result is that the United States believes it knows areas where bin Laden has visited and to which he may return, said a defense source.

U.S. military officers in Afghanistan have expressed growing confidence they will catch bin Laden by year's end. But Mr. Rumsfeld yesterday sought to lower expectations.

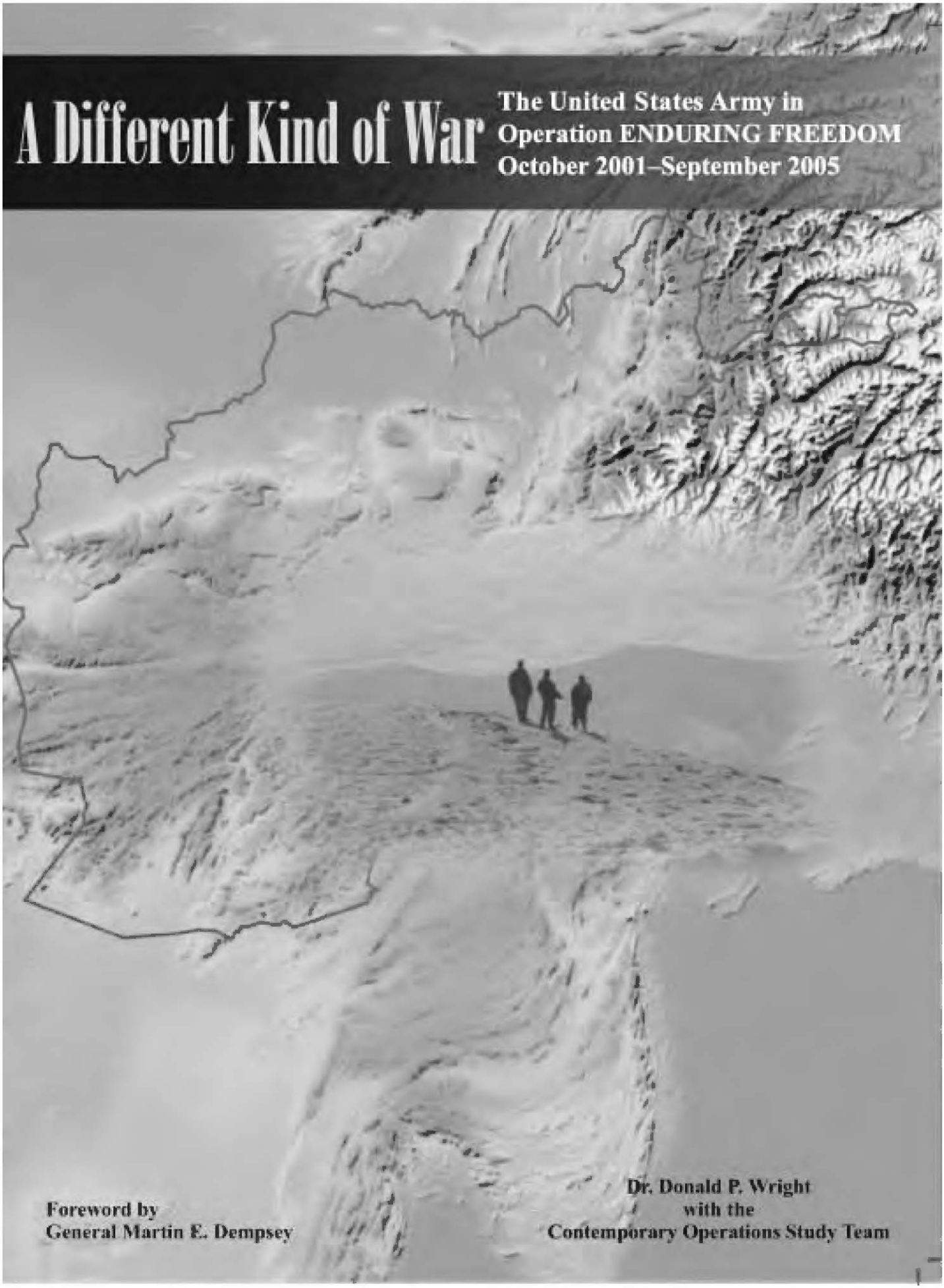
"I don't know if he'll be caught this year. If he's alive, I'm sure he'll be caught eventually. And when, I don't know," the defense secretary said yesterday on CNN's "Late Edition."

"What's going on is a normal activity that takes place. And from time to time, there are sweeps made," Mr. Rumsfeld told CNN. "And I think to hype it or suggest that there's something major going on is probably a misunderstanding. These things tend to ebb and flow."

Mr. Rumsfeld said of bin Laden: "You know, he may be alive and he may not be. We don't know if he's alive or dead. He may be in Afghanistan. He may be in Pakistan. He may be someplace else."

A Different Kind of War

The United States Army in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM October 2001–September 2005



Foreword by
General Martin E. Dempsey

Dr. Donald P. Wright
with the
Contemporary Operations Study Team

The United States Army in
Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)
October 2001–September 2005

A Different Kind of War

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Foreword

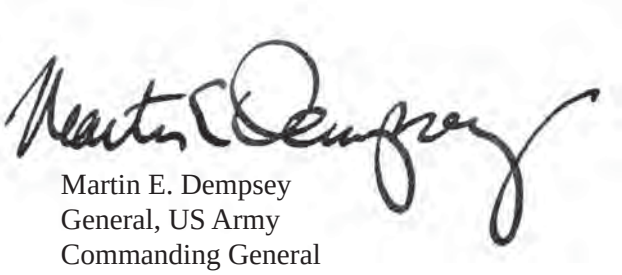
Since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has captured the experiences of Soldiers as they conducted difficult operations across the world in a variety of important ways. Historical accounts of the US Army's campaigns play a critical role in this process by offering insights from the past to assist Soldiers with their current—and future—operational challenges.

This volume, *A Different Kind of War,* is the first comprehensive study of the US Army's experience in Afghanistan during the first 4 years of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). The work focuses on Army operations in the larger Joint and Coalition campaign that evolved between October 2001 and September 2005. Beginning with a description of the successful offensive against the Taliban regime, launched in late 2001 in response to the attacks of 9/11, the book then shifts to the less well-understood campaign that began in 2002 to establish a peaceful and politically stable Afghanistan.

A Different Kind of War is balanced and honest. Its publication is particularly timely as both the Army and the Department of Defense are beginning to reassess and restructure the campaign in Afghanistan. This study will shed a great deal of light on the overall course of OEF. As the title suggests, the campaign in Afghanistan was unique. While its initial phases featured the use of small teams of Special Operations Forces and air power, the campaign after 2002 evolved into a broader effort in which conventional forces were responsible for the creation of security, reconstruction, and programs to train the Afghan Army. Overall, the story in these pages is one of a relatively small number of Soldiers conducting multifaceted operations on difficult terrain and within a complex cultural environment.

A Different Kind of War was written in recognition of all the men and women who served in Afghanistan to bring stability and prosperity to that country while protecting the security of the United States. Their experiences chronicled in this book will help inform and educate all those who serve the Nation today and in the future.

Victory Starts Here!



Martin E. Dempsey
General, US Army
Commanding General
US Army Training and Doctrine Command

Acknowledgments

Constructing a study of this length and complexity was a huge task. We have benefited greatly from the large number of Soldiers and civilians who took the time to talk with us and share documents, insights, and encouragement. This study would have been impossible to complete without their contributions, and for this we are deeply indebted. Because of the contemporary nature of this history, we have relied heavily on oral interviews—approximately 140 were completed for this study alone. We would like to thank each of those who found the time to share his or her experiences with us. Additional thanks goes to those interviewees who helped us make contact with other veterans of Afghanistan and to those who shared unit records with us. Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Ronald E. Corkran was particularly helpful in sitting for several interviews and in providing materials related to Operation ANACONDA.

Since the Contemporary Operations Study Team was established at the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) in 2005, we have enjoyed the support of General (Retired) William S. Wallace, General David H. Petraeus, and Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV. As commanders of the Combined Arms Center, these senior officers made the creation of ambitious historical studies like *A Different Kind of War* possible. All three have served as sponsors of this project because of their strong belief in the obligation to examine and seek insights from the Army's experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. General George W. Casey Jr., the Chief of Staff of the Army, also reinforced the Army's interest in the contemporary history of these campaigns and served as a proponent of the team's efforts.

The authors are indebted to the other members of the Contemporary Operations Study Team in this endeavor. Specifically, we would like to thank Ms. Catherine Shadid Small for her management of the team as well as Ms. Angela McClain and Ms. Rebecca Bednarz for their roles as editors. Mr. Jerry England and Mr. Ray Barker were instrumental in organizing the voluminous amount of primary documentary material collected by the team into an accessible collection. Ms. Kim Sanborn provided the critical transcription support that transformed our interviews into usable primary sources. Ms. Robin Kern, our graphics specialist, created the maps and charts that make this study more vibrant and comprehensible. Major Jeffrey Holmes and Major J.D. Steven assisted the team by providing critical research support.

We would like to extend special thanks to the historians and archivists who worked closely with us in our research. At the US Army Center of Military History, Mr. Frank Shirer, Dr. Chris Koontz, and Ms. Dena Everett were especially helpful in providing key documents to us from their growing collection. Lieutenant Colonel Scotty Dawson (USMC), the command historian at US Central Command, welcomed our team and offered assistance in the collection of unit records. Mr. Doug Cubbison, the 10th Mountain Division command historian, provided our team with a wealth of documentation about that division's multiple deployments to Afghanistan. Ms. Donna Tabor, the US Army XVIII Airborne Corps historian, assisted by scheduling interviews and making available critical materials about the operations of the 82d Airborne Division in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Dr. John Lonnquest, the historian for the US Army Corps of Engineers, was instrumental in providing documents and helping us understand the Army's large-scale reconstruction effort in Afghanistan.

Closer to home, Mr. Les Grau of the Foreign Military Studies Office at Fort Leavenworth offered key insights into the Soviet experience in Afghanistan and early US operations in 2001

and 2002. The work of Mr. John McCool, Mr. Laurence Lessard, and Ms. Colette Kiszka of the Operational Leadership Experience, CSI, expanded our understanding of operations in Afghanistan.

A number of individuals reviewed early drafts of this study and we are in debt to all of them for their comments. Lieutenant General (Retired) David W. Barno and Lieutenant General (Retired) Karl W. Eikenberry made time to carefully read our work and offer important recommendations. Dr. Richard Stewart, the Chief Historian of the Army, Dr. Alexander Cochran, Historical Advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Army, and Dr. Britt McCarley, the command historian for the US Army Training and Doctrine Command, provided helpful suggestions. Dr. Kenneth Finlayson in the US Army Special Operations Command history office gave us useful comments concerning the critical role of Army Special Forces in Afghanistan.

Finally, the entire team would like to thank Colonel Timothy R. Reese and Dr. William G. Robertson, the senior leaders of CSI, for their enduring support and belief in the importance of contemporary history to today's Army. Ms. Elizabeth Weigand, an editor in CSI, also merits special acknowledgment for her transformation of a rough manuscript into a real book.

As our team gathered documents, conducted interviews, and began to write this account, we remained cognizant of the fact that many Americans, both military and civilian, made great sacrifices in their service in Afghanistan. The story in these pages belongs to them. As authors, we have tried diligently to tell their story accurately and with candor. Still, in writing this history, we have undoubtedly made mistakes of fact and interpretation. All responsibility for those errors lies on our shoulders.

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Introduction

As the sun rose on the morning of 11 September 2001, the United States (US) was at peace. American Soldiers across the country and in a number of nations across the globe woke up that day planning to conduct routine operations and training. A relatively small number of US Army units were deployed in the Balkans and the Sinai desert on peacekeeping missions. But, for most Soldiers, the day promised to be much like any other.

For the Army, as well as the entire American nation, the peaceful nature of that day was shattered when just after 0900 a United Airlines jet filled with passengers plowed into the side of the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Thirty minutes later, an American Airlines jet rammed into the South Tower. While the twin towers burned, a third airliner slammed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and a fourth plane, possibly headed toward the US Capitol, dove straight into a field in Pennsylvania. By noon on that day, almost 3,000 people, most of whom were Americans, were dead.

Within hours of the attack, George W. Bush, the President of the United States, identified the radical Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda as the likely perpetrator of the attacks and began preparing the US military for retaliation actions. As the sun set on 11 September 2001, many Soldiers realized that their country was now preparing for war and that they would likely be called on to act against their country's enemies.

Many of the world's governments and international organizations immediately expressed outrage and called for solidarity with the United States. The United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union all began deliberations on how to respond. President Bush identified the attacks as an act of war against the United States rather than using the previous practice of classifying terrorist acts as crimes. The response would thus be a military campaign rather than legal proceedings against individuals. The US Government began diplomatic negotiations and military planning to create a Coalition to support the retaliations against the terrorist network and the nations that hosted it.

In less than a month, the United States had forged a Coalition and begun attacking al-Qaeda and its supporters in a variety of ways. The most visible and dramatic means was the military campaign that began in early October 2001 against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and its al-Qaeda allies in that country. That campaign—largely improvised and based on the innovative use of Special Operations Forces (SOF) and air power—became known as Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). Like the unconventional attack that provoked it, this campaign did not resemble past armed conflicts, a fact that led President Bush to describe it as "a different kind of war."* This study takes its title from the President's suggestion that OEF—and the broader war on terrorism—would be conducted differently from other American military campaigns.

A Different Kind of War is the third volume in the series of contemporary historical accounts by the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) of the US Army's operations since 9/11. The first two volumes, *On Point* and *On Point II*, offered preliminary histories of the US Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) during initial combat operations against the Saddam regime and the

*George W. Bush, "Radio Address from the President to the Nation," 29 September 2001. http://www. whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010929.html (accessed 8 October 2008).

campaign that resulted once that regime was toppled in April 2003. *A Different Kind of War* is CSI's first study of OEF.

These preliminary studies are a result of an initiative by senior US Army commanders who hoped that historical analysis could help the Army understand its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in a more complete way. In 2005 General Kevin Byrnes, the commander of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and Lieutenant General William Wallace, the commander of US Army Combined Arms Center (CAC), directed CSI to produce contemporary historical accounts of these campaigns. To create these studies, CSI created the Contemporary Operations Study Team (COST), composed of researchers, writers, editors, and transcribers, who would conduct interviews with participants in these campaigns, collect primary documents from Army units, and transform those materials into coherent historical accounts.

The difficulties posed by the task of writing this type of contemporary history were and remain manifold. Perhaps the greatest is that the operations that are the focus of CSI's contemporary accounts are ongoing. This not only prevents the historians from writing from the vantage point of knowing how the conflict ended, it also creates difficulties with establishing a methodological basis for research. For example, the dearth of primary sources from Taliban and other insurgent forces means that this study does not include accounts of the campaign from the adversary's perspective. Also daunting is that many if not most of the US Army documents associated with OEF in the period covered by this study remain classified and are unavailable for direct use. To be sure, a number of documents are unclassified and they were used to the maximum extent in this book. However, the problems related to the classification of military records have led the historians involved in this project to rely to a significant degree on oral interviews. While memories never allow for the perfect re-creation of events, the hundreds of interviews conducted by CSI with participants in OEF have established a solid foundation on which the authors could construct their account of the US Army in Afghanistan.

Another obstacle to the writing of contemporary histories of the Army's current campaigns is the general lack of scholarly secondary sources. The historical literature about the campaign in Afghanistan in particular is not well developed. Perhaps the best work on the first 6 months of the campaign is CSI's study of US Army Special Forces (SF) operations in Afghanistan titled *Weapon of Choice*. There are also several good secondary works on Operation ANACONDA, which took place in early 2002, and a number of good first-person accounts from military personnel involved in the early phases of OEF. Nevertheless, the scholarly literature, other than specialized articles in professional military journals, generally does not cover military operations in Afghanistan after 2002.

A Different Kind of War offers the first preliminary comprehensive historical account of OEF, tracing the development of the Afghanistan campaign from its inception in the fall of 2001 through the Afghan parliamentary elections of September 2005. To do so, the study takes a chronological approach to the story of the Army in Afghanistan in this period. The first three chapters provide the background to the campaign that began in October 2001. Chapter 1 describes the Afghan context by briefly discussing the geography, history, and culture of the country with an emphasis on the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s. Chapter 2 explains the national strategy promulgated by President Bush in response to the 9/11 attacks and the rapid formulation of US Central Command's joint and interagency campaign plan to carry out actions against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The chapter includes a discussion of the political and diplomatic complexities that the United States had to master to build a Coalition that would

support operations inside Afghanistan as well as the engagement of regional powers such as Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and other central Asian republics needed to support the Coalition campaign. Chapter 3 examines the opening phase of OEF, covering the broad effort of staging and moving units and equipment to the central Asian theater as well as the preliminary air campaign.

The next three chapters examine the initial ground operations focused on the overthrow of the Taliban and the elimination of al-Qaeda. Chapter 4 discusses operations in the northern region of Afghanistan in late 2001 where SOF teams married up with anti-Taliban Afghan forces and quickly ended Taliban rule over the area. Chapter 5 examines Coalition ground operations around the capital of Kabul as well as in the southern and eastern regions of the country that were the traditional homeland of the Pashtun ethnic group and the Taliban movement. This chapter follows the ground campaign in the south and east from the airborne assault near Kandahar in October 2001 and the arrival of Hamid Karzai through the ultimately unsuccessful battle at Tora Bora in December 2001. Chapter 6 looks closely at Operation ANACONDA, the final large-scale combat action that in March 2002 essentially destroyed the remnants of Taliban and al-Qaeda organized military formations, thus achieving the Coalition's critical goals of ridding Afghanistan of Taliban rule and the presence of Osama bin Laden's terrorist organization.

The four chapters that follow focus on the evolution of the campaign in Afghanistan from mid-2002 through the parliamentary elections of 2005. Chapter 7 begins with the termination of ANACONDA and the establishment of Combined Joint Task Force-180 (CJTF-180), the command that led the transition to the next phase of the campaign designed to stabilize Afghanistan, strengthen the new government and its security forces, and support humanitarian and reconstruction operations. Chapter 8 follows the development of the CJTF-180 campaign from mid-2002 through the middle of 2003 by looking at security and reconstruction operations as well as the effort to establish the Afghan National Army. Chapter 9 examines the creation of a new Coalition headquarters called Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan (CFC-A) in late 2003, that headquarters' transformation of the Coalition effort in Afghanistan into a counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign, and the course of that new campaign through the middle of 2004. Chapter 10 concludes the narrative portion of the study by focusing on the period between May 2004 and September 2005 when the Coalition reinforced the difficult COIN campaign to set conditions for two critical elections.

The study closes with a discussion of the key implications generated by the first 4 years of OEF. Although each military campaign is unique, there are key insights offered by the Coalition's experience in Afghanistan during this period that can inform military officers and civilian officials who in the future might face the daunting task of planning similar operations in comparable conditions. What will emerge throughout the study is the overriding evolutionary nature of the campaign in Afghanistan. If that campaign at its outset appeared to be a different type of conflict with its focus on the use of air power, SOF, and indigenous forces to overthrow the Taliban government and the presence of al-Qaeda, those aspects that arguably made it unique continued to change after the toppling of the Taliban. This transformation is most starkly seen first in the transition in 2002 to a larger-scale campaign with the broader goals of nation building to prevent the return of the Taliban, and then again in 2003 when the Coalition effort transitioned to a COIN campaign.

Accompanying this evolution is the changing composition of US forces and command structure in Afghanistan. The early emphasis on maintaining a small footprint in Afghanistan meant that through the middle of 2002, the number of US troops in the country was less than

10,000 Soldiers, the majority of whom lived on large Coalition bases near the city of Kandahar and at the Bagram Airfield outside the capital of Kabul. These forces were commanded by a division headquarters that served as a CJTF. With the introduction of more conventional forces in the middle of 2002, the growing troop commitment, and expanded requirements to work with the new Afghan Government and to train Afghan security forces, the US military decided to create a larger headquarters (CJTF-180) out of the staff of the XVIII Airborne Corps and appoint the corps commander, a three-star general, as the commander.

In 2003, the Coalition added CFC-A as the theater-strategic headquarters that would oversee CJTF-180 while focusing on synchronizing political affairs and military operations. The establishment of CFC-A marked a sea change in the nature of OEF because of its introduction of a formal COIN campaign. Largely as a result of this shift, the size of the US troop commitment began growing and in 2005 would reach approximately 16,000 Soldiers as combat, aviation, logistics, and units dedicated to training security forces established their presence in Afghanistan. Further, during this period, the increasing number of US Soldiers began moving out of their large bases to live and conduct operations among the population in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan. However, beginning in 2003, the United States had clearly shifted its strategic focus—and the lion's share of its resources—to Iraq. Thus, the transition to COIN had to be accomplished in a theater of operations that was increasingly considered an "economy of force" effort.

Throughout this period, the American Soldier in Afghanistan displayed a remarkable amount of flexibility and toughness. In the earliest days of the campaign, the members of the SF teams showed innovation and a high degree of professionalism in their ability to translate Coalition air power in support of indigenous Afghan forces into victory over the Taliban. As the campaign transitioned after mid-2002, Soldiers and their commanders found themselves conducting a broad set of operations that included security and reconstruction operations as well as the training of Afghan forces. With the exception of the security missions, most units deployed to Afghanistan in this early period were not trained for these operations. As the Taliban gradually reasserted itself after 2002 and the Coalition transitioned toward a more comprehensive COIN campaign, US commanders found even the conduct of adequate security operations challenging given the relatively small numbers of troops available.

A Different Kind of War was written in recognition of the tens of thousands of American Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen who served in Afghanistan during this period. These men and women, along with their Coalition and Afghan allies, endeavored to help Afghanistan achieve an amount of political stability and economic progress that would prevent the country from becoming a terrorist safe haven in the future. In the process, 122 American Service men and women lost their lives while another 640 were wounded in action.[†] Ultimately, all of the Soldiers involved in OEF, like their comrades who served in Iraq and their predecessors who fought in America's previous wars, sacrificed to protect their own nation while simultaneously assisting another people achieve peace and prosperity. The authors of *A Different Kind of War* have tried to ensure that this study accurately captures their contributions in a very difficult effort.

[†]US Department of Defense, Military Casualty Information. http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm (accessed 10 April 2009).

Chapter 1

Afghanistan and the Tribulations of Nationhood

US military forces began arriving in Afghanistan in October 2001. As they entered the country, American Soldiers found they were operating in an austere, rugged, and often beautiful environment. While a small number of specialists in the US Government had maintained a close watch on Afghanistan in the years following the Soviet pullout in 1988, the US Armed Forces in general had no deep understanding of the country, its population, or its recent history, which had been marked by civil war and the rise of a radical Islamist regime called the Taliban. For many American Soldiers, Afghanistan appeared to be a place of imposing physical topography inhabited by an unknown people. Assessing the country through Western eyes, some Soldiers focused on the unfamiliar quality of the culture with which they began interacting. Major Bryan Hilferty, who deployed to Afghanistan in January 2002 as the Chief of Public Affairs for the 10th Mountain Division, expressed a commonly held first impression of the country among those Soldiers who arrived in the early months of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). Hilferty recalled thinking, "Afghanistan was kind of a blank slate because there was no infrastructure there. There were no native newspapers, radios, television, electricity, or anything . . . there was barely water or air."[1]

These early perceptions of Afghanistan often dwelled on the alien nature of the country and tended to overlook the deeply rooted social, economic, religious, and cultural structures that together formed the environment in which American Soldiers soon began operating. This chapter examines these often-complex structures to describe the terrain—physical, political, and cultural—that influenced US military actions in Afghanistan. After a brief assessment of the country's rugged topography, the discussion will then examine Afghanistan's religious, ethnic, and social structures, focusing on the issue of Afghan identity and the evolution of national consciousness. The final section will offer an overview of Afghanistan's history with emphasis on the country's political history since the 1970s and the rise of the Taliban movement that became the chief adversary to the Coalition's political and military effort in Afghanistan.

The Lay of the Land

Afghanistan is completely landlocked, bordered by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north; China and Pakistan to the east; Pakistan on the south; and Iran to the west. A country of physical extremes, it includes flat arid deserts and towering mountain peaks. With a total land area of 252,000 square miles, Afghanistan is roughly the size of the state of Texas. This makes the country one-third larger in area than Iraq. That large territory can be divided into five regions.[2] The eastern edge contains terrain that is heavily mountainous with some peaks in the Pamir Range that are higher than 10,000 feet. The Hindu Kush Range begins in the northeast and runs southwest to form part of the high plateau that dominates the central part of the country. The capital city of Kabul is located in the Kabul River Valley on the southeastern edge of this plateau. North of the high central region is the Turkoman Plain, characterized by relatively arid terrain. To the west are the more fertile lowlands that border on Iran, and to the southwest, running from the Hindu Kush foothills to the Pakistani border south of the city of Kandahar, scrubland and desert dominate.

Figure 1. Afghanistan base map.

Despite its significant size, only 55,000 square miles of Afghanistan's land is arable.[3] Fertile areas are located primarily in the river valleys although irrigation has allowed for the expansion of farming into other sections, especially in the southwest. Traditional Afghan irrigation practices involve the use of buried irrigation canals, sometimes located 20 feet or more below the surface of the land, that bring water from mountain streams to fields of wheat, barley, and corn. Poppies, grown for the production of opium, became a commonly cultivated crop in the 20th century, especially in the south.

Transportation and communication in this mountainous and rural country has always been difficult. The Hindu Kush Range and the high plateau that dominate the central region make travel across the mid-section of the country slow. Slow construction of roads has exacerbated the situation. The main ground transportation artery is the Ring Road, actually a network of roads and highways of varying quality that roughly traces a circle around the circumference of

Afghanistan. The road connects the capital of Kabul to Kandahar in the southwest. From there, it runs westward to Farah and then north to Herat near the Iranian border. At Herat, the road turns east and runs toward the cities of Konduz and Mazar-e Sharif in the north-central part of Afghanistan. The rough terrain in the northern part of the country prevented the road from connecting with the capital. However, the Salang Road does link Kabul with Konduz and the northern border of Afghanistan. When American forces arrived in the fall of 2001, the Ring Road was damaged, but essentially still intact; even so, many of the country's other paved roads had been almost totally destroyed during the Soviet occupation of the 1980s.

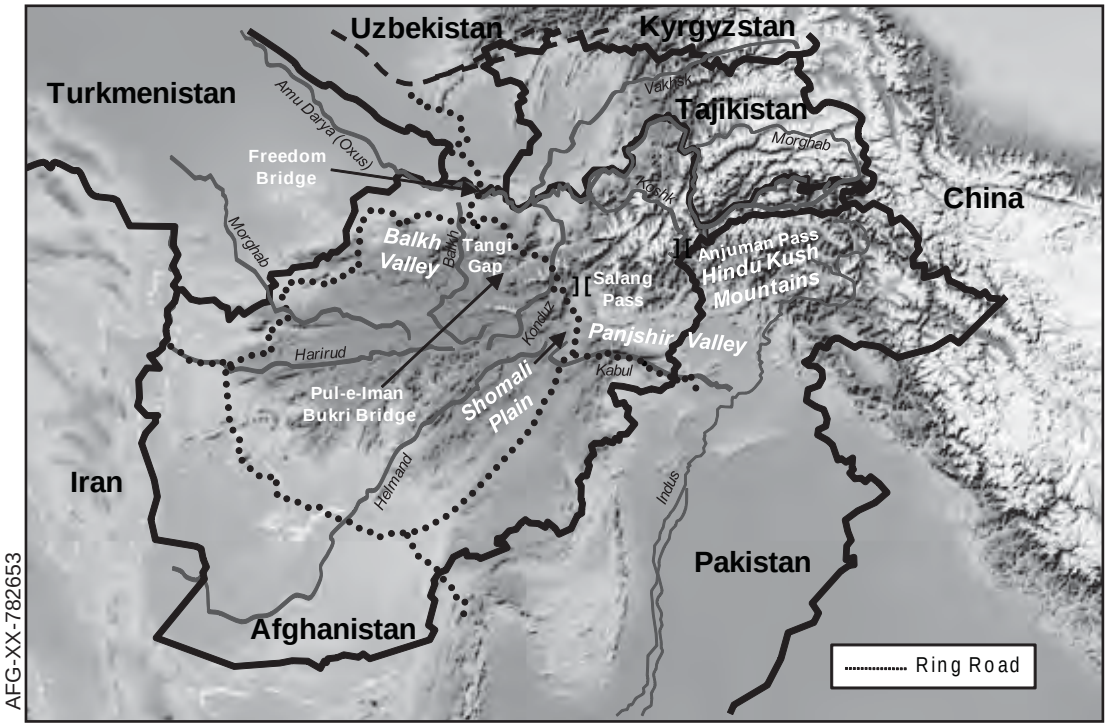

Figure 2. Afghanistan map showing Ring Road.

Afghanistan's rugged topography and minimal transportation infrastructure have prevented economic development and greater political centralization. Still, that terrain has proven beneficial at times. During the course of its history, Afghanistan has been the target of many invading forces. The mountains and the lack of roads have prevented outsiders from using military force to dominate the country. Moreover, for Afghan irregular forces, who for centuries have fought ferociously to expel outsiders, the terrain served as sanctuary from which they could attack invading armies, making their hold on the country tenuous.

Afghan Ethnic and Religious Structures

Afghanistan defies conventional Western thought about nations and nationhood. Although Afghans are united by their Islamic faith, ethnic and tribal identities divide them. These serious differences have led some to question whether the Afghan nation truly exists. This section describes the key identities and structures that dominate Afghan life as a means of describing the culture in which America Soldiers began operating in 2001.

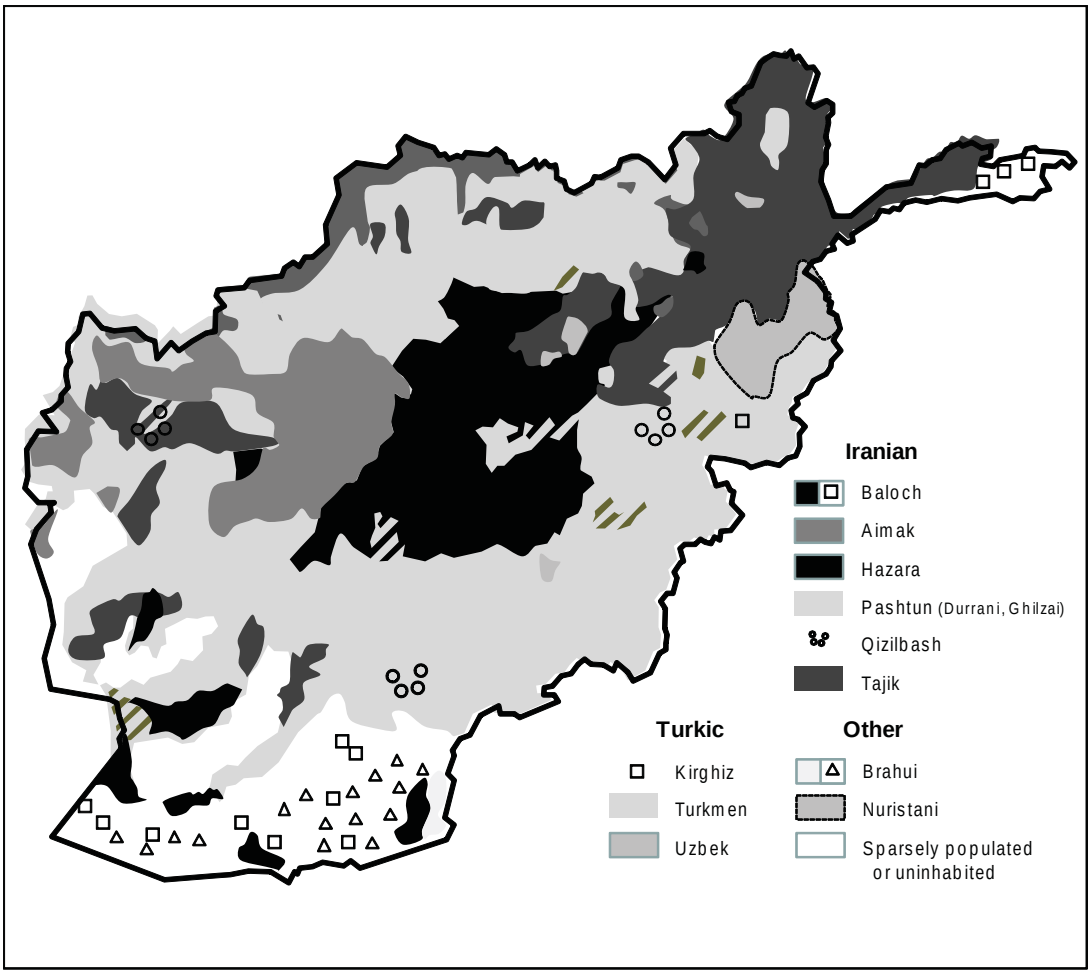

Figure 3. Ethnic map.

To be sure, scholars recognize that the process of nation building began in Afghanistan as early as 1747 and continued until the country became formally independent of Britain in 1919. The centuries of Afghanistan's existence as a state appear to have fostered at least some measure of national identity. Some have found evidence of this identity in expressions like the one made by a tribal elder from Nangarhar province, near the country's eastern border with Pakistan: "Without our land, there is no food; without our water, there is no life; without our trees and flowers, there is no soul; and without our country, there is no poetry, no music, for then we are not Afghans."[4] Shah M. Tarzi, like many Western Afghan scholars, avoids suggesting that "the Afghan people lack a sense of national consciousness."[5] Tarzi instead suggests that the Afghan sense of national identity derives from "the persistent historical pattern of foreign intervention" that predated formation of the Afghan state in 1747 (under Ahmad Shah Abdali) and continues into the modern era.[6]

Perhaps the best recent example of outside intervention serving as a uniting force is that offered by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Soviets turned what had been a domestic political conflict between Afghan factions into a campaign that united many

Afghans against a foreign invader.[7] The intervention from outside appears to have reawakened a very real, if sometimes dormant, sense of patriotism that historically seemed to surface in Afghanistan's response to foreign threats. The Soviet experience evokes an anecdote from a previous foreign intervention in Afghan affairs. In 1809 a British envoy to the Afghan throne suggested that Afghans could enjoy a better, more peaceful quality of life if only their monarchy would accept British guidance. An elder gave this response to the envoy: "We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood . . . but we will never be content with a master."[8]

While this story is perhaps apocryphal, it does capture the role of division in Afghan life. These differences have become the focal point for those scholars intent on arguing that Afghanistan does not constitute a nation. One specialist in Afghan affairs, Larry P. Goodson, has asserted, "Afghanistan has never been a homogenous nation but rather a collection of disparate groups divided along ethnic, linguistic, religious, and racial lines and forced together by the vagaries of geopolitics."[9] The remainder of this section examines how the identities that compete with Afghan nationality shape social structures and practices in Afghanistan.

Ethnicity

Ethnic identity is the most striking feature of Afghan culture. Goodson has identified it as "the most important contextual factor shaping Afghanistan today, as it has been throughout Afghanistan's history."[10] The mix of ethnic groups that settled there was a product of the multiple invading forces that entered Afghanistan over the centuries and decided to stay. In this sense, Afghanistan became the ethnic crossroads of central Asia and by the 20th century featured six prominent ethnic groups and many smaller ethnic communities. The most important of these groups are the Pashtuns, the Hazara, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, the Turkomen, and the Kirghiz.

Ethnic identities served as the foundation for more than just cultural differences, however. Louis Dupree, a historian of Afghanistan, has asserted that internal discord, caused by ethnic strife, is a key characteristic of the country's history.[11] Goodson agrees and suggests that the differences in ethnicity prevented Afghan society from uniting except in dire circumstances:

> Afghanistan's ethnic mixture has traditionally known a high propensity for violence, often between ethnic groups, subtribes, and even cousins. Only outside threats seem to unite the Afghans, and those alliances are temporary and limited. When the threat is eliminated or sufficiently reduced, people return to regular patterns of traditional warfare.[12]

What emerges from these scholarly accounts is a picture of a country that is historically more accustomed to political division than political unity. Further, those divisions along ethnic lines have led to conflict and violence between many of the groups that make up Afghan society. These patterns, rooted in centuries of history, remained a vibrant part of Afghanistan life as the 21st century began.

Any discussion of Afghanistan's ethnic groups must begin with the Pashtuns. They are the largest and historically dominant of the country's groups, comprising approximately 40 percent of the country's total estimated population of 27 million. In addition to their dominant position in present-day Afghanistan, the Pashtuns are also responsible for the founding of the first Afghan monarchy in the 18th century. This group, of Indo-European origin, moved into the

area around what is today southern Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan thousands of years ago. As an ethnic group, they are divided into several large tribal groups—the most important of which are the Ghilzai and the Durrani—and many smaller tribal and clan communities. In addition to these internal divisions, the Pashtun people are further divided by a political boundary: the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. That frontier, arbitrarily created by the British Government in 1893, divides the Pashtuns, placing them under the jurisdiction of two countries.

Figure 4. Pashtun Belt.

Despite the internal and artificial divisions, two things unite the many groups that make up the Pashtuns: the Pashto language and the Pashtun code of behavior called Pashtunwali. The code is actually a combination or synthesis of many tribal codes focused on several common denominators that stress the importance of kinship ties, tradition, and localism. One pair of prominent scholars of Afghanistan have noted its focus on ensuring the legacy of the people, stating that Pashtunwali is "simple but demanding. Group survival is its primary imperative. It demands vengeance against injury or insult to one's kin, chivalry, and hospitality toward the helpless and unarmed strangers, bravery in battle, and openness and integrity in individual behavior."[13] Among the Pashtuns themselves, discord, feuds, and violence often dominated intertribal and intratribal relations. Pashtunwali established the means of settling these disagreements and creating peace: "Much honor is given to Pashtuns who can successfully

Key Values of Pashtunwali

Hewad—Love and defense of Pashtun people (or Pashtun "nation")

Nang—Honor

Meranah—Manhood

Milmastia—Hospitality and protection for all guests

Nanawati—Requirement to provide asylum even to bitter enemies if requested

Namus—Defense of the honor of women

Badal—Action taken to avenge a death or honor of a woman

Jirga—Use of councils to settle feuds and other matters

Larry P. Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001)

arbitrate the feuds that are endemic among them. Fines and blood money are devices frequently used to limit violence among rival families. Pashtunwali is a code that limits anarchy among a fractious but vital people."[14]

An aspect of the code that would come to play an important role in OEF was its establishment of the *jirga*, an all-male council or assembly of tribal elders that met to discuss and settle matters, both public and private. At the national level, the Pashtuns would sometimes convene a *loya* (grand) *jirga* to decide particularly critical problems of broad consequence. Goodson underscored the importance of this venerable form of representative assembly by chronicling a January 1987 incident that occurred near Peshawar, Pakistan: "A *jirga* of elders had settled a case in Pakistan's Khyber Agency concerning the construction of a road. When they went to deliver the verdict to the person affected, he opened fire, killing five tribal elders." Committing these murders instantly rendered the perpetrator a pariah, "because it symbolically represented the rejection of tribal will. The killer became an outlaw in the truest sense of the word, having rejected both the government and his tribe."[15] According to Goodson, the relationship between the Pashtunwali and *jirga* is that "as the Pashtunwali provided a code of behavior for the Afghan tribes, so the *jirga* . . . provided a form of government."[16]

In 2001, as US planners began to consider military and political actions in Afghanistan, the importance of the Pashtuns was not overlooked. The Taliban, the Afghan Islamist movement that had taken power in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, had originated among Pashtun tribes near the city of Kandahar. Additionally, in 2001, the Taliban regime remained heavily dominated by the Pashtuns. Perhaps more important was the decision by Coalition leaders to support Hamid

Karzai as the leader of the new government that replaced the Taliban. Karzai, a Pashtun of the Durrani tribe, was a native of Kandahar and had close relationships with other key Pashtun leaders throughout Afghanistan. For many within the Coalition leadership, Karzai represented the best chance of forming a lasting representative and stable government in Afghanistan. They certainly had taken notice of Karzai's ethnicity in championing his candidacy.

Second to the Pashtuns in size are the Tajiks, composing approximately 27 percent of the population. This ethnic group, which speaks a Persian language called Dari, is centered in the northeast of the country, but its people also inhabit the strategically important Panjshir Valley northeast of Kabul as well as the capital itself.[17] Although originally a rural people who practiced animal husbandry and farming, over the last several centuries many Tajiks have moved to urban centers, especially Kabul. As a result, some Tajiks are now less connected to their tribal groups.

