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## Australia in Afghanistan 2001 -2010: the way out of the quagmire

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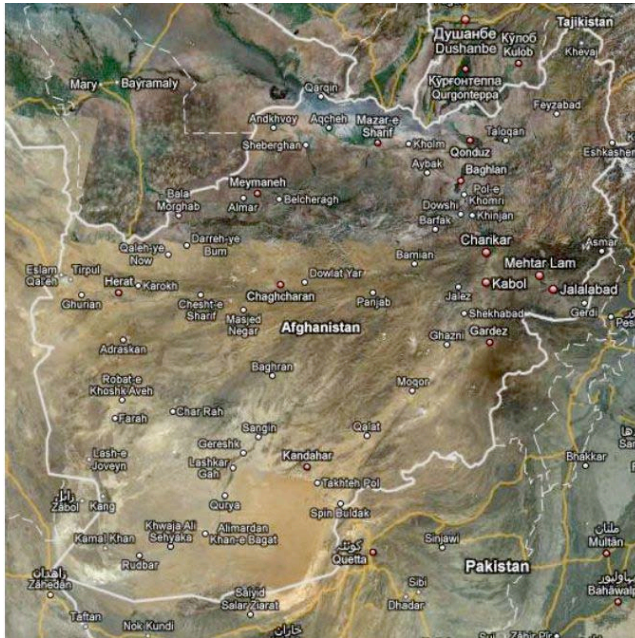
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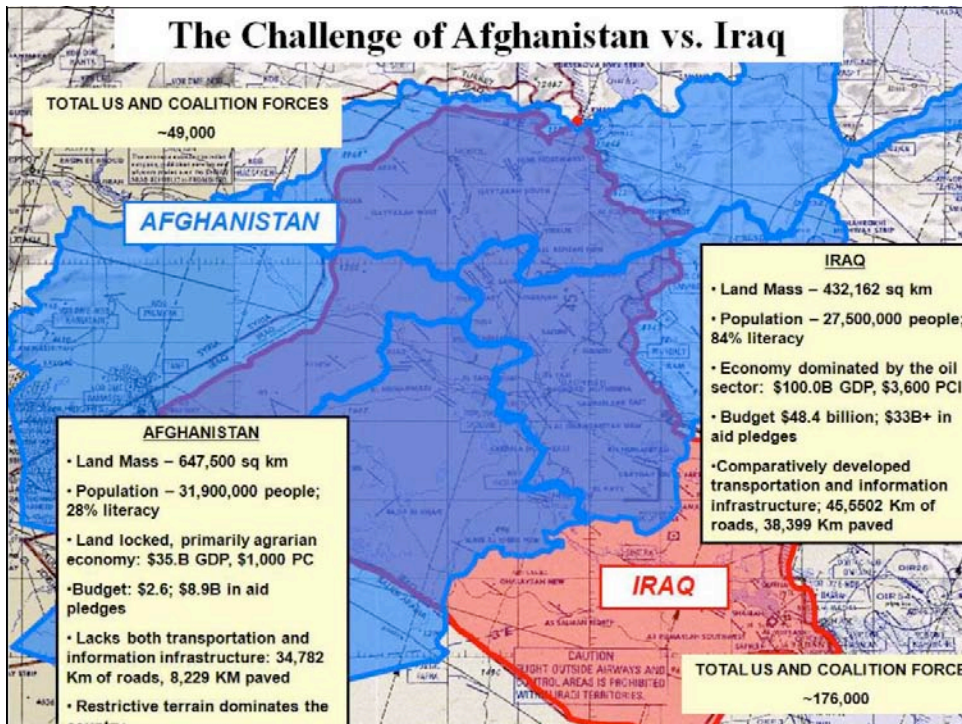
### **Outline:**

- Now a two-country war: Afghanistan, spilling over into Pakistan
- Origins and legal foundation of intervention
- Main players and strategy: government and UN-authorized coalition vs “anti-government forces”
- Political economy of the Afghan war: aid, corruption and the narcostate
- Current state of the war
- Pakistan and the neighbourhood
- Australian role and stated goals
- What way out?

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## Origins and now

- Afghanistan as a buffer state, and as a perpetual quasi nation-state
- Soviet war (December 1979 - February 1989)
- Civil war I: Democratic Republic of Afghanistan vs. the Mujahideen (Feb 1989 - April 1992)
- Civil war II: Warlords vs Taliban (April 1992- late 1996)
- Taliban government (1996 - late 2001)
- UN-authorized and US-led intervention and establishment of Hamid Karzai headed government (late 2001 - )
- Now: Civil War III: disputed government with international support vs Islamist-based national resistance?