Located in the central portion of Afghanistan, an area that includes the city of Bamian and known as the Hazarajat, is the next largest ethnic group—the Hazara. This group makes up about 10 percent of the population, speaks a dialect of Dari, and may be the descendants of the Mongol armies that invaded Afghanistan in the 13th century. Because they are Shia Muslims, the Hazara have periodically been the victims of religious discrimination, which has led to the movement of some in this group to western Pakistan and eastern Iran. The Taliban, for example, began targeting the Hazara in the late 1990s because of their Shia faith. Exacerbating confessional differences is the history of Pashtun attempts to subjugate the Hazara, campaigns that led to a series of Hazara uprisings in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Uzbeks, situated primarily in Afghanistan's northern provinces, comprise the next largest ethnic population. Their traditional lands lie in the region between the northern ridges of the Hindu Kush Mountain Range and the Amu Darya (or Oxus) River, which forms the boundary between Afghanistan and the states of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Possessing Mongoloid features, they speak Uzbek, a Turkic language, and share their culture with fellow Uzbeks in Uzbekistan.[18]

The nomads called Aimaqs and the more sedentary farmers identified as Turkomen make up another 10 percent of the population. These two groups range across the northwestern region of Afghanistan. While the Aimaqs have a language similar to Dari, the Turkomen speak a Turkic language and maintain close ethnic and cultural ties to Turkmenistan, another former Soviet Republic that neighbors Afghanistan.

It is important to note that a feature shared by most of the large ethnic groups within Afghanistan, with the sole exception of the Hazara, is that their respective populations flow across international boundaries. Goodson contended that this has greatly influenced Afghan history: "Because all of Afghanistan's major ethnic groups either straddle the border with neighboring countries or have ethnolinguistic-religious ties to groups in [those] countries, all of those countries have built-in incentives for meddling in Afghanistan's internal affairs."[19] Interference from a number of Afghanistan's neighbors would prove to be both helpful and a hindrance once Coalition forces arrived in 2001.

Religion

Islam is the faith of Afghanistan. As noted earlier, this generally helped unite groups of the population that have distinct ethnic differences. However, there are various sects within

Islam and ways of practicing the faith that are of great importance, especially in the type of campaign the US forces began in 2001. In a study of the Taliban movement published in 2001, Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid characterized the type of Islam traditionally practiced in Afghanistan as "immensely tolerant—to other Muslim sects, other religions, and modern lifestyles. [Religious leaders] were never known to push Islam down people's throats and sectarianism was not a political issue until recently."[20] Other scholars agree and have emphasized the willingness of Afghan Muslims to incorporate local practice and thought.[21] Goodson, arguing that Afghans have historically rejected radical interpretations of Islam that would hold up the faith as the single guide for life, stated, "The vast majority of [Afghans] believe but are not particularly religious."[22]

Despite these conventions, religious divisions were important. Roughly 80 percent of the population of Afghanistan practiced the Sunni form of Islam. The rest were Shia. As noted above, the Shia faith of the Hazara people made them a minority that the Sunni Pashtun majority sometimes treated with harshness. Within the larger Sunni community, there sometimes appeared divisions as well. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Sufi sect—a mystical form of Islam—had made significant inroads in Afghanistan, and by the 1970s practicing Sufis held important political positions in the country.[23] More radical sects, such as the Wahabbi school of Islam, did not find Afghanistan fertile ground until the Soviet invasion, when many Wahabbists arrived in the country to fight the Soviet infidel forces. These men, often backed by Saudi funds, slowly gained influence in the 1980s and would play a major role in the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s.

Perhaps most important in this discussion of Islam and Afghanistan is the critical tenet of protecting Islamic lands from infidels. Appeals to fight the infidels had provided much of the force behind the insurgency of the mujahideen against the Soviets in the 1980s. A later section in this chapter will more closely examine this conflict. Still, those appeals were no less powerful in 2001 when military forces from Christian countries of the West began appearing in Afghanistan. Religion in general and the desire to not appear as a large non-Muslim occupation force specifically became a major factor in the Coalition's campaign in the country.

Afghanistan and the Outside World, 1800–1979

Afghanistan's location in central Asia, astride the ancient caravan routes that connected east Asia with Europe and Africa and close to the rich lands of the Indian subcontinent, gave the country a strategic importance that was obvious to many outsiders. Alexander the Great, who in the 4th century B.C. led his army to the area that would later take the name Afghanistan, was the first Western leader to seek dominance over the territory. Forces from China and other parts of central Asia also sought to add the region to their empires. They often succeeded, at least temporarily. Between the years 400 and 1700 A.D., Afghanistan came under the power of rulers such as Genghis Kahn, Tamerlane, and Babur the Tiger.

But by the end of the 18th century, an independent Afghan kingdom had managed to emerge under the leadership of a Pashtun monarchy that managed the querulous Pashtun tribes while also attempting to subjugate the other ethnic groups in the region. As a series of Pashtun rulers consolidated power into the 19th century, their territory became a focal point in the imperial rivalries of European colonial powers. Both Great Britain and Russia began to view Afghanistan as a critical buffer to their expanding empires. The British, increasingly

concerned about Russian designs on their colony in India, sought control over the Afghan kingdom. Likewise, the Russians viewed Afghanistan as an obstacle to British expansion in their growing sphere of influence in central Asia. Over the course of the 19th century, both powers would partake in what historians have labeled the Great Game—the contest for control over Afghanistan that featured diplomacy, espionage, saber-rattling, and overt military force.[24] While the two Great Powers never went to war with each other directly, they did use violence and coercion in the Afghan kingdom to achieve their interests.

The British Government, for example, used its military power to fight two campaigns in Afghanistan in the 19th century and one in the early 20th century. In the first Anglo-Afghan War, a British force marched north from Indian territories to install a monarch on the throne who would be favorable to British interests. In 1840, after capturing the recalcitrant Afghan king Dost Muhammad and exiling him to India, the British Army established a garrison in the capital of Kabul to protect the newly installed Afghan ruler. In any event, by 1841 popular discontent among the Afghan population compelled the force to leave Kabul and attempt to march back to British-controlled territory. Along the way, thousands of British and Indian soldiers met their deaths at the hands of Afghan tribesmen.

This disaster did little to deter British aspirations in central Asia. In 1859 Great Britain annexed Baluchistan, a region located south and southwest of Afghanistan, making it a part of India's Northwest Frontier provinces. After becoming concerned about rising Russian influence in Kabul in the 1870s, the British pressured the Afghan monarchy into accepting the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879 in which the Afghan kingdom ceded control of its foreign policy to the British Government, and agreed to accept British military presence in Kabul. Not all Afghan factions accepted the treaty, and some tribal forces took to the field against the British. At the Battle of Kandahar in 1880, the only major engagement in what became known as the second Anglo-Afghan War, a British military victory sealed the political fate of Afghan independence.

In the three decades that passed between the Treaty of Gandamak and the Outbreak of World War I, Great Britain and Russia eventually reached an accord for central Asia that kept relations stable. Afghan domestic politics, nevertheless, were marked by an instability partly caused by conflict between traditional groups and factions advocating modernization. In 1919 the Afghan ruler Habibullah Khan was replaced by King Amanullah Kahn, who wasted little time before initiating the third Anglo-Afghan War by ordering the Afghan Army to attack south into British-held territory. British forces, weakened by 4 years of war in Europe, struggled to retain control over Afghanistan, but after several months of conflict, London agreed to end hostilities and signed the Treaty of Rawalpindi that granted Afghanistan full independence.

Independence and Invasion

In the five decades following the Treaty of Rawalpindi, a succession of Afghan leaders, working within what was ostensibly a constitutional monarchy, launched efforts to modernize some of the country's institutions. Foreign aid provided by Western powers was key in this process. As the Cold War heated up, Afghanistan attracted the attention of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Both Cold War protagonists contributed funds and advisors to Afghanistan in an effort to make the country an ally in Asia. However, by the 1960s the Soviet Union had forged a closer relationship with Afghanistan by offering military equipment and

training to the Afghan Army as well as technical and financial assistance for the building of key infrastructure.

Not surprisingly, in the 1970s elements within the Afghan Army came under the influence of Marxist officers, and this group managed to erode the government's power until the Great Saur Revolution of April 1978 created a Communist regime called the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). Leading the Communist party—the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)—was Mohammed Taraki, who became head of state. Shortly after assuming power, Taraki signed a treaty with the Soviet Union, and Soviet military advisors soon began working with Afghan military units. The new Afghan Communist regime did enjoy some support in urban areas of Afghanistan, but quickly alienated the more traditional rural areas because of its introduction of sweeping social reforms.[25] The insurrection that resulted led to Taraki's dismissal from power and the installment of a new Afghan leader, Hafizullah Amin, who also failed in suppressing dissent. Concerned about a rebellious Islamic territory on its southern border, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev made the decision to invade Afghanistan on 27 December 1979 with a contingent of 30,000 troops that included airborne units and special forces.[26] Larger, more powerful mechanized units soon followed, and by early 1980 there were close to 90,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

By 1979 maintaining control over Afghanistan had become a paramount strategic goal for Soviet leadership for two reasons. That year marked the radical Islamist revolution in Iran, a movement that threatened to spread to the rest of the Muslim world, especially to those Muslim parts of the Soviet Union that were located near Iran. In Soviet eyes, a stable Afghan Government could serve as a bulwark to the spread of the Islamic revolutionary threat. In addition, 1979 saw the rise of the Solidarity Labor Union in Poland, a far different movement but one almost as threatening to the Soviet empire. For the Soviet leadership, a strong military move in Afghanistan would send a message to the Poles and other eastern European satellite states that the Soviet Union would act against any power that appeared to be attempting to leave Soviet orbit. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan reinforced the Brezhnev doctrine established after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 to end forcefully the "Prague Spring" and the potential loss of the country as a client state.

To a large degree, Soviet leadership hoped to model the Afghanistan intervention on the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In 1968 Brezhnev had not sought to occupy the eastern European state for any length of time. Instead, the use of military power was intended to be short termed and focused on installing a new government in Prague that would return the country securely to the Soviet fold. In this sense, the 1968 intervention was successful. Soviet and other Warsaw Pact forces did not face an armed resistance from the Czechoslovak population and were able to withdraw relatively soon after their arrival.

However, as much as the Soviet political and military leadership hoped to use the 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia as a template for the Afghanistan invasion, the Afghan population responded far differently than did the Czechs and the Slovaks. In reaction to this invasion by an outside non-Islamic power, Afghan society broke along the fractures that had already appeared in the previous 2 years. Some Afghans, especially those associated with the Marxist party, remained Soviet partners. The Soviet leadership, for its part, viewed the Afghan partnership as crucial to achieving its goals in Afghanistan. According to Dr. Robert Baumann, a historian who has looked closely at the Soviet-Afghan conflict, Soviet military leaders in

command of the intervention believed their primary mission to be the "resuscitation" of the Afghan Government and its military forces while avoiding the commitment of a large force to a lengthy campaign.[27]

Other Afghans ensured that the incursion of the non-Islamic power to the north would be neither short nor easy. Not long after the Soviets arrived, small bands of guerrillas emerged from the population to oppose the foreign invaders. Known as mujahideen or "holy warriors," these guerrillas viewed their mission as the expulsion of an infidel occupier from Muslim territory. Lightly armed and untrained in conventional tactics, mujahideen bands could hardly stand toe-to-toe when matched against Soviet formations, whose mobility and technology allowed them to quickly concentrate firepower and maneuver forces. Mujahideen leaders adapted by using time-proven tactics of the insurgent: ambush, retreat, and gradual wearing down of the enemy's will to continue the fight.

Soviet and Afghan military units fortified the capital city and conducted patrols along the highways to keep lines of communication open. This approach allowed Afghan forces to engage the guerrillas. Still, as the mujahideen resistance continued in the early 1980s and the Afghan Army proved less than capable of meeting that resistance, Soviet forces began mounting large-scale operations in the countryside with the goal of suppressing the guerrilla forces. Gradually, the Soviet approach became that of the counterinsurgent. Even so, the counterinsurgency campaign mounted by the Soviet command did not try to win support from the population, but instead focused on destroying the mujahideen by eliminating the rural population that supported the guerrillas. To do this, the Soviet and Afghan air forces relied heavily on air power, bombing villages, irrigation systems, grain storage facilities, and other elements of the rural infrastructure. As a result, by 1985 tens of thousands of Afghans had died in these attacks and nearly 5 million had fled to Iran or the Pashtun areas of Pakistan just across the Afghan border.

By the mid-1980s the Soviet leadership had also increased the number of soldiers inside Afghanistan to approximately 100,000. While often successful in temporarily removing the guerrilla presence, Soviet operations led to a relatively high number of casualties. Indeed, by 1984 Soviet forces were suffering thousands of deaths per year.[28] In any event, Soviet units usually chose not to hold the terrain, returning instead to bases near urban areas. This practice meant that control of the ground quickly reverted to the mujahideen.[29]

The decision in 1986 by the US Government to clandestinely aid the Afghan guerrillas by sending them sophisticated weaponry altered the context of the conflict. By secretly funneling American Stinger and British Blowpipe shoulder-fired, surface-to-air missiles through Pakistan into Afghanistan, the United States empowered the mujahideen to blunt Soviet aerial assaults.[30] While these weapons were not enough to forcibly eject the Soviets from Afghanistan, the introduction of these systems marked a shift in US policy and symbolized the extent to which nations bordering Afghanistan influenced Afghan affairs. Before 1986 no US-made weapons or personnel had been directly committed to the Soviet-Afghan War. By 1986 not only was the United States involved, but American officials had begun using the Pakistani Government and its intelligence arm, the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), to channel arms and other support to the mujahideen. Forging the US-ISI military aid pipeline established the Pakistani Government as the most important regional player in the anti-Soviet resistance by giving it the power to determine which rebel groups received support and for setting priorities for distributing military supplies.

But Pakistan did more than provide weaponry to the mujahideen. The Pakistani Government allowed its tribal areas centered on the city of Peshawar in the northwest region of the country to become a headquarters for the mujahideen. Afghan guerrilla leaders not only met in Peshawar but also recruited their fighters from the refugee camps that had sprung up in the Pakistani provinces closest to the Afghan border. Moreover, the Pakistanis tacitly encouraged Muslim mujahideen from across the Islamic world to use their territory to organize and travel to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets alongside the Afghan guerrillas. According to Ahmed Rashid, tens of thousands of Muslim men from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, Africa, central Asia, and east Asia arrived to help the Afghan mujahideen. Although only a portion were Arab by ethnicity, these foreign volunteers came to be called "Arab Afghans" and contributed significantly to guerrilla successes in the Soviet-Afghan War.[31]

While the Soviet and Afghan forces did celebrate some victories after 1986, the situation in Afghanistan increasingly took on the character of a stalemate that the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, believed was not tenable. By 1987 Gorbachev had decided to withdraw his military forces over a period of 2 years. While the mujahideen on the field of battle had not defeated that army, the guerrillas had certainly made it impossible for the Soviets and their Afghan allies to exert political or military control over Afghanistan, thus preventing the Soviet Union, despite its dedication of manpower and financial resources, from achieving its goals in Afghanistan. The Soviets increased the scale of their military actions in 1987 and early 1988, including one multidivision operation called Magistral aimed at Paktia province in the southeast, in a final series of operations designed to destroy the guerrillas. However, when Soviet units began leaving in 1988, the mujahideen remained in firm control of much of the country. Historian Lester Grau summarized the Soviet experience in Afghanistan by casting the country as the site "where a modern, mechanized army tried to defeat a guerrilla force on rugged terrain in the middle of a civil war. Despite their best efforts, [the Soviet soldiers] were unable to achieve decisive military victory and their politicians finally ordered them home."[32]

Post-Soviet Afghanistan and the Rise of the Taliban

When the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan, they left behind a puppet Communist regime that remained intact for a short time because of a continued presence of Soviet aid and advisors. At its helm stood Dr. Najibullah Ahmadzai, the former head of the KHAD, the Afghan security service that bore some similarity to the Soviet KGB.[33] Najibullah was last in a string of leaders the Soviets installed in the wake of the 1979 invasion and notwithstanding his former reputation as a hard-liner, he had little choice but to initiate a National Reconciliation Campaign that sought to broaden the base of popular support for his government. His regime suffered from lack of legitimacy, and would last only as long as Soviet benefactors were willing and able to offer support.

For their part, the mujahideen, though fragmented, continued to scorn any contact with the Najibullah government, and their conflict with the Afghan Communists continued with unremitting brutality. Still, during this period at least some guerrilla factions formed temporary alliances with the government. More than anything else, the reconciliation drive bought time to orchestrate the Soviet withdrawal and permitted the Afghan regime to reorganize itself to meet the problems it would face alone following the Soviet Army's departure.

If collapse of the Najibullah government was not a forgone conclusion when the Soviets left, it was fated to last only as long as the Soviet state, and in the end survived the demise of the Soviet

Union by little more than 2 months. What ensued after 1991 was a continuance of the struggle for mastery in Afghanistan with various factions of the mujahideen competing for power. This period, sometimes referred to as the mujahideen interregnum, left Afghanistan in chaos.

Two factions were of particular importance in this period. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pashtun, led a contingent called the Hezb-i-Islami that was itself 75-percent Pashtun and found most of its support in northeastern Afghanistan and within Pakistan's Afghan refugee population.[34] Other factions would break way from Hekmatyar's party to form half a dozen splinter parties operating out of Pakistan; but, until the rise of the Taliban, the Hezb-i-Islami remained one of the most prominent.

The second was the Jamiat-e Islami, a faction comprised primarily of Afghans from the northern minority groups, especially Tajiks and Uzbeks. Prominent within the ranks of this more northern-based faction, besides its Tajik leader, Burnahuddin Rabbani, were General Ahmed Shah Massoud, a former police chief of Herat, and Ismail Khan, also of Herat. Religious biases complicated the ethnic divide between the northern and southern (mainly Pashtun) factions.

Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami was both more organizationally close-knit and ideologically strident in its Islamic zeal than was the Jamiat party. Still, Rabbani's forces were formidable. Indeed, the chaos of the mujahideen interregnum broke out partially because in 1992 Kabul fell to a non-Pashtun force composed of Tajik forces under Burnahuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud combined with Uzbek forces under General Abdul Rashid Dostum. Hekmatyar and the Pashtuns could not tolerate this event. Allowing Kabul to remain in those hands raised the possibility that for the first time since Afghanistan became a country, non-Pashtuns would be ruling it. Hekmatyar's response was to besiege Kabul and unleash artillery barrages on the city's residential areas, which predictably cost the lives of thousands of civilian noncombatants.[35]

Out of the factions that fought in the interregnum emerged a small group of politically unsophisticated Islamic fundamentalists that became known as the Taliban. Eventually, the Taliban evolved into a force that eclipsed others and eventually seized the reins of power in Afghanistan when it captured Kabul in late 1996.

The root of the Taliban rise to power lies not within Afghanistan but in Pakistan. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as the Afghan refugee population grew inside Pakistan, an entire generation of young men was exposed to a fundamentalist version of Islam taught in the many madrassas (religious schools) that thrived in the Pashtun areas around Peshawar. That interpretation of Islam, combined with the lack of employment opportunities available to refugees and the culture of violence that had developed among the mujahideen, contributed to the creation of groups that sought simple, often violent, answers to Afghanistan's problems.

This generation of youth, most of whom were Pashtuns, would play a key role in the rise of the Taliban and the shaping of their approach to political rule. In 1995, on the eve of the Taliban victory, journalist Ahmed Rashid encountered young Taliban soldiers and found them quite different from the older, more traditional Afghans:

> These boys were a world apart from the [mujahideen] whom I had got to know during the 1980s—men who could recount their tribal and clan lineages, remembered their abandoned farms and valleys with nostalgia and recounted legends and stories from Afghan history. These boys were from a generation who had never seen their country at peace. . . . They had no memories of their

> tribes, their elders, their neighbors nor the complex ethnic mix of peoples that often made up their villages and their homeland. These boys were what the war had thrown up like the sea's surrender on the beach of history. . . . Many of these young warriors did not even know the history of their own country or the story of the jihad against the Soviets.[36]

Rashid then suggested that the version of Islam taught by the madrassas in the Pashtun regions was "the only prop [the young Taliban men] could hang onto which gave their lives some meaning."[37]

By 1994 these young men had begun their climb to political power. For the better part of that year, Afghanistan remained mired in the midst of the civil war. Burnahuddin Rabbani set up what amounted to a Tajik government in Kabul, and assumed the duties as its nominal president, although his own forces controlled only Kabul and the northeast, thus limiting his actual political authority. Other regional leaders and their militias held sway over the other regions of the country, and the dominant ethnic group remaining, the Pashtuns, suffered from divided leadership.

The Taliban represented one of the Pashtun groups vying for influence. Most of the initial membership of this loosely organized group formed in the region around Kandahar and were united in their disillusionment with the mujahideen leadership. Many were young graduates of the madrassas, and because of this common experience, they took the name "Taliban," an Arabic term that refers to students of the Islamic faith. The leader of the group, Mullah Mohammad Omar, came from a poor family, had been educated in a traditional madrassa, and in the 1980s opened his own madrassa in Kandahar province.

The men who formed the original core of the Taliban had learned and imparted a version of Islam that differed significantly from other fundamentalists. Some scholars of the movement have emphasized that the madrassa education instilled in Pakistan focused on returning Afghan society to an imagined premodern period in which a purer form of Islam was practiced by a more righteous Muslim society. This made the Taliban approach to governance somewhat utopian in its attempt to battle the enemies of modernity and nonorthodoxy.[38]

Originally an inchoate group of disgruntled mujahideen, the Taliban came together more formally in 1994 when Omar organized an attack against a local warlord who had kidnapped and raped several local girls.[39] The group received a boost later that year when attempts by Pakistan's Government to bolster Pakistani involvement in the Afghan economy were rebuffed by all of the major mujahideen factions. The Taliban, however, started collaborating with Pakistani interests and began a campaign in 1994 to gain control of southern Afghanistan to help establish a new trade route from the Pakistani border to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The first step was a small attack by Taliban forces on Hekmatyar's men in October. By mid-November Taliban leaders had used bribes, force, and threats of force to secure a truck route through central Afghanistan.

The Taliban's backers could not have been more pleased with their performance. More importantly, as the word about the Taliban actions and their theology spread, the movement began attracting large numbers of recruits. One scholar contends that by the beginning of 1995 approximately 12,000 men from both Afghanistan and Pakistan had traveled to the Kandahar area to join Mullah Mohammad Omar.[40]

At this stage of the struggle, there existed three geopolitical centers of gravity in Afghanistan. One was Kandahar, firmly within the Taliban grip. A second was in the west in the important city of Herat where the formidable warlord Ismail Khan enjoyed Iranian support and held sway over three provinces considered by Iran to be in its strategic backyard. The third focus was Kabul, where President Rabbani's government clung to power thanks mainly to troops under the command of Ahmed Shah Massoud.

In the months that followed the attack on Hekmatyar's forces, the Taliban won control—at least temporarily—of 12 out of Afghanistan's 31 provinces. As they moved toward Kabul, opposing warlords either surrendered or fled the field.[41] As this untrained group of soldiers marched, they opened roads, disarmed local populations, and restored order by introducing a strict version of Sharia law. Their success was almost completely unexpected and continued as they captured Oruzgan and Zabol provinces without firing a shot. Helmand province was a vortex of a flourishing opium trade and proved to be more difficult for Mullah Mohammad Omar's men. The Taliban met stiff resistance, but through a combination of bribery and exploitation of local rivalries that province fell early in 1995. By February they were within striking distance of Kabul and prepared to attack.

Hekmatyar's forces, strung out between Kandahar and Kabul, became trapped between government forces to the north and the Taliban to the south. Prior to the Taliban advance, different Kabul neighborhoods had been occupied by contending mujahideen forces. With Hekmatyar trapped, Massoud decided to confront his remaining enemies in serial fashion, launching an attack first on the Hazaras—the Shia ethnic group that received support from Iran. Fearing for their position in Kabul, the Hazara leadership made a deal with the approaching Taliban. However, in the turmoil that began when the Taliban entered the capital, the Hazara leader was detained and murdered by Taliban soldiers.[42] This won the Taliban the undying enmity of the Hazaras, who evened the score 2 years later by massacring thousands of Taliban prisoners.

During the rest of 1995, Taliban fortunes waxed and waned. Massoud's forces pushed the Taliban out of Kabul in March. That same month, Mullah Mohammad Omar's advance toward the city of Herat came to a halt when it ran into Ismail Khan's ground forces backed by air power provided by Massoud. Taliban losses mounted as their poorly equipped and untrained soldiers clashed with armies that were more modern and better organized. By the fall, a steady stream of volunteers, many from madrassas in Pakistan, had replenished the movement's ranks and the Taliban leadership renewed the pressure on Herat. In September the assault on the city was renewed, forcing Ismail Khan to flee to Iran and Herat falling to the Taliban.

With Kandahar and Herat now under the control of the Mullah Omar's upstart army, much of the country had fallen under the sway of the Taliban. As long as the capital belonged to Massoud and the Tajiks, however, the Taliban could not truly assert themselves as rulers of Afghanistan. Aided by support from both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the Taliban leadership planned a campaign that would lead to an assault on the capital from several directions. Launched in September 1996, that attack forced Massoud to evacuate his forces from the city and deploy them to the north. Kabul was then turned over to the Taliban.

Before leaving the city, General Massoud offered former Communist President Najibullah safe passage out, but he declined, opting instead to seek asylum through United Nations (UN) channels. When that arrangement fell through, the Taliban punctuated their conquest

by murdering Najibullah in a barbaric fashion—hanging his body from a light pole near the UN compound in the capital.[43] Shortly thereafter, the Taliban leadership also imposed death sentences (in absentia) on Dostum, Rabbani, and Massoud, but lacked the practical means of carrying out these executions.

The Taliban's Reign of Militant Islam

Massoud and other forces—collectively known as the Northern Alliance (NA)—continued their resistance in the northern reaches of the country from late 1996 until the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in September 2001. The Taliban ruled most of Afghanistan, creating and asserting new political, legal, and social policies based on their interpretation of Islam. As an indicator of things to come, within 24 hours after capturing Kabul, they began to proscribe the rights and privileges of women as part of an overarching plan to impose their narrow interpretation of Sharia law.

The Taliban creed claimed to be apolitical, universal, and all encompassing. According to Ahmed Rashid, the core members of the Taliban "rejected nationalism, ethnicity, tribal segmentation, and feudal class structure in favor of a new Muslim internationalism which would reunite the Muslim world."[44] The success of this approach depended on the purity and piety personified by a charismatic leader, as opposed to a solid organizational infrastructure grounded in, for example, a system of checks and balances. While claiming to be unique, the all-embracing ideology of their revolution demanded change from the top down rather than attempting to accommodate the myriad social, ethnic, and racial strands that comprised the fabric of Afghan culture.

Some actions taken by the Taliban resonated with Afghan Muslims; others did not. To the extent that they reigned in fractious warlords who recognized only their own authority, the Taliban's actions were welcomed. Still, as Rashid and other scholars have noted, that Islamic tradition "does not sanction the killing of fellow Muslims on the basis of ethnicity or sect [which certainly occurred after they came to power], and it is this, the Taliban interpretation of jihad, which appalls the non-Pashtuns."[45]

The Taliban remained something of an enigma. They emerged from obscurity in 1994, ruled for 6 years, and then were ousted by Coalition forces. One journalist suggested that, at the time of their 2001 defeat, the Taliban "were not much better understood than they were when they first emerged."[46] To some they represented less an enigma than an anomaly: "The Taliban interpretation of Islam, jihad, and social transformation was an anomaly in Afghanistan because the movement's rise echoed none of the leading Islamist trends that had emerged through the anti-Soviet war. . . . They fitted nowhere in the Islamic spectrum of ideas and movements that had emerged in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1994."[47]

Still other scholars of Afghanistan thought they could discern continuity in the Taliban: the tendency of the majority ethnic group to assert hegemony over a heterogeneous society and state to rule it effectively. The Pashtun reliance on leaders like Mullah Mohammad Omar and their treatment of minorities represent a new version of an old refrain, which a writer for the International Institute for the Study of Islam (ISIM) called person-centered politics. This view holds that, ironically, even as Mullah Mohammad Omar donned the reputed Cloak of the Prophet Mohammed in Kandahar to accept the title of Commander of the Faithful, he acted within a historical tradition "consistent with a kin-based mode of Pashtun tribal social and

political organization [that] has been the defining [trait] of Afghan politics since Pashtuns first came to dominate the Afghanistan in the mid-18th century."[48] One meaningful way of interpreting the Taliban rise to power is to view it as the Pashtun choosing one of their own who was renowned for his piety and simplicity to rule Afghanistan. Although these two events occurred centuries apart, they shared a common denominator: Pashtun hegemony.

An important distinction here is the difference between state formation and state failure. It is not that a nation-state never evolved in Afghanistan; rather, most scholars view the country as a failed state whose infrastructure has been destroyed or rendered ineffective by war and other disasters. As M. Nazif Shahrani explained, "The primary reason for the failure has been the unwillingness or inability of the leadership to shift from a tribal political culture anchored in person-centered politics to a broader, more inclusive, participatory national politics based on the development of modern national institutions and ideologies."[49] Despite their universalist message, the Taliban refused to stop behaving like Pashtuns historically acted—they embodied a tribal hegemony that has scorned other tribes and traditions, and failed to reach out to broaden their base of support. This failure became very apparent when considering their treatment of women and Taliban behavior toward other Afghan ethnic and religious groups.

The mujahideen interregnum proved to be a period marked by not only widespread war and indiscriminate use of violence, but also of more targeted brutality focused on particular ethnic groups. After the Taliban gained power, the marginalized ethnicities considered the Taliban's version of Islamic justice a pretext for killing non-Pashtuns. Although a Taliban regime ruled in Kabul, much of the rest of the country remained under the control of its enemies. In May 1997 a rebellion of Shia Hazaras forestalled a Taliban takeover of Mazar-e Sharif. Replacing their losses required a transfusion of an additional 5,000 new madrassa students. In June 1997 elements opposing Taliban rule established the "United Islamic and National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan," which would become known as the NA. But efforts to form a new "shadow government" floundered due to squabbles among Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazara factions.[50] Rashid offered a fuller explanation:

> All sides had carried out ethnic cleansing and religious persecution. The Taliban had massacred Shi'a Hazara villagers and forced out Tajik farmers from the Shomali valley. The Uzbeks and Hazaras had massacred hundreds of Taliban prisoners and killed Pashtun villagers in the north and around Kabul. The Shi'a Hazaras had also forced out Pashtuns on the basis of their Sunni beliefs. More than three-quarters of a million people had been displaced by the recent fighting—in the north around Mazar, on the Herat front and around Kabul—creating a new refugee crisis.[51]

Winter imposed its annual lull in the fighting, but by summer 1998 the Taliban had amassed sufficient combat and logistics strength, much of which came from their Pakistani and Saudi allies. This replenishment allowed for a second assault on Mazar-e Sharif. The corpses of 5,000 to 8,000 massacred civilians lay in the wake of their advance; among these were "Iranian diplomats [stationed at the Iranian Consulate in Mazar], intelligence officers, and a journalist [who had been herded] into the basement and then shot."[52] One observer described the tone of this massacre as "genocidal in its ferocity."[53] In large measure, it was retribution for Taliban losses inflicted the previous year by the NA.

The regime's attitude toward gender represented another dimension of its hatred of the Hazara. Women within this ethnic group had formerly comprised a core of opposition to the Taliban. For centuries Afghanistan's tribal culture constrained women in a vise of domesticity that limited their opportunities within society. Gender issues became muddled during the 1970s as Afghans wrestled with social issues raised by the PDPA and its Soviet mentors. If the Soviet occupation eroded traditional values, it also afforded women—especially those who numbered among the ranks of the urban middle class—greater opportunities for education and careers.[54] Predictably enough, for many this resulted in conflicting values and loyalties.

The 1992 collapse of the Najibullah government did not bode well for women who had supported the Communist government. Many suffered abuse, torture, and death at the hands of mujahideen who sought retribution for crimes committed by the former regime. In the post-Communist era, women's conduct, apparel, and fashion mirrored the return to traditional Islamic mores and values. Although Rabbani's Isamic Republic of Afghanistan neglected to codify women's rights, it did at least acknowledge the role of women in the jihad against the Soviets, as well as their right to work for a livelihood and receive an education.[55] Historically though, a woman's professional status could backfire with negative results. Some former mujahideen regarded feminine upward mobility as an indication that a woman's mind had been inoculated with atheistic, anti-Islamic values. Nonetheless, the status of Afghan women gradually improved before the Taliban rose to power. Approximately 70 percent of the teachers at Kabul University were female by the mid-1990s, along with about 8,000 members of the university's student body. The city's public school students numbered near 150,000 by that decade, and roughly 40 percent were female.[56]

Things changed dramatically and suddenly in areas conquered by the Taliban. In these regions, religious police appeared almost immediately to enforce Islamist strictures on female behavior. Typical was a public notice published by Mawlawi Rafiullah Moazin, head of Kabul's Religious Police, that warned women not to go outside their residence: "If you go outside the house you should not be like women who used to go with fashionable clothes wearing much cosmetics and appearing in front of every man before the coming of Islam. . . . If women are going outside with fashionable ornamental and charming clothes to show themselves, they will be cursed by the Islamic Shari'a and should never expect to go to heaven."[57]

A noted Afghan academic with credentials in archaeology, Sidiqa Sidiq, appealed in vain to Taliban authorities: "Based on the orders of the Holy Koran, I am requesting all the concerned brothers and individuals to release us from this detention and these chains and let us continue our education and our jobs. Under the Islamic Law that is the prime need for the development of our ruined homeland."[58] The Taliban ignored this plea, and thumbed their noses at UN requests for the universal observance of human rights. That Afghanistan had formerly been a signatory to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights carried little weight with the country's new leadership.[59]

In the wake of President Najibullah's murder in 1996, media attention finally began to focus on how the Taliban treated women. Only after "Western journalists witnessed the public whipping of women with bicycle chains because they had not worn their burqas correctly" did members of the press decide that the "people's right to know" warranted moving Afghan gender issues into the spotlight of world public opinion.[60]

In their efforts to instill the values that they believed were necessary to create a pure religious society, the Taliban ushered in a brutal regime of strict behavioral standards for all Afghans. Public punishments, even for capital offenses, assumed a grim equal opportunity dimension. One episode in Kandahar entailed tying a suspected murderer between the goal posts of a soccer stadium recently renovated by the UN—where the relatives of his alleged victim executed him with an AK-47. Other examples include the stoning of a woman to death for trying to leave Afghanistan with a man who was not her blood relative.[61] The Taliban also severely curtailed many forms of social entertainment common in the West, including television, videos, music, cards, and kite flying.

Previously, the sect represented an unknown quantity to US diplomats who, if a little naïve from the vantage point of historical hindsight, had no particular reason *not* to take what the Taliban told them at face value. The latter articulated a dislike for Iran, intent to curtail poppy cultivation, and, at least initially, a disdain for the foreign Muslim presence of the Arab-Afghans. Moreover, they projected a public image of foregoing political power in favor of simply ensuring that the reins of government were in the hands of good Muslims. According to Ahmed Rashid, at least some US officials viewed the Taliban "as messianic do-gooders [not altogether unlike] born-again Christians from the American Bible Belt."[62] Despite warnings from others in the region, American diplomats could not fully grasp what the Taliban represented and promised, partially because the United States had not been integrally engaged in Afghan affairs once the Soviets withdrew at the end of the 1980s.

This brief review of the physical, political, cultural, and historical structures of Afghanistan has tried to illustrate the environment in which US forces found themselves operating in 2001. These structures had developed over centuries and had proven extremely resistant to change. Perhaps the two most important elements of Afghan life that have persisted are contradictory. First, Afghan society has been and remains an amalgam of ethnic groups such as the Pashtuns who are historically mutually antagonistic. The fact that each ethnic group contains further tribal divisions only contributed to the fragmented nature of society. This social structure, not surprisingly, has historically served as a brake on political unity within Afghanistan's borders. While the country was first united as a kingdom in the 18th century, ethnic fractures continued to characterize Afghan life.

The second critical element has been the role of outside intervention in Afghan affairs. Foreign powers from the British in the 18th century to the Pakistanis and, arguably, the Americans at the beginning of this century have viewed Afghanistan as a strategic territory and have attempted to gain dominance in the country. Unified opposition composed of Afghans of all ethnic groups has met these outsiders, especially those from outside the Islamic world. Indeed, foreign armies have actually served as forces for political accord inside Afghanistan, although that accord was often short-lived.

These elements and the other deeply embedded structures examined in this discussion would come to play a major role in OEF. American Soldiers who arrived in 2001 and early 2002 would quickly discover that the country they had entered was exceedingly complex. To achieve any amount of long-term success, these Soldiers would have to deal not only with harsh physical terrain but also with a society that was quite different from their own.

Notes

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37. Rashid, *Taliban*, 32.
38. Olivier Roy, as quoted in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 238. This definition, taken from Roy, appears in Girardet's glossary but does not cite a specific work. However, two publications authored by Roy do appear in Girardet's bibliography on page 522: *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2d Edition, 1990), and *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (Darwin Press).
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40. Rashid, *Taliban*, 29.
41. Rashid, *Taliban*, 29–30.
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44. Rashid, *Taliban*, 86.
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54. Christine Aziz and Smruti Patel, "Defiance and Oppression: The Situation of Women," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 104.
55. Aziz and Patel, "Defiance and Oppression," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 106–108.
56. Aziz and Patel, "Defiance and Oppression," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 108.
57. Aziz and Patel, "Defiance and Oppression," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 108.
58. Aziz and Patel, "Defiance and Oppression," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 108–109.
59. Aziz and Patel, "Defiance and Oppression," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 108–109.
60. Aziz and Patel, "Defiance and Oppression," in Girardet et al., *Afghanistan*, 109; see also Rashid, *Taliban*, 113.
61. Rashid, *Taliban*, 2–5.
62. Rashid, *Taliban*, 176–177.

Chapter 2

The American Response to Terror: Planning Operation ENDURING FREEDOM

In the days that followed the attacks on 11 September 2001, it became clear that the United States (US) Government intended to take swift and decisive action. In his address to the nation, President George W. Bush announced that the United States and its friends would soon be embarking on a campaign to destroy the forces that had planned and executed those attacks. Bush stated, "America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism."[1] Across the globe, US military forces prepared for operations. Within US Central Command (CENTCOM), the combatant command whose geographic area of responsibility (AOR) included Afghanistan, military staffs began developing a comprehensive campaign plan for widespread counterterrorist actions in a number of countries. This plan was complex and had to be built from the ground up because no previous plan for operations in Afghanistan or other nearby countries existed.

The overarching objectives of CENTCOM's plan were ambitious and required the planners to create a plan that featured both conventional units and Special Operations Forces (SOF) from a variety of nations. They also had to rely on capabilities offered by other agencies within the US Government. Despite the complexities and the demand of creating a wholly new campaign plan, by 21 September, less than 2 weeks after the assaults in New York City and Washington, DC, General Tommy Franks, the commander of CENTCOM, briefed President Bush on the concept of the plan for what was called Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF).*

USAF Photo by TSgt Steve Faulisi, USAF

Figure 5. General Tommy Franks, commander of US forces in Afghanistan.

In the days following the attacks, President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had provided the strategic vision and overall direction for OEF as well as for what became known as the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Working from this guidance, Franks designed OEF to eliminate Osama bin Laden and his terrorist group, al-Qaeda, and to take down the ruling Taliban regime that harbored these terrorists. The resulting campaign plan divided operations into four phases, beginning with preparing the battlefield for an air campaign and the insertion of SOF to work with and train indigenous forces and culminating in humanitarian efforts that would allow the international Coalition to help rebuild Afghanistan.

*Initially, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM was called Operation INFINITE JUSTICE; however, because Muslim followers believe that only God can compel infinite justice, the name was changed to ENDURING FREEDOM.

The overall approach taken by Franks and the Bush administration was multifaceted, utilizing all the elements of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic—to achieve the larger goals of the new war on terrorism. From the early days of OEF, Franks and his staff worked closely with military representatives from many nations to ensure the campaign plan made the best use of international capabilities. Likewise, because gaining and retaining the support of the Afghan people became a crucial aspect of the campaign, CENTCOM mounted effective humanitarian assistance efforts. This imperative added the additional task of integrating nongovernment organizations (NGOs), like the International Conference of the Red Cross, into the plan.

This chapter provides an account of how the American Government, working with its allies, created a unique response to answer the terrorists that had perpetrated the worst attack on the United States since Pearl Harbor. The discussion will begin with a brief overview of the American experience with terrorism over the last three decades to help explain why the US Government in 2001 had no plan to attack al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan. Following that section, the chapter will shift focus to the strategy devised by the Bush administration that would serve as the foundation for the campaign the American military and its partners were about to begin. Because international support was so critical to OEF, the discussion will then recount the efforts to work with key countries such as Pakistan and Uzbekistan and build a Coalition that would help the United States respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September. Finally, the chapter examines the plan itself to explain how Coalition forces intended to enter a landlocked country and defeat both the Taliban regime and the al-Qaeda organization harbored by that regime.

International Terrorism and American Counterterrorism Policy, 1970–2001

In hindsight, it is perhaps difficult to understand why the US Government did not have a plan in 2001 to mount an offensive against terrorist targets in Afghanistan. After all, in the previous 3 years the al-Qaeda organization and its leader, Osama bin Laden, had used Afghanistan as a site for planning and launching two dramatic attacks on American targets. In 1998 al-Qaeda had simultaneously bombed the US Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. These attacks killed over 200 and wounded thousands. In 2000 suicide bombers had used a huge bomb to blow a large hole in the destroyer USS *Cole* as it was moored in the harbor of Aden, Yemen, killing 17 Sailors. By early 2001 US intelligence officials were reasonably certain that al-Qaeda was responsible for both incidents.[2]

These suspicions were based on strong evidence, but did not collectively represent a trigger for a large-scale military campaign. Indeed, in 1998 the US Government chose not to initiate major military operations against the Taliban regime that was providing refuge for al-Qaeda, but instead launched missile strikes designed to kill the organization's leadership and damage its training camps. In the wake of the *Cole* bombing, the American Government gathered evidence and prepared a multifaceted response that featured diplomatic pressure on the Taliban to turn bin Laden over to the United States. At the same time, intelligence and military officials continued to plan covert efforts to kill bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders using SOF, cruise missiles, or non-Taliban groups inside Afghanistan.[3] In support of any future US airstrike against Osama bin Laden, CENTCOM and other US military agencies maintained a list of al-Qaeda targets at all times. This set of targets, and the preparations that had been made to strike them, were the only "plans" available to the CENTCOM commander on the morning of 11 September 2001.

This lack of a fully manifested plan for a campaign in Afghanistan should not be surprising. In the three decades that preceded the events of 9/11, a period replete with terrorist attacks against American military targets and other interests, no US administration had chosen to direct large-scale military operations against any nation that either directly conducted the attacks or harbored the groups responsible for terrorist incidents. In general, the American counterterrorism policy was a mix of diplomatic, legal, law enforcement, intelligence, and covert initiatives. In a few cases where evidence pointed to state-sponsored terrorism, the American Government did launch military actions to punish those regimes.

Perhaps the best example of a focused military response was the escalation of action against Muammar Qadhafi's Libya in the 1980s. After discovering that Libyan agents were involved in several attacks on US military personnel and installations in Europe, the Reagan administration used US air power to attack Libyan aircraft and bomb targets in the capital city of Tripoli. The US Government, however, never considered invading the country and overthrowing the Qadhafi regime, conceivably because of the relatively small scale of the attacks and their location overseas.

While the Libyan attacks were horrific and unconscionable, a military campaign aimed at regime change was not among the courses of action considered to address the Qadhafi problem. Moreover, the broad approach by the Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Clinton administrations toward Libya that relied on economic, diplomatic, and legal policies as well as limited military actions seemed to members of these administrations to be the right response toward a terrorist state because it resulted in success. By the late 1990s the Qadhafi government had distanced itself from terrorist groups and begun working with the United States, the United Nations (UN), and the International Court of Justice to bring the Libyan officials responsible for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, to trial. Until September 2001, no American political or military leader had seriously considered counterterrorism policies that departed from this general approach.

Strategy for the Global War on Terrorism

The US response to the attacks of 9/11 differed considerably from past US policy to terrorism. Unlike the Libyan-sponsored incidents or previous al-Qaeda bombings, the attacks on that September morning were directed against iconic landmarks of American power inside the country itself. These strikes by al-Qaeda hijackers also inflicted far greater casualties than previous terrorist attacks. Despite policy precedents, the Bush administration immediately considered large-scale military action once the scale of the 9/11 attacks became apparent. President Bush pledged to bring the entire spectrum of US power to the fight in Afghanistan and declared the terrorist attacks acts of war rather than crimes. As such, the military would take the lead in actions against al-Qaeda rather than playing a limited role as in the past.

Three days after the attacks, President Bush signaled his intent to use the military broadly when he signed a directive making all elements of the Ready Reserves available for up to 2 years of Active Duty.[4] One day later, on 15 September 2001, the President used very clear language at Camp David to assert the role of the Armed Forces in his response to the terrorists, stating, "The message is for everybody who wears the uniform: get ready. The United States will do what it takes to win this war."[5]

Thus, within days of the attacks, the Bush administration began using the term "war" to describe its effort against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups and consequently began placing

some governmental institutions on a war footing. In an effort to bolster homeland defense, the Department of Defense (DOD) began planning for Operation NOBLE EAGLE, the official name for homeland defense and civil support operations after 9/11. The mobilization in support of NOBLE EAGLE called up approximately 35,000 National Guard and Reserve members to provide medical and engineering support as well as general civil support.[6] The Air National Guard patrolled the skies over New York and Washington, DC, and flew random patrols over other major cities. Coast Guard Reserves patrolled the waters on both coasts. The US population overwhelming supported these steps. A *New York Times*/CBS News poll taken 2 weeks after the 9/11 attacks found that 92 percent of those surveyed believed the United States should take military action. Even if it meant the deaths of thousands of military personnel, 72 percent supported military action, and 68 percent believed the military conflict would last a year or longer.[7]

In an address to the nation on 20 September 2001, President Bush declared that Osama bin Laden and his terrorist organization were responsible for the attacks and implicated the Taliban leadership as sponsors of al-Qaeda. Although bin Laden and al-Qaeda were the primary perpetrators for the 9/11 attacks, Bush clearly stated that the goal of the United States was to look beyond bin Laden to eliminate terrorism worldwide. He declared, "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."[8] Bush also used this speech to announce that the US Government had given the Taliban an ultimatum demanding that they hand over all members of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and close all terrorist camps on Afghan territory. A refusal to do so, Bush promised, would be met by military action.

Other calls for the Taliban to surrender Osama bin Laden and cease all affiliation with al-Qaeda followed. On 6 October 2001, for example, President Bush gave a final warning to the regime in Kabul, stating, "The Taliban has been given the opportunity to surrender all the terrorists in Afghanistan and to close down their camps and operations. Full warning has been given, and time is running out."[9] According to one report, on the eve of the US military offensive, the Taliban offered to try Osama bin Laden in an Islamic court.[10] However, the US Government quickly rejected this compromise.

From its incipient stage, the primary goal of US strategy in the emerging campaign against terrorism was to disrupt and destroy the al-Qaeda organization in Afghanistan and in other states that had granted al-Qaeda sanctuary. Still, President Bush explicitly attempted to distinguish the war on terrorism from a religious war against those of the Islamic faith in his 20 September address: "The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them."[11] This was an important declaration given the American desire to make the campaign a Coalition effort and limit the number of adversaries that Coalition would face. Indeed, President Bush repeatedly asked every nation in the world to join in the battle against extremism and terrorism in its many guises.

Civilian and military officials in the US Government certainly understood the impending campaign against al-Qaeda as a *war*. Furthermore, most believed that this new war would *not* resemble past armed conflicts. This imminent military effort was focused against a secretive supranational terrorist organization and because of that distinction, would likely not rely on conventional combat operations against an enemy state and its armed forces. This difference

in the nature of the conflict forced American leaders to consider how they might harness all the elements of national power in the new war. Beginning in September 2001, planners for the GWOT employed a variety of means including interrupting financial networks, conducting widespread information operations, and asserting diplomatic influence in conjunction with military action.

Disrupting terrorist financial networks became a vitally important part of the overall campaign. On 23 September, just 12 days after the attacks, Bush signed Executive Order 13224 authorizing the US Government to block the assets of foreign individuals and entities that committed or posed a serious risk of committing acts of terrorism. This effort included individuals who supported or assisted terrorist organizations.[12] In addition to the Executive order, the United States and its allies worked to deny terrorist access to the international financial system and to prevent the movement of assets through alternative financial networks.

Information efforts included providing information to the Afghan population about US intentions. The United States needed to ensure that the Afghan citizens as well as Muslim allies around the world understood that a war was not being waged against Islam and Muslims, but against terrorist organizations and their illegitimate allies that ruled Afghanistan. Further, as the largest provider of humanitarian funding to Afghanistan, the United States publicly asserted its renewed commitment of aid through planned food drops and coordination with humanitarian organizations.

Intelligence gathering efforts grew exponentially after the attacks as the military and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began focusing on al-Qaeda and affiliate organizations. Lieutenant General Michael DeLong, Deputy Commander of CENTCOM, recalled that his staff immediately pulled together all available intelligence on Afghanistan and began to review counterterrorism contingency plans.[13] Although the United States had a well-developed set of intelligence services, successful intelligence operations required the sharing of information from allied countries. By 30 September 2001, over 100 nations had begun to offer intelligence support, and several dozen countries took more overt action by detaining suspected terrorists and their supporters.[14]

On the diplomatic front, President Bush and his key advisors—including Vice President Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell—immediately began to put together a Coalition from around the world. Making the fight against terrorism an international effort had become a cornerstone of Bush's strategy and some American military leaders quickly recognized it as equal in importance to the imminent military action in Afghanistan. DeLong, for example, contended that the construction of a Coalition was key to launching a multifaceted counterterrorist campaign that struck at terrorist groups across the globe. International organizations and leaders from nations around the world were sympathetic to the American cause, quickly denouncing the terrorist attacks and offering condolences to the victims. The victims of the attack had included citizens from over 80 countries, a fact that highlighted the international significance of the atrocity.

Some nations quickly offered military assistance while others agreed to provide intelligence and access to their airspace. Because of the complexity of worldwide negotiations and alliances, the Coalition did not fully disclose all specific pledges. Generally, offers of support involved sharing information, transportation access agreements, use of military bases, and provisions of military assets. Because Afghanistan was completely landlocked, access to airspace,

ports, airfields, and roads was especially crucial to the campaign. Some nations promised border security to thwart escape attempts by al-Qaeda. Others provided substantial military assets such as aircraft, ships, equipment, and both conventional and special forces.[15] The most critical contributions came from America's traditional allies—Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and France in particular—which quickly declared that an attack on the United States was an attack on their own countries and volunteered military troops and equipment.

Support also came from international organizations such as the UN, which issued several proclamations concerning terrorism and humanitarian assistance, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which offered the most dramatic initiative. In 2001 NATO was the strongest military alliance in the world and in the wake of 9/11, the organization fulfilled the promise that was at the core of its existence. Formed in 1949 to defend western Europe against a Soviet invasion, NATO had survived the Cold War as a powerful league of Western allies. NATO took military action in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Kosovo, but 9/11 was the first time that a NATO member-nation was directly attacked. Article V of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, which formed the basis of the alliance, made the following assertion: "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."[16] Although the organization had participated in past military actions, NATO leadership had not invoked Article V. The events of 11 September, nevertheless, called for a strong consideration of the article. Hours after the attacks, Lord Robertson, Secretary General of NATO, made a strong public statement condemning the attacks: "These barbaric acts constitute intolerable aggression against democracy and underline the need for the international community and the members of the Alliance to unite their forces in fighting the scourge of terrorism."[17]

NATO leaders felt a responsibility to uphold the alliance in the face of terrorism. At the same time, the North Atlantic Council had to consider its sometimes-tenuous relationship with Russia and the effect any action would have on central and eastern European nations who might someday join NATO. Another consideration was the sustainment of continuing missions in the Balkans and Macedonia.[18] Finally, consensus to support the United States required proof that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda were responsible for the attacks. Many member nations had already experienced terrorism and did not wish to incite new incidents within their borders, nor did they wish to offend their sizable Muslim populations.[19]

Within 36 hours of the attack, NATO provisionally invoked Article V, and by 4 October 2001 had gathered sufficient evidence incriminating Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda to allow a formal invocation of Article V. As part of this declaration, the NATO allies agreed to take numerous measures to assist the United States in the fight against terrorism. The nations agreed to share intelligence and increase security for US and other allied facilities on their territories. They also gave blanket overflight clearance to US and allied military aircraft involved in the campaign and granted American forces access to ports and airfields on allied territory.[20]

In support of the military effort, NATO deployed the nine ships of the Standing Naval Forces Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED) to the eastern Mediterranean. Five NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft and one cargo plane with 196 military and 31 civilian people deployed to Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, under the command of North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), a move that freed up American AWACS aircraft to deploy to Afghanistan. While this initial NATO support enhanced American military

capabilities, the United States did not initially seek substantial military forces or assets from NATO countries. Most of these nations did not have the air or Special Forces (SF) capabilities needed for the initial campaign. Instead, these allies supported other strategic objectives by providing intelligence, security, and tracking and terminating financial networks that supported al-Qaeda and their supporters. In a press conference on 20 September 2001, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage discussed the importance of this level of international cooperation on all strategic aspects of the war against terrorism. Explaining that the fight against terrorism would be a sustained campaign, he stated, "And I think it is quite clear to most, if not all . . . that this is not just military in nature. It's political, it's economic, it will mean sharing of intelligence. So I think there is a role of some sort for every nation who is disgusted by terrorism and has had enough."[21]

By focusing the NATO effort toward other missions and by not asking for collective military action from the allies, the United States maintained control of the military campaign while gaining a wide degree of international support. This arrangement also benefited the allies who demonstrated their commitment to eliminate terrorism and support the United States, but were not bound by future military action.[22] French Minister of Defense Alain Richard appeared to endorse this approach and its diplomatic benefits when he remarked in early October 2001, "Our American friends have thoughtfully emphasized that defeating terrorism can only proceed from a large array of means—financial, political, diplomatic, judicial, police and intelligence-related . . . of which military force is only one among others."[23]

The endorsement of the UN also assisted the overall American approach. The UN charter stated that the organization's goals were to prevent war, affirm fundamental human rights in all nations, uphold international law, and promote social and economic progress.[24] As the largest and most important of the world's international organizations, it facilitated dialogue and cooperation for 189 countries. While only a relatively small number of member countries considered themselves military allies of the United States in 2001, the attacks of 9/11 compelled an immediate condemnation of terrorism. On 12 September 2001 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated, "We are struggling, above all, to find adequate words of condemnation for those who planned and carried out these abominable attacks. In truth, no such words can be found. And words, in any case, are not enough."[25] That day, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1368 that condemned the attacks, expressed condolences to the victims, and called on all nations to combat terrorism. In addition to these strong condemnations, many nations used the General Assembly forum to publicly express their outrage at the attacks and express sympathy for the American people. James Cunningham, Acting US Ambassador to the UN, thanked these speakers for their support and urged united action to defend the founding values of the United Nations. He also reminded the General Assembly of President Bush's message that all nations had to choose between those who oppose terrorism and those who use and support terrorism, including turning a blind eye to terrorist groups active on their soil.[26]

While condemnation of the attacks and sympathy for the victims was widespread, UN members had diverse opinions concerning subsequent action and retaliation. They expressed their concerns in several debates in the General Assembly. Gaining UN consensus and support was central to the US campaign, especially because of humanitarian concerns in Afghanistan. The UN estimated at the time of 9/11 that more than 5 million Afghans required humanitarian assistance and 3.8 million relied on UN food aid for survival. Nearly 20 percent of those in need

were children under the age of 5.[27] The UN called on all countries and especially neighboring countries to help prevent tragedy by contributing humanitarian aid and opening borders to those in need. In late September, with military action in Afghanistan looming on the horizon, Kofi Annan implored the international community to provide assistance:

> In accordance with international law, the borders must be open to civilians seeking refuge. At the same time, the international community must send swift and generous help, so that refugees do not become an impossible burden on the neighboring States. Innocent civilians should not be punished for the actions of their government. The world is united against terrorism. Let it be equally united in protecting and assisting the innocent victims of emergencies and disasters.[28]

The UN representative from Pakistan, Shamshad Ahmad, pledged Pakistan's full support in the fight against international terrorism and stated that over 2.5 million Afghan refugees had entered Pakistan in the last two decades with many more likely to cross the border. He also appealed to the international community to address Afghanistan's grave humanitarian situation through reconstruction and reconciliation as well as greater emphasis on economic growth in developing countries.[29]

In response to the 9/11 attacks, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1373 to combat terrorism and monitor its implementation. Resolution 1373 made previous UN Resolution 1269 binding on all member states and furthered the strategy of the Bush administration by declaring that all nations must block any financing of terrorism, deny safe haven to any terrorist persons or entities, and prevent terrorist groups from using their territories. Further, the resolution stated that member nations should establish terrorist acts as serious criminal offenses and should bring to justice any person or any organization who participates in terrorist financing, planning, preparation, or perpetration. The UN Security Council also requested that all nations share intelligence regarding terrorist acts and assist one another in criminal investigations or criminal proceedings relating to the finance or support of terrorist acts.[30]

NATO and the UN were not the only international organizations to express solidarity with the United States. The Organization of American States, which included many Central and South American countries as well as the United States, quickly invoked the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (commonly know as the Rio Treaty). Ratified in 1945, this treaty was similar to NATO's Article V in that the agreement stated that an attack against one was considered an attack against all. On 14 September 2001 Australia formally invoked the ANZUS Treaty, which pledged Australian and New Zealand support for their ally, the United States. Both Australia and New Zealand would eventually provide both SOF and naval ships for OEF.

As noted earlier in this chapter, several key nations expressed their immediate support to the United States after 9/11 and volunteered to participate in the GWOT. Great Britain, as a member of NATO, had supported the invocation of Article V. However, British Prime Minister Tony Blair went further by committing the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, the British Army, and British SOF to the Afghanistan campaign. The Royal Navy made available an aircraft carrier, a squadron of Harrier jets, and other capital ships while the Royal Air Force planned to use fighters, bombers, tankers, and attack helicopters.[31] President Bush recognized Prime Minister Blair's and Great Britain's contribution stating in his 20 September address to the

nation, "America has no truer friend than Great Britain. Once again, we are joined together in a great cause."[32]

Canada, as a NATO member, also supported Article V and further contributed to the operation by pledging 2,000 Canadian troops including an SOF unit, six warships, six planes, and several helicopters. Canada placed the Canadian Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) as well as three humanitarian assistance ships in readiness.[33] In addition to invoking the ANZUS Treaty, Australia committed 150 Special Air Service troops along with 1,000 other service members. Australian Prime Minister John Howard also promised to send aircraft and additional SOF if required.[34]

France allowed use of French airspace and sent a navy air defense frigate and a command and logistics vessel to support the United States. The French placed their SOF overseas in readiness and President Jacques Chirac agreed to commit French forces in the offensive.[35] Japan sent four warships from its Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) for support, intelligence, medical service, transportation, fuel, and supplies. Turkey provided blanket access to Turkish airspace as well as the use of eight air bases. Turkey Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit also authorized the deployment of SOF to train anti-Taliban fighters, and the Turkish parliament increased support for the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance (NA), which controlled territory in northeast Afghanistan. By 30 September 2001 the Department of State (DOS) had received dozens of declarations of multilateral and unilateral support. Equally important was that several Middle Eastern nations severed diplomatic ties with the Taliban, thus furthering that regime's isolation from the international community.

Securing Access to Afghanistan's Neighbors

Perhaps the most critical type of support offered to the Coalition in September and October 2001 were the overflight and landing rights made available to the Coalition by over two dozen nations.[36] Given Afghanistan's location as a landlocked country in the middle of central Asia, planners knew that securing overflight and basing assistance from Afghanistan's neighbors would be critical. Further, the United States needed access to these countries to stage Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) units, teams that could locate and pick up pilots and crewmembers who had ejected from damaged aircraft. Without CSAR capability, both ground and air missions would be precarious.

Negotiating in this part of the world, in fact, was extremely complex because the alliances and conflicts in this region made the area a virtual political chessboard. To the north of Afghanistan were the central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, which were independent but retained close ties to Russia. Although each claimed to be a democracy, human rights violations had damaged relations between these nations and some countries in the West. To the west was Iran, which, although a staunch opponent of the Taliban, firmly opposed joining a US-led Coalition claiming the war was a pretext for helping Israel and extending American military power in the Middle East. In late September 2001 Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, expressed his government's public dismissal of support for the anti-Taliban Coalition stating, "How can America, which has tampered with Iran's interests, demand help from Iran to attack the suffering, oppressed and Muslim nation of Afghanistan? . . . It is true that America's dignity has been badly damaged, but that does not mean that it can make an arrogant face and force other countries to give in to its demands. . . . It is wrong to say that those who are not with us are with the terrorists."[37]

Figure 6. Afghanistan and its neighbors.

Pakistan to the south of Afghanistan presented the most difficult challenge for the Coalition. The populous Muslim country had been involved in internal Afghan affairs for decades. In the 1980s the country's Pashtun provinces in the northwest had been the sanctuary for the mujahideen movement, and in the following decade, the Taliban drew support not only from the fundamentalist Muslims in the northwest but also from the Pakistani Government. In 2001 much of the country's population was generally sympathetic to the Taliban and not necessarily eager to support the United States. Further complicating diplomatic matters was that in the fall of 2001 Pakistan was embroiled in a disagreement with India over the Kashmir region, a conflict that threatened to escalate into nuclear war.

Within this turbulent international environment, military leaders and US diplomats worked to secure overflight, staging, and basing support. Recalling the initial planning sessions within the National Security Council following the 9/11 attacks, National Security Advisor

Condoleezza Rice remembered that the participants were struck by complexities inherent in conducting military operations in Afghanistan. She stated, "You look at the map, you look at Afghanistan and you look at where it is—I think the color kind of drained from everybody's faces. . . . I think everybody thought, 'Of all of the places to have to fight a war, Afghanistan would not be our choice.' But we didn't choose Afghanistan; Afghanistan chose us."[38]

During the course of these sessions, the central Asian nations of Uzebekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan quickly rose to prominence. Luckily, when Rice and others considered these countries as allies in the GWOT, there was a foundation on which they could build. These countries had become members of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program in the 1990s, and in 1995 that program facilitated the creation of the Central Asian Battalion (CENTRASBAT) to conduct training and exercises with NATO countries and the United States. In 1998 CENTCOM Commander General Anthony Zinni used CENTRASBAT as a conduit to foster closer ties with the central Asian states by attending the opening ceremony of an exercise held in Kyrgyzstan.[39] Then on 1 October 1999 the DOD transferred these nations from European Command's AOR to that of CENTCOM. When General Franks took command of CENTCOM, he continued to promote military relationships through CENTRASBAT exercises and visited President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan twice in the 12-month period before 9/11.[40]

Although the United States fostered military and political relationships with the independent central Asian states, the Russian Government still had multiple ties within the region and considered the area to be in their back yard.[41] On the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia and 10 former Soviet republics, including all 5 central Asian states, formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The CIS was not a confederation, but did facilitate coordination of security, trade, and finance among member countries and allowed Russia a great deal of influence in these matters. Russia also extended its influence through the Shanghai Five, another important regional organization formed to maintain security along the borders of the former Soviet states and China. Formed in 1996, the founding members—Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan—united to foster stability through fighting terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal immigration, and armed smuggling. In June 2001 Uzbekistan joined the alliance.[42]

Given Russia's heavy influence in the region, the United States tried to tread lightly in its dealings with the central Asian countries. Already in September 2000, General Franks was careful to ensure that support for Uzbekistan was not intended to compete with Russia's support and that CENTCOM's presence in the area was for "coordination and cooperation, not for competition."[43] Instead of fostering competition, US diplomatic strategy after 9/11 focused on gaining the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Putin was one of the first leaders to offer moral support after the attacks, and quickly pledged intelligence sharing and the opening of Russia's airspace for deliveries of humanitarian aid. The Russian president also urged the central Asian states to assist the United States.[44] This cooperation was vital for impending US operations in Afghanistan and was politically valuable for Putin who had an opportunity to regain international status and defuse criticism of Russia's policies toward Chechnya.[45]

While President Bush and other key US leaders worked with Moscow, US officials also traveled directly to central Asian states to seek support. On 28 September 2001, James R. Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, visited Tashkent, Uzbekistan. General Franks arrived in the Uzbek capital 2 days later and Secretary of Defense

Rumsfeld followed the CENTCOM commander on 5 October 2001. Rumsfeld met with President Islam Karimov and secured the use of Uzbekistan's former Soviet air base Karshi-Khanabad (later known as K2) for staging, CSAR, and humanitarian missions.[46] The United States did not intend its presence in Uzbekistan to become permanent. Rather, K2 would serve as a base for ongoing operations in Afghanistan and US forces would vacate once the conflict ended. This assurance eased fears of a permanent US presence within Russia's sphere of influence.

Figure 7. Location of US Air Base at Karshi-Khanabad (K2).

Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan was only 137 kilometers long, but was of strategic importance because of its proximity to Mazar-e Sharif and other NA strongholds. As President Bush's and the US military's emissary to Uzbekistan, Rumsfeld's ability to secure support from President Karimov was a key turning point in the planning process. Without use of the air base and airspace, the United States would have had a significantly more difficult time providing the logistics support for operations.

Karimov had not made this crucial decision without considering the benefit to his own government, however. The United States pledged military and financial support in return for the basing rights. While the terms of the agreements were not disclosed, the US Government gave Uzbekistan $118.2 million in general aid in 2002, up from a total of $24.8 million in 2001. Funding for Foreign Military Finance and International Military Education and Training grew from $3 million in 2001 to $37.7 million in 2002.[47] From Karimov's point of view, the relationship had benefits beyond the additional incoming funds. The US air base would stimulate the local economy and bring the young nation closer to the world's remaining superpower. Additionally, Uzbekistan planned to use US support to combat its own internal terrorist threat, a group called the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that often fought alongside Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. Indeed, in its negotiations with Karimov, the United States pledged to target the IMU as part of the GWOT.

While US diplomats were courting Uzbekistan, other officials also visited Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. All of these countries eventually issued statements of support, but Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan went further. The former offered the use of three air bases—Kulyab, located only 96 miles from the Afghan border; Kurgan-Tyube in the south; and Khujand in

the north. In addition, in December 2001 Kyrgyzstan granted the use of Manas Airport near the capital of Bishkek for use by the Coalition. This base became a major logistics hub during operations in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan's K2 provided the platform from which operations in northern Afghanistan could be launched, but the United States also needed cooperation from Pakistan. That country shared a 2,430-kilometer border with Afghanistan and was thus critical for operations in southern and eastern areas. Until 11 September 2001 Pakistan maintained a pro-Taliban stance and offered the Afghan regime political, financial, and military support. In light of the attacks on the United States, Pakistan had to give serious consideration to President Bush's ultimatum that "any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."[48] When faced with this statement, Pakistan quickly chose to side with the United States against Osama bin Laden and on 13 September, Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf announced that Pakistan would give "unstinted cooperation" to the United States.[49]

Unlike the former Soviet states where US relationships were relatively new, Pakistan was over 50 years old and had maintained an uneasy relationship with the United States for several decades. This relationship had begun in the early years of the Cold War when the United States and Pakistan aligned out of US concerns about Soviet expansion into South Asia and Pakistani anxiety about India. Conflicts between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 strained these links, although the relationship grew much tighter in the 1980s when Pakistan served as the conduit for US military aid to the mujahideen. In the 1990s, as Pakistan experienced political turmoil, ties between the two countries became strained again and finally broke in 1998 after Pakistan tested a nuclear weapon and the US applied economic sanctions.

The attacks of 9/11 provided Pakistan the opportunity to go from pariah to partner in the eyes of the United States. While a US partnership would be economically and diplomatically advantageous for Pakistan in many respects, President Musharraf faced a difficult decision. Within Pakistan, public opinion did not generally support the United States. Many Pakistanis regarded the United States with skepticism fostered by the belief that once Pakistan's usefulness had expired, the country would be cast off and forgotten, much like what had happened after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.[50] This skepticism was seen in a number of polls conducted in 2002. According to a Pew Global Attitudes Survey of that year, only 22 percent of Pakistanis had a favorable image of the United States in 1999–2000, and by 2002 this percentage dropped to only 10 percent. Additionally, only 20 percent of those surveyed favored the United States' declaration of a GWOT, while 45 percent opposed it.[51]

As one of the few nations who recognized the Taliban as a legitimate government, Pakistan had many deep-seated connections to the regime in Kabul. The Taliban's origin in the Pashtun ethnic group, a people who lived straddling the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, was only the most obvious tie. While border control was a known problem, managing the flow of terrorist groups and refugees seemed to be an insoluble problem for the Pakistani Government. Any Pakistani policy in support of US actions in Afghanistan had to take the interests of Pakistan's Pashtun citizens under consideration.[52] This was especially true of Pakistan's many Islamic fundamentalists who cooperated with al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and offered no great support to the Musharraf regime. Any abrupt change of policy had the potential to ignite violent reaction.

President Musharraf assessed his options and quickly came to a decision. Weighing the pros and cons of cooperating with the United States, he concluded that, militarily and economically, Pakistan did not have the strength or social cohesion to sustain an attack by the United States.[53] For this reason, Pakistan decided to join the GWOT and offer immediate tangible support to the United States. President Musharraf's strategy firmly and vocally placed the needs of his country and people first.

On 13 September 2001 Musharraf's government agreed to take several important steps mandated by the Bush administration. Following the American demarche, Pakistan had to stop al-Qaeda operatives at its border and end logistical support for bin Laden. And, in its relations with the Taliban, the Musharraf government had to cut off all shipments of fuel to the regime and prevent Taliban recruits from entering Afghanistan from Pakistan. If the evidence implicated bin Laden and al-Qaeda and the Taliban continued to harbor them, Pakistan had to break all relations with the Taliban government.[54] Ultimately, Pakistan agreed to 74 basing requests including CSAR, communication relay stations, and medical evacuation sites.[55] These negotiations included the right to use Pakistani bases near the cities of Pasni, Dalbandin, and Jacobabad as forward operating bases (FOBs).[56]

These measures were not easy for Musharraf to accept because of the significant dissent within his own government and military. More ominously, these events occurred as fears of nuclear conflict between Pakistan and India escalated over differences that had been festering for decades. Throughout 2000 and into 2001, troops and militants had assembled in the border region of Kashmir and increasingly came into armed conflict. This tension between the south Asian countries was at the forefront of President Musharraf's mind as he worked with US diplomats and was a catalyst in his decision to side with the United States.[57]

In return for Pakistan's extensive military cooperation, the country was compensated with over $1 billion in US assistance and several billion dollars from international organizations. The Bush administration also allowed Pakistan to reschedule $379 million of its $2.38 billion debt owed to the United States. The American Government offered other forms of assistance including funds for health, education, food, counternarcotics programs, border security, and law enforcement. As members of the international Coalition against terrorism, both Japan and the European Union suspended sanctions against Pakistan and promised debt relief, aid, and trade concessions.[58]

Prelude to Planning

The diplomatic efforts to build a Coalition and convince key regional powers such as Pakistan and Uzbekistan to collaborate must be considered an integral aspect of the overall campaign, especially given the curtailed timeframe allowed to both diplomats and planners. What loomed in front of all officials in the US Government—civilian and military—was the enormous challenge of quickly projecting forces into Afghanistan to destroy al-Qaeda before the organization's leaders slipped away.

While American diplomats continued to negotiate basing rights and other key details, military planners, primarily at CENTCOM, forged ahead with the daunting task of drawing up a campaign plan on a blank slate. This plan included operations in Afghanistan but had a truly global scope.[59] Estimates suggested that al-Qaeda had cells in approximately 60 nations including the United States, and the goal of the US strategy was to eradicate each one of these. Since

most terrorists were operating from countries within CENTCOM's AOR, that combatant command became a primary focus for the GWOT.[60]

As one of five geographically defined unified commands, CENTCOM was responsible for military activity in southwest and central Asia and northeast Africa, an area that encompassed 27 nations. In the past, CENTCOM had conducted successful missions to liberate Kuwait from Iraq and led humanitarian operations in Somalia and Kenya. On 9/11, even as the second plane was crashing into the World Trade Center, CENTCOM immediately activated its Crisis Action Team (CAT) to begin planning a response.[61] These organizations were specialized teams drawn from all joint command staff sections that immediately assembled to begin assessing the situation and devising possible resolutions in response to a crisis. On 11 September, while the President and his advisors met to discuss the circumstances and devise a national strategy, the CAT at CENTCOM had already begun its work.

On 9/11 General Franks, the CENTCOM commander, was making an official visit to the island of Crete. Without a secure telephone line in his hotel room, Franks quickly moved to the roof of the building where he could use an encrypted satellite link to communicate with his CENTCOM staff.[62] Back in Tampa, Florida, where CENTCOM's headquarters is located, the command's deputy commander, Lieutenant General DeLong ordered the CAT to stand up and told regional commanders to lock down their bases. Rumsfeld ordered the Armed Forces to Defense Condition (DEFCON) 3, and military bases around the world went to Threat Condition (THREATCON) Delta. Franks recalled that as soon as he turned on the television in his Crete hotel room, he knew war was imminent. As he flew back to the United States, Franks was already in planning discussions with his onboard staff and the senior leadership at CENTCOM.

On the morning of 11 September, President Bush was visiting an elementary school in Florida. Once he was notified of the attacks in New York and Washington, DC, he boarded Air Force One and flew to Barksdale Air Force Base (AFB) in Louisiana and then to Offutt AFB in Nebraska before returning to the White House later that afternoon. President Bush communicated with the National Security Council from Offutt AFB, and then assembled his entire team once he completed an address to the nation. The following morning Bush made contact with British Prime Minister Blair and discussed the veracity of the evidence against al-Qaeda and the possible ultimatums for the Taliban. That weekend Bush and the National Security Council met at Camp David to develop both an immediate response and the beginnings of an overall strategy. The group discussed the need to form an international Coalition, the scope of the war that they would declare, how to think about Afghanistan, and the methods to use in pursuit of al-Qaeda.[63]

CENTCOM was quickly pulled into the planning at the national level. Franks recalled that on 12 September Secretary Rumsfeld directed him to "prepare credible military options and bring them to me."[64] By that date Franks understood that the imminent campaign would have two objectives: destroy al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and remove the Taliban from power.[65] The next 10 days flew by as planners in Tampa considered a full range of courses of action to attain these goals. By doctrine, the US military creates campaign plans that coordinate military operations of all kinds so that they attain national strategic goals. Put another way, the campaign plan is the means of transforming military action into successful accomplishment of strategic objectives. Often, CENTCOM and the other regional combatant commands developed campaign plans for

future contingencies based on threat assessments and current US policy. For example, after the 1991 DESERT STORM operation that drove the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait, CENTCOM created a campaign plan for future military operations against Saddam Hussein and continued to develop that plan throughout the 1990s. While critical to military success, campaign plans are normally complex, requiring dozens of planners who need detailed information and analysis as well as a great deal of time. The planning effort takes into consideration terrain, weather, enemy strengths and weaknesses, as well as friendly forces and capabilities available. Further, planning staffs need to know in detail how friendly forces will travel into an area and often spend years developing deployment schedules.

As noted earlier, CENTCOM did not have a developed plan on the shelf for conventional ground operations in Afghanistan, nor did its planners have the type of detailed information required to immediately construct a detailed plan. Moreover, the command did not have much time to collect this information. What CENTCOM did have was a list of al-Qaeda locations that could become targets for air and cruise missile strikes. However, General Franks determined that the Bush administration was going to demand a far more sweeping campaign that would involve American Soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan. The leadership of CENTCOM and the planning teams thus began scrambling to learn as much as they could about Afghanistan's history, culture, and terrain.

To facilitate this learning process, CENTCOM invited experts from around the world to brief the military members working in Florida. This group of specialists included diplomats such as Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad, an Afghan-American who at that time held a position on the National Security Council, as well as academics from various think tanks and universities.[66] These lecturers discussed the cultural and ethnic history of Afghanistan, including the traditional role of tribes and approaches to principles such as loyalty and honor. An extremely valuable source of expertise came from former Russian generals who served in Afghanistan and historians of the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s who offered critical insights about that conflict. Lester Grau, a historian and author of two books on the tactics used by both sides in the Soviet-Afghan War, briefed CENTCOM planners about what the Taliban might do to defend their regime.

Armed with this expertise, military planners began work on an initial operation order that would guide Coalition forces in the deployment and early combat phases of the campaign. They would then transform that order and the overall vision for the campaign into a more complete plan that established objectives and phases, and defined key concepts such as center of gravity (COG) and lines of operation (LOOs), all of which are necessary for the complete expression of how a military force intends to achieve the overall end state of a campaign. The concept of the COG was particularly important to planners and was drawn from the thinking of military theorist Carl von Clausewitz who suggested that these centers represented the source of power for both sides in an armed conflict. Campaign planners might identify the adversary's military units as the enemy's COG or they might decide that the COG was actually the political leadership of the enemy nation.

During CENTCOM's planning process, the command's staff came to see the strategic-level COG as the continued support for the upcoming campaign from both the American population and the international community. Additionally, CENTCOM viewed its ability to project power into Afghanistan as the operational-level COG. When these planners shifted focus to the al-Qaeda and Taliban enemy, they calculated that the COG for the former would be its

well-developed financial network that undergirded its operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The Taliban's COG could be found, they believed, in their military forces, and that power was a result of the Taliban commanders' ability to retain cohesion among units that were made up of disparate tribes and ethnic groups. If that cohesion could be attacked, this strength might be diminished.

The LOOs were critical as well and were best understood as conceptual devices used to describe the directions of effort made by a military force. Traditionally, military planners used *geographic* LOOs to describe the sequential path taken by a military force to travel to the ultimate enemy objective. However, nonconventional campaign plans that were not based on seizing terrain en route to a specific geographic objective might have *logical* LOOs that described the various types of efforts to be mounted by a military force to attain its objectives. Examples of logical LOOs included security, reconstruction, governance, and training of indigenous forces. Developing the logical LOOs for the campaign in Afghanistan was an important task and it would take weeks of analysis and development before they were approved and published.

Assessing Campaign Options

CENTCOM's immediate objectives for the campaign were to overthrow Taliban rule in Afghanistan and eliminate the al-Qaeda organization in that country.[67] In early planning sessions, Secretary Rumsfeld emphasized that the opening stages of the campaign had to change the balance of power in Afghanistan by denying Taliban military power while enabling anti-Taliban forces.[68] This emphasis on Afghan proxies suggested that impending operations in Afghanistan would be different in comparison to other recent American military campaigns.

Instruction from Soviet experts provided vital texture to information gained from imagery intelligence and other means. Insights gained from the Soviet experience included the need to understand the role of Islam and the strength of Afghan religious beliefs. Many Afghans had viewed Soviet forces as infidel invaders and felt they had a duty to fight the foreign force for reasons of faith. The Soviets had made little allowance for the effect their intervention would have on the deeply religious Afghan population. Alexander Lyakhovsky, a Soviet general who commanded troops in Afghanistan, wrote, "[We] completely disregarded the most important national and historical factors, above all the fact that the appearance of armed foreigners in Afghanistan was always met with arms in the hands [of the population]. This is how it was in the past, and this is how it happened when our troops entered (Afghanistan)."[69]

Historical lessons were at the forefront of thinking as the CENTCOM commander and his staff developed the plan. They focused on the British experience in Afghanistan in the 19th century as well as the Soviet intervention, viewing them both as examples of the wrong type of approach to take in Afghanistan. US Air Force Lieutenant General Victor Eugene Renuart, who served as the CENTCOM Director of Operations (J3) in 2001, asserted that in the planning process, the historical experiences of these other armies were extremely powerful and suggested strongly that the United States had to avoid sending sizable numbers of troops to Afghanistan: "It was very, very important that we not relearn the lessons of the Russians, that we not get mired in large forces, that we not allow ourselves to be pinned down to big installations that could become easy targets, and that we not be seen as occupiers in the early stages because that would draw the same reactions that the Brits and the Russians drew."[70] According to Renuart, CENTCOM's historical analysis suggested that any large foreign element would inevitably face an armed and violent Afghan opposition unified across ethnic and political divisions.[71]

These insights led planners at CENTCOM to two key conclusions. First, they determined that the plan had to avoid the presence of a large Coalition ground force that might inflame the Afghan population. Second, they concluded that the Coalition effort had to achieve its goals quickly and turn political power over to the Afghans themselves as soon as possible. Both of these key realizations led CENTCOM planners to view the NA as the linchpin of the campaign. Renuart recalled that during the planning process in September 2001, the importance of this group ballooned. Renuart stated, "The ability to take forces from the NA, empower them, and have them take on a large portion of this ground operation was critically important to us."[72] Not only did the NA promise to provide the bulk of the ground forces, they would also put an Afghan face on the campaign and might provide the future political leadership of a post-Taliban Afghanistan. For Renuart, one of the most striking aspects of the CENTCOM plan was this reliance on the NA as the "ground component" of the Coalition effort.[73] This decision, however, tacitly transformed key alliance commanders such as Rashid Dostum and Fahim Khan into subordinates of General Franks. The CENTCOM commander and his staff would then have to figure out ways to ensure the Coalition's intent would be met by these distant Afghan leaders.

Supporting the use of the proxy force was the hard realities of Afghanistan's location. While US leaders were working to secure basing and staging assistance from neighboring countries, this assistance was by no means assured during this first week after the attack. A large number of ground troops could not be sustained without substantial staging facilities, and the NA did not have the facilities to host a large force. Because of the high mountains and distance from US staging areas, heavy artillery could not easily be airlifted into place.[74] Further, although President Bush assured military leaders they would have the time necessary to build up their forces, deploying a large contingent of ground troops would take longer than desired. These factors all strengthened the imperative of a small presence or footprint of Coalition forces.