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## Original legal foundation for international intervention: Security Council Resolution 1386 (2001), 20 December 2001

1. **Authorizes**, as envisaged in ... the **Bonn Agreement**, the establishment ... of an **International Security Assistance Force** to assist the **Afghan Interim Authority** in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas ...;
2. **Calls upon** Member States to **contribute personnel**, equipment and other resources to the International Security Assistance Force, and invites those Member States to inform the leadership of the Force and the Secretary-General;
3. **Authorizes** the Member States participating in the International Security Assistance Force **to take all necessary measures** to fulfil its mandate;

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## Afghanistan government and UN- authorised coalition

- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
  - Afghan National Army (ANA)
  - Afghan National Police (ANP)
  - supporting militia/warlord groups
- International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)
  - “NATO plus”
- Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan
  - US Afghanistan combat operation structure for Global war on Terror
- United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

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		International Security Assistance Force: Troop Contributing Nations							
	Albania	250		Georgia	175		Poland	2140	
	Armenia	40		Germany	4335		Portugal	110	
	Australia	1550		Greece	15		Romania	970	
	Austria	3		Hungary	310		Singapore	40	
	Azerbaijan	90		Iceland	4		Slovakia	230	
	Belgium	560		Ireland	7		Slovenia	70	
	Bosnia & Herzegovina	10		Italy	3160		Spain	1075	
	Bulgaria	525		Jordan	6		Sweden	410	
	Canada	2830		Latvia	170		The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia <sup>1</sup>	165	
	Croatia	270		Lithuania	220		Turkey	1835	
	Czech Republic	455		Luxembourg	9		Ukraine	8	
	Denmark	750		Montenegro	4		United Arab Emirates	25	
	Estonia	145		Netherlands	1880		United Kingdom	9500	
	Finland	95		New Zealand	220		United States	50590	
	France	3750		Norway	470		Total (rounded)	89480	

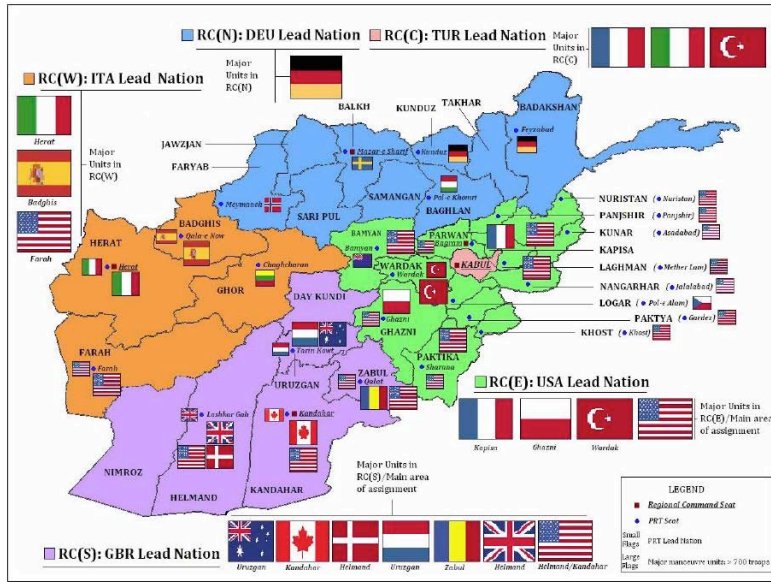
Note on numbers: Totals are approximations and actual numbers change daily. Number of troops should be taken as indicatives.

<sup>1</sup> Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

05 March 2010

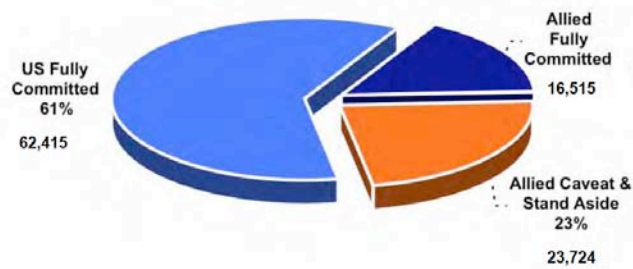


### International Security Assistance Force Regional Commands, Major Units, Provincial Reconstruction Teams



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### The Problem of "Stand Aside" Forces:



4,715 of 16,515 fully committed allied forces leave in 2011

## Afghanistan: anti-government forces: Taliban

- origin during anti-Soviet war
  - US and Pakistani intelligence role in development
  - But at root indigenous
- Pakistani military interest in maintaining Afghan unrest: border concerns
- ethnically- and class-inflected Sunni Islamism
  - Pashtun ethnic dominance
- regional variations
- not a single united body, or equivalent to pre-invasion government
  - Mullah Omar, leader (at least in south)
- overlaps with Taliban in Pakistan but not identical

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### Afghan Taliban Intentions and Directives

#### Taliban Code of Conduct published by Taliban leadership, Mid July 2009 (Mullah Omar's COIN guidance – a population centric strategy)

- "This is our mission: to keep people and their property safe. Do not let those people that love money take our local people's property and cause them problems."
- "Keep good relationships with your friends and the local people, and do not let the enemy divide / separate you."

#### Intentions

- We don't have to beat ISAF militarily, just outlast international will to remain in Afghanistan
- Continue population outreach and protection programs
- Continue successful asymmetric operations
- Expand lethal IED and high-profile attacks to deny ISAF freedom of movement
- Emphasize increasing violence in RC North and RC West
- Demonstrate Taliban reach and perceived control of all Afghanistan
- Make the main enemy the United States

#### Directives

- Reiterated prohibitions on the following:
  - Mistreating population
  - Forcibly taking personal weapons
  - Taking children to conduct jihad
  - Punishment by maiming
  - Forcing people to pay donations
  - Searching homes
  - Kidnapping people for money

## Afghanistan: anti-government forces: Militia leaders/“warlords”

- regional/clan/tribal-based patron-client relationships
  - fusion of “feudal”/pre-modern relations and “modern” social and political relationships
- Haqqani Network
  - Jalauddin Haqqani; family/clan leadership
- Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddun
  - Gulbuddin Hekmatyar
    - former PM; Islamist; deeply opposed to foreign intervention
- “warlords” on both sides
  - shifting clan loyalties and inter-relationships
  - narco financing both sides

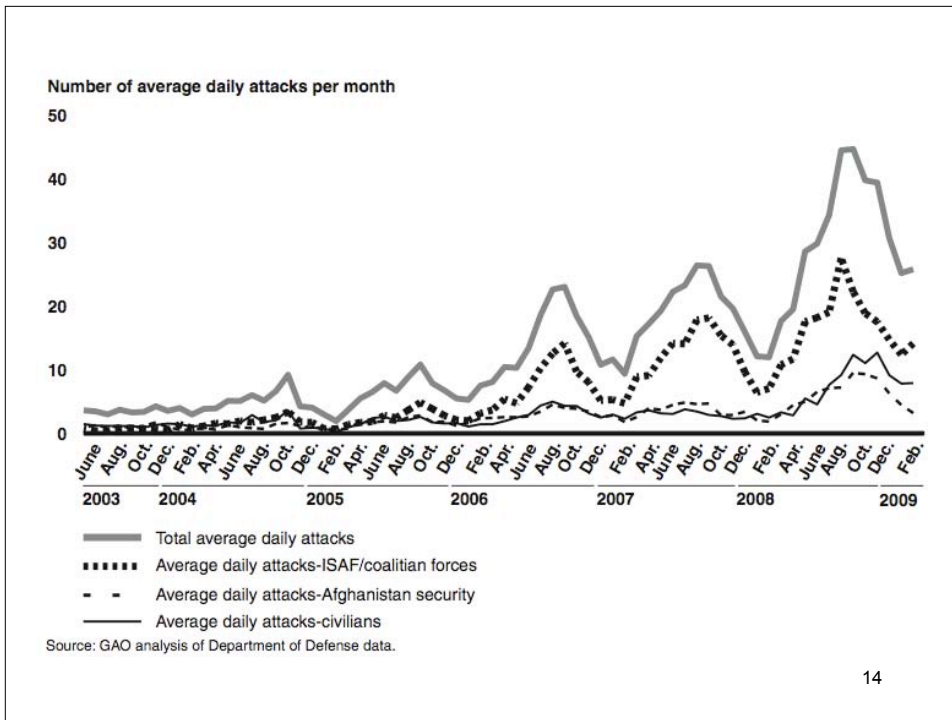


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## Afghanistan: anti-government forces: Al Qaeda

- Saudi- Egyptian-originated Sunni Salafi international militia group
- November 2001 invasion immediately destroyed training camps, displaced AQ activists to Pakistan, reduced AQ capacity, long-running tensions with hosts
- key leaders Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri still at large, presumably in Pakistan
- core AQ international combat reach doubtful; limited Afghanistan combat role
- effective “franchising” of AQ through loose international networks continues
  - differentiation and development of loosely related networks
  - not Afghanistan-based
  - mega-terrorism threat continues

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## “Time is Running Out...”