As the CENTCOM staff began considering these factors, Franks received a directive from the President and Secretary Rumsfeld telling CENTCOM to develop a broad set of options ranging from a limited air campaign that used air and missile strikes to a large-scale intervention by ground forces.[75] The airstrike option would be similar to attacks against al-Qaeda facilities in 1998 after the African Embassy bombings. On the other extreme, the conventional force option would involve up to three light infantry battalions in direct combat against enemy forces.[76] After much consideration, the planning team arrived at three specific courses of action. The first would be a major Tomahawk land attack missile (TLAM) strike. The TLAM was an all-weather missile that had a range of about 870 miles and could be launched by US Navy ships in the Persian Gulf. With their sophisticated guidance mechanisms, the TLAM could hit targets in the rough terrain of Afghanistan making the missile an ideal weapon for certain types of targets.[77] This choice provided instant retaliation with little risk to US Armed Forces.

The second course of action was a TLAM strike followed by or concurrent with Global Power sorties.[78] The Global Power Program was the unclassified name for the US Air Force's long-range conventional strike aircraft such as B-1, B-2, and B-52 bombers that could strike al-Qaeda camps and Taliban bases with precision Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs). This option would require 3 to 10 days and also provided little risk to US forces.[79]

The third course of action combined cruise missiles, bombing missions, and small SOF teams composed of US Army SF Soldiers and Air Force combat air controller elements. These SOF units would provide intelligence support and air support to NA forces. US Army SF

possessed the requisite training and experience in a myriad of tasks, including advising foreign armies, and SF teams were prepared to act quickly and covertly while operating in the austere environment of Afghanistan. The Air Force combat air controllers could identify enemy targets and guide ordnance onto these targets using laser target designators and other devices, making these teams a lethal joint combination.

CENTCOM leadership favored the third course of action, because it combined the advantages of an air campaign with a presence on the ground that could enable the NA and signal the Coalition's determination without provoking Afghan concerns about foreign intervention. Although the NA was much smaller than the ruling Taliban, they had maintained their fighting forces for years and been quite effective in defending their territory from the Taliban. The goal for SOF was to convince the various warlords and tribal factions within the alliance to work together to defeat the Taliban. To win them over, these small American teams would promise the NA that they could deliver a huge amount of firepower in the form of missiles and bombs. Acting as forward observers, the American troops could use their technology to guide ordnance onto specific Taliban targets, regardless of how well hidden they might be.

In the eyes of the CENTCOM planners, this type of combined campaign would have a secondary benefit. Lieutenant General DeLong maintained that CENTCOM leaders realized that Taliban forces were dug in and the location of key targets such as political leaders were difficult to confirm. However, according to DeLong, aerial attacks on suspected Taliban and al-Qaeda positions had the potential to reveal those targets. DeLong explained, "You start hitting the enemy and they have to move. If they move, they can't attack, and if they move you can see them. So what we wanted was to see them move so we could get after them because they were dug into different places where we couldn't find them."[80] As the enemy began to change locations, sensors in the air and teams on the ground could then detect them and engage them with NA forces or with Coalition air power.

CENTCOM did give serious consideration to a broader intervention with larger conventional units. In his memoirs, General Franks stated that in the early planning sessions in mid-September 2001 he gave his staff a fourth course of action that did involve a larger contingent of conventional ground forces. Franks recalled that he told his planners, "We've discussed three options. Here's a fourth. Run the first three simultaneously, as the lead-in for the deployment of conventional American ground combat forces."[81] For the CENTCOM commander, this course of action would actually be what is called a *sequel* in US joint military doctrine. Sequels are major operations that follow initial phases of a campaign and are contingent on conditions. In the case of Franks' fourth course of action, the success of the NA and SOF teams in their offensive against al-Qaeda and the Taliban would determine whether the sequel involving conventional US forces was necessary. In actuality, Franks and his key staff officers assumed that this sequel would likely occur. Indeed, in the final plan for OEF, CENTCOM made provisions to insert a force of approximately 10,000 to 12,000 US Soldiers and Marines that would exploit the gains made by the NA and ensure remaining enemy concentrations were defeated.[82]

After reviewing the three courses of action, Secretary Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Hugh Shelton supported the third choice. In addition, they also required that CENTCOM include in their plan measures that would minimize damage to the country so the reconstruction could commence immediately and Afghans could quickly take charge of a new government.[83] President Bush's promise that the campaign in Afghanistan was not against

Islam or the Afghan people remained a key principle for this campaign. To put substance behind this statement, the CENTCOM staff began planning for humanitarian assistance operations that would be conducted concurrently with combat actions. President Bush approved the overall campaign concept on 21 September, enabling CENTCOM leaders and planners to focus on the fine points of the plan. General Franks expected to begin the initial air and SOF portions of the campaign plan in the first week of October 2001.[84] With 2 weeks remaining, the CENTCOM commander and his staff had a great deal to do.

Planning the Campaign

As the CENTCOM planners developed the critical details of the campaign in Afghanistan, they decided that it should consist of four phases. The first phase was called "Set Conditions and Build Forces to Provide the National Command Authority Credible Military Options," an unwieldy title but a set of vital operations and actions that included the finalization of basing, staging, and overflight agreements with countries surrounding Afghanistan.[85] Phase I involved communicating with NA leaders to lay the groundwork for the arrival of Coalition forces. This phase would also include the delivery of thousands of humanitarian daily rations (HDRs), consisting of a nutritious, culturally sensitive diet of barley and lentil stew, prepared for airdrops to assist the Afghan population. By the fall of 2001, NGOs had largely pulled out of Afghanistan because of the imminent military operations, and delivering these rations to hungry populations in the country was a central Coalition concern. According to the plan, US Air Force C-17s would travel from Ramstein Air Base, across Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and into Afghanistan to drop hundreds of thousands of HDRs.[86]

Phase II, "Conduct Initial Combat Operations and Continue to Set Conditions for Follow-On Operations," marked the beginning of airstrikes to hit al-Qaeda and Taliban targets and the completion of the deployment of SOF teams to work with the NA.[87] Tomahawk missiles, B-2 Stealth bombers, and B-52s were scheduled to take out training bases, early warning radars, tactical aircraft, and major air defense systems.[88] Once the initial strikes reduced the enemy's minimal antiaircraft capability, fixed-wing aircraft would attack targets across Afghanistan. Taking off from the British island of Diego Garcia and Navy carriers in the Arabian Sea, these sorties would be among the longest combat flights ever attempted. Each plane had the capacity to drop 25 tons of precision guided munitions.[89] As air operations progressed, SOF teams would infiltrate Afghanistan and begin to contact and work with the NA.

Once the NA and their SOF counterparts gained the initiative against the Taliban, a force of up to 12,000 US combat troops would enter the country to begin Phase III, "Conduct Decisive Combat Operations." CENTCOM's end state for this phase was the toppling of the Taliban regime and elimination of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.[90] While the size of this force would dwarf the small SOF element that had entered the country earlier, the relatively small footprint would grant Coalition commander's flexibility and give them a rapid reaction capability without appearing as an army of occupation.[91] To mitigate this appearance, CENTCOM planners would direct these units to seize and hold only that ground that was required for support bases.

The final phase was called "Establish Capability of Coalition Partners to Prevent the Re-Emergence of Terrorism and Provide Support for Humanitarian Assistance Efforts." Franks and his staff had designed this phase as a 3- to 5-year effort to work with Coalition partners to help create conditions in Afghanistan that would prevent the reemergence of terrorist groups.[92] They

had not, however, conceived this as a nation-building endeavor for the US military. There was no articulation of specific goals such as the fosering of a new Afghan Government or Afghan security forces that would help prevent a return of al-Qaeda or other terrorist organizations. Instead, the OEF plan directed the US and its Coalition partners to provide basic humanitarian aid and civil affairs assistance to a general restoration of stability inside Afghanistan. Clearly, CENTCOM planners were concentrating most heavily on deploying the right forces into central Asia and defeating the Taliban and al-Qaeda. What would come after that victory never really came into clear focus in this initial vision for OEF.

This four-phase plan set mission, objectives, phasing, and tasks for the Coalition military strategy in Afghanistan. General Franks later supplemented the plan with nine logical LOOs: political-military coordination, support to the opposition, direct attack of al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership, attack cave and tunnel complexes, reconnaissance and direct action, operational fires, operational maneuver, information operations, and humanitarian assistance.[93] These LOOs were types of efforts that Coalition units conducted simultaneously. The LOOs not only allowed the staff and the commander to focus overall actions, but also permitted them a means of assessing progress in achieving milestones.

While not explicitly laid out in the campaign plan, the LOOs were seen by CENTCOM leaders as the chief pathways to success in Afghanistan. Political-military actions involved the efforts to secure basing and staging support from allied nations as well as efforts to isolate the Taliban regime by denying the Taliban outside support. Support to the opposition was the focus of initial SOF coordination with the NA and subsequent efforts to recruit other Afghan groups to an anti-Taliban Coalition.[94]

Coalition SOF also had the mission to attack al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership directly. This leadership included the al-Qaeda figures Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri as well as critical Taliban leaders Mullar Mohammad Omar and Dadullah Lang among others. Direct action focused on the enemy's strategic COG, and because economic and political sanctions were not an effective strategy against the Taliban regime, elimination was the key.[95] The operational fires LOO directed firepower at enemy concentrations from both the air and on the ground, breaking up Taliban concentrations and depriving the enemy of the means of communication and maneuver. Friendly operational maneuver, on the other hand, attempted to use the Coalition's advantages in strategic and operational lift to grant Coalition ground forces the ability to move quickly in a country that lacked developed infrastructure. Information operations also became an essential LOO because of the need to reach the Afghan population. The Coalition needed to convince the Afghan citizenry of the positive benefits of the Coalition's presence to gain and retain its support.

The SOF who would advise the NA and direct the precision guided munitions in the early operations against the Taliban were critical throughout the campaign. As small and elite units, SOF were uniquely suited for this mission because of their specialization in strategic reconnaissance, direct action, and unconventional warfare (UW), a term that described a broad spectrum of operations that are usually conducted by a surrogate or indigenous force that is assisted by an outside element. By 2001 US joint doctrine defined UW as including guerrilla warfare, sabotage, clandestine, and other indirect operations. SOF's specialized and rigorous training, specialized equipment, and unique tactics allowed them to undertake operations not suited for conventional forces. These elite units fell under US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

whose mission was to lead, plan, synchronize, and, as directed, execute global operations against terrorist networks. The Army service component command within USSOCOM was US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Within USASOC, Soldiers from the Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserve served in the Special Forces, Rangers, Aviation, Support Units, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations. Collectively, they were known as Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF).

Planning the SOF and Air Campaigns

As CENTCOM developed its plan in mid-September 2001, SOF planners in Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT), a component command that controlled joint SOF within the CENTCOM AOR, began their own planning process. The ARSOF on the staff of that command received the intent from General Franks, understood that they would be preparing for UW, and began building a seven-phase plan for a US-based insurgency. According to ARSOF doctrine, a US-based insurgency occurred when SF trained or developed an organized resistance movement to help advance US interests. SF in Afghanistan would train the NA as a sponsored insurgency against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. SOCCENT planners, however, had to ensure that their concept was nested with Franks' overall approach. One SF staff officer within CENTCOM described how the SOF officers carefully synchronized their UW plan with Franks' plan. Less than a week after the attacks of 9/11, SOCCENT had briefed its plan to the CENTCOM commander and gained his approval.

Formulating a campaign plan was an arduous process that involved drawing on doctrine and lessons learned from Afghanistan's history as well as devising innovative ways to target al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Combining SOF and conventional forces along with the allied NA was groundbreaking. Further, successfully transmitting commander's intent from General Franks to Afghan tribal leaders demonstrated the communication abilities of those on the ground as well as the statesmanship of General Franks who was able to forge political-military relationships. Renuart summarized the campaign plan saying, "It was taking the sophistication, the technology, and the capabilities that we had and placing them on a battlefield, which was not unlike the face of the moon, with relatively unsophisticated warriors, taking on a reasonably well equipped and reasonably sophisticated enemy."[96] Campaign planners worked tirelessly to complete the campaign plan in a very short period. Even so, Phase I of OEF would begin in mid-September and Phase II would start in early October while planners were still developing the details of the campaign plan. Only in late November 2001 did General Franks publish the final version of his plan for OEF.

Essential to the plan was the ability to locate and destroy key Taliban and al-Qaeda strongholds, both those that were preplanned and those that presented themselves as targets of opportunity. SOF forces working with the NA would track the enemy's movements and locations and send intelligence back so targets could be developed. This intelligence was essential because the Coalition did not have a large number of preplanned targets before the bombing campaign began on 7 October. In most air campaigns, high-value targets (HVTs) include key government and military buildings, utilities, and transportation systems. However, the Taliban-run government was heavily decentralized and did not rely on traditional physical strongholds in the capital of Kabul. Commercial and transportation infrastructure was nearly nonexistent, so there were very few bridges, railroads, or energy plants to target. Instead, the

only preplanned targets were a few buildings used by al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership, some al-Qaeda training bases, and a few tactical aircraft and antiaircraft batteries.[97]

To assist in identifying targets, Coalition forces on the ground benefited from the presence of US Air Force Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPs). These teams made excellent use of laser designators and other tools to locate enemy targets for engagement. Although cutting edge technology allowed targeting in real time, Soldiers still needed to employ caution to ensure they did not inflict excessive collateral damage. The improved picture of the engagement zone allowed more care to be taken to ensure the campaign did not cause a great deal of damage to noncombatants and nonmilitary targets, a demand specifically requested by the Bush administration. Secretary Rumsfeld personally approved every medium- or high-collateral damage target. To convert high- and medium-collateral targets to low collateral, the CENTCOM staff considered hitting the target at a time of day when fewer people were present, using a different type of weapon or a more precise weapon, or changing the direction of the blast.[98] After the campaign began, this caution would sometimes slow down the pace of the war and there would be instances in which CENTCOM overrode the Combined Air Operations Center's (CAOC's) tactical execution authority for strategic considerations of collateral damage.[99] Some would later express what they felt was bureaucratic rigidity in CENTCOM and the DOD when the campaign opened and there was great care in identifying and acting on targets.[100]

A Joint, Combined, and Interagency Effort

When General Franks and his planners began designing the campaign for OEF, they started from the assumption that the plan would include the involvement of all four military Services as well as participation from other agencies within the US Government. SOF from each Service, for example, would work together with joint conventional forces. Air support from the Air Force, Navy, and Marines would assist the Army and Marine forces on the ground. Additionally, representatives from other Federal agencies such as the DOS would be critical to the campaign from its inception. Commenting on the success of General Franks' efforts to create a joint plan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers praised Franks in November 2001, saying, "In my view, General Franks . . . has effectively called on the strengths and unique capabilities that the different services bring to this fight."[101]

CENTCOM planners also believed that success in the Afghanistan campaign rested on the coalescing international Coalition. While the US military was exceptionally strong, the planners understood that the military forces of allies could contribute unique capabilities and would bolster the effect of the Coalition on the world stage. Thus, Franks and his staff made a concentrated effort to integrate Coalition forces while maintaining unity of purpose and unity of command.

Within 3 days of the 9/11 attacks, Coalition military commanders started to arrange to provide assistance with CENTCOM's planning. Space within the CENTCOM headquarters was at a premium, however, and there was literally no place to create offices for these Coalition allies. In response, CENTCOM Chief of Staff Colonel Michael Hayes created the "Coalition Village" for foreign officers near the combatant command's headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. Hayes contracted with a local company to rent 20 trailers that were fully equipped with data lines, computers, phones, and other equipment. As autumn progressed,

the number of trailers increased first to 40 and then 80, reflecting the enormous increase in Coalition integration. These Coalition members proved vital in the campaign planning process, not only for operations in Afghanistan, but also in the larger GWOT effort in areas such as the Horn of Africa.

The Plan for Humanitarian Assistance

Because the Coalition campaign was focused on al-Qaeda and the Taliban rather than against the Afghan people, the United States wanted to ensure the war did not deprive the innocent people of Afghanistan of food and other necessities. President Bush stipulated that humanitarian assistance be a vital component of the campaign. As noted earlier, Phase I of the campaign plan included humanitarian drops. Actions of this type carried through the next two phases and culminated with Phase IV during which the Coalition would turn to immediate humanitarian needs and to larger reconstruction projects that would rebuild Afghanistan, hopefully preventing the Taliban and al-Qaeda from regaining a foothold in the country. General Franks considered this phase to be the longest within the plan, assuming that it would require 3 to 5 years for the Coalition to reach its goals.[102]

Humanitarian assistance was especially critical because Afghanistan had long been one of the poorest nations in the world. An April 2001 UN report found that living conditions in Afghanistan were among the worst in the world. The UN estimated that only 25 percent of the population had access to potable water and only 10 percent had adequate sanitation.[103] Access to education and the quality of education were poor, and literacy rates hovered around 25 percent. Medical services were almost nonexistent. The UN also estimated that since 2000, up to 700,000 Afghans left their homes because of drought or armed violence. While most were displaced within Afghanistan, some 170,000 crossed the border into Pakistan and over 100,000 left for Iran.[104]

On 6 September 2001, just 5 days before the 9/11 attacks, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Afghanistan warned,

> Human suffering in Afghanistan has largely outstripped the capacity and resources of the aid community due to both the magnitude and the depth of the crisis. The catastrophe is a gradually cumulative humanitarian disaster of enormous proportions. Conflict, drought, displacement, grinding poverty, and human rights abuses add up to a deadly combination.[105]

The United States, historically the largest provider of humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, had sent hundreds of millions of dollars in 1999 and 2000 to help provide housing, medical care, and education.[106] In May 2001, after a visit by US officials to the impoverished country, Secretary of State Powell had announced a $43 million aid package for distribution through the UN and various NGOs. The United States was determined to maintain its support for the Afghan people even as Taliban rule became more oppressive.

How to continue funneling aid to the Afghan population and thereby maintain broad support from that population became one of CENTCOM's most difficult planning challenges in the fall of 2001. Staff from almost all international organizations (IOs) and NGOs who were working throughout Afghanistan quickly relocated to Pakistan and neighboring countries, expecting the imminent Coalition offensive to make conditions very dangerous for aid workers. With almost

all the aid organizations leaving the country and winter quickly approaching, the humanitarian situation was perilous.[107]

The humanitarian aid element of the campaign plan was designed to help assuage this crisis situation and to support President Bush's promise that this was not a war against the Afghan people. At the CENTCOM level, the planning staff viewed the humanitarian actions as supporting combat operations through their ability to win "hearts and minds" and mitigate immediate humanitarian crises so that the military could focus on defeating the Taliban and al-Qaeda. For the United States, the humanitarian aspects of the plan would set conditions by providing initial relief and creating a secure environment into which the IOs and NGOs could them move and begin their operations.

The CENTCOM plan assumed that Coalition military forces would support NGOs and IOs throughout the country while retaining focus on combat operations. Thus, planners did not expect to provide security support for all relief convoys moving inside Afghanistan. Even if that had been a desirable objective, the small ground force made it impossible. Instead, CENTCOM planned to rely on the existing infrastructure as much as possible and to allow Afghans, NGOs, and Coalition partners to take the lead, especially on reconstruction operations.

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The campaign plan formulated in the aftermath of the attacks of 9/11 gave life to President Bush's strategy for taking the fight to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Bin Laden had struck at the nation's homeland, and the United States resolved to strike back using the nation's military, political, and diplomatic resources. However, believing that the campaign required widespread international support, the US Government built a Coalition against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The Taliban's former ally, Pakistan, joined this effort and became an important ally against terrorism.

As the headquarters charged with the military portion of President Bush's strategy to destroy the terrorist enemy, CENTCOM quickly composed a plan that projected military power into a distant and foreboding part of the world. That plan was equally remarkable in the way it integrated air power, SOF, and conventional units. But whether the audacious concept would prove successful was not clear to anyone when the campaign began in early October, just 26 days after the 9/11 attacks.

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Chapter 3

Opening Moves: The Preliminary Phases of the Campaign

Between 12 September and 7 October 2001—the 26 days during which US Central Command (CENTCOM) developed its campaign plan for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)—the US Armed Forces expended much effort in preparation for America's response to 9/11. As the four phases of the CENTCOM plan clearly established, this campaign would not consist solely of airstrikes and cruise-missile attacks. Instead, the plan called for regime change in Afghanistan and the destruction of al-Qaeda and its support facilities in that country. Historically, objectives such as these are difficult to achieve with air power alone. They are best realized by the development of complex plans that place forces on the ground and provide for the support and sustainment of those forces while they move toward the objectives. However, before the United States and its Allies even gained proximity to those goals, they had to accomplish a series of exceedingly difficult tasks including the mobilization of forces; the gaining of indigenous support in Afghanistan and surrounding nations; the deployment of troops, equipment, and supplies; and the preparation of the battle area for the commencement of ground operations. This chapter will briefly examine the key actions taken by the US Government to prepare for major ground operations in Afghanistan, including the initial logistics and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) effort and the air campaign launched by CENTCOM.

Mobilization

OEF began with the US Government's efforts to place the US Armed Forces and key federal agencies on a war footing. On Friday, 14 September 2001, the US Congress passed a joint resolution titled "Authorization for Use of Military Force" that allowed the President to use the Armed Forces against the terrorist groups responsible for the 9/11 attacks.[1] That same day, President George W. Bush authorized the mobilization of America's Reserve Components. That directive allowed Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, on the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), to order the activation of 35,500 military reservists.[2]

In the past, large-scale mobilizations of military reservists were reliable indicators of a nation preparing for war. Yet, the mobilization by the United States in September and October 2001 was somewhat different. Primarily it was small in contrast to the mobilization for past conflicts. In his initial orders, Rumsfeld called for only 10,000 Soldiers, 13,000 Airmen, 7,500 Marines, and 3,000 Sailors.[3] To seasoned military observers, the numbers hardly seemed to indicate that the United States was preparing any kind of serious counterattack. Indeed, most of these troops were mobilized to support what became known as Operation NOBLE EAGLE (ONE)—the security operations in American cities and airports that immediately followed the terrorist attacks. What was not apparent to many at this point was that the campaign about to take shape would portend a different style of warfare that did not require a large number of troops. Indeed, few Reserve and National Guard Soldiers would participate in the initial operations in Afghanistan.

The first priority of the US Government's response was the security of the homeland. ONE, as noted above, was the Department of Defense's (DOD's) effort to provide security within the borders of the continental United States (CONUS). The Army's portion of that effort

included both Active Duty and Reserve Component units. Beginning on 11 September, Regular forces were immediately deployed to secure military installations and sensitive sites around the country. In most cases, those duties were turned over to National Guard and Army Reserve units and personnel as they mobilized and deployed to their assigned missions in the next few weeks.

For ONE, the Army National Guard and US Army Reserve mobilized 16,298 Soldiers between 12 September and 5 December 2001.[4] The types of National Guard units mobilized generally consisted of military police and infantry organizations. The Army Reserve, likewise, mobilized many military police and military intelligence units as well. These units were typically assigned missions to provide security for myriad locations—on both military installations and key civilian sites, to include civilian airports. Few were tasked to support OEF.

Though the Army Reserve contribution to the initial callup for OEF was small, that of the US Air Force was both enormous and critical to the initial phases of the campaign. For the Army to successfully support CENTCOM's plan, its troops had to enter the theater of operations. Only the Air Force could accomplish that task. To support both ONE and OEF, the Air Force mobilized 227 units of various types. No less than 54 of these units were airlift and refueling outfits that would soon play critical roles in the deployment of Army units into Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

Securing Regional Bases

The salient characteristic of the opening phases of OEF was that it required air power. The staging of forces and the logistics support for those forces once they began operations in Afghanistan could not be done in ways used in recent campaigns. In Operation DESERT STORM, for example, the US Army secured seaport facilities through which massive amounts of supplies could be trucked or railed to a depot close to the area of operations (AO). From there the supplies were distributed to units in large quantities. That conventional approach was impossible for OEF. Afghanistan's landlocked position in central Asia precluded the use of seaports near the country. Those neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, that did possess seaports would not allow US military convoys to rumble along their already inadequate highways to reach Afghanistan. Further, Afghanistan's transportation infrastructure was severely outdated. Rail transportation into Afghanistan was not available and roads were in such disrepair that they were almost unusable. Thus, movement into Afghanistan had to be conducted through the air.

This realization presented another challenge. On 11 September 2001 there were few countries in the region that were interested in making airfields available for Coalition air operations. As the previous chapter of this study demonstrated, one of the key efforts in the US planning process was to secure the rights to landing and overflight in the region. One of the first nations to offer the use of an airfield was Pakistan. Despite the unpopularity of such a decision among Islamic fundamentalists in his own country, President Pervez Musharraf offered the use of several fields to the United States, most importantly the Shahbaz Air Base in the city of Jacobabad in the center of Pakistan. Shahbaz was close enough to key AOs in Afghanistan that United States Air Force (USAF) Special Operations Forces (SOF) and CSAR units could use the base for their missions.[5] However, Shahbaz was too far from bases in Europe from which Air Force cargo planes would fly to support operations in Afghanistan. CENTCOM planners needed an airfield that was closer to the European airfields yet still within central Asia.

Figure 8. Major regional air bases in support of OEF.

Fortunately, the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan on Afghanistan's northern border signaled its potential willingness to cooperate with the Coalition. Uzbekistan possessed several former Soviet air force bases that met the basic needs of the CENTCOM commander. American negotiators originally pushed the Uzbek Government for the use of a base at Samarkand, but were rebuffed.[6] The Uzbeks instead offered the use of a base at Karshi-Khanabad, a name quickly shortened to K2 by military planners. On closer look, the negotiators found that K2 could provide the United States an aerial port of debarkation (APOD) for troops operating in Afghanistan, and a location to establish a small, though critical, supply depot to support those operations. The airfield was sufficient, but not ideal. The old Soviet-built runways had extensively deteriorated and required repair and expansion.[7] Despite their serviceable quality, the K2 runways were too short to handle the large C-5 Galaxy cargo planes used by the US

Air Force to transport large numbers of troops, large pieces of equipment, or big shipments of materiel. Planners had to send C-5s from the United States or elsewhere to Ramstein Air Base in Germany, or other US bases in Spain, Italy, or Turkey, where they were unloaded and their cargo transferred to smaller C-17 or C-130 aircraft for haul into K2.[8] The time needed for these long flights and to load and unload the cargo at each stop would be a significant factor for logistics and therefore operational planning efforts.

The K2 airfield support facilities were also in complete disrepair in 2001 and required a huge renovation effort. Few buildings were actually intact; those that were livable were occupied by Uzbek military personnel. Tents would initially serve as the living and working quarters for US military personnel. Environmental conditions in the area presented other problems. The subsoil on the base was severely contaminated with old jet fuel and the vapors that resulted caused potential health problems. Asbestos was another concern.[9]

Despite its dilapidated character, the United States did not immediately obtain permission from Uzbekistan to use the K2 Air Base. However, negotiations went on through early October as US and Uzbek officials came closer to an agreement. The agreement was critical to the start of the air campaign because K2 would be needed for staging potential CSAR operations once Coalition aircraft began operations over Afghanistan.

Establishment of Lines of Communications (LOCs) and the Deployment of Forces

While the US and the Uzbek diplomats finalized arrangements for the use of K2, US Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) and the Air Force pressed forward with their work to support the CENTCOM campaign plan and concurrently prepare other pending operations. Transport planes from the United States loaded with troops and equipment slated for K2 arrived in Spain, Sicily, and Turkey in late September and early October.[10] To the great concern of military planners at TRANSCOM and other commands, the number of airplanes parked on the tarmacs at these locations continued to increase and were idle at a time when they were needed to support other operations around the globe.

One of those operations was called BRIGHT STAR, a multinational exercise co-organized by the United States and Egypt to foster cooperation and stability among allies in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East areas. BRIGHT STAR was an annual event held in Egypt and consisted of up to 60,000 troops from as many as 24 countries. Scheduled for 8 October to 2 November 2001, many on the CENTCOM staff believed it should be canceled after the events of 9/11 and because of the impending campaign in Afghanistan. US Marine Lieutenant General Michael DeLong, the Deputy Commander of CENTCOM, recalled that he and General Tommy Franks both agreed that the exercise should take place because it would allow CENTCOM to funnel people and equipment into the area of responsibility (AOR). After the very successful exercise, over 9,000 troops remained in the Middle East and south-central Asia to provide security and build or improve port facilities; billeting; airfields; and command, control, and communications nodes.[11] The decision to execute BRIGHT STAR also reinforced to the world that the United States was committed to its allies and had the capacity to both participate in the exercise and still fight a war. Arguably, the most important outcome was the ability that the American exercise participants provided CENTCOM to rapidly establish the LOC to support the opening stages of OEF.[12] Colonel Mark Wentlent, who served on the staff of US Third Army, maintained that his involvement in BRIGHT STAR significantly helped him and his

colleagues become the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) headquarters a few months later.[13]

As BRIGHT STAR progressed, advance parties from CONUS-based SOF units began arriving at the K2 Air Base even before an agreement was made between the US and Uzbek Governments. The initial Army elements into K2 were a 3-man team from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and an 11-man team from Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT), a Special Operations headquarters subordinate to CENTCOM, which arrived during the negotiations. The teams landed with the mission to prepare the way for the impending arrival of US forces at the airfield. They conducted surveys of the base; decided locations for the parking, loading, and unloading of Coalition aircraft; and coordinated with the Uzbek airfield commander to determine the facilities available for Coalition use. Eventually, the Uzbek official granted one building, which became the tactical operations center (TOC). But the Americans were able to begin the purchasing of fuel, building materiels, and other supplies to repair and operate the airfield for the coming air campaign.[14]

Because of the pressure in DOD and CENTCOM to keep the US footprint in the region small, campaign planners sought to conduct a ground war that differed from earlier US conflicts. As the previous chapter established, CENTCOM desired to use Special Forces (SF) teams working in conjunction with anti-Taliban Afghan militias and Coalition aircraft to defeat the enemy, rather than rely on large conventional forces. Although reliance on SF allowed for a very light footprint, those teams still required a great deal of support in the form of airlift. Colonel Phillip McGhee, Deputy Chief of Staff for Resource Management for United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), expressed his surprise at the amount of airlift that was needed to transport one SF group, a formation consisting of three SF battalions and support elements. McGehee recalled, "The amount of airlift it took to get one [SF] group in theater just amazed me. It took almost fifty C-17s to get 3,000 guys and their equipment into theater."[15]

Once Uzbekistan granted formal permission to use K2 on 5 October 2001, the American transport planes waiting in Europe and elsewhere quickly launched to clear the ramp space at the backed up air bases. Nevertheless, the onslaught of planes almost immediately congested the limited ramp and taxi space at K2 creating a huge traffic jam. Air traffic controllers were overwhelmed, and offload teams struggled to keep up using the limited offloading equipment they had. Aircraft began arriving at K2 every 2 hours, and the base population swelled from 100 to 2,000 in just 1 week.[16]

Company A, 528th Special Operations Support Battalion (A/528th SOSB), the first US Army unit to arrive at K2 on 4 October, attempted to handle the arriving cargo planes. The company normally performed the mission of receiving, sorting, and issuing supplies; the US Air Force Theater Airlift Control Element (TALCE) assigned the mission to unload aircraft at K2 arrived the day before but without its cargo handling equipment. The 528th Soldiers then pitched in to help the TALCE unload the incoming planes through muscle power.[17] In a unique twist, the SOF provided the initial logistical support to the Army. Doctrinally, the geographic combatant commander and his subordinate component commanders support SOF once in theater. However, because OEF commenced so rapidly, the SOF were the first to arrive in Uzbekistan and had to begin building the base. Thus, conventional Army units were supported by the SOF support unit for about 30 days until the Army could build its capability for logistical support.[18]

Among the arrivals on 5 October was the 16th Special Operations Wing of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), the advance party of the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG), elements of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), elements of the 112th Signal Battalion, and the lead elements of the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry (1-87 IN), a unit that belonged to the US Army 10th Mountain Division and soon responsible for securing the entire airfield.[19] These early arrivals were quickly followed by other logistics, signal, civil affairs, and psychological operations (PSYOP) units.

Among the first logistics units to arrive at the Uzbek base was Logistics Task Force (LTF) 530, which arrived from Fort Bragg in mid-November. LTF 530 was a composite organization pasted together to meet the logistics needs of the units at K2. It was composed of the battalion headquarters and service company (HSC) of the 530th Service and Supply Battalion, and the 58th Maintenance Company of the 7th Transportation Battalion. Consisting of only 174 personnel, this unit took over A/528th SOSB's mission and provided virtually every class of supply required by the other organizations at K2. In addition, the HSC also provided billeting, food, laundry and bath, and sanitation services to the compound, while the 58th Maintenance Company provided all vehicle and equipment maintenance support less that required by the helicopter units.[20] This composite unit would continue operations well into the following year as the footprint continued to grow at K2.

CENTCOM planners originally intended to use the K2 airfield as the base for CSAR operations that would retrieve downed aviators during the initial air campaign. To this end, when Colonel Frank Kisner, commander of the 16th Special Operations Wing arrived, he quickly established a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) headquarters knowing that the CSAR operation would soon involve other Services' SOF elements.[21] One of those elements, the 2d Battalion, 160th SOAR from Fort Campbell, began arriving on 5 October 2001. To conduct CSAR operations as well as other missions that might emerge, 2-160 SOAR was equipped with MH-47E and MH-60L helicopters. In an amazing feat of teamwork, the battalion mechanics unloaded the aircraft from the cargo planes, assembled them, conducted tests, and had them ready for operations within 48 hours of arrival.[22] That achievement was critical because the air campaign was set to begin on 7 October.

The Air Campaign

As early as 12 September, an air campaign against Taliban forces in Afghanistan had been on the table as a viable response, at least in part, to the attacks of 9/11. As the Bush administration's strategy for the war against terror evolved and the planning for the initial campaign took shape during mid- to late-September, the Air Force and Navy positioned assets in and around the Middle East and Asia to support an air campaign in Afghanistan. On 14 September the Navy ordered two ships carrying 235,000 barrels of marine diesel fuel to Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean. Concurrently, 28,000 gallons of aviation fuel was ordered to be delivered to Moron Air Base in Spain, which had been used as a staging base for Air Force tanker aircraft. Other actions included the recall of tankers from test programs and the limiting of the Air Force bomber fleet to only essential flying so that repairs and scheduled maintenance could be completed before assigning them to missions in Afghanistan.[23] All these actions, and more, were sure indicators of the impending air campaign.

By the end of September, USAF long-range precision strike aircraft were ready for combat missions and many had been repositioned to forward operating bases such as Diego Garcia and other locations throughout southern Europe and the Middle East. A large number of the B-52 Stratofortresses that deployed to Diego Garcia had been modified to carry AGM-86C Conventional Air Launched Cruise Missiles (CALCMs), along with Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) and cluster bombs. The B-1B Lancer supersonic bombers, which were based at Diego Garcia as well as in the Persian Gulf country of Oman, were also capable of carrying JDAM precision guided munitions, cluster bombs, and Mark 82 500-pound iron bombs. The B-2A Spirit stealth bombers, however, remained based at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. With several in-flight refuelings, the B-2A was capable of flying round trip, nonstop, from Whiteman to Afghanistan and back, and could deliver thousand-pound JDAMs, as well as deep penetrating precision-guided bombs on each mission. In addition to these strike aircraft, a large number of additional USAF attack and tanker aircraft had been flown to the Middle East, Turkey, and Pakistan in preparation for OEF.

The US Navy had been preparing to support operations over Afghanistan as well. When the 9/11 attacks occurred, the carriers USS *Carl Vinson* and *Enterprise* and their corresponding battle groups were conducting operations in the Indian Ocean. By 18 September two other carriers, the *Theodore Roosevelt* and the *Kitty Hawk*, had been ordered to the area as well. The latter ship, sailing from her homeport at Yokosuka, Japan, had left almost her entire air wing there so that she could function as a platform for launching helicopters from the 160th SOAR that would transport SOF into Afghanistan from the south.[24]

US Air Force Lieutenant General Charles Wald, commander of the Joint Forces Air Component Command (JFACC) for CENTCOM, was responsible for planning and executing the air campaign. Wald's mission statement was clear: "On order, Combined Forces Air Component Command provides air support for friendly forces working with the Northern Alliance and other opposition forces in order to defeat hostile Taliban and al-Qaeda forces and to set the conditions for regime removal and long-term regional stability." Wald's command would operate from the newly established Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia.[25]

The planning and preparation for the air campaign was not without problems. Delays resulted from a number of issues involving the problems with negotiations over K2, proper target designation, a shortage of approved targets, and a heavy emphasis on collateral damage avoidance. For example, all potential targets were scrutinized in painstaking detail not only at the CAOC, CENTCOM, and onboard Navy aircraft carriers, but also by military attorneys in the Pentagon. Each routinely assessed potential target lists before approving targets for planned raids and airstrikes.[26] Frustrated with the situation, General Franks, the CENTCOM commander, stepped in and put a stop to at least some of the micromanagement from the Pentagon. Franks wrote in his memoirs that he told the Chairman of the JCS, General Myers, "I am not going along with Washington giving tactics and targets to our kids in the cockpits and on the ground in Afghanistan."[27]

The planning and other preparations continued up to the night of 7 October when the attacks began. In a televised address to the nation on 8 October, President Bush announced, "On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al-Qaeda terrorist training

camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan."[28] The first night of bombing was far from overwhelming in either scope or effect. Only 31 preplanned strategic targets in the vicinities of Kabul, Kandahar, Shindand, Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, and Sheberghan were hit. These targets did not include frontline Taliban positions. The opening-round attacks were conducted by Air Force B-2 stealth bombers from Whiteman, the B-1B and B-52 bombers from Diego Garcia, and by Navy F-14 and F/A-18 fighters from aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea. Joining the ordnance dropped by the aircraft were Tomahawk missiles fired by US Navy cruisers and destroyers as well as submarines belonging to both the United States and the United Kingdom.[29]

The goal of the initial wave of air attacks was to gain uncontested control of Afghan airspace by destroying Taliban air defense capabilities. To this end, US planners focused attacks in the first several days on surface-to-air missile sites; early warning radars; command, control, and communications facilities; airfields; and aircraft. While the Taliban air defense system was not well developed, the threat to Coalition aircraft was real. On the first night of the air offensive, for example, Coalition pilots reported a small number of incidents in which Afghan soldiers directed antiaircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles at their aircraft.[30] Still, within days, the air campaign had achieved air supremacy in the skies over Afghanistan.

The Coalition also sought to erode the Taliban's ground forces and general capability to oppose the upcoming Coalition ground campaign. After the first day, strikes targeted Taliban tanks and artillery as well as training facilities in Kabul and Kandahar. On the fifth day, Air Force aircraft dropped the first 5,000-pound laser-guided bombs on al-Qaeda mountain cave sanctuaries.

By the end of the first week of the air campaign, Coalition aircraft had dropped over 1,500 bombs and munitions of various types. As the second week began, AC-130 gunships and F-15E Strike Eagles from Jaber Air Base in Kuwait, the first land-based fighters to enter the campaign, joined the fray and began attacking Taliban troop concentrations and vehicles. With the bulk of the primary targets destroyed or damaged, the Coalition target list expanded to focus on emerging targets or "targets of opportunity."[31]

In addition to the bombing, on the first night of the air campaign C-17 Globemasters, flying from Ramstein Air Base in Germany, began dropping food and medical supplies to the Afghan population that, as the previous chapter noted, was suffering from decades of war and social dislocation. That turmoil had by late 2001 left a majority of Afghanistan's 27 million citizens impoverished.[32] During the first 4 nights of the air campaign, C-17s airdropped nearly 150,000 humanitarian daily rations (HDRs) to the needy Afghans.[33]

While the humanitarian air drops were an integral part of the campaign plan, these drops were actually controversial in the civilian humanitarian assistance community. Detractors claimed that they were ineffective, expensive, and motivated by political concerns. Some nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs) in Afghanistan felt that the airdrops were a PSYOP mission and the use of the term "humanitarian" for these missions was incorrect.[34] A further point of contention was that both cluster bombs and aid packages had yellow packaging. Civilian workers on the ground contended that the two could easily be confused. Although there were no reported instances of Afghans confusing the two, the Coalition changed the color of the HDR packages.[35] Despite these concerns, during the early October timeframe, the Coalition dropped more humanitarian rations than bombs.

Coalition PSYOP in the Opening Phases

While CENTCOM directed the initial phase of the air campaign, Coalition leaders began efforts to engage and win over the Afghan population to their cause. To explain to the Afghan people why the Coalition was attacking their country, CENTCOM directed several efforts to focus on distributing critical messages to the population. At Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the Special Operations (SO) 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG) began its air war effort 2 days before the initial OEF airstrikes. On 5 October, the EC-130 "Commando Solo" aircraft, from the 193d Special Operations Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, began broadcasting radio transmissions across Afghanistan. The Joint Psychological Operations Task Force (JPOTF), which became active on 4 October at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, scrambled to develop messages that would capture the minds of the Afghans. However, the development of radio transmissions, leaflets, and other PSYOP products and their distribution would not be an easy task in a time-constrained environment.