- The Taliban-led insurgency has the momentum...but additional effective counterinsurgency forces and operations will challenge them in select districts and provinces

### Kinetic Events by Geography

01 Jan 05 – 15 Dec 05      01 Jan 07 – 15 Dec 07      01 Jan 09 – 15 Dec 09

### Kinetic Events by Week and Type

PAK STATS (Open Source—as of 12 NOV):  
 Suicide Attacks: 66 (793 KIA / 2086 WIA)  
 Other IED Attacks: 83 (760 KIA / 875 WIA)  
 39 attacks since 17 OCT (~ 30 days)

- Taliban influence expanding; contesting and controlling additional areas.
- Kinetic events are up 300% since 2007 and an additional 60% since 2008.
- The Taliban now has “Shadow Governors” in 33 of 34 provinces (as of DEC 09)

### Taliban Shadow Governments

2005: 11 Taliban  
 2006: 20 Taliban  
 2007: 28 Taliban  
 2008: 31 Taliban  
 2009: 33 Taliban

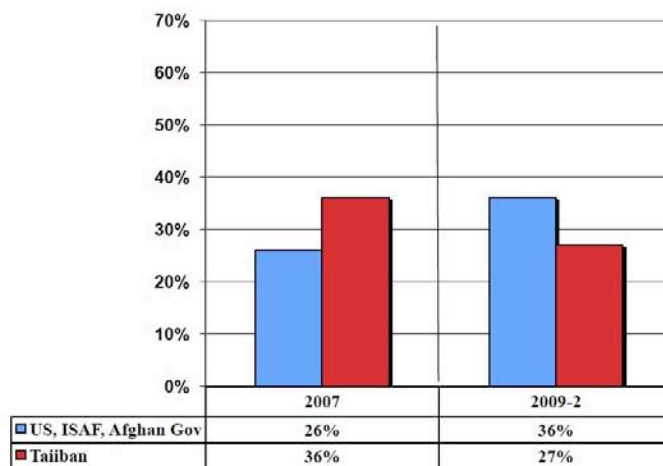


## Afghans' Perception of Violent Events

Type of Activity	Respondents Who Replied Yes (%)
Bombing or shelling by U.S., NATO, or ISAF forces	72
Civilians killed or hurt by U.S., NATO, or ISAF forces	69
Civilians killed or hurt by ANA or ANP	67
Car bombs, suicide attacks	66
Snipers, cross-fire	64
Civilians killed or hurt by Taliban, al-Qaeda, or foreign jihadists	60
Kidnappings for ransom	59

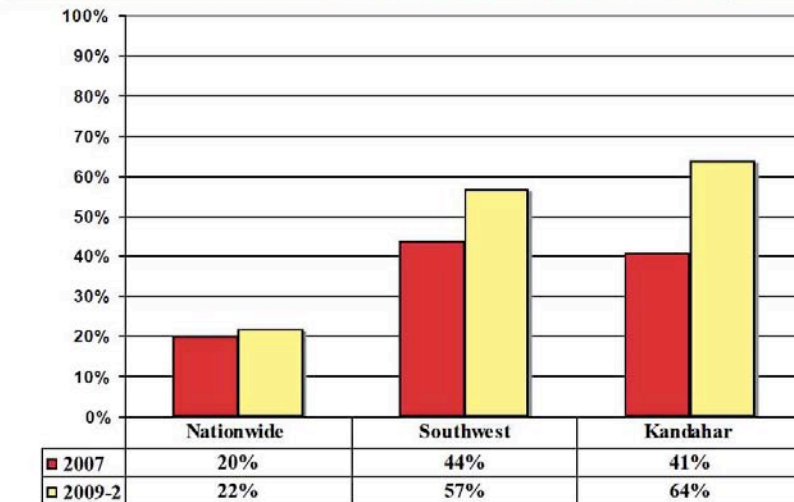
Note: Percentage represents total "yes" replies out of 5,156 surveyed.  
 Source: UNDP, "Police Perception Survey 2009: The Afghan Perspective," 10/2009, p. 11.

### ABC/BBC/ARD Poll: Who Afghans Mainly Blame for Violence: 2007 vs. 2009-2



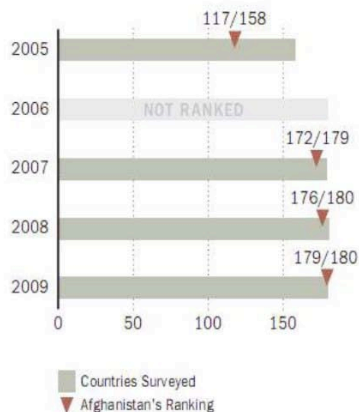
Source: Gary Langer, Director of Polling, ABC News, "Afghanistan: Where Things Stand," Public Opinion Trends in Afghanistan, CSIS - Feb. 11, 2009

### ABC/BBC/ARD Poll: At Least Some Support for the Taliban : 2007 versus 2009/2



Source: Gary Langer, Director of Polling, ABC News, "Afghanistan: Where Things Stand," Public Opinion Trends in Afghanistan, CSIS - Feb. 11, 2009 14

### Corruption Rankings 2005-2009 Afghanistan vs. All Countries Surveyed

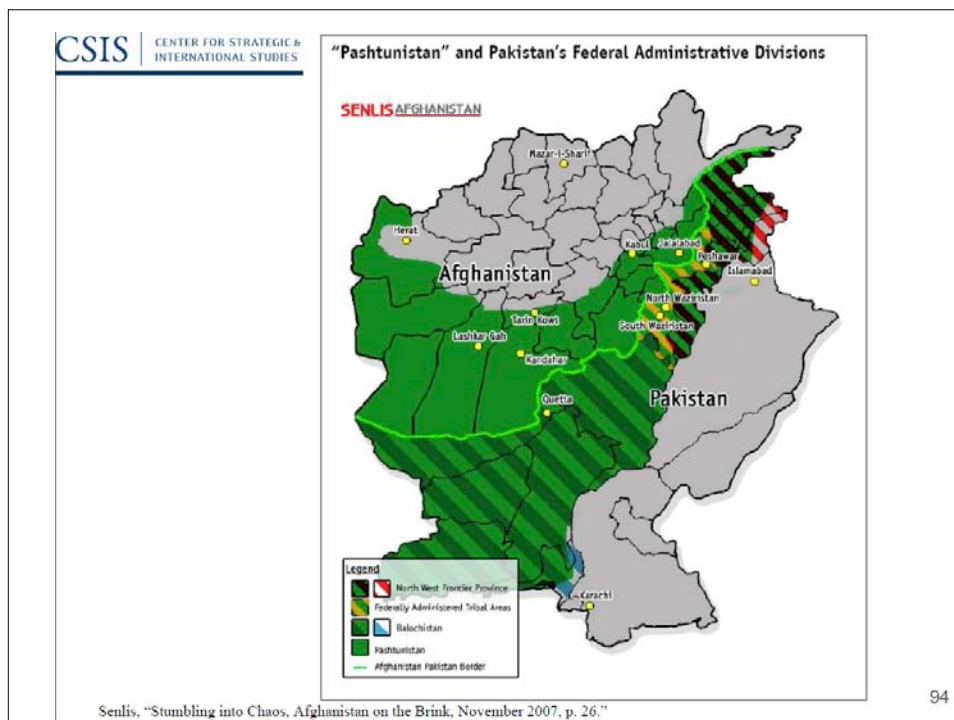


Note: Afghanistan was not ranked in 2006.  
Sources: Transparency International, "Annual Report: 2005," 2005, p. 17; Transparency International, "Annual Report: 2007," 2007, p. 27; Transparency International, "Annual Report: 2008," 2008, p. 51; Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2009," accessed online 1/11/2010.