Fortunately for the Coalition forces, Dr. Ehsan Entezar, a native Afghan who spoke the Dari and Pashto languages; Dr. David Champagne, who had worked with the Peace Corps in Afghanistan; and Dr. Joseph Arlinghaus, an intelligence analyst at Fort Bragg who had served since 1982, were already working as civilians in CENTCOM's Strategic Studies Detachment (SSD) within the 4th POG. As Dr. Champagne explained, the SSD had people "with over 100 years of cumulative experience working on [OEF] which was unheard of in the government. That didn't exist in any other agency."[36] Despite this, the 4th POG found itself challenged by scrutiny from officials at the Pentagon. Captain Troy O'Donnell, a JPOTF planner who worked at CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida, from September 2001 to January 2002, experienced Pentagon micromanagement first hand. During the first 2 months of the campaign, final products had to go through a lengthy approval process with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD[P]) at the top of the chain.[37] As O'Donnell remembered, the OUSD(P) was "really telling us what to produce and in some instances the medium they wanted. But they didn't understand the target audience and they didn't understand really, I think, the intent of what General Franks wanted us to be able to accomplish when we went out."[38] By the December timeframe, however, OUSD(P) began to realize the 4th POG's expertise and allowed the approval process to centralize at CENTCOM, with Franks as the final approving authority.[39]

One of 4th POG's initial operations was to coordinate the messages that would be broadcast from Commando Solo. The group's experts quickly developed a variety of radio scripts—all with different themes, objectives, and target audiences—that were recorded in both the Dari and Pashto languages. One message focused on the innocent victims of 9/11, stating, "On September 11, 2001, thousands of people were killed en masse in the United States . . . policemen, firefighters, teachers, doctors, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers all killed. Why?"[40] The staff of the 4th POG also used music to focus the attention of the Afghan populace on the messages the Coalition hoped to disseminate. Colonel James Treadwell, who commanded the group in 2001, stated that the use of traditional jovial Afghan music was a calculated decision.

> The Taliban had banned music on the radio. We used the power of music. We would have music interspersed with a short spot after every song. Then, if we were passing out information, there might be two or three minutes where we would speak, but we would always go back to music because nobody is going to turn to a radio station if it is just somebody preaching to them.[41]

Because of the quick development of the PSYOP campaign, individuals from the 4th POG had to supply the Afghan music from their personal collections.[42] Though most Afghans did have access to radios, the Coalition eventually airdropped small portable radios with the preset frequency throughout the country.[43]

The overall messages of these broadcasts were designed to encourage the Taliban to cease support of al-Qaeda, to undermine Taliban and al-Qaeda morale, to promote the legitimacy of US operations, and to convince Afghan citizens that they were not the target of US attacks.[44] The Soldiers in the 4th POG also employed strong direct themes such as the inevitable defeat of both the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and rallying support for the NA.[45] Once the Coalition took out the main Taliban radio station, Commando Solo began broadcasting updates and messages on the same frequency that very day.

Due to Afghanistan's low literacy rates, leaflets had to be simple and many messages were transmitted orally via radio broadcasts. Leaflets were designed to appeal to the general public and were targeted toward specific geographic regions in Afghanistan to reflect tribal differences and ethnic diversity.[46] One leaflet featured bin Laden moving pawns with Taliban faces on a chessboard. This image was chosen because chess was once a popular Afghan pastime before the Taliban banned the game.[47] Other leaflets explained the humanitarian drops, stressed that the American forces were a friendly rather than an occupying force, and warned about landmines remaining from previous conflicts.[48] A large majority of the leaflets simply instructed the Afghans to tune their radios to the Coalition's broadcasting station.

Thousands of leaflets accompanied the numerous HDRs that were dropped to the Afghan people. Leaflets printed at Fort Bragg either were flown directly from Bragg or were transported by rented U-Haul trucks to McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, where they were packed into MK-129 leaflet bombs. To keep up with demand, forward teams deployed to Diego Garcia also printed leaflets. If intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets spotted activity in the mountains, leaflets pre-positioned at Diego Garcia could be dropped within 6 hours.[49]

The JPOTF also developed and printed hundreds of thousands of leaflets that were shipped to Diego Garcia and initially disseminated by B-52 bombers over Afghanistan beginning 15 October. Up to 80,000 leaflets could be packaged in a single MK-129 or modified Rockeye leaflet bomb.[50] In due course, F-16, F-18, A-6, and MC-130 aircraft would also perform high altitude leaflet drops in the AOR. One such leaflet, written in both Pashto and Dari, described US intentions in Afghanistan as honorable, and pictured an Afghan man and an American Soldier shaking hands. Another portrayed radio towers and gave the frequencies for receiving Commando Solo broadcasts. Other leaflets explained how to properly use the daily rations and warned Afghans to stay clear of unexploded ordnance.[51]

The air campaign that began in early October was a multifaceted effort designed to destroy, degrade, or demoralize Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. Concurrently, the air effort sought to prevent large-scale suffering of the Afghan people while seeking to convince the populace that the Coalition efforts were designed to ultimately help the Afghan people. Ultimately, the campaign met its primary objective of gaining air superiority over Afghanistan so that land forces could enter the country and begin to work against the Taliban with the full support of the Coalition's air power. Indeed, air power would prove to be far more decisive once the initial air campaign was over and Coalition Soldiers were on the ground.

Boots on the Ground: Joint Special Operations Task Force–North (JSOTF-N) Enters the Theater

In September CENTCOM and SOCOM designated 5th SFG, based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, as the core of the special operations unit designated by the unwieldy title Joint Special Operations Task Force–North (JSOTF-N). It was a good fit in the sense that the 5th SFG had trained for missions in the CENTCOM AOR. This meant that many of its Soldiers were fluent in the main languages and understood the cultural norms of the region.[52]

The commander of the 5th SFG, Colonel John Mulholland, and the group headquarters arrived at K2 Air Base on 10 October. Two days later, JSOTF-N was officially established with Mulholland as the commander. Since no Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command (JFSOCC) was yet established in theater, Mulholland served as the commander of joint SOF as well, despite the fact that his small SF group headquarters was not staffed or equipped to function in such a role. This command arrangement would continue to pose significant challenges to Mulholland and his staff until a formal JFSOCC was established in November.[53] One advantage, however, was that Mulholland had direct access to General Franks, the CENTCOM commander.

Initially, the primary mission of JSOTF-N was to coordinate and provide CSAR for Coalition aircrews that might have to bail out or crash land during the air campaign. Fortunately, this mission was never required and the task force's focus would quickly transition to the insertion of ODAs into Afghanistan to link up with NA units for the ground campaign. Because Mulholland was the senior US Army officer at K2, he also took tactical control (TACON) of the other Army units at the air base. The largest of these was the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry (1-87 IN) from the 10th Mountain Division stationed at Fort Drum, New York, a force of about 700 Soldiers. The 1-87 IN had been deployed to K2 to perform the base security mission and provide quick reaction force (QRF) teams for CSAR operations. The battalion's mission would evolve into much more as the ground campaign developed.

Over the next week, other units continued to arrive at K2, further taxing the abilities of the JSOTF staff. Not only did this relatively small staff have to plan for and prepare for the coming ground operations, it also had to wrestle with mundane matters like billeting for incoming units on the already cramped air base, unloading and spotting cargo from incoming aircraft, feeding the troops, sanitation, and general housekeeping requirements. Nevertheless, the staff continued to prepare for the infiltration of its ODAs into Afghanistan.[54]

On 12 October planning began in earnest for the insertion of the ODAs. Two MH-60L helicopters from the 2d Battalion, 160th SOAR, paved the way for the initial insertions on the night of 16 October by flying over the mountains and unloading equipment at a helicopter landing zone (HLZ) near General Abdul Rashid Dostum's headquarters in Afghanistan. Three nights later, ODA 595 assembled at the back of an MH-47E helicopter at K2 Air Base for the long flight into Afghanistan.[55] Remarkably, just over 5 weeks had passed since the World Trade Center buildings had fallen. Within those 5 weeks, the Coalition had planned a complex response

to the 9/11 attacks and then launched the initial deployment of forces into theater as well as the air attack that had begun destroying enemy forces in Afghanistan. In mid-October US Army SOF were ready to begin the initial phase of the ground war. Unlike preceding American wars, SOF would be the main effort for this fight. Instead of selecting the US military's powerful conventional units as the American vanguard on the ground, leaders at the Pentagon and at CENTCOM had chosen these small teams to deal the fatal blows to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. It would indeed be a different kind of war.

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Chapter 4

Collapse of the Taliban in Northern Afghanistan

In October 2001 most observers of the Coalition's air campaign in Afghanistan believed that Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) was progressing slowly and that the Taliban retained a tight grip on power over much of the country. Almost no one—either inside or outside the Coalition—considered the collapse of the Taliban regime imminent. Master Sergeant Armand J. (John) Bolduc, who in early October was preparing to lead one of the first US Army Special Forces (SF) teams into Afghanistan, expected the worst. As the leader of Operational Detachment–Alpha (ODA) 585, Bolduc informed his men that they might not survive and advised them to fight to the death rather than surrender or be taken prisoner.[1] Yet, in just over 6 weeks, Bolduc and approximately 100 SF Soldiers and airmen empowered the Northern Alliance (NA) to decisively defeat the Taliban in northern Afghanistan.

This striking victory was the result of a unique set of circumstances. The provinces to the northeast of Kabul were populated by non-Pashtun ethnic groups and served as the base of operations for the NA, which was dominated by Uzbeks and Tajiks. In his original vision for OEF, General Tommy Franks had proposed the use of a small number of US Soldiers to seize the initiative and begin assisting the NA in operations against the Taliban, thus avoiding the appearance of an outright invasion.[2] Initially, Joint Special Operations Task Force–North (JSOTF-N), established at Karshi-Khanabad (K2), would plan and direct the infiltration of these teams. The first two teams to enter Afghanistan arrived on 19 October and began making contact with the NA commanders in the northern areas. Soon, those Special Operations Forces (SOF) teams would be directly involved in combat against both Taliban and al-Qaeda forces and would greatly assist in the critical battles for the cities of Mazar-e Sharif, Taloqan, and Konduz that would lead to the NA victory in the north.

The Taliban Enemy

As the first chapter of this study established, the Taliban movement had formed in the chaotic aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal. Led since the mid-1990s by Mullah Mohammad Omar, the militant group was intent on establishing an Islamist government in Afghanistan and on driving foreign influence from the country. Affiliation with al-Qaeda in 1996 signaled the Taliban's tacit support for spreading global Islamist extremism beyond Afghanistan. By 2001 the Taliban controlled an estimated 80 percent of Afghanistan.[3]

But the ruling regime did not command a single military force. Instead, in the fall of 2001 the 40,000 to 50,000 combatants organized to fight for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan were essentially organized in three distinct components: indigenous Taliban, non-Afghan Taliban, and al-Qaeda forces trained by and associated with Osama bin Laden.[4] The three groups were then organized nominally into five divisions. Funding and logistical support for Taliban activities in Afghanistan came primarily from Pakistan; however, sympathetic Muslim organizations from various parts of the globe also contributed. This led to the influx of Arabs, Pakistanis, Uzbeks, Chechens, and central Asians who eventually were organized into the non-Afghan elements in the Taliban force. Taliban units were generally armed with Kalashnikov (AK-47) assault rifles, 7.62-mm PK general-purpose machineguns, antiaircraft guns and missiles, rocket

and grenade launchers, mortars, makeshift-armed vehicles, and a limited number of Soviet-era tanks and artillery pieces.[5]

The quality of both the Taliban's military leadership and its soldiers varied widely. While Mullah Omar was the commander in chief, the army was overseen by a military council and a general staff. Senior officers tended to change position frequently, however, and no single body was invested with either operational control or setting overall strategy. Both the Afghan and non-Afghan Taliban soldiers served on a less than permanent basis. Although some were conscripted, many were volunteers either from Pashtun tribes or Pakistani madrassas. As such, both commanders and troops on the front lines changed often during the course of a typical campaign as some returned home and others arrived to take their places. Thus, these forces did not make up a professional standing army but a military organization that had more traditional characteristics. Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid described many indigenous Taliban units as having more in common with a *lashkar* or tribal militia than with a regular military force.[6] Historically, Afghan *lashkars* were formed by Pashtun commanders from unpaid volunteers when tribal leaders felt threatened or wanted to exert power. This practice affected the structure of the Taliban's indigenous units, making their formations dependent on individual leaders, politics, and financial conditions. Coalition and NA units made use of these vulnerabilities in late 2001 as they induced defections from many indigenous Taliban units.

The foreign Taliban, who comprised approximately 25 percent of the regime's military force, were far better trained and enjoyed a higher level of morale derived from their desire to wage jihad. Of the foreign groups, those associated with al-Qaeda had received the best training and displayed the most zeal in combat against Coalition and NA forces. Stephen Biddle, an analyst at the US Army Strategic Studies Institute, has pointed out that the Taliban recognized the superiority of the foreign elements and relied greatly on them in the fall of 2001 as the NA and their American allies began the ground campaign.[7]

The Northern Alliance

The anti-Taliban Northern United Front, known more commonly as the NA, was led during the summer of 2001 by ousted Afghan President Burnahuddin Rabbani and his military commander General Ahmad Shah Massoud, the charismatic Tajik mujahideen leader who was known as the "Lion of the Panjshir." As the fall of 2001 began, the NA controlled only the Panjshir Valley in the northeast region of the country, the Shomali Plains north of Kabul, and several other small enclaves in the northern, central, and western regions of Afghanistan.[8]

The leadership of the NA suffered a devastating blow on 9 September 2001 when General Massoud was assassinated in Takhar province by two al-Qaeda suicide bombers posing as journalists. Shortly after his death, dire predictions arose regarding the possible disintegration of the NA. Massoud had been considered an exceptional military strategist and had successfully engineered key coalitions among disparate anti-Taliban guerrilla groups that hardened the NA.

Massoud's death did not lead to the disintegration of the NA; however, four distinct components within the Alliance rose to the surface. The largest contingent was made up of ethnic Tajik forces commanded by General Mohammed Fahim Khan. Fahim, former head of intelligence for the NA, rose to take the position of overall military commander immediately following Massoud's demise. In Ghowr and Herat provinces, in west Afghanistan, General Mohammed Ismail Khan took charge of additional ethnic Tajik NA forces. Known as the "Lion

of Herat," Ismail had been a mujahideen commander during the Soviet invasion and had previously served as governor of Herat province. Ethnic Uzbeks, under General Abdul Rashid Dostum, formed a third element of the Alliance. In the 1980s, General Dostum's militia had controlled six provinces in northern Afghanistan. His stronghold had been the city of Mazar-e Sharif, the country's fourth largest city, which Dostum lost to the Taliban in 1999. The final faction of the NA was the Hizb-i-Wahdat (Unity Party), comprised of ethnic Hazara fighters led by Karim Khalili. The Taliban had driven this group out of central Afghanistan in 1998, but Khalili and his fighters had managed to survive.[9]

During the summer of 2001, prior to the US intervention in Afghanistan, the NA was short on manpower, inadequately trained, and poorly equipped. Its forces were capable only of maintaining a military stalemate with the Taliban. Although troop strength estimates varied at the time, it was likely that the NA could muster only about 20,000 combat forces to support upcoming US operations.[10] Most NA forces were armed with AK-47 rifles; PK machineguns; ZGU-1 heavy machineguns; single- and multi-barrel rocket launchers; and a limited number of artillery pieces, tanks, and other armored vehicles. The NA had also retrofitted light trucks and BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles with 32-shot 57-mm rocket pods recovered from Russian Mi-24 and Mi-25 combat helicopters. The Alliance also maintained a small air wing that included approximately a dozen Soviet-built helicopters. Logistics support for the NA was difficult at best and came primarily from the central Asian countries to the north. Supply routes from Tajikistan, for example, were long, arduous, and susceptible to Taliban interdiction. Thus, NA commanders relied on local markets to purchase food and other perishable supplies.[11]

The Insertion of the ODAs

Extensive inclement weather in early October 2001 combined with the treacherous mountain terrain and Taliban antiaircraft fire to significantly delay US Central Command's (CENTCOM's) schedule for the insertion of US Army SF ODAs (also known as A Teams). Since the beginning of the air campaign, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had pushed hard for SOF presence in Afghanistan. According to a number of sources, in early October Rumsfeld continuously directed pointed queries about the ODAs to the planners at CENTCOM, asking, "When are the Special Forces people going to get in?"[12] Since becoming the head of the Department of Defense (DOD), Rumsfeld had championed the use of SOF. Once OEF began, Rumsfeld placed great stock in the capacity of SOF to play a decisive role in the campaign. At a news conference on 18 October 2001, Rumsfeld asserted that SOF brought specific capabilities that air power could never offer, stating, "there are certain things they [aircraft] can't do—they can't crawl around on the ground and find people."[13]

On the evening of 19 October 2001, the first of several SF elements infiltrated Afghanistan. Eleven members of ODA 555, onboard MH-47 Chinook helicopters, arrived late in the evening at the Astaneh camp in Panjshir Valley and received their initial briefing.[14] Within a few days, ODA 555 would link up with NA's General Bismullah near Bagram. That same night, the 12 men of ODA 595 infiltrated the Darya Suf Valley on MH-47s to join General Dostum's forces in Dehi, some 60 miles south of Mazar-e Sharif.[15] Not long after, the team split into two sections—one accompanying Dostum to his headquarters, the other remaining at Dehi. On 25 October ODA 585 landed near Dasht-e Qaleh then moved south to join General Bariullah Khan's NA forces near Konduz. On 31 October ODA 553 was inserted into Bamian province, northwest of Kabul, to support Hazara Commander Karim Khalili. Next,

an eight-man command-and-control element, known as an Operational Detachment–Charlie (ODC), was inserted to assist General Dostum and his staff on 3 November. On 4 November ODA 534 landed at Darya-e Balkh to support NA General Atta Mohammed. This detachment soon split into two six-man teams, one remaining with Atta Mohammed's command group

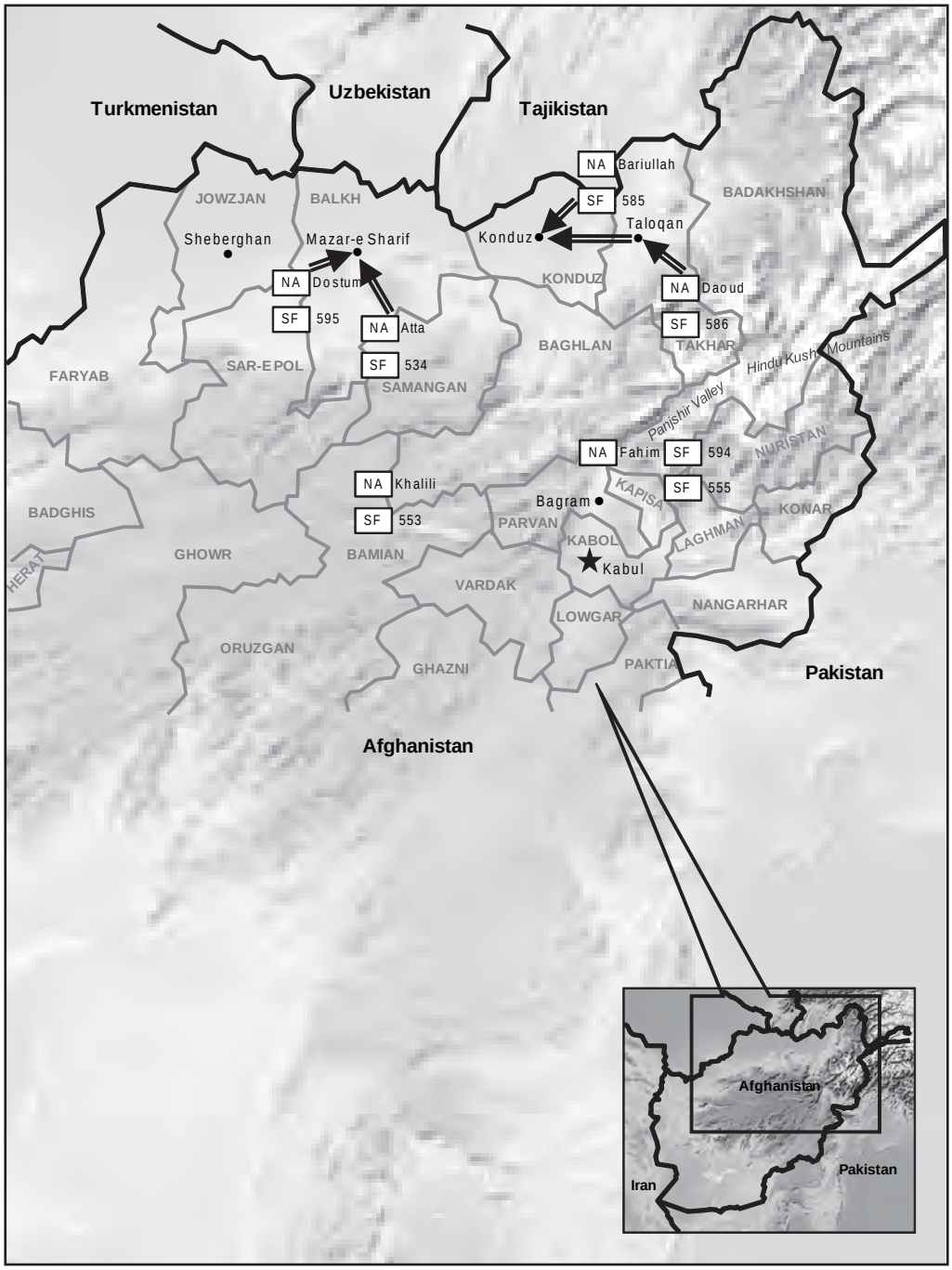


Figure 9. ODA and NA operations, northern Afghanistan, October–December 2001.

while the other moved ahead to join forward NA elements. Finally, ODAs 586 and 594 were flown to a remote landing zone near the Tajik border on 8 November. From there, ODA 586 flew south to link up with General Daoud Khan near Farkhar. ODA 594 moved farther south to the Panjshir Valley.[16]

Beginning in early October, 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) A Teams had been kept in isolation facilities (ISOFAC) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where they prepared for operations in Afghanistan without contact from any outsiders. Their mission was complex and difficult, but once they reached K2 Colonel John Mulholland, the 5th SFG commander who had transformed his command into the JSOTF-N, described the SOF mission in a single straightforward statement: "Advise and assist the Northern Alliance in conducting combat operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, kill, capture, and destroy al-Qaeda, and deny them sanctuary."[17] The overly broad statement provided the JSOTF-N commander and his teams the freedom to make decisions with limited operational constraints and the appropriate amount of flexibility necessary to complete the mission. Since there had been no off-the-shelf plan for operations in Afghanistan, the 5th SFG began with a clean slate. "Basically, we wrote our own plan," Mulholland explained, adding, "it was heavily guided by Special Forces Unconventional Warfare doctrine which proved to be very relevant to the situation."[18] Unconventional warfare (UW) was a doctrinal term used by the US Army to describe operations in which SF Soldiers deploy to a foreign country and partner with that country's indigenous forces to conduct a variety of operations including intelligence collection, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, and conventional combat actions. Mulholland pushed this emphasis on UW down to his subordinates, allowing them great latitude in how to conduct this type of campaign. Captain Dean Newman, ODA 534 team leader, recalled that his "entire mandate consisted of a handful of PowerPoint slides that told him to conduct unconventional warfare, render Afghanistan no longer a safe haven for terrorists, defeat al-Qaeda, and coup the Taliban."[19] Newman stated that he was afforded remarkable discretion in carrying out the team's mission, asserting, "We were given an extraordinarily wonderful amount of authority to make decisions."[20]

Mazar-e Sharif: The Starting Point

Roughly 2 weeks after the arrival of the first ODAs in northern Afghanistan, Mazar-e Sharif became the first Taliban-controlled city to fall to NA forces. Strategically situated in the Balkh River Valley approximately 35 miles south of Uzbekistan, the city is the capital of Balkh province and has been a major regional trading center since the days of Alexander the Great. As the fourth largest city in Afghanistan and with an estimated population of 200,000 Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkomen, Mazar-e Sharif was named in honor of the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed, Hazarate Ali, who was enshrined there in a blue-tiled mosque built during the 12th century.

In the late 1990s, control of the city shifted several times between forces led by General Dostum and the Taliban. In 2001 Mazar-e Sharif had been under the control of the Taliban for several years. Once hostilities began in October, the Taliban government moved 3,000 to 5,000 soldiers to the region, and as the month progressed, additional reinforcements were arriving daily from Pakistan by way of Konduz.[21]

For Coalition leaders, Mazar-e Sharif had to be the first objective of the new campaign. In late October 2001, General Franks, the CENTCOM commander, had met with NA commander

Fahim Khan in Tajikistan and both had eventually agreed to focus operations in the north, specifically against the cities of Mazar-e Sharif, Taloqan, and Konduz. Franks and his staff viewed Mazar-e Sharif as critical because its strategic location and airport allowed for the creation of a logistics node inside Afghanistan and a staging area for future operations against Taloqan.[22] Gaining a supply base with an airport before the onset of winter was especially important for Franks who anticipated major humanitarian crises as a result of the military operations. During the meeting, General Fahim brought up the importance of the capital of Kabul. Franks promised that the Coalition would help the NA take Kabul, but was adamant about starting with Mazar-e Sharif and securing the north before moving south. Franks then sealed the deal by granting Fahim both financial and logistical assistance.

By the time Franks and Fahim met, JSOTF-N had inserted two ODAs and an ODC in the Mazar-e Sharif vicinity to help the NA capture the city. ODA 595, which had joined up with General Dostum south of the city, wasted little time calling in its first series of airstrikes on 21 October against Taliban positions in the Beshcam area, about 8 miles from Dostum's headquarters.[23] Pleased with the potential power promised by the airstrikes, Dostum radioed the opposing Taliban commander and announced, "This is General Dostum speaking. I am here, and I have brought the Americans with me."[24] Captain Mark Nutsch, the ODA 595 team leader, then moved his men forward to Cobaki and directed additional airstrikes on Taliban tanks,

The Horses They Rode in On

On 19 October 2001, Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) 595 infiltrated into Afghanistan and linked up with General Rashid Dostum and his Northern Alliance (NA) forces in the Darya Suf Valley some 70 miles south of Mazar-e Sharif. General Dostum's only modes of transportation were horses and mules; thus, for the next several weeks, ODA 595 rode into battle on horseback, side-by-side with NA fighters.

The commander of ODA 595, Captain Mark D. Nutsch, was well prepared for this task. A full-fledged, highly skilled, cowboy from Alma, Kansas, Nutsch had been a rodeo rider and calf-roping champion at his college alma mater, Kansas State University, prior to joining the Army and becoming a Special Forces officer. Although their Afghan saddles were too small and the stirrups too short, ODA 595 team members were able to successfully keep up with General Dostum during a series of battles leading to the eventual Taliban defeat at Mazar-e Sharif on 10 November.

Along the way, Nutsch, his men, and the NA forces that they supported liberated more than 50 towns and cities, killed or captured thousands of Taliban and al-Qaeda soldiers, and destroyed hundreds of enemy vehicles, bunkers, and weapons systems. In his first field report (25 October), Captain Nutsch declared "We are doing amazingly well with what we have . . . . Frankly, I am surprised that we have not been slaughtered." After Mazar-e Sharif fell to NA forces, General Dostum expressed his gratitude to Nutsch and ODA 595, stating, "I asked for a few Americans. They brought with them the courage of a whole Army."

Courtesy of US Army SF.GOARMY.COM/1

Special Forces Soldier on horseback.

Kalev Sepp, "Meeting the 'g-chief': ODA 595," *Special Warfare,* September 2002.

artillery, and a command post near Chapchal.[25] In quick succession, NA forces took control of several villages in the district south of Mazar-e Sharif, assisted in great measure by additional airstrikes directed by ODA 595.

On 26 October Nutsch sent a three-man element to Omitak Mountain to intercept enemy troops moving south toward Dostum's forces and to conduct further airstrikes. Then, during the evening of 28 October a US Air Force Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) arrived, allowing Captain Nutsch to split ODA 595 into four three-man elements along with a two-man command and control cell comprised of himself and a radio operator. The next day saw the arrival of the ODC 53, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Max Bowers, to provide command and control support for ODA 595, ODA 534, and General Dostum's NA forces in preparation for the impending battle.

With these early actions putting the Taliban on the defensive, General Dostum was ready to move north and retake Mazar-e Sharif with a full complement of US support personnel: SF teams, an SF command and control element, and an Air Force TACP that carried satellite radios for contacting strike aircraft and Special Operations Forces Laser Acquisition Markers (SOFLAM) for pinpointing enemy targets. US cargo aircraft had also managed to drop much-needed food, ammunition, and supplies to NA forces in preparation for this next phase of operations.[26] Additionally, since no vehicles were available and paths in the region consisted primarily of winding mountain trails at elevations in excess of 6,000 feet, NA forces and their American counterparts were forced to travel on horseback and by mule.

The Role of the US Air Force on the Ground

Typically, two Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Terminal Attack Controllers accompanied each Army Special Forces ODA on combat operations during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Everyone wanted a terminal attack controller on his team and these airmen had a dramatic effect on the battles of Mazar-e Sharif, Taloqan, and Konduz in northern Afghanistan. Their primary function was to coordinate and control all joint close air support missions conducted by US Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps attack, fighter, and bomber aircraft in support of Special Operations Forces and Northern Alliance operations on the ground. They used laser designators and special GPS equipment to direct hundreds of air strikes on Taliban and al-Qaeda troops, tanks, personnel carriers, and assorted vehicles. The Air Force controllers also proved proficient at controlling a variety of aircraft from fighters to B-52s and AC-130s. These aircraft often carried a mix of munitions (precision-guided and/or iron "dumb" bombs of varying sizes) that necessitated split-second decision-making by the controllers regarding which ordnance was best suited for which targets.

One controller, whose team had been nearly overrun in the Balkh Valley south of Mazar-e Sharif, noted that "there is no doubt in my mind that air power allowed the Northern Alliance to move through that valley virtually unimpeded. Close air support helped cut down the amount of time it would have taken for the alliance to advance, and it reduced the loss of life that would surely have resulted from direct action." These men, whose roles are often overlooked, were critical in the early Coalition victories against the Taliban.

Technical Sergeant Ginger Schreitmueller,
"Profile: Staff Sgt. Matt," *DefendAmerica*, February 2002

Collapse of the Taliban in Northern Afghanistan

During the week of 29 October, ODA 595 teams spread out across the region south of Mazar-e Sharif to prepare for the final assault.[27] On 4 November ODA 534, commanded by Captain Newman, linked up with General Atta Mohammed's forces in the Balkh River Valley.[28] The intent at this point was for Dostum to keep moving through the Darya Suf Valley, while Atta Mohammed pushed north in the Balkh. Once they met, the combined force, which also included an NA group led by General Mohammed Mohaqqeq, would continue up the Balkh Valley and attack the Taliban stronghold at Tangi Gap.

On 5 November General Dostum's men were ready to move. The operation began at dawn when MC-130 aircraft dropped two 15,000-pound BLU-82 "Daisy Cutter" bombs on Taliban locations at Aq Kuprok. However, one of ODA 595 teams had crept close to Taliban positions and the Taliban commander counterattacked, attempting to trap the team. Close air support (CAS), Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs), and strafing runs by F-14s disrupted the Taliban attack and assisted the SOF in escaping safely. Other 595 teams had similar success directing airstrikes from B-52s, a Predator unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), and other aircraft against key Taliban command and control sites. In one case, an SOF-controlled bomb killed high-ranking Taliban commander Mullah Razzak. In another, an attack on Taliban forces by F-18 Hornet aircraft was followed by NA forces launching a cavalry charge against the remaining enemy, many of whom had begun to retreat northward.[29]

At this point, NA forces were closing in on Mazar-e Sharif from the south and southwest. Taliban commanders in the city continued to funnel reinforcements to the south and continued to put up some resistance. As a result, SOF teams directed Coalition air power against these

Early Look at Hell

On 5 November 2001, two officers with General Rashid Dostum's Northern Alliance forces south of Mazar - e Sharif were monitoring Taliban defensive positions located about 3,000 meters away. Soon, an MC-130 Combat Talon aircraft approached and released a huge wooden pallet containing a 15,000 pound high explosive BLU-82 bomb over the enemy position. The pallet separated and fell away; then, a drag parachute deployed from the back of the bomb as it slowly floated toward the Taliban target.

Suddenly, there was a tremendous explosion and a crushing shock wave that knocked both men to the ground, leaving one unconscious. A giant mushroom-shaped cloud (that resembled a nuclear blast) rose from the impact site. One of the officers finally commented, "We were nearly a mile away from the blast and it beat the crap out of us. What was it like out there on the Taliban lines?" He would soon answer his own question, noting "they're getting an early look at what hell is like." Moments later a second BLU-82 was dropped on the same Taliban position. Mazar-e Sharif fell to Dostum's troops that night.

The BLU-82 epitomized the US military's ability to make a huge impact on the battlefield with a small force. Few of these weapons would be used in OEF and not all would have the equivalent effect as the two outside of Mazar-e Sharif. But the overall use of air-delivered munitions proved decisive in enabling the Northern Alliance to defeat the Taliban in northern Afghanistan in 2001.

Gary C. Schroen, *First In* (New York, NY: Ballentine Books, 2005).

moving Taliban units, which often fled back to the north.[30] As the NA forces and their American partners displayed the amount of firepower they had at their command, local Afghan Taliban began defecting.

On 9 November General Dostum began his final push. In preparation for the assault, ODA 595 Soldiers called B-52 strikes on Taliban defenders who were dug in on the reverse slope of a ridge outside the city. As the NA force moved, a Taliban rocket barrage and minefields slowed Dostum's forward progress. But by late afternoon, NA forces fought off last-ditch Taliban counterattacks and, led by Captain Nutsch on horseback, seized the ridge.[31] The next day, NA troops seized the city airport allowing General Dostum and his SF advisors to ride into Mazar-e Sharif where they were greeted warmly by the population.[32]

Fighting in the city would resume, nevertheless, when several hundred Taliban, who had taken refuge in the former Sultan Razia girl's school, refused to surrender. An estimated 300 Taliban fighters, mostly Pakistanis and other non-Afghans, were subsequently killed when US airstrikes destroyed the school.[33] In the aftermath of the assault, the NA took nearly 3,000 Taliban prisoners in the city and the surrounding area.[34] This quick victory would have been highly unlikely without the marriage of NA forces and Coalition air power that the ODAs made possible. Even the Taliban regime tacitly acknowledged the role that air power had played in the taking of Mazar-e Sharif. On 10 November the Bakhtar News Agency quoted a Taliban official as stating, "For seven days continuously they have been bombing Taliban positions. They used very large bombs."[35]

Securing the North: Konduz and Taloqan

ODA 585 arrived at a village close to the Tajik border on 25 October. After linking up with NA forces, Master Sergeant Bolduc and his team met with local NA commander General Bariullah Khan at a safe house to plan the joint operation that would ultimately capture the city of Konduz. Bariullah, though, was skeptical of the team's capabilities. "I have been here for three years with hundreds of men and could do nothing—what are you going to do with 10 men?" he asked.[36] Despite his concern, Bariullah arranged a meeting for ODA 585 with Fahim Khan, the Supreme NA Commander. Fahim agreed to give Bolduc a few days to prove his team's worth. Bariullah, Bolduc, and five members of ODA 585 then moved to the NA front line, which consisted of four observation posts extended over 6 miles of rugged terrain located about 40 miles northeast of Konduz, an important city in northern Afghanistan located to the east of Mazar-e Sharif. From the observation point, Bolduc could see several Taliban fortifications running north to south along the opposite ridgeline. Bolduc immediately called for airstrikes against these enemy targets. Unfortunately, the first bombing runs missed the Taliban fortifications, leaving General Bariullah unimpressed. Moments later, two Marine Corps F-18 Hornets made four passes over the target area, destroying two enemy command bunkers and several sections of Taliban trench lines. Bariullah now saw the light. "We proved to him that we could be an asset and this was only our third day in country," recalled Bolduc.[37]

By early November ODA 585 was manning an observation post which overlooked the village of Chickha and calling in airstrikes. For the remainder of the month, the SOF Soldiers continued bombing the Taliban day and night, wearing them down mentally and physically. Eventually, this allowed NA fighters to overrun Taliban positions, capture the town of Chickha, and push south toward Konduz.[38]

General Bariullah's offensive bogged down briefly, and, to better assess the enemy defensive situation up ahead, Bolduc sent a three-man observation team to find a more suitable vantage point. The observation team sent back invaluable intelligence reports describing Taliban defensive positions in detail. With this critical information, Bariullah now felt ready to resume NA offensive operations. An attack was planned for dawn the next day, but Bariullah called it off at the last minute for no apparent reason. Bolduc was forced to cancel the CAS missions he had arranged and to recall his observation team. Then, in another surprise move, General Bariullah launched his attack without notifying ODA 585. The frontal assault was a dismal failure that led to the deaths of several hundred NA soldiers and three reporters who were covering the offensive. In explaining the NA defeat, Bolduc emphasized the lack of air support which left them exposed to enemy fire, contending, "they were like ducks in a barrel with no air cover."[39] After the failed assault, Bariullah apologized to Bolduc, explaining that he wanted to achieve victory on his own, without assistance from the SOF team.

The following day, nevertheless, offered another chance to dislodge the Taliban defenders. With the assistance of the Coalition air support, the NA forces overran the enemy fighters who had just defeated them. Bariullah and Bolduc then moved farther west and established a new command center about 40 miles north of Konduz. From this location, the SOF team and the NA sent out a reconnaissance team to gather information about Taliban forces in the city and came close to being overrun 10 miles north of Konduz. However, the timely arrival of two F-18s allowed the team to withdraw unharmed.[40] Two days later, General Bariullah's NA forces moved unchallenged to the outskirts of the city.

While General Bariullah and ODA 585 were approaching Konduz from the north, ODA 586 and NA forces commanded by General Daoud Khan were moving toward Konduz from the

ODA 586

Figure 10. ODA 586.

southeast. ODA 586, commanded by Captain Patrick O'Hara, had flown into Afghanistan to link up with General Daoud. By 10 November ODA 586 team members were discussing the mission to capture both Konduz and Taloqan over dinner with Daoud at his safe house in the town of Farkhar. Daoud claimed to have several thousand men as well as some artillery and armored vehicles. The next day these forces, acting on their own initiative, easily seized Taloqan.

This was a significant victory for the NA, because until the Taliban capture of Taloqan in September 2000, the city served as the headquarters of General Ahmad Shah Massoud. On 11 November ODA 586 moved into Taloqan where O'Hara reorganized the team into a three-element rotation with one section along the NA front lines directing CAS operations, another recovering and overseeing supply matters, and the third preparing for the next day's series of CAS missions.

On 13 November the Taliban counterattacked Daoud's forces west of Taloqan along the road to Konduz. The ODA 586 forward element was forced to reposition to a new observation post, but was quickly able to call in a series of airstrikes that destroyed the attacking Taliban forces. General Daoud had expected that the move west to Konduz would be as easy as the capture of Taloqan. Instead, Daoud and ODA 586 would have to fight all the way to the outskirts of Konduz. Tactically, the NA now began moving slowly and deliberately, allowing air power to suppress and destroy Taliban positions ahead of them before moving forward to occupy the positions. Captain O'Hara described the advance up the road to Konduz in the following way: "Bomb the mountain, then hit it with artillery, then take the mountain. The next day we are going to go to the next mountain. . . . [Daoud] did that for 2 weeks and we did that with him, trying to advance as quickly as possible."[41] This combination of tactics proved to be extremely lethal against the Taliban forces that had no weapons to defeat the aircraft and little protection against the bombings.

In the NA attack on 15 November, for example, Coalition CAS accounted for an estimated 386 Taliban killed or wounded. Three hundred additional Taliban casualties were reported on 17 November. The men of ODA 586 had taken great risks to launch these attacks on the Taliban. They came under enemy fire almost daily on the march to Konduz, and in several instances had to call for emergency CAS to protect their own lives.[42] Their bravery, though, was pivotal to setting conditions for the final assault on Konduz.

By 23 November Daoud had captured the city of Khanabad and was moving toward Konduz, 15 miles to the west. During the move from Taloqan to Khanabad, ODA 586 controllers directed hundreds of airstrikes against Taliban and al-Qaeda troops, trucks, tanks, and mortar positions along the way. O'Hara had kept accurate records for the daily bomb damage assessments and later confirmed the destruction of 51 Taliban trucks, 44 bunkers, 12 tanks, and 4 ammunition dumps. In addition, O'Hare reported that more that 2,000 enemy soldiers had been killed or wounded in the 10 days of fighting.[43]

At the same time that General Daoud was closing on Konduz from the east and General Bariullah was approaching from the north, General Dostum was moving in from the west. All three NA commanders were attracting support from the local populations and by the time they surrounded the city, NA ranks included approximately 30,000 fighters.[44] Each NA general then began his own surrender negotiations. After holding out for several days, a few thousand Taliban forces, which included numerous Uzbeks, Chechens, Pakistanis, and Arabs, finally acknowledged the bleakness of their desperate situation and surrendered Konduz to the NA

over a 4-day period beginning 23 November. Captain O'Hara and ODA 586 were the first Americans to enter the city. Dostum set many of the Afghan Taliban free, while his forces held foreign and al-Qaeda fighters as prisoners. With the fall of Mazar-e Sharif, Taloqan, and Konduz, the strategically important cities of northern Afghanistan were now in the hands of NA forces.