## “Pashtunistan” and the spill-over of the war into Pakistan

- Afghanistan and Pakistan both ethnically mixed
- structure/border legacies of colonial formation as nation-states
- key Pashtun ethnic group cross-border relations: hence “*Pashtunistan*”
  - largest single group in Afghanistan; southern and eastern concentrations
  - dominant in western border provinces of Pakistan
- emerging US perception of a cross-border war against Pashtunistan: hence “AfPak War”

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## **Pakistan: what comes after the destabilisation of wobbly equilibrium?**

- “acronym state” barely held together: substantial economic problems exacerbated by conflict and climate change
- enduring separatist insurgency in Baluchistan
- North-West Frontier Province and FATA (Federally-Administered Tribal Areas) = former colonial buffer regions; Pashtun cross-border links
- socially, politically and economically distinct
- effective long-running live-and let-live informal “contract for regional autonomy” broken by rise of Taliban in Pakistan and US intervention and demand for Pakistani central intervention

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## **International community: the neighbourhood**

- Central Asia: the former Soviet “-stans”, and the contest for hydrocarbons and regional influence
- supply routes for the war
- Iran: refugees, pipelines, Sunni-Shia
- India: Pakistani terrorism, nuclear issues, and Kashmir
- China: Pakistan connections, Central Asia initiatives, warm-water ports, and fear of Islamist contagion
- Baluchistan separatism as a constant

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## **International community: the allies**

- US and NATO and NATO partners
- levels of commitment: numbers and arguments about “rules of engagement”
- shifting rationales for intervention - and progress:
  - democracy
  - drugs
  - terrorism
- What are western interests? What are coalition goals? What counts as victory?
- the UN and the war: UNSC resolutions as global law?
- war weariness, coalition strains and alliance maintenance

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## **Australia in Afghanistan**

- Australia in Afghanistan Briefing Book:
  - <http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad>
- troop levels, types, tasks, locations
- duration of deployment, 2001,-2003, 2004-2010
- casualties
- Government rationales for deployment
  - Howard/early Rudd: democracy, drugs, terrorism
  - Later Rudd: terrorism and training Afghan army/police

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## Australian forces, as of early 2010

- a **National Command Element** in Kabul;
- a **Mentoring and Reconstruction** Task Force based in Tarin Kowt, Oruzgan Province as part of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Provincial Reconstruction Team;
- a **Special Operations Task Group** deployed to Oruzgan province as part of ISAF operations against insurgents; and
- an RAAF **Control and Reporting Centre** (CRC) deployed at Kandahar Air Field
- a **Chinook helicopter detachment** based at Kandahar in Helmand province in support of ISAF operations;
- an **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Detachment** of approximately 30 personnel
- Force Level **Logistic Asset** consisting of approximately 60 personnel at ISAF headquarters in Kandahar
- three **Operational Mentor and Liaison teams** (OMLTs) embedded with the Afghan National Army in Oruzgan

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## International community and the management of conflict: paths

- the McCrystal/Petraeus “counter-insurgency” (COIN) strategy
  - requirements
  - Is it different from “Nation-building” = changing a culture?
- the question of time
- return of colonialism in UN/coalition form?
- possible foundations of Afghan peace
  - no ideological impediments
  - shared social links and identity
  - experience of local truces and desire for negotiations

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## **Possible foundations of Afghan peace**

- no deep ideological impediments
- shared social links and identity
- experience of local truces and desire for negotiations
  
- Deal-breakers
  - Hosting/facilitating Al Qaeda international terrorism
  - Violation of basic human rights
    - In particular Taliban sadism towards women

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## **A path out of Afghanistan**

- Australian withdrawal
- United Nations movement away from backing of one side in civil war
  - Rescinding/replacing UNSC 1386
- Like minded-countries grouping to frame honest broker role in international push for peace negotiations
- Agenda includes Afghanistan constitutional framework and borders
- Overt deterrence threat against resumption of AQ support
- Economic aid commitment equal to coalition war effort
  - conditional on civil rights compliance
- Get serious about the real strategic interest: Pakistan

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## **Useful sources on the web**

- Anthony Cordesman, Center for Strategic and International Studies (source of most slides in this PPT)
  - <http://csis.org/expert/anthony-h-cordesman>
- Informed Comment, blog by Juan Cole, University of Michigan
  - <http://www.juancole.com/>
- Nautilus Institute in Australia
  - <http://www.nautilus.org/offices/australia>
- Australia in Afghanistan Briefing Book:
  - <http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad>
- Austral Peace and Security Net: free twice weekly by email and on the web
  - <http://www.nautilus.org/mailling-lists/apsnet>
- this talk [PPT]:
  - <http://www.nautilus.org/about/staff/richard-tanter/richard-tanter>

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**Two new “must-reads”: Taliban and US military as parallel and non-communicating universes**

- Abdul Salam Zaeef,  
*My Life with the Taliban*  
(Scribe Books, Melbourne, 2010)
  
- Sebastian Junger  
*War*  
(London, Fourth Estate, 2010)