Concurrent Civil-Military Operations

As noted earlier in this study, CENTCOM planners had sought to create a campaign plan for OEF in which combat operations and humanitarian assistance would occur simultaneously. Northern Afghanistan became the first stage on which the Coalition attempted to do these types of operations concurrently. To support humanitarian relief assistance for the Afghan people, CENTCOM had requested that Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) establish an appropriate organization to coordinate these relief activities. Lieutenant General Paul Mikolashek, CFLCC commander, then created the Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF), composed of elements from the 377th Theater Support Command, the 122d Rear Operations Center, and the 352d Civil Affairs (CA) Command to conduct the humanitarian assistance operations. The CJCMOTF formed in Atlanta and Tampa, moved to Kuwait, and eventually deployed to Kabul in early December 2001.

The planning for humanitarian assistance operations in theater had begun just 4 days after the air campaign began. On 11 October an officer from the 96th CA Battalion deployed to Islamabad, Pakistan, to establish a Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) and to organize

Humanitarian Rations from the Sky

Developed in the early 1990s by the Department of Defense Humanitarian Assistance Team, humanitarian daily rations (HDRs) were similar to the military meal, ready-to-eat (MRE) that offered a variety of single-portion foods in sealed pouches. HDRs were designed to feed large populations of refugees in emergency situations. Each HDR provides sustenance for one day (2,200 calories), and did not include animal products in order to comply with worldwide religious restrictions. The HDR packages were colored yellow to make each packet highly visible. In Afghanistan, Coalition aircraft dropped HDRs without parachutes. This "flutter-down" method created wide dispersion and hopefully precluded hoarding and altercations over large pallet-load airdrops.

Unfortunately, at the same time that the Coalition was dropping HDRs, its aircraft were also dropping cluster bombs in Taliban concentrations. Each cluster bomb contained over 200 cylindrically-shaped bomblets that were colored yellow like the HDRs. About 5 percent of these bomblets failed to explode, thereby creating the potential for being mistaken for HDR packets. Realizing the potential danger of mistaking bomblets for rations, the Coalition used the Commando Solo aircraft to warn the Afghan population in Dari and Pashto about the differences between the HDRs and the deadly munitions.

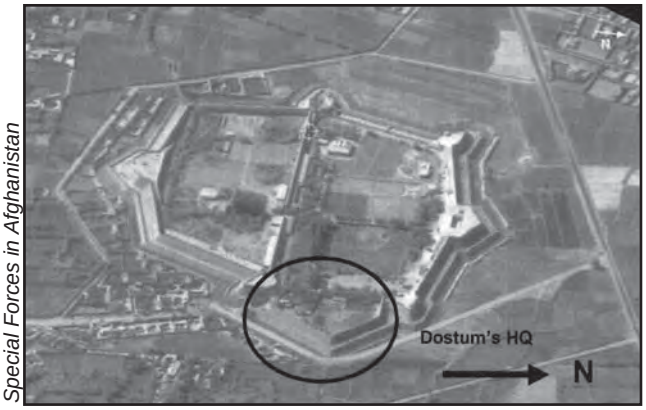
The final OEF humanitarian daily ration airdrop occurred on 13 December 2001. By that time, US military aircraft had dropped nearly one million packets in support of the Afghan people. In 2002, the Pentagon changed the HDR packet color from yellow to red.

Deborah Zabarenko, "US Offers Lesson on How to Tell Cluster Bombs from Food Packs," *The Washington Post*, 30 October 2001.

Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Cells (CHLCs) to deconflict humanitarian and combat operations, conduct assessments, and identify potential relief projects. Later that month a liaison officer and several CA teams from the 96th CA Battalion deployed to the K2 Air Base in support of the 5th SFG. One of these teams relocated to Mazar-e Sharif in late November and a second would move onto the Bagram Air Base near Kabul after it was occupied in October.[45]

During this same period, Humanitarian Assistance Survey Teams (HASTs) from the 96th CA Battalion joined the ODAs in place in the north. Their mission was to assist NA leaders and to initiate collaborative efforts with local Afghan civilians. Some HAST members began wearing civilian clothes in an effort to blend in with Afghans. Nongovernment organizations (NGOs) complained about this practice, however, thinking that locals would be unable to distinguish between Soldiers (in civilian attire) and NGO personnel. Shortly thereafter, CENTCOM ordered CA Soldiers in Afghanistan back in uniform.[46] After the NA victory in Mazar-e Sharif, Soldiers from the 96th CA Battalion, the 5th SFG, and the 10th Mountain Division began working on a number of humanitarian projects including the opening of a new hospital.[47] The hospital, completed in part by specialists from the country of Jordan, quickly put a staff of 20 surgeons to work and by mid-January 2002 had treated approximately 8,000 patients.[48]

Qala-i Jangi Prison Uprising



Special Forces in Afghanistan

Figure 11. Fortress of Qala-i Jangi.

The Taliban collapse in northern Afghanistan had led to the surrender of thousands of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters to victorious NA forces. True to the Afghan fighting tradition, NA leaders accepted at face value the word of the captured Taliban that they would not engage in any further hostilities. Because of this promise, NA Soldiers rarely searched their captives for weapons in a thorough manner. What local NA commanders seemed to have overlooked was that many of those surrendering were non-Afghan Taliban—Pakistanis, Chechens, and others—as well as members of al-Qaeda who would not follow Afghan customs. Approximately 1,000 of these prisoners were taken to the 19th-century Qala-i Jangi fortress, 6 miles west of Mazar-e Sharif, that had served as a Taliban military base and most recently as General Dostum's headquarters.[49]

On 24 November, the day of their arrival at the makeshift detention facility, Taliban captives killed two NA commanders in separate handgrenade suicide attacks.[50] Despite these unexpected attacks, the NA failed to expand the force guarding the prison, which consisted of only about 100 soldiers.[51] The next morning two officers, unaccompanied by security, arrived to interrogate the Taliban and search for al-Qaeda members. Several Taliban wandered freely within the compound, having been untied by the guards to wash and pray.[52] The American presence provoked the Taliban and one attacked a guard with a rock and grabbed an AK-47 assault rifle.[53] Within minutes, the remaining guards fled and enemy forces seized control of the

fortress. One of the officers escaped in the turmoil. The other officer, was killed, after having shot three Taliban, thus becoming the first American casualty of hostile fire in Afghanistan.[54]

Later that afternoon, American SF and British Special Air Service (SAS) Soldiers led by Major Mark Mitchell of 3d Battalion, 5th SFG, arrived at Qala-i Jangi and took control of the situation. For the remainder of the day, they called in airstrikes on the south end of the compound where the Taliban had concentrated. On 26 November additional SF troops and Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division flown in from K2 joined the US and British forces at the prison. Mitchell established a new command post and positioned an NA tank in the northeast corner of the facility. Unfortunately, a misdirected 2,000-pound bomb dropped from a Coalition aircraft struck the north wall of the command post later that morning, killing several NA soldiers and wounding five US and two SAS Soldiers.[55] That evening, Coalition leaders on the ground directed two AC-130 Spectre gunships in strafing runs against the Taliban end of the prison. By the next day, the surviving Taliban were nearly out of food, water, and ammunition. NA tanks shelled a building where the remaining prisoners held out. By late that afternoon, the fighting ended and an SF team was able to recover the fallen Soldier's body. For his leadership in action, Major Mitchell was later given the Distinguished Service Cross, the first award of this decoration since the Vietnam War.

A group of Taliban survived, however, by hiding in the basement of the prison complex. For several days they refused to come out despite being doused with burning oil.[56] Finally, on 1 December, 86 Taliban prisoners emerged and surrendered after the basement had been flooded with frigid well water. Among the survivors was the so-called "American Taliban," John Walker

The Death Ray

Air Force AC-130H "Spectre" and AC-130U "Spooky" gunships heavily supported US Special Operations Forces in northern Afghanistan during the fall of 2001. In November, an AC-130 was providing suppressive fires to ODA 595 and General Rashid Dostum's Northern Alliance forces near the city of Konduz when Dostum overheard the gunship's female fire support officer's voice over the radio. He immediately summoned Mohammed Fazal, a recently-captured former Taliban chief of staff, to listen to the radio conversation. Dostum convinced Fazal that the voice was the "Angel of Death," waiting overhead to use the "Death Ray" on Taliban holdouts in Konduz. Fazal immediately grabbed a radio and ordered the remaining Taliban forces to surrender.

AC-130 gunships flew out of Oman during the initial months of OEF and were instrumental in every Northern Alliance attack in northern Afghanistan, especially those in Konduz and in the Qala-i Jangi prison uprising. The side-firing gunship's primary missions include close air support, air interdiction, and force protection. Integrated sensor, navigation, and fire control systems allow the aircraft to operate at night, in adverse weather, and over extended liter times, while providing both surgical strike or saturation firepower.

AC-130H Spectre gunships are configured with a 40-mm Bofors cannon (rate of fire up to 120 rounds per minute) and one 105-mm Howitzer cannon (rate of fire 10 rounds per minute). The AC-130U Spooky (also know as the U-Boat) gunship has a 25-mm GAU-12 Gatling gun (rate of fire 1,800 rounds per minute), advanced sensors, and a new fire control radar system, and is capable of engaging two targets simultaneously.

CAPT. Mark, no last name available,
PBS Frontline, "Campaign Against Terror Interview:
U.S. Special Forces ODA 595," 8 September 2002.

Lindh, who was treated at the Afghan hospital in the city of Sheberghan, interrogated at Camp Rhino in southern Afghanistan, and transported to the USS *Peleliu* in the Arabian Sea.[57] Many of the Taliban and al-Qaeda members involved in the Qala-i Jangi insurrection were among the first arrivals at the newly established detainee facility called Camp X-Ray, which the US Government had established at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba.[58]

For his part, General Dostum felt betrayed by the Taliban uprising at the prison. He had hoped that his humane treatment of the prisoners would be regarded as a gesture of reconciliation. As a result, he had not directed his subordinates to search the prisoners as thoroughly as they should have in the circumstances. "We treated them humanely . . . we did not search them well enough because we trusted them," he would later remark. "That was a mistake."[59]

Logistics Operations in the Early Campaign

Prior to OEF, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) were accustomed to deploying and operating independently in small teams. Thus, their logistics needs were limited. In 2001 the existing, nondeployable, Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM) with one support battalion, two forward support companies, and one headquarters company was sufficient to meet ARSOF team-oriented logistics requirements.

However, when the 5th SFG deployed to K2 and became the JSOTF-N, the assigned forward support element—Alpha Company, 528th Special Operations Support Battalion—was nearly overwhelmed with the enormity of logistics requests. There were approximately 400 Soldiers in the entire 528th Support Battalion to provide combat service support for 15,000 Soldiers in the ARSOF. This ratio appears inadequate in contrast to conventional force ratios that normally allow for 3,300 support personnel for a combat division that normally has 15,000 Soldiers.[60] Nevertheless, the Soldiers of the 528th shouldered the huge burden at K2 by quickly establishing a warehouse, a clothing distribution center, a dining facility, and ration and refueling points. The 507th Corps Support Command replaced the 528th in December 2001 after SF combat operations in northern Afghanistan had subsided.[61]

Soldiers and Army civilians from the 200th Materiel Management Center (MMC), 21st Theater Support Command (TSC) in Kaiserslautern, Germany, also provided logistics support to SOF personnel during the early days of OEF. A special OEF cell was established at 200th MMC headquarters to provide, as they claimed, "corner-cutting, on-the-fly, I-want-it-now, customer-driven" support services as "unconventional as the war being fought."[62] The cell operated 24 hours a day and was in direct contact with US troops on the ground in Afghanistan via satellite phones and e-mail. When certain items were not readily available in the system, MMC members used their Government credit cards to make the necessary purchases on the local German economy. When cargo parachutes were in short supply, the cell had hundreds more sent to Germany by Federal Express. During the first 60 days of OEF, the 21st TSC air-dropped dozens of Western saddles, 12,000 pounds of horse feed, 2 million humanitarian meals, 2 million pounds of wheat, 93,000 blankets, specialized batteries, nonmilitary tactical gear, camping equipment, mountaineering clothing, plus tons of extra equipment and supplies.[63]

Without doubt, the workhorse airlift aircraft in the early months of OEF was the C-17 Globemaster III. The Air Force had recently purchased 80 of these aircraft to replace the aging C-141 fleet for intertheater long-range transport missions. C-17s carried a larger payload and could operate from smaller, unimproved, airfields. Typically, C-5 Galaxy or commercial aircraft

airlifted personnel and equipment from US aerial ports of embarkation to staging bases. To accommodate this movement, the Air Force established two air bridges—one flowed eastward from Moron Air Base in Spain, Rhein-Main and Ramstein Air Bases in Germany, and Incirlik Air Base in Turkey; the other moved westward from Andersen Air Base on Guam to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. At these intermediate staging bases, aircrews transferred cargo from the larger C-5s to C-17s for delivery to the theater. Unfortunately, a single C-17 could not accommodate all the cargo from a C-5 transport. This discrepancy caused considerable backlog and congestion at the various staging bases and resulted in split theater shipments.

From the beginning of the air war until mid-December 2001, C-17s air-dropped more than 2 million humanitarian daily rations for the Afghan population.[64] Since there were no in-theater bases initially, these food drop missions often lasted up to 30 hours and required a third pilot joining the C-17 crews to rotate rest periods. Despite the fact that there had been no CENTCOM or Air Mobility Command off-the-shelf plan for airlift to Afghanistan, the Coalition air forces used innovation and flexibility to deal with the significant challenges posed by the operations in central Asia.[65]

Explaining the Taliban Collapse in the North

US civilian and military officials had expected defeating the Taliban would take much longer than it actually did. However, the speed with which the NA routed the Taliban in northern Afghanistan resulted from an unprecedented combination of military efforts: SOF directing precision-guided airstrikes in support of an indigenous ally against enemy forces. In many battles in the north, the Taliban enemy, which often outnumbered NA forces, were not in contact with the NA and were only visible through sensors used by the ODAs. In these situations, SOF-directed US air power was the combat multiplier that enabled an outnumbered NA to destroy Taliban infantry and armor and to liberate northern Afghanistan in just over 6 weeks. SOF executed their UW campaign precisely in accordance with their doctrine. ODAs not only directed deadly airstrikes, but also influenced the decisionmaking of NA commanders on the ground, thereby shaping NA tactics. According to Colonel Mulholland, commander of JSOTF-N, the Taliban faced a classic dilemma. If they massed, they would be annihilated by devastating airstrikes. If they dispersed, they would be, in Mulholland's words, "overwhelmed and defeated piecemeal by NA ground forces."[66] For Mulholland, the ODAs were the key, serving as "the ultimate 'bridging force,' joining methods and techniques of warfare that had not changed in hundreds of years to 21st century capabilities"[67]

These tactics presented US forces maximum effectiveness with minimal risk. Al-Qaeda units did attempt two counterattacks, yet US SOF suffered no casualties in any of the battles in the north. The principal reason for this was that CAS controllers attached to ODAs used laser illuminators and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment to engage Taliban fighters at significant stand-off distances. For example, on the march toward Mazar-e Sharif in October, SOF controllers were able to acquire Taliban targets at ranges of up to 10 kilometers.[68] The resulting technique took on a new name, ground-directed interdiction (GDI), and differed from typical CAS in which supported forces are normally in direct contact with the enemy. GDI facilitated attacks on moving targets, ensured compliance with CENTCOM rules of engagement, and enabled the concentration of devastating effects without concentrating physical forces.[69] US Army Colonel Mike Findley, the former Commander, Special Operations Command, Joint Forces Command, argued that although the mix of players in the GDI equation

was unprecedented, the NA (along with its SOF advisors) was essentially no different than any other conventional ground maneuver force requiring periodic joint fire support.[70] Matching concentrated firepower with nimble ground maneuver elements to vanquish an enemy force has always been a principal factor for success in warfare. As such, JSOTF-N became by default the functional ground force (supported) commander directing ODA/NA maneuver units against the Taliban and employing complementary US air support whenever needed.

Some observers have suggested that the quick victories over the Taliban in the north and elsewhere resulted from the pitting of a modern force against a poorly-trained, incompetent, and unmotivated enemy.[71] This may have been true during the first few days of SOF-directed US bombing, when the enemy was exposed and easily acquired. The Taliban learned quickly and by November 2001 had adopted a variety of cover-and-concealment techniques and began taking cover and dispersing their troops. These efforts proved at least partially successful in minimizing the devastating effects of American airstrikes, and would serve the Taliban well in future actions such as the assault on Tora Bora and Operation ANACONDA. Additionally, although Afghan Taliban were often hesitant to stand and fight, the foreign forces that had received sophisticated military training were significantly more likely to hold their positions and even mount counterattacks.

The power of the SOF/NA combination was magnified by important innovations in the use of aerial platforms during the initial months of OEF. The expanded use of UAVs, such as Predator and Global Hawk, provided both faster reaction times and longer dwell times than did conventional piloted aircraft. This enabled significantly improved data fusion, near constant surveillance of Taliban activity, and major reductions in sensor-to-shooter link times. Unfortunately, teams on the ground could not communicate directly with UAV operators. On the other hand, improved capability to transmit and receive data permitted aircrews to retarget during flight and to strike targets repeatedly if necessary.

Despite some initial growing pains, the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Prince Sultan Air Base provided an unprecedented level of timely air support for SF ODAs and the NA. Air Force and Navy cooperation and integration was generally harmonious from the start as all CAOC members focused on sharing information and on the common objective of defeating the Taliban. Improved technology provided CAOC operators with proximate real-time theater connectivity, situational awareness, and the ability to deliver devastating firepower on demand.[72]

A few controversies did arise. Military and civilian personnel at CENTCOM and in Washington exercised high levels of centralized control over mission planning and execution, thereby interfering with timely target approval decision cycles.[73] This practice, coupled with restrictive rules of engagement that sometimes required Judge Advocate General (JAG) officers influencing target choices, rear-area scrutinizing of live Predator data, lengthy mission distances (up to 15 hours flight time from Diego Garcia), limited loiter capability, and the fact that CENTCOM and CAOC were separated by eight time zones detracted from air power reaction times as new targets emerged. Additionally, other US Government agencies flew armed Predators within the area of responsibility (AOR) in support of covert operations without advising the CAOC. To address this issue, liaison officers at CENTCOM, CAOC, and JSOTF-N developed a broad-based coordination plan that integrated all friendly OEF participants—SOF, covert SOF, and NA.[74] Eventually, JSOTF-N established a limited Air Support

Operations Center (ASOC) to coordinate joint fires and began using other procedures to help eliminate friendly fire incidents.[75]

Fortunately, commanders quickly resolved the few difficulties that arose early on in OEF. For example, JSOTF-N's assumption of the role of "supported" command clarified command relationships among the participants. Also, CENTCOM requested the first-time use of commercial satellites to address the demand for data transmission bandwidth.[76] This, though, did not completely alleviate occasional range and reliability problems with targeting systems, data links, and frequency modulation (FM) tactical radios encountered by infiltrated SOF. In addition, extensive aviation operations in mountainous terrain revealed the high-altitude lift limitations of MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Although Black Hawk crews flew hundreds of dangerous OEF support missions, several such missions involving flights into mountainous terrain were, of necessity, shifted to the larger and more powerful MH-47 Chinooks. Taking time to assess variations in aircraft capabilities complicated mission planning for commanders, but never seriously endangered the support Coalition SOF was able to give to their indigenous partners in the NA.[77]

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In fewer than 2 months, the NA, supported by US SOF and air power, decisively defeated the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in northern Afghanistan and liberated 6 provinces, 3 key cities, and nearly 50 additional smaller towns and villages in the region. NA forces killed nearly 10,000 enemy soldiers and took several thousand more prisoners. The unique combination of small SOF teams (trained eyes on the ground), strike aircraft/bombers, and precision-guided munitions brought about the remarkable accomplishments realized during combat operations in the north. SOF also provided tactical advice to the NA and dealt adroitly with various Afghan factions, rivalries, and tensions. The seven ODAs and one ODC that entered the northern region certainly maintained the imperative of keeping the Coalition footprint small and proved that devastating firepower and other technological advantages could be brought to bear by small, highly-trained units.

In the early battles for Mazar-e Sharif and for the other population centers in the north, American forces gained valuable insight into how the Taliban and al-Qaeda would fight. Moreover, CENTCOM had demonstrated to doubters that the United States could rapidly project destructive land, sea, and air power over exceptionally long distances. US combat participants proved the concept of "jointness" to be both viable and workable, as all—SOF, conventional Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines—cooperated in support of the OEF mission. Defeating the Taliban and establishing a strategic foothold in northern Afghanistan would be critical to the rest of the OEF campaign by creating an anchor point for NA power and a platform from which to project that power.

The NA commanders now turned their focus to the capital of Kabul and the promise of taking control of the entire country. At the same time, CENTCOM and JSOTF-N had begun conducting UW in the south of Afghanistan where the Taliban had deep roots amongst the Pashtun population. The victorious battles in the north were critical to the campaign and set the stage for even greater victories. However, both the capital and the south of the country would have to be secured for the Coalition to achieve its overall goal of ridding Afghanistan of the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

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74. Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*, 353.

75. Findley, Green, and Braganca, "SOF on the Contemporary Battlefield," 12–13.

76. Cordesman, *Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan,* 43.

77. Conrad Crane, *Final Report: The U.S. Army's Initial Impressions of Operation Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2002), 4.

Chapter 5

Success in the South and East

The situation in southern and eastern Afghanistan differed markedly from the circumstances in the north. Unlike operations in the northern part of Afghanistan, where Operational Detachment–Alpha (ODA) teams worked with the multiethnic Northern Alliance (NA) to bring down the Taliban, ODAs in the south and southeast did not have the opportunity to work with a well-established anti-Taliban organization and needed to either manufacture resistance to the Taliban or nurse extant opposition within the local population to maturity. Making this problem more difficult was that the Taliban movement emerged from the areas around the southern city of Kandahar, and the movement's most ardent supporters remained located in that region and the southeastern provinces along the Pakistani border. In the eastern region, seizing control of Kabul presented both a military and a political challenge. If that seizure occurred at the hands of the Tajik- and Uzbek-dominated NA, the Pashtun majority within the country might be irrevocably alienated from the Coalition. Clearly, for the ODAs that would begin working in the south and the east, significant obstacles lined the path that led to the overthrow of the Taliban regime.

Still within 2 months of arriving in Afghanistan, the ODAs worked with indigenous forces of several different types to capture Kabul in November, seize Kandahar in early December, and destroy much of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda forces at Tora Bora in mid-December. Throughout these operations in southern and eastern Afghanistan, Coalition military leaders continued to rely on the partnership between indigenous anti-Taliban forces, small teams of Special Operations Forces (SOF), and highly-focused close air support (CAS). This formula worked well through the middle of December as key anti-Taliban Pashtun leaders such as Hamid Karzai and Gul Agha Sherzai emerged to work with Coalition forces and rapidly build their own military forces. The collaboration of these elements culminated in early December with the remarkably quick capture of Kandahar, the key objective in the south.

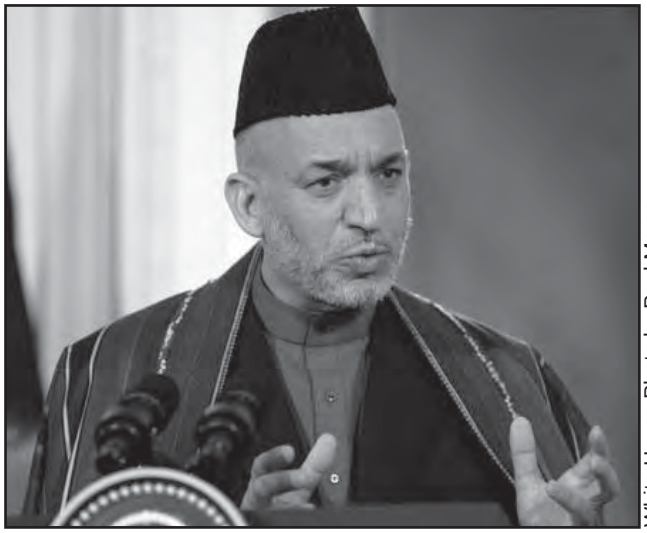
However, the collaboration between Special Forces (SF) advisors and anti-Taliban militia developed differently during the fighting in the Tora Bora Mountains in early to mid-December. There, on the border with Pakistan, a potent mix of cultural differences, inter-Afghan political agendas, and international frictions prevented Coalition forces from annihilating al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan and capturing Osama bin Laden. While the actions at Tora Bora were generally successful in removing al-Qaeda as a fighting force, that battle revealed that the Coalition's ability to rely on Afghan militia forces in the south had significant limits.

Initial Moves: Identifying Pashtun Allies in the South

For the ODAs designated for operations in eastern and southern Afghanistan, it was vital to find, link-up, and work with legitimate anti-Taliban Pashtun leaders who would help the Coalition seize Kandahar—the center of Pashtun life in Afghanistan. By the late 20th century, there were roughly 17 million Pashtuns living along both sides of the Afghan–Pakistani border, and any outside power that wanted to significantly influence Afghan affairs needed a champion from within the Pashtun ethnic group.[1] Coalition military and political leaders recognized early that operations could not solely rely on the NA; ultimate victory would required support from the Pashtun population. Fortunately, the US Government quickly found a Pashtun leader who

was willing to serve at the head of an anti-Taliban Pashtun movement. His name was Hamid Karzai and he would quickly emerge as an ally not only in the effort to dislodge the Taliban, but also in the nation-building process that would immediately ensue after the Taliban's defeat.

Little known by Americans before the dramatic events of September 2001, Karzai was born in 1957, the son of Abdul Ahad Karzai, just outside Kandahar. Abdul Karzai had served as deputy speaker of the Afghanistan Parliament in the 1960s and was a tribal elder of the Popalzai, one of the key Pashtun tribes. Hamid Karzai's maternal grandfather, Khair Mohammad Khan, had fought in Afghanistan's War of Independence in 1919 and had served as the deputy speaker of Afghanistan's Senate. Karzai thus enjoyed an impeccable pedigree that in 2001 positioned him as a potential player in the post-Taliban Afghan government.



White House Photo by Paul Morse

Figure 12. Hamid Karzai.

In any event, it was not just Karzai's lineage that thrust him into the forefront of the anti-Taliban forces' efforts.[2] Karzai had played a significant role in just about every major event in Afghanistan since the 1979 Soviet invasion. After receiving his Master of Arts degree in International Relations in 1983 from Shimla University in India, Karzai returned to his home country and joined the mujahideen, serving the anti-Soviet resistance in a variety of capacities. He was the Director of Information for the National Liberation Front (NLF) and eventually moved into the post of deputy director of the NLF's Political Office. After the Soviet withdrawal, Karzai received an appointment as the director of the foreign affairs unit within the transitional post-Soviet government led by Mohammad Najibullah. After the mujahideen ousted Najibullah's communist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan regime in 1992, Karzai was tabbed as the interim government's Deputy Foreign Minister. When civil war broke out, Karzai attempted to bring the disparate sides together at a *loya jirga* (grand council), but failed.

With the rise of the Taliban, Karzai and his family became fierce opponents of Mullah Mohammad Omar's movement and of his al-Qaeda allies, a stance that forced them to leave Afghanistan. In August 1999 assassins killed Abdul Ahad Karzai in Quetta, Pakistan, while he was attempting to organize resistance to the Taliban regime. This event consolidated Hamid Karzai's position as an anti-Taliban figure able to garner support from fellow Pashtuns as well as other Afghan ethnic groups.

Karzai's potential looked very promising, but Coalition leaders believed they would have to recruit other Pashtun leaders if they were to conduct a successful campaign in the south and east. Gul Agha Sherzai was the next obvious candidate. Prior to the Taliban taking power in the 1990s, Sherzai had exerted political control over the area around Kandahar. He had fought with

the mujahideen against the Soviets and maintained close ties with the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. While Sherzai would ultimately prove to be a valuable resource to the United States in driving the Taliban from Kandahar, his power was based on his political standing in the Kandahar region. Because of this, Sherzai had sometimes been identified as a warlord. By turning to men like Karzai and Sherzai, Coalition leaders hoped to cultivate favor among the Pashtuns and enable not just a military decision against the Taliban, but a political coup de main that would bring a new government supported by all ethnic groups.[3]

Ground Operations Begin: Objectives RHINO and GECKO

In mid-October, 2 weeks after the beginning of the air campaign, US ground forces would make their first appearance in southern Afghanistan. The US Army Ranger and SOF units that hit the ground first hoped to set the right conditions for the ODA efforts in the region. On the night of 20 October 2001, about 200 Rangers from the 3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, conducted a parachute assault on a small desert airfield about 50 miles southwest of Kandahar dubbed Objective RHINO. The purpose of the operation was to secure the airfield and use it as a forward arming and refueling point (FARP) for helicopters ferrying troops of an elite SOF task force, which would be conducting a follow-on mission from the airfield.[4]

The objective area was divided into smaller objectives: TIN, IRON, and COBALT. The last of these was a walled compound that appeared to be a billeting area for Taliban troops. The 3d Battalion's A Company was to clear Objectives TIN and IRON, then set up blocking positions to oppose any Taliban counterattacks that might develop. Company C's mission was to assault and clear Objective COBALT, the walled compound.[5]

Before the Rangers parachuted onto the objective, strikes by a variety of aircraft hit the targets to suppress and perhaps kill many of the enemy forces near the objectives. The US Air Force directed B-2 Stealth Bombers to hit the various target areas around RHINO, especially TIN, with 2,000-pound bombs, and were followed up by AC-130 gunship strafing runs.[6] The airstrikes proved remarkably successful, eliminating 11 Taliban fighters on Objective TIN and forcing 9 more to withdraw.[7] The AC-130 attacked several structures within COBALT and effectively quelled resistance there that might have contested the parachute drop and the follow-on assault into the walled compound.[8]

The 3d Battalion's attack went off relatively smoothly. Once on the ground, the Rangers of A Company immediately attacked and secured their objectives without incident. Company C then attacked the walled compound at COBALT. With the exception of one enemy fighter who was quickly killed, there was no resistance. During the attack, members of the 9th Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Battalion began broadcasting messages via loudspeaker urging any surviving enemy soldiers to give up to the Americans.[9] The US elements at RHINO quickly cleared all buildings, destroyed weapons caches, and secured the field. In less than 20 minutes, several MC-130 aircraft landed and prepared to refuel the SOF helicopters and extract the Rangers. Within a few more minutes a flight of choppers landed at the FARP and began refueling.[10] Phase I was complete. The next phase, the operation to seize Objective GECKO, was about to begin.

Objective GECKO was a residential compound southwest of Kandahar that, according to Coalition intelligence, potentially housed a target of significant value—Mullah Mohammed Omar, the leader of the Taliban. According to a US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

history of the operation, the SOF mission going into GECKO was to "disrupt Taliban leadership and [al-Qaeda] communications, gather intelligence and detain select personnel."[11] A short time after refueling at the FARP, the helicopters were en route to the compound carrying about 90 highly trained SOF soldiers who were intent on killing or capturing Mullah Mohammed Omar. Shortly before the choppers landed near the compound, AC-130 Spectre gunships and MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters pounded the residence with a variety of weapons. Once on the ground, the elite force took less than an hour to seize and clear Omar's compound. Failing to find the Taliban leader at the site, the troops gathered valuable intelligence, after which they evacuated the objective and returned to RHINO.[12] Once the SOF choppers departed RHINO, the Rangers boarded the MC-130s and departed. The entire operation lasted just over 5 hours after the parachute assault.[13]

The operations to capture Objectives RHINO and GECKO were designed to have as much of a psychological impact as a military one. The Taliban simply did not have a well-developed air force and so the loss of the airfield did not have any meaningful military effect on their war effort. However, the operation was meant to have a significant influence on the thinking of the political and military leadership of the Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies. The day after the assault, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, US Air Force General Richard B. Myers, asserted that the operations near Kandahar displayed the Coalition's military dominance, stating, "U.S. forces were able to deploy, maneuver and operate inside Afghanistan without significant interference from Taliban forces. They are now refitting and repositioning for potential future operations against terrorist targets in other areas known to harbor terrorists."[14] General Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander and overall commander of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), reinforced this point, stating that these operations were conducted to show the Taliban, and perhaps the Afghan people at large, "that we will go anywhere we choose to go."[15]

Despite Omar's absence at Objective GECKO, the operations did achieve some success. The raids on Objectives RHINO and GECKO demonstrated that the Taliban was powerless to prevent the Coalition military command from focusing land forces on any target within the borders of Afghanistan at the time of its choosing. The Taliban's attention on any impending battles was doubtless fixed to the north where the bulk of its fighting force faced the NA. The south was supposed to be secure, but these raids proved to the Taliban and the country's population that it was not.

The ODAs Enter: The Fall of Kabul

On the same day that the Rangers landed at RHINO, US Central Command (CENTCOM) and Joint Special Operations Task Force–North (JSOTF-N) inserted another SF team much closer to the historic political capital of Afghanistan—the city of Kabul. As noted in the previous chapter, ODA 555 was the first team inserted into the Panjshir Valley in northeast Afghanistan on 19 October 2001. This team, nicknamed the "Triple Nickel," arrived with the mission of working with the NA forces of Generals Bismullah Khan and Mohammed Fahim Khan to seize the Shomali Plains located between the city of Bagram and the capital of Kabul. The team met with the NA commanders at the old Soviet Air Base near Bagram and discovered that the dilapidated control tower at the field made a superb observation post. From that site, the team could observe the Taliban front lines and call in airstrikes against their positions.[16] Sergeant First Class "Frank," a member of ODA 555, recalled the first day that he was taken up into the tower:

> [An NA commander] takes us up into the tower. We didn't go down there to call any of our aircraft in, we were just going to survey the front lines, and he starts pointing out all the enemy positions. [We were] like, "You mean that's al-Qaeda right there, and that's Taliban?" He knew. "Yes, General so-and-so lives in that house. This is where his lines are."[17]

Frank and the others quickly gathered their laser designating equipment and called for CAS:

> [The NA commander] just started pointing out the targets where all the gun positions were, where all the commanders were, the radios. We just started taking them out with the laser, one by one. [The commander and his men] were giggling. They were all laughing and joking about it and slapping each other on the back. They were happy as hell. The food got a lot better that day.[18]

For the next 3 weeks, the ODA directed multiple airstrikes against the Taliban, softening their positions.[19]

Such tactics, as well as discussions between NA leaders and local Taliban commanders, were repeated several times up and down the lines before the final assault. Still, the negotiations and planning for the attack took time and the impression that the offensive was stalled worried some senior American political and military officials. Lieutenant General Dan K. McNeill, the commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps in 2001, recalled that in early November the general anxiety within the DOD and Bush administration generated pressure on CENTCOM to get the NA moving again. Eventually, General Franks directed McNeill to prepare plans for an airborne operation that would drop American paratroopers near Kabul or elsewhere to draw Taliban troops away from the front lines north of the capital, thus allowing the NA to approach the city.[20]

Despite the concerns inside the Coalition command, the much-anticipated NA attack began on 13 November, with the forces under Fahim and Bismullah moving forward, ahead of schedule, to attack the Taliban defenses. The enemy resistance rapidly fell apart, clearing the way through the Shomali Plains all the way to the capital. This sudden success caught Coalition leaders by surprise, and they became concerned that the sudden conquest of the capital by the NA would threaten Pashtun leaders and scuttle any chances to create a new, stable, multiethnic government in Afghanistan. Indeed, around the time of the NA offensive, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf communicated his interest in the proper treatment of Pashtun interests in any post-Taliban state, and Coalition leaders hoped to allay the concerns of this critical ally.[21] Regardless of political desires in Washington, DC, and Islamabad, Pakistan, the NA found no reason to wait for negotiations once Taliban forces disintegrated and widespread disorder erupted in the capital. On 14 November 2001 the troops of General Fahim Khan rolled into Kabul and liberated the city from 5 years of despotic rule by the Taliban.[22]

The ODAs Go to Work in the South

To win over the Pashtuns in the south and begin operations against the Taliban, the Coalition planned to insert two ODAs near the city of Kandahar. Major Donald Bolduc was a member of Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) 52, which had tactical control of the two ODAs. Bolduc explained the mission:

> Basically from November 2001 until complete, we were to provide C2 [command and control] and conduct unconventional warfare in order to advise and

> assist Hamid Karzai and Gul Sherzai in organizing anti-Taliban forces, which was what they were called at that time, and to conduct combat operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces.[23]

Bolduc further described the key tasks that the ODAs had to accomplish with their Afghan partners:

> We were to secure Kandahar City, develop a plan to stabilize Kandahar City, and operate from a secure base, and then concentrically improve that security from Kandahar City, which was considered the cultural and religious center of gravity, out to other provinces in the south, and then, on order, exfiltrate the operational area.[24]

Coalition leaders also understood that they could not simply leave the area once Kandahar was out of the Taliban grip, but had to set conditions for the next phase of the campaign. Major Bolduc asserted that the end state for the ODAs was the creation of "a stable, safe, and secure Kandahar City ready to transition to more formalized humanitarian assistance and nation-building operations."[25] This objective was ambitious, especially considering the small Coalition presence, which in November 2001 consisted of the 27 Soldiers of the two ODAs and SOCCE 52.[26]

Hamid Karzai would have to play a key role if the effort in the south was to have any serious chance. In early October 2001 Karzai decided that the time was right for his return to Afghanistan. On either 8 or 9 October, he and three colleagues riding on two motorcycles crossed the Pakistan border to enter Afghanistan. Before Karzai departed, several of his friends warned him that Taliban forces heavily patrolled the border areas and that an attempt to get through in such a manner was very risky. Undeterred, Karzai and his friends made it through and proceeded to Shorandam, a small village close to Kandahar. There he began recruiting fighters to help him overthrow the Taliban.[27]

Karzai was not entering an Afghanistan that was entirely hostile to his cause. During the previous 5 years, Karzai and his allies had been busy making contacts among other Pashtuns in and outside of Afghanistan who wanted to overthrow the Taliban. Many of these contacts were former mujahideen who had known Karzai in the 1980s. He thus had an extensive network of friends, acquaintances, and anti-Taliban sympathizers with whom he could begin work on his return. Still, there was a great deal to do to transform these contacts into an armed resistance.[28]

In early November 2001, after spending several weeks talking to the people in the areas around Kandahar, Karzai believed that the population was prepared for political change. He also came to the realization that he would need Coalition support to force the Taliban out of power. Karzai recalled that he used a satellite phone and "called Rome and I called Islamabad and I told the [US] Embassy there and the consulate that I needed help. They said, 'Where are you?' I said, 'I'm in this area.' . . . Then they came and helped, dropped parachutes." To his followers' amazement, the American planes dropped bundles containing not only weapons and ammunition, but also food and other supplies. The aid could not have been more timely. On the following day, Karzai and his followers, now numbering about 150 men, were attacked by about 500 Taliban troops. That attack was successfully repulsed with the aid of the US-supplied weapons.[29]

While the food, weapons, and other supplies were a huge boost to Karzai's band, some in his following realized that it was not enough. After a number of days of wandering in the

Hamid Karzai and His Satellite Phone

The members of ODA 574 who worked closely with Afghan opposition group leader Hamid Karzai learned that he was not a typical military leader. Karzai's charisma and knowledge of Afghanistan made him a natural choice to lead the anti-Taliban resistance. While Karzai had no formal military training, he did use one unconventional weapon with devastating effectiveness—the satellite phone.

Upon his return to Afghanistan in early October 2001, Karzai quickly realized that he did not have the required resources to take on the Taliban. So, to use Karzai's own words, he "called the United States." Karzai's phone calls to the US (actually, the US Embassy in Rome and the US consulate in Islamabad) started a flood of aid, supplies, and weaponry to this most prominent Pashtun anti-Taliban leader. Eventually, ODA 574 was inserted to provide Karzai military advice and to train his growing band of men. But Karzai also used his "sat phone" for intelligence, diplomacy, and interviews.

ODA 574 team member Captain Jason Amerine, the ODA leader, stated, "The biggest tool in his intelligence network was the [satellite] telephone. He had them spread all over the province with key trusted leaders. So he was able to get word right away of anything going on. . . . He worked the phones constantly. . . . It was something. He'd get phone calls like that all the time. Whenever the phone rang, all of us were kind of wondering who's calling next. Maybe it was the BBC or maybe it was another senior Taliban leader trying to surrender. The satellite telephone was his greatest weapon. Arguably, it was our greatest weapon in the war, especially in the Pashtun tribal belt."

Karzai also addressed the Bonn Conference via his trusty cell phone, and did numerous TV and print interviews—all the while trying to raise an anti-Taliban force and gather intelligence. The emerging Afghan leader had to do a lot of different tasks that would normally be farmed out to subordinate staff officers which Karzai did not have. Lieutenant Colonel David Fox asserted that Karzai handled the majority of the personnel, intelligence, operations, and logistics tasks that kept his small anti-Taliban group going in the fall of 2001. Fox recalled that Karzai was "doing everything, and I don't know [how] he did it. He was giving interviews, speeches, working with his commanders, working with the Americans. He was working on about three or four hours sleep a night. He would get up fresh in the mornings and begin, ready to start the day again."

Hamid Karzai, "Interview with President Hamid Karzai," *PBS Frontline* (7 May 2002).

Captain Jason Amerine, "The Battle of Tarin Kowt," *PBS Frontline* (12 July 2002).

Lieutenant Colonel David Fox, "Interview: Lt. Col. David Fox," *PBS Frontline* (no date given).

mountains trying to avoid contact with the Taliban, some of his men came to him and, as Karzai remembered, told him, "Hamid, life is difficult. The Taliban will come and get us one day. . . . Look, we must ask for American help." Karzai relented, picked up the phone, and made another call to the Americans to ask for SF support. He remembered that he was told by someone at the embassy, "Fine, we can do that." The effort to get help from America was "Easy. Quite easy," he recalled.[30]

Karzai was instructed to mark a helicopter landing zone (HLZ) with small fires and wait for an ODA that would arrive at the site at a specific time. Karzai remembered, "We lit the fires

and they just came—very easy, exactly on the minute that they told . . . they would be there, on the very minute. Our people couldn't believe it."[31]

Arrival of ODA 574

ODA 574 arrived in southern Afganistan to link up with Hamid Karzai and his band of Pashtun fighters. According to Captain Jason Amerine, the ODA leader, the team's mission was to "infiltrate the Oruzgan province, link up with Hamid Karzai and his Pashtun fighters, and advise and assist his forces in order to destabilize and eliminate the Taliban regime there."[32] Amerine and his team immediately evaluated the situation in terms of men, intelligence, supplies, and the enemy.

On his arrival, Amerine quickly sat down with Karzai to establish a relationship with him and understand the situation as Karzai comprehended it. During the course of the initial meeting, Karzai told the American officer that the key to winning Kandahar as well as Oruzgan province was to capture the town of Tarin Kowt, located to the north of Kandahar. Amerine explained:

> Hamid Karzai described Tarin Kowt as the heart of the Taliban movement. He said that all the major leaders of the Taliban movement had families in and around Tarin Kowt. Mullah Omar was from Deh Rawod, which was just to

DOD Photo

Figure 13. Karzai with ODA 574.

> the west of Tarin Kowt. So the seizure of Tarin Kowt would represent such a psychological victory for us. He believed that, by taking Tarin Kowt, all of the Pashtun villagers would essentially surrender at that point, or turn completely to our cause.[33]

Amerine then gathered his team, pulled out some maps, and developed a strategy to take Tarin Kowt. That plan amounted to a siege. Karzai's forces along with their SF advisors would close off the mountain passes leading into the town. Karzai had reasoned that once that was accomplished, the town would simply surrender. Additionally, he informed Amerine that there were already friendly fighters in Tarin Kowt who would foment an uprising if necessary. Given the small numbers of troops that were available—the 12-man ODA and the 150 Afghan fighters in Karzai's band—Amerine told Karzai that they would have to create a larger force.[34]

Bringing in more weapons and ammunition, Karzai and the ODA began building a volunteer militia. Hundreds of people arrived to try and get weapons, but most were only interested in protecting their own homes and villages. With the recruiting effort just starting, news arrived on 16 November that stunned both Karzai and his newly arrived American comrades: the people in Tarin Kowt had already seized the town and wanted help.[35] If Karzai was correct, the Taliban would have to quickly and forcefully restore their control of the town.[36]

The Taking of Tarin Kowt

The news of the uprising presented Amerine and Karzai with a dilemma. If they moved into Tarin Kowt and the Taliban launched a counterattack, Karzai's forces were too small to defend the town. It was doubtful that enough reliable and capable volunteers could be recruited to make much difference before the Taliban would likely begin such an assault. Still, Amerine knew he had the trump card of American air power on his side. It was a difficult choice, but Amerine and ODA 574 decided to support Karzai's insistence that they go immediately to Tarin Kowt and take advantage of the military—and political—opportunity.[37]

Piling into a motley collection of beat-up trucks and other vehicles sent by village elders, the ODA and their Afghan partners bounced along the mountain roads to the village. En route, Karzai worried that the population of Tarin Kowt might be angry that American Soldiers had accompanied his force to the town. His fears were quickly allayed though when the people warmly welcomed the Soldiers.[38]

Once in the village, Karzai left military matters to ODA 574. He stayed busy getting in touch with other Pashtun leaders in the area, constantly recruiting fighters, supporters, and, conversely, undermining the Taliban's rule. Many of the area's most important people came to speak with him. From them he learned where al-Qaeda elements were located. He also discovered that many of the Islamic clerics in the region were supportive of his actions. Early that evening, other informants brought him the news that he had been expecting: a large force of Taliban were en route to Tarin Kowt.[39]

Karzai quickly requested that Amerine meet him and his local supporters to explain the situation. The Afghan leaders proceeded to matter-of-factly mention that hundreds of Taliban troops were approaching the town and that the enemy force, mounted on a large number of trucks, would probably arrive "in the next day or two." Amerine remembered, "It took me a second to digest it. At that point, I said, 'Well, it was nice meeting all of you. I think we need to organize a force now and do what we can to defend this town.'"[40]

The captain attempted to excuse himself so that he could start getting things ready to oppose the threat. His Afghan hosts, however, would not hear of it. Since it was the first day of Ramadan, they insisted that he stay, drink tea, eat, and talk. Sensing that he could not embarrass his hosts, Amerine stayed just long enough to satisfy their request, then quickly made his exit, but not before asking Karzai to send every fighter he could find to the ODA's headquarters as soon as possible.[41]

Returning to his men, Amerine pulled them together and told them about the impending arrival of the Taliban forces, stating, "Well they're coming from Kandahar. We know it's a large

Figure 14. ODA and anti-Taliban operations, south and east, October–December 2001.

convoy." The captain then ordered a number of actions. His communications sergeant began contacting the team's SOCCE to inform their headquarters about the imminent assault. The team's Air Force enlisted terminal attack controller (ETAC) passed warning orders through those channels to let the Air Force and Navy know that their CAS services would soon be required at Tarin Kowt. Amerine's team worked into the night to arm all the new Afghan fighters that showed up and develop a plan to hold the town.[42]

Amerine had a limited force at his disposal: the 12 men of ODA 574 and only several dozen of Karzai's Afghan fighters.[43] Sometime around midnight, Amerine moved with this group to the outskirts of the village. There he spotted a plateau from which the team could direct airstrikes onto the vehicular approaches to Tarin Kowt. In addition, from the plateau the team could observe the main road as it came through a pass at the south end of the valley. That road led to Kandahar and was one of two axes of advance that the approaching Taliban forces could use to attack Tarin Kowt. Amerine surmised that the Taliban would arrive on this road. He guessed correctly.[44]

Early on the morning of 17 November, Amerine received an intelligence report from F-18 Navy jet fighters that "a convoy of 8 to 10 vehicles" was heading north on the Kandahar–Tarin Kowt road.[45] Amerine explained what happened next:

> So my combat controller looked at me and said, "OK, well, this is what we see." At that point, we hadn't fired a shot in the war, really; that was sort of the commencement of actual fighting for us. The whole team was in a small room. There really was kind of a moment of silence. A lot of the men had been to war. It wasn't that the experience was that new to a lot of the people on the team. But at the same time, it was the first shot of the war for us. . . . I'd hoped to say something a little bit more eloquently, but I just said, "Well, smoke 'em."[46]

After the tense buildup, the first bomb missed the target. The second one did not.[47] Using a laser designator, the team's ETAC directed a storm of bombs onto the Taliban convoy causing significant destruction and confusion. As the pilots continued their work and the Taliban struggled to avoid the bombardment, the situation began to look like Karzai and ODA 574 had won a tremendous victory.

Then something inexplicable happened that Amerine described as feeling like "we were seizing defeat from the jaws of victory."[48] Karzai's men panicked. The lack of training among these militiamen demonstrated itself with graphic clarity when the Afghan fighters decided for some reason that the battle was not going well and their best option at that point was to withdraw to Tarin Kowt. To make matters worse, Karzai was not present at the battle area, and the men of ODA 574 could not communicate with the panic-stricken Afghan tribesmen.[49] The Afghans hopped into the vehicles and were only prevented from driving off immediately by the members of ODA 574 who literally stepped in front of the vehicles to get them to stop. If the trucks left, the Americans had no way to get back to Tarin Kowt. Amerine later dryly observed that in a future situation like this, the ODA team needed to make sure they kept the truck and car keys before deploying for a fight.[50] Reluctantly, the troops of ODA 574 jumped aboard the trucks and went with their charges back to the village.

With the Taliban still continuing its advance, ODA 574 and Karzai had to turn the situation around. Back at Tarin Kowt the team met with Karzai and after a quick consultation, ODA 574

sped south of town again to find another spot to establish a final defensive position. After urging Karzai to speed as many Afghan fighters as he could to them, ODA 574 found a new site from which to observe Taliban vehicles, and the air attack on the enemy convoy began anew.[51]

With the renewal of the attacks on the Taliban, ODA 574 ran into a new and wholly unexpected problem: many civilians from Tarin Kowt had begun arriving on the outskirts of the town to watch the battle. The ODA team had not expected to have to deal with this type of situation. Captain Amerine called it a "circus atmosphere" where Afghan children attempted to rummage through their equipment and older civilians meandered around the defensive position. One member of ODA 574 pleaded with an English-speaking Afghan to at least send the children back to Tarin Kowt because of the danger of the situation.[52] Thankfully none of the townspeople was injured as the pace of the attacks on the Taliban convoy increased.

Initially, the leading trucks were targeted to slow the convoy down. When those vehicles were destroyed, the Coalition aircraft simply began working their way back through the convoy which was now very spread out. Sometime after 0800, another unexpected surprise struck the ODA. Two of the Taliban trucks had found an alternate route into Tarin Kowt and dismounted 10 to 20 fighters at the edge of town. The American troops began to hear small arms fire to their flank, which indicated the enemy was close by. The mounting gunfire caused Amerine to think perhaps the battle was lost. Unbeknownst to him, a number of villagers had moved to the threatened area and fought off the Taliban intruders. That action actually signaled the end of the battle. For the next 2 hours, the remnants of the convoy took hit after hit from CAS sorties as the Taliban tried to make their way back to Kandahar.[53]

One final obstacle emerged the evening after the battle and caused Karzai great concern. One of the local mullahs called on Karzai to speak with him. He was deeply concerned that the mullah, who would speak for the others, was going to tell him that the Taliban attacked because there were Americans in Tarin Kowt and that Karzai and the others must leave. If this belief was communicated, Karzai believed that the people in the region would also turn against his liberation efforts. His fears were thankfully dashed when the mullah instead told him, "If the Americans hadn't been here, we would have all been killed."[54] That statement was an indication that the military victory had also become a political success.

ODA 574 and Hamid Karzai's small force, assisted greatly by Coalition air support, had clearly triumphed over the Taliban at Tarin Kowt. Colonel John Mulholland, commander of JSOTF-N, later viewed the engagement at Tarin Kowt as "pivotal for the [entire operation in the] south."[55] Furthermore, Mulholland argued that the Taliban recognized the potential threat posed by Karzai to their legitimacy in the region and made a strong effort to force Karzai's group out of Tarin Kowt. According to Mulholland, when that attack failed, the Taliban grew greatly concerned about their hold on the southern area of Afghanistan.[56]

This belief seemed borne out by the success Hamid Karzai enjoyed in rallying other Pashtuns to his cause. Captain Amerine not only witnessed firsthand the destruction of the Taliban forces, he also saw the reaction of other Pashtun Afghans to Karzai. He realized the tremendous psychological and political importance the victory had, and its resultant impact on the enemy.[57] Karzai's tireless work in securing political support from the various groups in the Tarin Kowt area—and elsewhere as it would turn out—made ODA 574's future tasks less difficult. Amerine explained:

> With the religious mullahs on our side, we were really in psychologically with the Pashtun tribes. Rapport had been established, trust had been gained, and now we could get on with fighting. Now we can become task-focused on "Let's get to Kandahar, and let's end this war." So in that regard, it was just psychologically a crushing victory for us. Hamid would later tell me that, in his eyes, that fight broke the back of the Taliban.[58]

Karzai later remarked that the battle was "a turning point. . . . I recognized there [was] a much wider legitimacy thing than I perceived we had. We actually underestimated the whole thing all along, the impact that this movement of ours had, the legitimacy that there was. This was our miscalculation—which is good."[59]

Karzai deserves more credit than he is given as a military leader. This is not to suggest that Karzai understood the intricacies of military tactics or operational art. However, Karzai's influence in winning the support of the population around Tarin Kowt, and later, much of the Pashtun population in and around Kandahar, clearly magnified the power of his small force. Karzai's clear and correct assessment of Tarin Kowt as the enemy center of gravity was borne out by succeeding events. Understanding his limitations, Karzai did not interfere with ODA 574's ability to conduct the battle against the Taliban convoy at Tarin Kowt. Conversely, his clear appreciation for the political situation—something the ODA team lacked—helped make Tarin Kowt a key victory in the fight to evict the Taliban from Afghanistan.

The battle of Tarin Kowt was clearly an instance where the plan to use an ODA team in conjunction with US air power to collaborate with an indigenous element worked almost flawlessly. The elements fit together seamlessly: SF working with indigenous troops, CAS, and a politically savvy tribal leader moving together toward a common goal. This was a textbook example of how a small, well-trained force could employ unconventional warfare for a superlative result.

Although the victory at Tarin Kowt had the Taliban reeling, they were by no means defeated. ODA 574 and Karzai's force were strategically positioned to move on Kandahar from the north, but the group still had too little combat power to take the city by itself. More indigenous support was needed and the effort to mobilize just such support was already underway.

ODA 583 and Gul Agha Sherzai

Following the victory at Tarin Kowt, planners at JSOTF-N wanted to maintain the positive momentum against the Taliban. To do this, they focused on identifying another Pashtun leader in the area south of Kandahar that might enable the next phase in the campaign in the south. Gul Agha Sherzai appeared to be the most promising candidate. Shortly after the Battle of Tarin Kowt, ODA 583 was sent to the Shahbaz Air Base near the Pakistani town of Jacobabad to prepare for its mission inside Afghanistan. The ODA leader, Captain Smith, had been informed that Sherzai was a fairly insignificant Pashtun figure, but because the United States needed more Pashtuns to take up arms against the Taliban in the south, no one at JSOTF-N or CENTCOM wanted to ignore any political figures that could become rallying points.[60] It later became clear to Smith that the information on Sherzai he received was largely incorrect and incomplete. Smith described his intelligence briefing in the following way:

> The initial report on Sherzai was horrible. I received a PowerPoint slide with an old picture of him that stated something to the effect that he was the son of a famous [mujahideen] who fought the Soviets and was the former Governor of Kandahar. At the top of the slide, the name Karzai had been scratched out in pen and Sherzai written in. It was quite a classy piece of intel that I wished I had kept to demonstrate how little we knew.[61]

Fortunately, prior to ODA 583's infiltration, Smith was able to acquire more accurate intelligence on Sherzai from an American intelligence official who would accompany the team on the mission.[62]

The benefits of enlisting Sherzai seemed obvious. Another anti-Taliban Pashtun group operating south of Kandahar could force the Taliban to spread their already rapidly dwindling resources more widely.[63] But the United States understood that Sherzai did not have the same national level influence in Afghanistan as Karzai. Nevertheless, the United States needed leaders at various levels of influence and from different ethnic groups to fight the Taliban. To US leaders, Karzai was a well-educated man who spoke English fluently and exhibited a great deal of political sophistication. He thus presented himself as a potential leader at the national level. Sherzai, on the other hand, did not speak English and had at best, a regional power base. Still, Sherzai offered a way of mobilizing more popular Pashtun support. As Smith later explained, Sherzai looked like a typical Afghan warlord, but "he was our warlord and seemed to fit our purposes as to getting after the Taliban and [al-Qaeda]."[64]

On 18 November, the day after the battle of Tarin Kowt, Smith, along with two other members of ODA 583 slipped into Afghanistan onboard an MH 53 "Pave Low" helicopter and landed in the Shin Naray Valley south of Kandahar just before midnight. There to greet him was Sherzai himself and 10 or so of his men. Led to a "small mud-walled hut," Smith and Sherzai began talking about future cooperation. Not surprisingly, Sherzai asked Smith for supplies, weapons, and ammunition, among other things. Smith delayed answering until he could better assess the potential of Sherzai and his forces.[65]

The following morning, Smith and his colleagues set out to review Sherzai's troops. The team judged Sherzai's Afghans to be between 650 and 800 men, clearly a much larger force than Karzai's group. However, to Smith, these soldiers looked more like an armed mob than a military organization:

> Sherzai's forces were lightly armed with a mix of small arms. Ammo was generally scarce. There were some light mortars and heavy machineguns that were inoperable. Uniforms were nonexistent and were a mix of local Pashtun garb. Vehicles were four-door Toyota pick-up trucks, tractors, a few sedans and motorcycles, and several large trucks. The force was organized (or unorganized) with numerous commanders of varying loyalty and men under their command.[66]

Sherzai, however, asserted that he could recruit 500 more fighters if needed. That was enough to convince Smith to request the insertion of the rest of his team, and the remainder of ODA 583 joined Sherzai's band on the evening of 21 November to start the offensive northward to capture Kandahar.[67] The United States had now become partners with two anti-Taliban Pashtun leaders, and both fixed their sights on capturing Kandahar, arguably the most important political center of gravity in the south.

Smith's plan to advance north centered on the main avenue of approach from the Afghan–Pakistan border, Highway 4. ODA 583 recommended an operation that advocated a westward movement through the Shin Naray Valley to the town of Tahk-te-pol with the eventual goal of blocking Highway 4 to cut the Taliban supply line into Pakistan. After capturing Tahk-te-pol, Smith then proposed a bold movement north to seize the Kandahar Airport, the key to the city. Sherzai generally approved of the plan, but he suggested that the combined force mask its approach to the Taliban garrison stationed in Tahk-te-pol by using a neighboring mountain range as a shield, then surprising the garrison by coming in behind it—from the north. Smith agreed to the change and on 22 November the combined Afghan and US force, 800 strong, piled into a collection of about 100 vehicles and began the trek to Tahk-te-pol.[68]

Arriving at a point about 5 miles from the town late on 23 November, the force stopped to ponder the next move. Sherzai and Smith agreed to initially try to negotiate for the surrender of Tahk-te-pol, thus capturing it without bloodshed. However, to make sure his force was protected and ready to fight if necessary, Sherzai deployed about half of it on a low ridge east of the town. The rest of his troops remained at the initial position while Sherzai sent a delegation to parlay for the surrender.[69]

On receiving Sherzai's negotiators, the Taliban leaders in the area agreed to talks, but in the meantime attempted to send troops to surround and destroy Sherzai's force. This ploy resulted in a 2-hour firefight between the two forces. ODA 583 ordered Sherzai's men to fall back to a stronger position and directed airstrikes against the Taliban. A Spectre AC-130 gunship arrived overhead and destroyed six Taliban trucks. The consensus among the Afghans and Americans was that the Taliban would attempt to wipe out Sherzai's force in the morning. Much to everyone's surprise and relief, the Taliban had abandoned Tahk-te-pol overnight and on the following day, 24 November, Sherzai's Afghans and ODA 583 entered the town. The capture of Tahk-te-pol meant that Taliban supplies from Pakistan traveling north on Highway 4 were effectively cut off, but it did not mean that Kandahar would immediately fall into the hands of anti-Taliban forces. Before Kandahar could be subdued, Sherzai's forces and ODA 583 needed to capture the bridge spanning the Arghastan Wadi, the dried-up river bed that was a major obstacle between their position and the city. Once the bridge was secure, the combined force could move on to the Kandahar Airport.[70]

At this point, Sherzai seemed reluctant to continue his move north. His American advisors encouraged him to go on with the advance, although they also recommended that Sherzai send out robust detachments north and south of Tahk-te-pol to warn of any advancing Taliban force.[71] On 25 November, as Sherzai's main element moved northward toward Kandahar, the Afghan commander of the southern reconnaissance detachment reported the capture of a truckload of Arab al-Qaeda fighters.[72] This commander then told Smith that enemy forces were moving up from Spin Boldak north toward Kandahar and that the ODA needed to take action against them.[73]

While concerns grew about Taliban reinforcements moving into the area, Sherzai's main force approached the bridge at Arghastan Wadi on 25 November and seized it. The force then continued to move north and approached the entrance to the Kandahar Airport. There they met fierce resistance and guessed that they were facing well-trained al-Qaeda terrorists. The heavy fighting forced Smith and Sherzai's forces back to the bridge. Sherzai decided to move his force back to Tahk-te-pol that evening, while Smith opted to place his ODA on a ridge to the south, which commanded the bridge.[74]

For the next week, the ODA's Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) working around the clock called in airstrikes against the al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in and around the Wadi and the Kandahar Airport. Enemy casualties were undoubtedly high, while the United States did not lose a single aircraft to hostile fire.[75] Despite the casualties, the enemy held Sherzai in check and the advance stopped.

Karzai's Offensive Renewed

While Sherzai's advance ground to a halt, Hamid Karzai's force to the north of Kandahar continued to find success. Karzai and the men of ODA 574 had little time to bask in their victory over the Taliban at Tarin Kowt. Shortly after the battle, Karzai and ODA 574 were joined by a more senior and experienced American officer, Lieutenant Colonel David Fox, and four other SF Soldiers. Fox, the commander of 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (SFG), linked up with Karzai early in the morning of 28 November.[76] While the US element with Karzai grew by four with Fox's arrival, Afghans were coming more frequently and in larger numbers to pledge their loyalty to Karzai. So many young Pashtuns arrived that Karzai urged the ODA to move south toward Kandahar because the newcomers were young men who, according to Amerine, were starting to get "rowdy."[77] Karzai and his advisors decided to keep the force fairly small, and resumed the advance toward Kandahar without the bulk of the newcomers.[78]

The drive south from Tarin Kowt was memorable for Fox and the rest of ODA 574. As the motley group moved south over the bumpy roads, individual trucks and cars continually raced up on the berm to see Karzai in person.[79] The whole process seemed surreal, but no one was hurt by these enthusiastic maneuvers, nor was the convoy attacked by the Taliban during the trek south toward Kandahar. For Major Donald Bolduc, the leader of SOCCE 52 who was now with ODA 574, the experience proved exasperating:

> It was crazy because [the Afghans] didn't understand convoy operations. They were turning around and driving back and forth passing each other. So, on our first stop, I said, "Hey, sir. We have to get control of this. Here is my recommendation." So we got the ODA . . . and Karzai together and we told Karzai to tell everybody that they could not pass a certain vehicle. So we organized it so we had organization and control of the recon element and the main body and then behind that was everything else.[80]

Eventually the group arrived at the village of Shawali Kowt where Karzai's force finally encountered a sizable Taliban element.[81]

The Arghendab Bridge near the village of Sayd Alim Kalay had to be captured to eradicate the last significant Taliban presence north of Kandahar. Rooting the Taliban out proved tougher than expected. At one point, Karzai informed Lieutenant Colonel Fox that the Taliban was on the way to attack the combined US-Afghan anti-Taliban force. Then Karzai and his men suddenly left, leaving the ODA to defend the north side of the Arghendab Bridge and a ridgeline just beyond the bridge.[82] Fox did not want to abandon the position as he did not like the idea of having "to fight over the same ground again" and thus refused to yield, calling in repeated airstrikes against the Taliban forces on the south bank of the riverbed and the high ground beyond.[83] By directing airstrikes, ODA 574 kept the enemy at bay.[84] The following day, 4 December, Karzai and the bulk of the troops returned to ODA 574.[85] After a sharp firefight, Taliban forces abandoned their positions across the river.[86] The military campaign to liberate

Kandahar continued, but Hamid Karzai was soon forced to focus on larger concerns that would play a major role in the overall US strategy to topple the Taliban.

The New Afghan Leader

While the campaign to evict the Taliban from Kandahar continued from both north and south of the city, political events outside of Afghanistan were moving quickly. On 14 November 2001 the United Nations (UN) had passed a resolution that endorsed a conference of Afghan groups to move the country in a new political direction. As described in a later chapter, that conference convened in Bonn, Germany, in late November and by early December had approved a new Afghan Interim Authority (AIA). However, as December began, the conference still needed to find a leader who could guide Afghanistan on its new political path.

Although ODA 574 did not have an intimate knowledge of what was happening in Germany, many senior Coalition officers knew about the conference and its implications for the Coalition campaign. Colonel Mulholland, JSOTF-N commander, recalled that he and his staff "were very aware of the Bonn Conference and [what was] going on there. I was requesting and receiving updates on what was happening politically when they were available. . . . It was really a political battle every bit as much as a military one."[87] This reality was underlined by the fact that in the midst of the Kandahar campaign, Karzai was unexpectedly asked to speak to the conference via satellite phone. By this point, it was clear that he was under consideration for a senior position in the new Afghan Government.

According to Karzai, his address to the conference was anything but an auspicious moment. He had a cold and sat in an unheated room among a number of fellow Afghans.[88] Karzai had no prepared remarks so he made a few spontaneous comments about the challenge and necessity of putting aside differences and working for the benefit of the nation as a whole.[89] Despite the lack of a written speech and inspiring surroundings, the conference nominated him to be the chairman of a governing committee that would take the reins of power if and when the Taliban regime was toppled. On 22 December 2001 Karzai would formally accept that position.

Karzai's tremendous potential as a leader of the anti-Taliban opposition made him a natural target for Taliban assassins. Considering what had happened to Ahmad Shah Massoud and other anti-Taliban leaders, Karzai's assassination was not a farfetched possibility. Indeed, Captain Amerine, the commander of ODA 574, possessed intelligence that Karzai was the target of Taliban assassination squads. Considering his new status as the nominated leader of the AIA, the men of ODA 574 now had an additional burden: the personal security of Hamid Karzai. Karzai had Afghan bodyguards, but they were not professionally trained, which forced ODA 574 to ensure they protected the Afghan leader properly. Amerine remembered that on many mornings when he arrived to meet with Karzai, he found a number of bodyguards asleep.[90] Karzai had by mid-November become a very well-known figure that many Afghans wanted to see or talk to in person. The new AIA president was also deluged with media requests for interviews. This kind of exposure, so necessary for Karzai to increase his political influence, also made him a highly visible and thus vulnerable target.

Ironically, it was not Taliban assassins that gave Hamid Karzai his closest brush with death. On the morning of 5 December—the same day that Karzai learned of his selection by the Bonn Conference—at least six of Karzai's group and two members of ODA 574 were killed by a Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) bomb dropped from a B-52 bomber.[91] After advancing

over the Arghendab Bridge, Lieutenant Colonel Fox and Captain Amerine received intelligence regarding a small Taliban force in a nearby cave. To remove any threat posed by this force, the ODA's TACP called in an airstrike.[92] A hand-held Viper laser target designator system carried by one of the TACP's members transmitted the target's Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates to a B-52 overhead, which then dropped the JDAM. Instead of hitting the target, however, the JDAM landed on the Viper laser designator, very close to Karzai and ODA 574's position.[93] Karzai initially thought that the building he occupied had been hit by al-Qaeda with some type of high-powered explosive.[94] Sadly, that was not the case.

Inexperience and technical issues led to the tragedy. There were two new TACP members on duty and, according to Fox, the most experienced operator was sleeping after a long shift.[95] The less experienced airman had been responsible for directing the Viper designator at the Taliban in the cave, but in the process the batteries in the device died. The airman quickly replaced the batteries. However, apparently unknown to the TACP airmen, when new batteries were inserted into the Viper, the system automatically zeroed out all data and transmitted its own GPS coordinates as a self-test operation.[96] Fox explained what happened next:

> So the navigator asks the TACP to confirm the grid coordinates and he reads the grid coordinates, but when you are only talking 1,000 meters from the target and you are using geo[graphic] coordinates you are talking one second off. So the navigator asks him to confirm and he confirms, which are the coordinates to the Viper, which is 30 feet from my position, and he launches the JDAM. The aircraft was at 25,000 feet. I'm not sure how long it takes for that JDAM to impact, but it lands right on top of the Viper.[97]

The resulting explosion killed or mortally wounded three ODA members and wounded every other member of the team. It also wounded 65 Afghan militiamen and even Karzai was struck in the face by a shard of glass.[98]

The strike was devastating. Still, the surviving ODA members, although wounded, sprang into action to get medical treatment for those hurt by the blast.[99] Major Bolduc suffered a dislocated hip in the blast, but he immediately popped it back in place and focused on assisting the casualties.[100] Coalition aircraft evacuated all the wounded, including the Afghans.

Hamid Karzai, incidentally, refused evacuation because he anticipated a breakthrough in the talks concerning Kandahar. His intuition was correct and the situation developed very quickly soon after the JDAM hit. By noon, Karzai was talking by telephone to Taliban authorities in Kandahar, and they were signaling interest in negotiating the surrender of Kandahar. Developments south of Kandahar had forced the Taliban's hand.

Culmination South of Kandahar

In the south, ODA 583 and Sherzai's opposition group had progressed to the Arghastan Bridge near the Kandahar Airport when the offensive stalled on 25 November in the face of significant al-Qaeda and Taliban resistance.[101] Having been driven back to the high ground south of the wadi, ODA 583 and part of Sherzai's force spent the next week calling in airstrikes against enemy positions at the airport and around the bridge.

The position at the bridge was a natural strongpoint and was easily defended. Captain Smith, the commander of the ODA, remembered,

> There wasn't a fixed line per se, just guys in and around the bridge and dry canal structures. . . . The problem was, there were so many natural fighting positions around there that developing a formal defensive line was unnecessary. The canals and [wadis] in the area were really maze-like and lended to a natural web or elastic defense.[102]

Sherzai's forces repelled a Taliban attack on their position south of the Arghastan Bridge and on 2 December, they moved across the bridge and took up positions in front of both Taliban and al-Qaeda units who mounted a tenacious defense using the rugged terrain to conceal themselves from ODA 583 and Sherzai's men as they regrouped. This might have worked had US aerial reconnaissance not detected the concentration of troops on Sherzai's left flank. Sherzai ordered an assault on the Taliban forces in this area early on 4 December. His men overwhelmed the defenders and Sherzai aggressively urged his men to continue the pursuit and capture the Kandahar Airport. This proved to be premature as Sherzai's forces were repulsed by heavy Taliban and al-Qaeda gunfire and artillery support. US airstrikes called in by the attached TACP blunted a follow-on Taliban counterattack and retained the Arghastan Bridge for Sherzai, but not before his forces had taken significant casualties.[103]

While Sherzai's northern advance stalled, his southern outposts were hit by the Taliban near the town of Spin Boldak. The half-hearted Taliban assault consisted mainly of mortar and rocket attacks on one of the main positions in the vicinity of that town. Sherzai's commander in the south had continued to report the build-up of enemy forces toward Spin Boldak and forced Captain Smith to split ODA 583 into three four-man elements. Smith now sent one of the teams to assess the reported enemy movements to the south. There, the element encountered a "real target-rich environment" along Highway 4 just as the Afghan commander had described.[104] The SF element went to work bringing Coalition CAS down on the enemy concentration. Eventually, Captain Smith went down to the area to assess the situation and recalled seeing "a lot of burning vehicles."[105]

The strikes blunted the southern attacks, but Sherzai's troops found Taliban personnel huddling under a bridge to escape the air assault. The TACP directed another attack on the troops there, eliminating a significant majority of the enemy force. After the battle, Smith inspected the remains of the enemy force and concluded that they were al-Qaeda rather than Taliban, recalling, "a lot of bodies in nice camo[uflage] uniforms lying around and other AQ indicators."[106]

The Fall of Kandahar

With the south seemingly secure and the Arghastan Bridge under his control, Sherzai could turn his full attention toward the Taliban forces defending Kandahar.[107] Instead of a dramatic battle to wrest Kandahar from the Taliban, however, the city was to ultimately fall without a fight. Earlier, the ODA 583 commander, Captain Smith, had been ordered by Colonel Mulholland to prevent Sherzai and his command from entering Kandahar. Historically, Karzai and Sherzai had not always gotten along and there was a great risk of fighting between the forces of those two men should they bump into each other in the city. In addition, Smith's and Sherzai's troops had been struggling for over a week to try and seize the airport. Smith badly wanted that prize and so attempted to convince Sherzai that the airport was the real objective.[108]

On 6 December Smith talked Sherzai into sending a reconnaissance detachment to the west to determine if there was a threat from that direction. The following day, Smith and his ODA

were in the vicinity of the airport entrance when Sherzai came roaring up in a convoy to let the captain know that the city had fallen and invited ODA 583 to join him at his former palace in Kandahar.[109] Smith soon learned that the reconnaissance force sent to the west had instead made its way into the city without encountering resistance and had proceeded all the way to the provincial governor's palace. Sherzai now could not be stopped and he too made his way to the palace. Though told not to enter the city, Smith recalled his rationale for ultimately deciding to disregard Mulholland's order:

> I determined that first, I had to maintain rapport with Sherzai and accept his invitation; second, that he had made it to the palace . . . so maybe things were somewhat safe; third, that if there was an implied intent to prevent forces of Sherzai and Karzai from conflicting I could do it better in the city than outside the city; fourth, making ballsy unexpected moves had served me well so far; fifth, Colonel Mulholland couldn't blame me if I made an on the ground assessment that going in would do more good than not going in if a positive advantage presented itself; and sixth, the whole team was itching to get into the city and the fighting was quickly dying down around the airport.[110]

Thus Smith concluded that Mulholland had no clear understanding of the extremely fluid situation facing the team and decided that they would enter the city with Sherzai's men. When later contacted, Mulholland had no objections to the decision by ODA 583 to enter Kandahar with Sherzai.[111] With the entry of Sherzai's forces into Kandahar, the initial combat actions aimed at overthrowing Taliban political control of Afghanistan concluded.

Consolidating Control

On the same day that Sherzai and his soldiers were making their final approach to Kandahar and the JDAM strike nearly killed Hamid Karzai, Taliban leaders agreed to surrender the city to Karzai's opposition group. The US air medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of the wounded Americans and Afghans from the JDAM accident may have had an unintended but fortuitous impact on the Taliban negotiators.[112] Fox noted that the Taliban delegation may have mistakenly assumed that this was a massive demonstration of US combat power instead of a MEDEVAC operation.[113] Whatever the reason for the Taliban surrender, the end seemed somewhat anticlimactic.

Unfortunately, the fall of the city led to problems between the two anti-Taliban forces. Kandahar surrendered to Karzai on 5 December, but his forces did not enter the city until 2 days later. Sherzai's forces were able to take actual possession of the city on 7 December by arriving first and managing to take control of the main buildings in Kandahar, including the governor's palace. Sherzai's action initially infuriated Karzai.[114] In exchange for surrendering Kandahar, the Taliban commander in Kandahar, Mullah Naqueebullah, had been promised the governorship of Kandahar, but Sherzai's occupation of the palace seemed to nullify that deal. Karzai seriously considered a military operation to evict Sherzai.[115] Fox elaborated:

> It was everything I could do to calm Karzai down because Karzai was prepared to conduct a military action to force Sherzai out of the mansion and out of Kandahar. So I looked at him and I sat down with him and I said, Listen, because the fall of Kandahar and the surrender was really the final stage. The

> country, at that point, was pretty much secure. The Taliban had fallen apart and had either gone back into the mountains or had dispersed into Pakistan or wherever. So I asked him, "Do you want to start a civil war? You are on the verge of starting a war."[116]

Cooler heads prevailed and Karzai insisted that the mullah yield all military and political power, and only then could he keep his religious title and his home in Kandahar.[117] A few days later, Karzai, Sherzai, and Naqueebullah concluded negotiations that solved the outstanding issues and averted a potentially serious crisis.[118]

Not everyone was happy with the turn of events, however. Less than a day after the governor's palace fell and Kandahar was secured, an improvised explosive device (IED) consisting of 24 antitank mines and 15 155-mm artillery shells was found on the roof of the palace and neutralized.[119] Had the improvised device detonated when Karzai and Sherzai were in the palace together, the blast likely would have killed both of them. The bomb demonstrated that the Taliban and their al-Qaeda confederates remained active even if the Taliban had lost political control of the country.

While Karzai had been negotiating the surrender of Kandahar, some Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders had escaped from the city. Coalition leaders and their Afghan allies could not identify with any certainty the identities of those who fled, and it remains unclear whether Osama bin Laden or Mullah Mohammad Omar were among that group. Fox was present during almost all of the negotiation process and was confident that the enemy had always intended to evacuate the city, but that Karzai did not acquiesce to their escape. Fox contended:

> I am sure that key Taliban leaders escaped during negotiations for the surrender in the south. I am absolutely certain that Karzai knew nothing about it. What I believe is that the Taliban believed if they kept Karzai at bay in the north and Sherzai at bay in the south, [with these] negotiations and a set date to surrender, this gave them the time to pick up, get in their vehicles and drive off.[120]

Fox noted that Karzai had dictated unconditional terms to the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces, compelling them to give up their weapons and vehicles before becoming prisoners of the US Army.[121] The promise of captivity forced the enemy to look for ways out of the city that was imperfectly sealed off by Karzai's and Sherzai's forces.

Tora Bora: An Opportunity Lost

With the fall of the major centers of Taliban power—Mazar-e Sharif, Konduz, Kabul, Tarin Kowt, and Kandahar—the sweep of the war was pushing the fleeing Taliban soldiers and their al-Qaeda allies who had not been killed or captured toward sanctuaries near the Pakistan border, or even into the uncontrolled Pakistani tribal areas of the Northwest Frontier province. The two primary sanctuaries within Afghanistan were located well northeast of Kandahar. One sanctuary was in Paktia province in the Shahi Kowt Valley, but that location would not be identified by Coalition intelligence sources as a major concentration point until late January 2002. The other sanctuary was located in the Spin Ghar (White Mountain) region of Nangarhar province about 45 miles southwest of the city of Jalalabad.[122] That refuge was in a valley called Tora Bora.

Success in the South and East

As the Kandahar campaign ended, intelligence indicated that Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders and fighters seemed to be moving toward Tora Bora.[123] Tora Bora had previously sheltered the mujahideen against the Soviets and since the late 1990s, had been improved by al-Qaeda as a training area and refuge. The complex consisted of a series of defensive positions and caves dug into the steep sides of the mountains and along the valley floor. The caves held large stocks of food, weapons, ammunition, and other supplies stockpiled to enable al-Qaeda to make a stand against a larger force.[124]

The valley was 9.5 kilometers wide, 10 kilometers long, and surrounded by 12,000- to 15,000-foot mountains that formed a concave bowl facing northeast. The primary avenue of approach into the area was from the town of Pachir Agam south through the Milawa Valley that joined the Tora Bora Valley at its eastern end. Most of the al-Qaeda positions were spread along the northern wall of the valley. Because the high mountains and steep terrain made CAS much less effective, any successful assault against the enemy would have to include ground troops.[125] The valley was also only 15 kilometers from the Pakistan border. Any al-Qaeda terrorists that wished to escape the valley could walk along one of several possible escape routes to reach the border, a journey that would take approximately 17 hours. Although the Coalition could block these escape routes by placing forces in blocking positions, the nearness of Tora Bora to the Pakistani border made that risky. The Coalition did not want those elements to mistakenly cross the border or otherwise come into conflict with Pakistani troops.

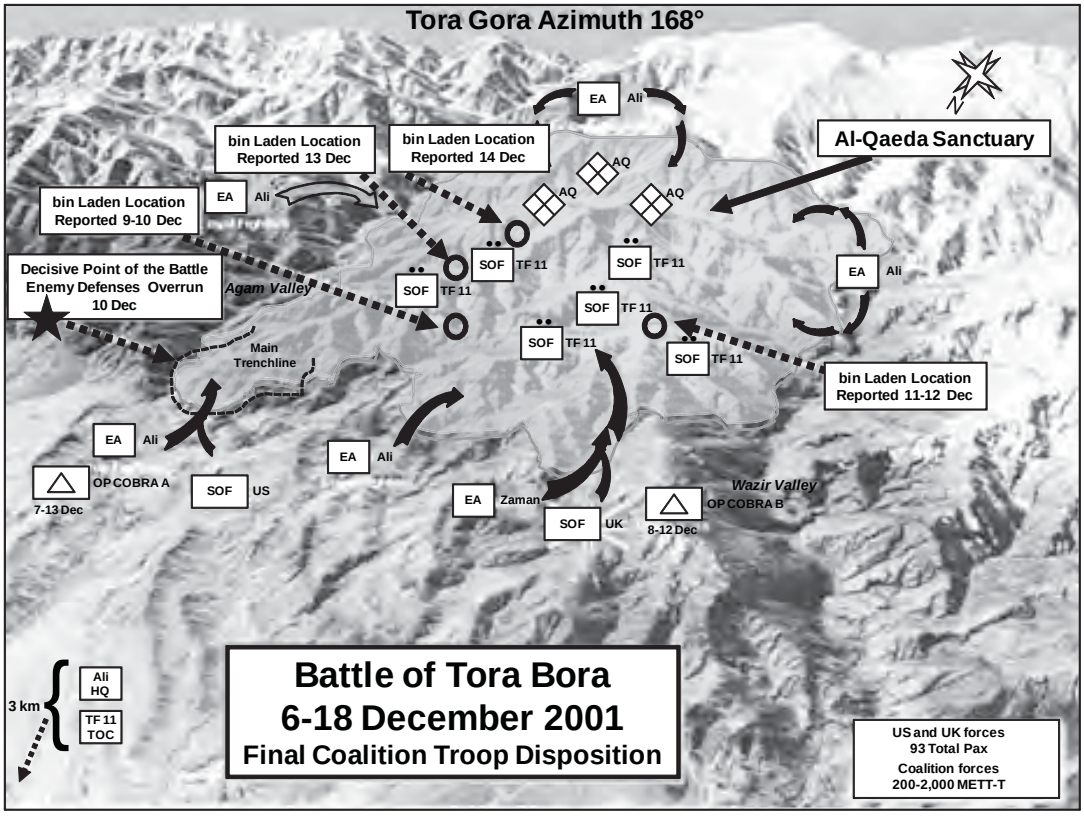


Figure 15. Battle of Tora Bora.

Intelligence from various sources indicated that the population in the Spin Ghar region of Nangarhar province was sympathetic to al-Qaeda. With that organization's presence in the area for many years, a large proportion of the local tribesmen had become beneficiaries of employment and trade with Osama bin Laden's group. Additionally, the sources indicated that al-Qaeda and Taliban strength was significant, but reports were not definitive and only offered estimates of between 300 and 3,000 enemy troops in the region.

More important to the Coalition leadership were the intelligence reports that suggested bin Laden and other senior al-Qaeda leaders were taking refuge in the Tora Bora Valley.[126] With the evidence now available, it is almost certain that at least Osama bin Laden was at Tora Bora and made good his escape as the Coalition attack culminated in mid-December. Several official government and former government sources affirm this view.[127] Additionally, in early 2005, the Department of Defense (DOD) released a document from a purported eyewitness, a detainee at Guantanamo Bay, who had fought under bin Laden during the Afghan-Soviet War and claimed that he helped the al-Qaeda leader escape from Tora Bora in December 2001.[128]

Given the importance of Tora Bora as a refuge for both al-Qaeda leadership and the remnants of their forces in Afghanistan, Coalition leaders began deliberating about the means of assaulting the enemy redoubt. In keeping with the efforts to maintain a small footprint in the country, General Franks and his staff at CENTCOM sought Afghan allies for the fight. Moreover, the fact that the Coalition did not have the right type of conventional combat forces in the region made Afghan proxies more important. The opposition group forces that would ultimately team with the United States at Tora Bora were a collection of small local militias numbering approximately 2,500 fighters that were grouped under the label "Eastern Alliance (EA)." The alliance was comprised of four anti-Taliban groups led by Commanders Hajji Qadir, Hajji Zahi, Mohammed Zaman Ghun Shareef, and Hazrat Ali. Only the last two leaders commanded a significant force to put into the field, and the last, Ali, would emerge as the primary commander at Tora Bora due to his connections with the NA. Ali had previously fought alongside Ahmad Shah Massoud and was considered to be the most loyal to the overall anti-Taliban effort.

Ali became the "security chief" of the EA, while Zaman was named the Jalalabad commander, but the two were rivals rather than friends.[129] The majority of Ali's men were ethnic Pashay, while Zaman's men were Pashtun, thus the two groups disliked and distrusted each other. During the assault on Tora Bora, there were times when the two factions shot at each other rather than at their Taliban and al-Qaeda foes and the fighters. The antipathy the leaders and their respective militias held for each other did not bode well for a successful outcome against a determined enemy.

On the Coalition side, CENTCOM had little to offer in the way of ground forces to help Ali and the others in their assault on Tora Bora. The 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry (1-87 IN), a part of the 10th Mountain Division's force in the theater, was tied up with security missions at K2, Mazar-e Sharif, and Bagram Airfield. The US conventional forces in the theater—the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry (1-187 IN), a unit that belonged to the 2d Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, at Shahbaz Air Base in Pakistan and US Marine Task Force 58 that had arrived at Kandahar Airfield in late November—were also busy with security tasks. Even had these forces been available, there were few aviation lift assets in Afghanistan making the primary problem of transport into the Spin Ghar region essentially impossible to solve. Franks

simply appeared not to have any ground forces inside CENTCOM's area of responsibility to assist the EA.

However, once Coalition military leaders began receiving credible intelligence reports offering positive identification of enemy forces in the region, they began committing forces to the fight. In late November, Coalition airstrikes began hitting targets in the Spin Ghar, killing and wounding many of the enemy and wreaking destruction on their vehicles and facilities. Meanwhile, Mulholland, now armed with the evidence of a large al-Qaeda presence near Tora Bora, decided to send an ODA to develop the situation further. Coalition leaders had decided to rely on the SF/Afghan partnership that had worked so well elsewhere.

Arrival of ODA 572

As promised, Mulholland directed ODA 572, under the command of Master Sergeant Jefferson Davis, to Jalalabad on 2 December 2001 to link up with Hazrat Ali. The team soon found that forging a close relationship with Ali and other EA leaders at Tora Bora would be difficult. First, Ali refused to wait for ODA 572's arrival and the team discovered that he had already commenced operations without coordinating with US representatives. When Master Sergeant Davis finally linked up with Ali on 4 December at his headquarters near Pachir Agam, he and his team immediately ran into problems. Misunderstanding the role the ODA was to play, Ali demanded that the special operators directly participate in combat, a mission that ran contrary to their main roles of advising and coordinating air support. Because of the problems between ODA 572 and Ali, Mulholland ordered the team back to Jalalabad until the issues could be sorted out. After some additional negotiations and explanations with Ali, the ODA returned to Pachir Agam on 6 December.

The reappearance of ODA 572 also returned the CAS capability that would soon tip the scales in favor of the EA. With Ali's concurrence, the ODA's plan was to divide into two teams and each would establish an observation point (OP) from which to direct the CAS for Ali's force. The air attacks would destroy, damage, or otherwise suppress the al-Qaeda positions thereby allowing Ali's men to advance through the Milawa Valley into the mouth of the Tora Bora Valley. There they would move against remaining pockets of resistance. On 7 December one-half of ODA 572 set up an OP on the eastern ridgeline and commenced the airstrikes. The following day, the other half set up on the northwestern side of the valley and began operations.[130]

Until 8 December ODA 572 operated under the loose control of JSOTF-N. The following day, Task Force (TF) 11—a Coalition SOF organization focused on capturing or killing enemy leaders—arrived and took control of all Coalition operations in the area. Committed to the region by General Franks, TF 11 consisted of 50 elite American troopers as well as contingents from British SOF.[131] While the new task force was not equivalent to an American infantry battalion, these troops could be used in close combat alongside Ali's troops. The task force mission, like that of the ODA, was to support Ali's offensive and kill or capture as many al-Qaeda leaders and troops as it could find.

Soon after his arrival, the TF 11 commander conducted a reconnaissance of the al-Qaeda defenses and realized he was up against a strong opposition. On 10 December he decided to both reinforce the two ODA OPs with some of his troops and establish additional OPs

farther forward. That afternoon Ali sent him word to send some SOF troops forward to support an impending attack. Two special operators were sent and the attack went forward. Around 1600 that day, some of Ali's men reported that they had cornered Osama bin Laden. The TF commander immediately ordered all of his available force forward to locate, capture, or kill the al-Qaeda leader. However, the early dusk of Afghan winters in the mountains meant that TF 11 would not arrive at the reported area until after dark. Nonetheless, the men piled into trucks and sped forward.

Unfortunately, the TF commander then encountered a problem that had plagued the operations from the beginning. En route to the specified location, TF 11's convoy met Ali's convoy on the road coming out of the valley. The EA commander had ceased operations for the night and had left the two TF 11 men who had accompanied him on the attack stranded and alone near the al-Qaeda positions. It was the holy month of Ramadan in the Muslim world and Ali's men were going home to break their fast. Upon encountering the TF 11 convoy, Ali promised the American commander that he would turn around and reinforce the pursuit, but he did not follow through on this pledge.[132] While the two stranded Soldiers were able to make their way back to safety, bin Laden made his escape.

One member of ODA 572 explained how the Ramadan holiday played a key role in the fight at Tora Bora:

> One of the biggest problems you have when you work with forces like this—indigenous-type forces—is their logistic system. They don't have a well-developed logistic system like we have. . . . Pretty much all their meals either had to be prepared straight from either raw materials or animals and what-not—cooked freshly right there for them. So a lot of the problems during the battle is, they'll go battle all day. Then when they pull back, it's not like a retreat they're going from the enemy; it's dinnertime. . . . Then the enemy moves back forward and reoccupies position. Then they got to go up there and try to retake it again.[133]

Another team member emphasized this problem, noting that the religious holiday exacerbated the situation, "Yes, it was a big, big problem because it was Ramadan at the time. They're not eating or drinking, really, all day. When it's their time to eat and drink, they want to eat and drink."[134]

Early in the battle the ODA OPs would bring in CAS to destroy the Taliban and al-Qaeda positions. The bombardment would force the survivors to retreat; then Ali's men would occupy the recently vacated ground. However, at night, the EA troops would pull back to eat and drink and the al-Qaeda forces would return to their original positions. The next day the process was repeated.[135] Because of this pattern, the TF 11 commander decided to keep his force close to the front. He hoped that with his own men occupying terrain at night it would convince the Afghan commander to keep his troops forward after dark to hold the ground they had taken during the day.[136] The effort did not immediately bear fruit.

Despite the slow pace that the EA approach required, enemy forces in the valley were increasingly under pressure and their positions were becoming less tenable each day. Much of this pressure was provided by the highly-accurate air support that was directed by the TF 11 Soldiers and the ODAs. On 10 and 11 December alone, the air controllers on these SOF teams called in airstrikes on al-Qaeda positions for 17 continuous hours.[137]

In reaction, some Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders attempted to use negotiations to extricate themselves. On the night of 11–12 December, al-Qaeda elements contacted Zaman and tried to negotiate a cease-fire so they could surrender to the Afghan forces. The negotiations came as a surprise to the men of ODA 572. One staff sergeant on the team recalled:

> One of the interpreters that we did work with—who we had with us all the time—came in and said, "Stop. No more bombs." When he would do that, usually it meant that General Ali's troops were about to move forward again. But it turned out that we were like, "Why are we stopping for so long?" He's like, "No, no. Don't drop any more." It turned out that one of the other commanders had rigged up a bargain, I guess, to receive a large surrender.[138]

When members of ODA 572 realized what was happening, they immediately attempted to end the cease-fire. According to one ODA member, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces wanted to "lay down their weapons and then walk away," which Afghan custom would have allowed.[139] Because the members of ODA 572 were certain that the forces at Tora Bora were al-Qaeda and that Osama bin Laden might be there as well, they considered conditional surrender unacceptable. One noncommissioned officer (NCO) on the ODA recalled that there was only one type of negotiation that would have been acceptable: "it's a complete unconditional surrender, and [the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces] are processed as prisoners" by the United States.[140]

Once the American opposition became known, the cease-fire ended and Coalition forces renewed their effort to reduce the enemy positions at Tora Bora. In the minds of the American Soldiers in the region, however, this process was excruciatingly slow. Most alarming was that all the terrain taken by the combination of EA forces and CAS during the day was ceded back to al-Qaeda at night when the Afghan militia retreated to their bases lower in the valley. The constant retreat had one unintended advantage. Soldiers in TF 11, armed with night observation and target acquisition equipment and powerful and accurate sniper weapons, became the masters of the night. With no friendly forces in the area after dark, the Tora Bora Valley and its accompanying slopes were a virtual free-fire zone and the dead bodies of al-Qaeda fighters carted off the field the next day in EA trucks were proof of the special operators' lethality. Only on 14 December did the process change when American commanders convinced Ali to keep his men forward and occupy ground already seized.[141] By this date, al-Qaeda forces had been severely mauled and were not able to defend this terrain.

The fighting continued at Tora Bora until 17 December. As the fighting concluded, the combat took on a brutal quality as al-Qaeda's most dedicated fighters remained in the caves to cover the retreat of their leadership. This resistance allowed large numbers of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters, along with their leaders to slip over the high, snowy, passes of the Spin Ghar into Pakistan.

When hostilities ended in the valley, CENTCOM directed ODA 561 to travel to the valley on 20 December and begin searching the cave complexes that studded the mountains in and around Tora Bora to determine whether wounded or killed al-Qaeda leaders had been left behind. In the process, they found no evidence that any of the key al-Qaeda or Taliban leaders had been killed or wounded in the combat.[142]

With that team's departure several days later, operations by US forces in the Tora Bora region essentially ended. Nevertheless, many questions remained and the most important of

these focused on how the combined American and Afghan force had allowed such a large contingent of enemy escape. The mission at Tora Bora had been to cut off and capture or kill large numbers of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters, and the Coalition forces in the valley had achieved some success in this. Estimates had placed the number of enemy in the hundreds or perhaps thousands and Coalition operations had taken a large toll on these enemy formations. One SOF commander later estimated enemy killed in action (KIA) at 250, but he arrived on the field well into the fight.[143] The JAWBREAKER team that was calling in airstrikes in the Milawa Valley was successfully engaging enemy troops with CAS almost 2 weeks earlier. EA forces had sharp engagements with the enemy even before ODA 572 arrived and that team began calling in airstrikes early on as well.

On the other hand, it is unlikely that as many as 1,000 enemy troops were killed, as some observers have estimated.[144] Still, using the lower estimates of enemy KIA and given historic ratios of wounded in action (WIA) to killed, another 750 fighters would have sustained some level of injury during the fight. Because of the harsh weather and sanitary conditions of the environment at that time, a number of these wounded men would have eventually succumbed to their wounds. In addition, Coalition forces accepted the surrender of a number of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, but the exact figures remain unclear. These numbers offer an approximate total of 1,100 enemy KIA, WIA, and enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) as a conservative estimate of total enemy casualties. Even if the enemy forces in the Tora Bora region numbered as high as 3,000, the above casualty estimate is a significantly large percentage given historic averages for losses in battle. It is even more impressive when one considers that few of the EA fighters and none of the US or British participants were lost in the fighting at Tora Bora. However, this estimate also suggests that as many as 1,500 fighters may have escaped to fight another day. Some of them likely made their way to the Shahi Kowt Valley in Paktia province and would fight Coalition forces again 3 months later.[145]

The actions at Tora Bora undoubtedly dealt a severe blow to those Taliban and al-Qaeda elements that remained active in Afghanistan after the fall of Kabul and other major Coalition successes that fall. As a result, operations in the valley were clearly not perceived as a victory because of the flight of so many enemy fighters and the likely escape of Osama bin Laden and other key leaders. The reasons for this incomplete success were myriad. Some observers have emphasized the lack of Coalition conventional forces that might have closed down the exit routes to Pakistan. Clearly, in December 2001, CENTCOM did not have combat forces in the theater equipped and trained to conduct sustained operations in the wintry elevations of the Spin Ghar Mountains. Even if these forces had been available, their use in blocking positions to seal the passes into Pakistan was probably unrealistic. The problems associated with inserting and supplying multiple battalion-sized units, spread out across mountainous terrain, were almost insurmountable. As noted earlier, there were not yet enough Army airlift assets in theater, for example, to put a force of this size into position and resupply them on a regular basis. Negotiating with the Pakistani Government over the role of these forces, operating so close to the border, would have added more complications.

An additional explanation of the incomplete success at Tora Bora was the nature of the EA and its relations with US forces. The rivalry between the various militia groups created rifts in the alliance and made command and control difficult. In fact, diplomacy became the primary means of persuading the Afghan chieftains to work together and move toward a

common purpose. Furthermore, at some points in the battle, diplomatic skills were not enough to keep the alliance together and the individual leaders began acting unilaterally. Given the poor relations between the two primary commanders, Ali and Zaman, it is somewhat surprising that operations went as well as they did.

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Although the Tora Bora operation was tarnished by the lost opportunity to capture or kill Osama bin Laden, the overall Coalition campaign in southern and eastern Afghanistan to oust the Taliban and evict al-Qaeda from the country must be considered a success. The plan to work with indigenous anti-Taliban Afghan groups to drive the Taliban from Kabul and Kandahar worked brilliantly. Indigenous leaders like Hamid Karzai proved to be critical not only for the achievement of American political goals in Afghanistan, but also for the ODA team that worked with Karzai at the tactical level. Although Karzai did not have much military acumen, his political savvy and intimate knowledge of the country and culture was a critical enabler that made the campaign much more feasible. Karzai readily admitted that he could not handle the military aspects of the campaign and wisely turned that element over to members of ODA 574 who essentially took command of Karzai's opposition group. The ODA leader, in turn, accepted Karzai's assessment of the political landscape and the two achieved a resounding victory at Tarin Kowt, which led to the fall of the Kandahar and, arguably, sowed the seeds of the Taliban's demise. ODA 583's experience with Gul Agha Sherzai proved to be equally successful. Only at Tora Bora did this form of unconventional warfare (UW) not prove to be as fruitful.

Coalition practices and technology were not the only explanation for the success in the south, east, and north of Afghanistan in the fall and early winter of 2001. The leadership, organization, and tactics of the Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies were equally important. Because the Afghan-Soviet War and the resultant civil war devastated Afghanistan, the country possessed almost no production infrastructure or modern and financial institutions. Thus, the Taliban could not adequately outfit and equip their forces with modern tanks, artillery, or ground-to-air missiles that might have beaten back Coalition ground and air forces.

Despite this, the Taliban government in October and November 2001 initially attempted to defend fixed positions using its antiquated weaponry. Because the Taliban and al-Qaeda troops largely manned these static sites, they were highly vulnerable to extremely accurate CAS sorties. Thus, they suffered huge casualties in terms of men killed or captured and equipment destroyed.

The Taliban and al-Qaeda were actually better suited to unconventional tactics rather than the conventional operations they tried to conduct. Once driven out of or otherwise freed from fixed positions, they would become a more potent fighting force. No longer would they have to wait for attacks against them; they could seize the initiative, at least locally, deciding where and when to attack. This transformation of the Taliban and al-Qaeda from conventional fighters to the unconventional began at Tora Bora. Bin Laden, Mullah Omar, and their military commanders realized that they could not stand up to US military might and melted into the mountains of

southern and eastern Afghanistan and the tribal regions of Pakistan to escape. In these sanctuaries they would begin to reconstitute and eventually sally forth to strike US and Coalition forces then disappear back into the mountains to blend in with the local population.

Before that reconstitution was complete, however, there remained one more sanctuary in Afghanistan that held a large number of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. That refuge was in the Shahi Kowt Valley in Paktia province to the southwest of Tora Bora. Many of the enemy's toughest fighters, including some that had survived the Coalition's assault on Tora Bora, began assembling there in January and February 2002. The Coalition's effort to eliminate these forces would lead to the biggest engagement of the campaign in Afghanistan.

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Chapter 6

Operation ANACONDA

Following the fighting at Tora Bora, the military situation in Afghanistan in late December 2001 and January 2002 settled down. With all of the known Taliban and al-Qaeda forces destroyed, captured, or scattered, US and Coalition military forces in the region were poised to more fully transition into Phase IV of US Central Command's (CENTCOM's) campaign plan that would feature stability operations. In political terms as well, the conditions appeared auspicious to begin this shift. The Taliban regime had been removed and Hamid Karzai had been installed as the head of an interim government of Afghanistan that would become a partner to the United Nations (UN) and the Coalition in supervising the country's path to a more stable political future. If done with the proper energy and resources, this campaign transition would help cement the notion that Coalition forces were there to help, not occupy. Thus, deliberations among Coalition leaders began to focus on reconstruction projects and humanitarian aid. As those discussions evolved, Coalition planners, as this chapter will show, began considering a significant redeployment of combat forces.

At the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Airfield in Uzbekistan, Major General Franklin Hagenbeck, commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division, became heavily involved in planning for this transition. Hagenbeck's division headquarters had arrived at K2 on 12 December 2001 to function as the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) (Forward). This command served as the representative for Lieutenant General Paul T. Mikolashek, the Third US Army/CFLCC commanding general (CG) in the theater of operations. As such, Hagenbeck's headquarters was responsible for commanding and controlling virtually all Coalition ground forces and ground force operations in the theater, to include security of Coalition airfields in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan, as well as the logistics operations set up to support those forces.

As combat operations wound down, Hagenbeck's staff officers began discussions with their counterparts at CFLCC about returning forces to their home stations. In fact, on 25 January Hagenbeck, Lieutenant Colonel David Gray, the 10th Mountain Chief of Operations (G3), and Major Paul Wille, the assistant G3, traveled to Camp Doha, Kuwait, to brief the CFLCC staff regarding the plan for redeploying the division headquarters.[1] Hagenbeck recalled that at this meeting "it was the general consensus from everyone that the war, the fight, in Afghanistan was done."[2] This conclusion would prove premature. At roughly the same time that Hagenbeck was in Kuwait, various intelligence assets in theater, primarily signals intelligence (SIGINT) and human intelligence (HUMINT), were developing a picture of increased enemy activity in Paktia province in the southeast of Afghanistan centered on the towns of Gardez, Khost, and Ghazni. There were indications that some of the al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters who had escaped from Tora Bora had gravitated to that area as well as into Pakistan. Estimates of al-Qaeda members in the Paktia region ran as high as 1,000 fighters.[3]

The intelligence about possible enemy formations in Paktia province would eventually lead to the planning and execution of the single largest combat action of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)—Operation ANACONDA. In this action, which would take place over 18 days in late February and early March 2002, more than 2,000 Coalition ground troops would enter the Shahi Kowt Valley to conduct search and destroy operations against a large

concentration of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. The end result—several hundred enemy troops killed, wounded, or captured and the rest driven underground or into Pakistan—would be a critical strike against the remnants of the enemy in Afghanistan. While Operation ANACONDA was an unequivocal victory, Coalition forces encountered significant difficulties in the Shahi Kowt Valley. The discussion that follows highlights many of the problems faced by the Coalition

Figure 16. Gardez–Khost–Orgun-e triangle.

forces during the battle against entrenched al-Qaeda and Taliban elements that stood and fought in the valley.

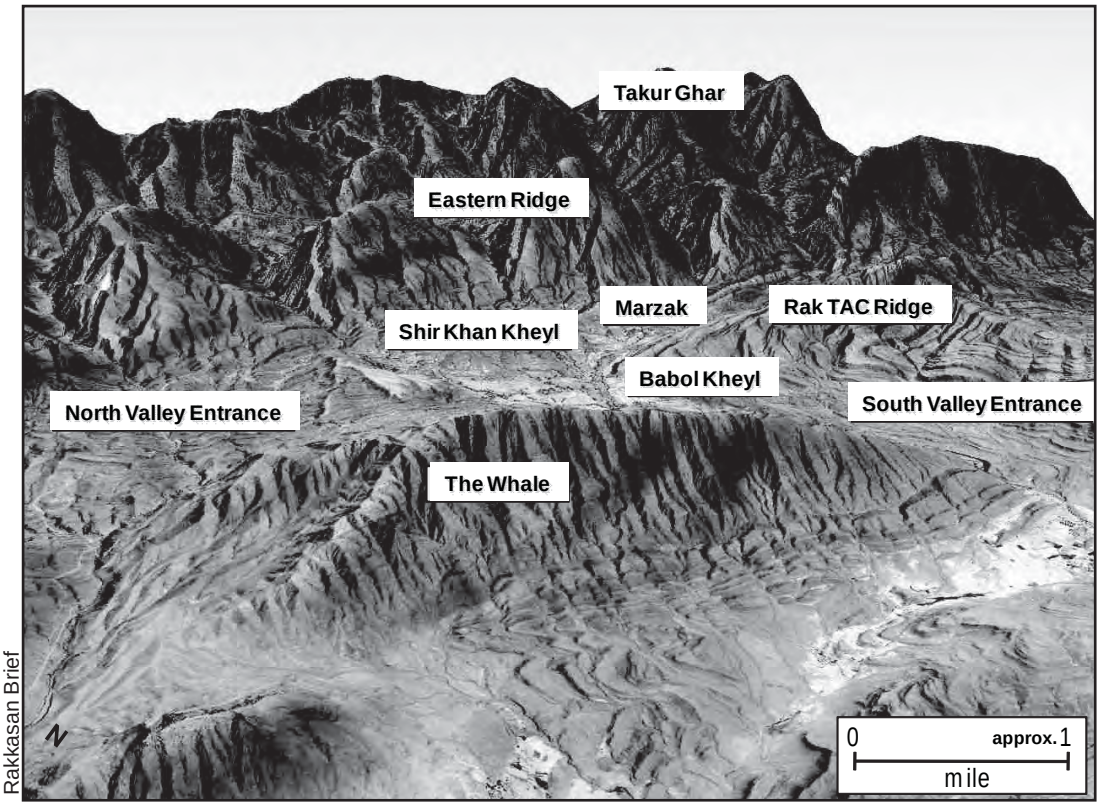

Figure 17. View of Shahi Kowt Valley from the north.

Paktia Province and the Soviet-Afghan War

The US-led Coalition was not the first military force to mount combat operations in the Shahi Kowt Valley. Indeed, in the 1980s the Soviet Army launched numerous campaigns into the region in attempts to destroy mujahideen control over the valley. The Soviet experience, therefore, provides important historical context for Operation ANACONDA.

Paktia province is located in southeastern Afghanistan adjacent to the Northwest Frontier province of Pakistan. The provincial capital, Gardez, sits in the middle of a large valley running northeast to southwest, which forms the northwestern third of the province. Splitting Paktia down the middle third is a huge range of rugged mountains with numerous peaks that rise well over 10,000 feet above sea level. The southeastern third of the province consists of the eastern foothills and, relative to the center third, low rolling hills that extend to the border of Pakistan.

Few paved roads cross the province. The main highway runs west from the city of Khost, located in the eastern hills, over the mountains to Gardez. The road heads north from the provincial capital, exits the province by crossing over another small mountain range, and continues north to Kabul, about 80 miles away. The other major route runs down the valley southwest out

of Gardez toward Kandahar, about 250 miles away. Largely inaccessible to vehicular traffic, the province is an ideal location for a nonmechanized armed force to regroup and refit. Afghans have also recognized it as an ideal place for such a force to do battle against a modern foe that seems to hold technological advantages.

Such was the case during the Soviet-Afghan War in the 1980s. The mujahideen forces opposing the Red Army in southeast Afghanistan centered their defenses in Paktia province on the central mountain range. Their defenses were particularly well placed and strong along the highway between Gardez and Khost. The latter city was garrisoned by a sizable Soviet force that relied on supplies coming in from Kabul through Gardez. Determined to deny use of that road as a supply route, in 1981 Afghan fighters successfully sealed it off and laid siege to Khost. As a result, the Soviets were forced to resupply the garrison through airlift.

During the 7 years that followed, the Soviet Army conducted numerous operations in the Gardez–Khost area seeking to bring the mujahideen to battle and to relieve Khost. On 20 March 1982 the mujahideen ambushed a reconnaissance platoon of a Soviet mechanized battalion at the village of Shir Khan Kheyl located in the Shahi Kowt Valley.[4] In August 1983 the Soviets conducted their first major offensive in Paktia province followed by another in November the following year. In August and September 1985 the Russians conducted one of the largest offensives of the war to break the blockade of the Gardez–Khost road and resupply the garrison. They succeeded in breaking through to Khost, but the mujahideen reestablished the siege and again blocked the road once the Soviet relief column pulled back to Gardez.[5]

In November 1987 the Soviet Army launched Operation MAGISTRAL, the largest campaign of the war. The 40th Army, consisting of about five divisions and air support, again battled its way through the mountains from Gardez to Khost. After a significant fight at Satukandav Pass, a key chokepoint on the road, the 40th Army successfully pushed through the mountains and relieved Khost. But as they had done repeatedly in the past, the mujahideen flowed back into the mountain defenses and cut off Khost as the Soviet relief column withdrew to Gardez. The difference this time was that Operation MAGISTRAL was used by the Soviets to set conditions for their departure from Afghanistan.[6] The mujahideen had lost the battle, but won the war when Soviet troops began officially pulling out in 1988.

In Paktia province, the mujahideen had achieved success largely by holding the high ground and making the enemy fight their way up to them. These guerrilla bands were exceptionally good at conducting hit-and-run ambushes with small arms against small detachments, especially convoys, and were generally successful in denying the use of roads to a largely road-bound mechanized army. Though the Soviets had the combat power to bull their way through whenever and wherever they chose, that combat power was not strong enough to conduct such operations anytime or anywhere in Afghanistan. Thus, when they conducted a large operation to clear an area of the enemy, the mujahideen would simply melt away in small elements and return after the Soviets had departed.

Conversely, the Soviets, despite their generally overwhelming superiority in firepower, were loath to fight the mujahideen at close quarters. Instead, Soviet commanders preferred to engage the enemy with heavy weapons at distances of 300 meters or greater—out of rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and AK-47 range—if the enemy could be detected early enough.[7] These timid tactics almost guaranteed the guerrillas an opportunity to escape and fight another day if the battle went against them.

As the war progressed, the Soviets began making extensive use of helicopters for airmobile and air assault operations. Operations that included air assault and airborne units were generally more successful than those conducted by mechanized forces alone. Typically, the air assault elements would function as an anvil to block the enemy escape routes and lines of communications, while the mechanized ground force would function as a hammer to drive the guerrillas into the kill zones. However, the Soviet's general lack of adequate helicopter lift capacity—critical to inserting the right number of troops in the right place—limited the overall effectiveness of these operations. Adding to this problem was that the trained air assault and airborne regiments in country required for such missions were generally understrength and often missing many of their subordinate battalions.[8] Despite the potential that air assault operations promised in the war against the mujahideen, the Soviets were never able to exploit them fully in the mountains of Paktia province or elsewhere that the Afghan guerrillas chose to stand and fight.

A New Mission for a Renewed Threat

The nature of the combat between Coalition and Taliban forces in late 2001 differed significantly from the operations during the Soviet occupation. Nevertheless, by February 2002 Coalition operations had established a pattern. The pressure to keep the numbers of military personnel in Afghanistan small led to a ground warfare that was unusual. The general pattern of the ground fighting since October followed what seemed to have become a standard set of tactics and procedures. Afghan Militia Forces, those groups that had fought as partners of the US Special Operations Forces (SOF), had engaged and routed the Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies. Once a combined Afghan—Operational Detachment–Alpha (ODA) team detected the enemy, the Special Forces (SF) advisors routinely proceeded by calling in close air support (CAS) to break up or destroy the enemy force. After the airstrikes had pounded the enemy into stunned inaction or retreat, the team would move forward to pursue, capture, or complete the destruction of the enemy force.

These tactics were ideal for three related reasons. First, it required a very light footprint of Coalition forces, which meant operations could be easily supported logistically. Second, the small number of troops demonstrated to the Afghans, and the world, that the Coalition was not an invading army but was there as a force for liberation. This appearance was important to the US Government in general and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in particular. Though there was no official force cap placed on CENTCOM forces flowing into Afghanistan, the pressure to keep numbers low was keenly felt by all deploying commanders as they tailored their units for operations in country. Finally, the Coalition approach on the ground played to the strengths of the SF teams trained to advise and assist indigenous forces in what was called unconventional warfare (UW).[9] Not unimportant was that the practice of UW nested perfectly with Rumsfeld's and CENTCOM's emphasis on retaining an Afghan face on the campaign to free Afghanistan from Taliban rule.

Even after most of the Taliban and al-Qaeda military concentrations had disappeared from the battlefield after December 2001, the partnerships between the ODAs and Afghan militia forces endured. Operations relying on these partnerships were overseen by the Joint Special Operations Task Force–North (JSOTF-N), located at K2, and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–South (CJSOTF-S), which had been established in December 2001 at Kandahar Airport. When on 6 January 2002 JSOTF-N received a mission to begin planning

for what was originally to be a sensitive site exploitation (SSE) mission in the Gardez–Khost region, they immediately conceived the mission within the UW context.[10] The SOF planners designed an operation in which Afghan militia, assisted by ODAs from the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG), would move into the area to engage and destroy the Taliban and al-Qaeda remnants that intelligence sources had identified there.[11]

Colonel John Mulholland and his staff set to work gathering intelligence on the area of operations (AO) while some of his ODAs began training and preparing several militia bands for the upcoming operation. Over the next 3 weeks, several ODA teams joined Afghan militiamen and reconnaissance teams from Australian Special Air Service's (SAS) Task Force (TF) 64 to look closely into the area around Gardez and Khost. The information these teams garnered indicated that there were indeed enemy fighters in the area, but none of the teams were able to actually observe activities in the Shahi Kowt Valley. In addition, several indigenous Afghan scouts that CJSOTF-S had sent into the valley were never heard from.[12] Toward the end of the month, ODA 594 was conducting a mission near the Shahi Kowt Valley when its Afghan security personnel urgently warned the team leader not to go there. The Afghans reported that local villagers claimed the enemy had indeed concentrated in the valley. Based on the report from ODA 594, Mulholland refocused his intelligence efforts on the Shahi Kowt Valley.[13] The more information Mulholland gained about the enemy in the valley, the more he became convinced he did not possess the combat power to accomplish the mission with which he had been charged. "It was beyond my ability with my small force to do something about it because we were confident there was a sizable concentration of bad guys in there," Mulholland recalled.[14]

In early February, Mulholland met with Major General Hagenbeck and Commodore Robert Harward, the US Navy Special Operations officer who commanded CJSOTF-S, to discuss future operations in the Shahi Kowt Valley. In this meeting, Mulholland explained the situation to Hagenbeck and Harward, informally suggesting that since this operation was going to need additional assets to ensure success—and employing such assets would be beyond the capabilities of JSOTF-N to control—that CFLCC (Forward) should take over the planning, command, and control of any offensive in the valley. Hagenbeck agreed and over the next several days the two commanders, along with their staffs, put together a briefing for Lieutenant General Mikolashek recommending that course of action. In early February they presented the brief to Mikolashek who agreed with the recommendation.[15] A few days later, in a video teleconference (VTC) Mikolashek advised Hagenbeck to "learn how to spell Bagram," thereby hinting that CFLCC (Forward) would soon be moving into Afghanistan to become more directly involved in the upcoming operation.[16] Indeed, on 13 February 2002 Mikolashek ordered Hagenbeck to move CFLCC (Forward) to the airfield located at Bagram and 2 days later the headquarters was officially redesignated as Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) *Mountain* and assumed responsibility for the planning and execution of what had then become known as Operation ANACONDA.[17]

CJTF *Mountain*

Though designated as a CJTF, the headquarters of the 10th Mountain Division, consisting of only 167 officers and Soldiers, was hardly the proper size to serve as the staff of a CJTF. Before it had deployed to K2, the headquarters had deployed part of its staff to missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, the Sinai Desert, and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana. The division's primary intelligence officer (G2) was one of those deployed

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Figure 18. 10th Mountain Soldiers in the Shahi Kowt Valley.

and would be sorely missed in the planning for ANACONDA. Additionally, some of the division staff had been left at Fort Drum to perform post security missions in the wake of 9/11. Additional assets missing for the planning and the execution of ANACONDA were the 20th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS) and the headquarters' Tactical Air Control Party (TACP), both of which were normally associated with the division and were critical to coordinating CAS with US Air Force units. The 20th ASOS had already deployed in October to support JSOTF-N and the TACP was left behind due to Department of Defense (DOD) pressure to keep the deployment numbers low. The 10th Mountain Division had been tasked to perform logistics and force protection functions at K2. Thus, division planners had not made arrangements to deploy the TACP.[18]

By doctrine, a CJTF headquarters is a much larger organization whose staff possesses all the assets and sections needed to plan, conduct, and support the full range of Coalition operations. Joint task forces are also responsible for conducting direct coordination with the various theater-level headquarters that command and support it. Such was not the case with CJTF *Mountain*. As Major General Hagenbeck explained, "Were we in fact a CJTF? I will tell you we were in name primarily, but names are powerful. It did bring all these disparate organizations together from across the Services and we had a small contingent embedded in that 167 now from some of the other Services, so I won't say it was a CJTF in name only."[19] But Hagenbeck did encounter problems, especially in creating a plan for ANACONDA that required close coordination with the air support staff at CENTCOM:

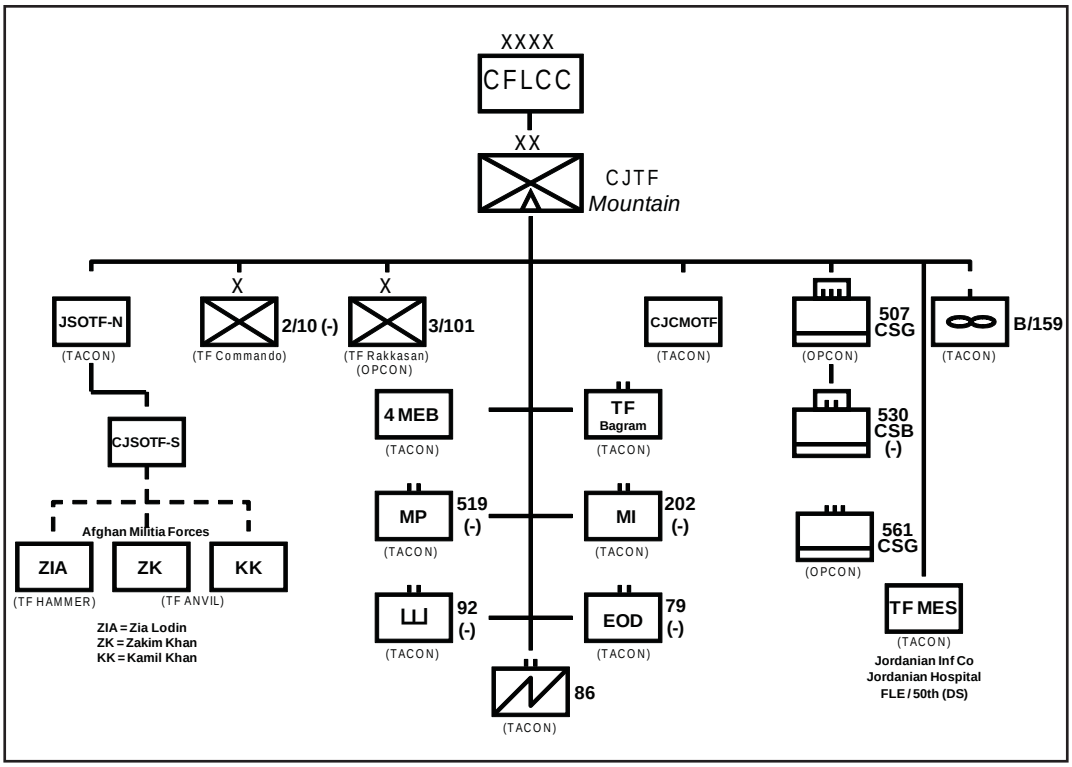

Figure 19. CJTF *Mountain* task organization for Operation ANACONDA.

> There was confusion because as we began to develop our battle plans and to work in air power for fire support because we had no artillery, and we saw this retrospectively, there were many that believed that we still were an appendage of the CFLCC and therefore [CFLCC] should be dealing directly with CENTCOM and with the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) in Saudi Arabia and Prince Sultan Air Base (PSAB). If we truly were a CJTF, we would have had direct lines working with them to develop the plans. So confusion did reign.[20]

Despite the problems inherent in the headquarters organization, Hagenbeck, Mulholland, Harward, and their teams moved forward on developing the plan for ANACONDA.

Planning Begins

The experience of Tora Bora was still fresh as the planning for ANACONDA proceeded, specifically the problems encountered when the Coalition relied on the Afghan militia forces of the Eastern Alliance to ensure the destruction of al-Qaeda forces in the Tora Bora Valley. The willingness of Afghan militia commanders to negotiate with the enemy allowed large numbers of Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders and fighters to escape. The lack of conventional troops that might have served to block that escape and the dearth of airlift capabilities that would have prevented the deployment of those conventional forces had they existed had pushed the Coalition toward its reliance on the militia groups.[21] Although al-Qaeda forces endured hundreds of casualties at Tora Bora, the operation had become a political and public relations defeat as well as an overall