

Leaving Afghanistan

Richard Tanter

Nautilus Institute for Security and
Sustainability

VCE International Studies Lecture

Social Education Victoria

13 May 2011

This PPT available at

<http://www.nautilus.org/about/staff/richard-tanter/talks/>

Origins

- Afghanistan as a buffer state, and as a 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 -)

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

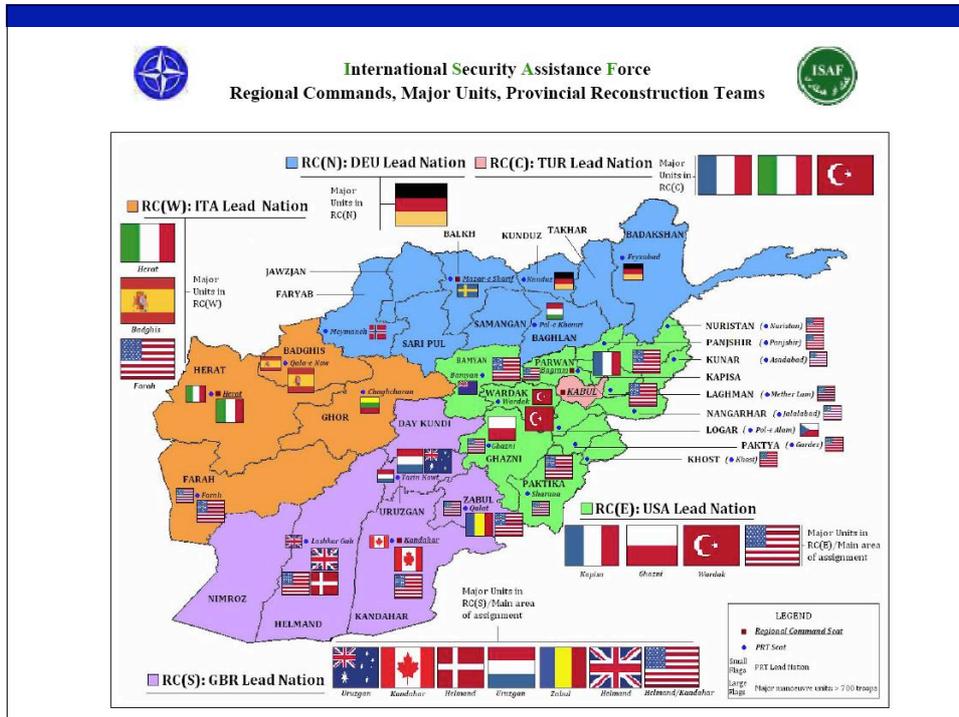
1. **Authorizes**, as envisaged in ... the **Bonn Agreement**, the establishment ... of an **International Security Assistance Force** to assist the **Afghan Interim Authority** in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas ...;
2. **Calls upon** Member States to **contribute personnel**, 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;

2

Main players

- Government and coalition forces
 - Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
 - Tribal/militia leaders/warlords supporting the government
 - US [ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom]
 - NATO plus [ISAF]
 - UN [UNAMA]
- Anti-government forces:
 - Taliban / Taliban groupings
 - Anti-government tribal/militia leaders/ warlords
 - Al Qaeda and other foreign fighters

3



Afghanistan: anti-government forces: Taliban

- Now effectively a nationalist resistance against foreign occupiers
- Afghan/Pakistan origin during anti-Soviet war
- US and Pakistani intelligence role in creation
- Pakistani military interest in maintaining Afghan unrest
- 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

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
 - Claimed responsibility for Kabul bombing this week
- Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin
 - Gulbuddin Hekmatyar
 - former PM
 - Deeply opposed to foreign intervention
- “warlords” on both sides
- shifting loyalties and finances
- central to current presidential elections



6

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, increased tensions with hosts
- Osama Bin Laden assassinated in targeted killing May 2011
- key leaders including Ayman al-Zawahiri still at large, presumably in Pakistan
- core AQ international combat reach doubtful; limited Afghanistan combat role - “100 fighters” acc. to US intelligence
- effective “franchising” of AQ through loose international networks continues
 - differentiation and development of loosely related networks
 - mega-terrorism threat continues
- Taliban distancing themselves; conflicts with foreign fighters

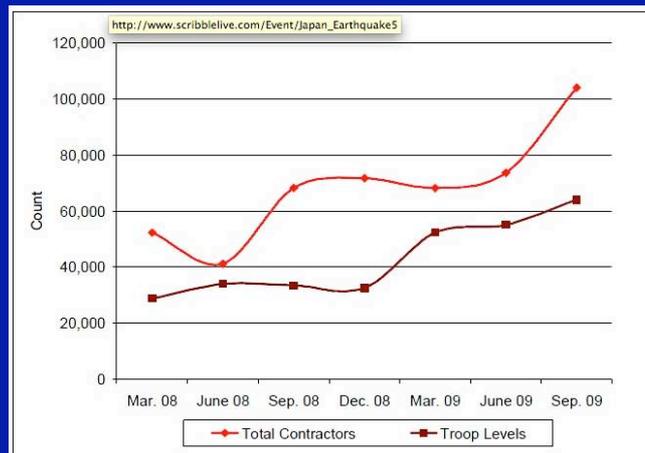
7

Australian forces, as of 2011

- 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

8

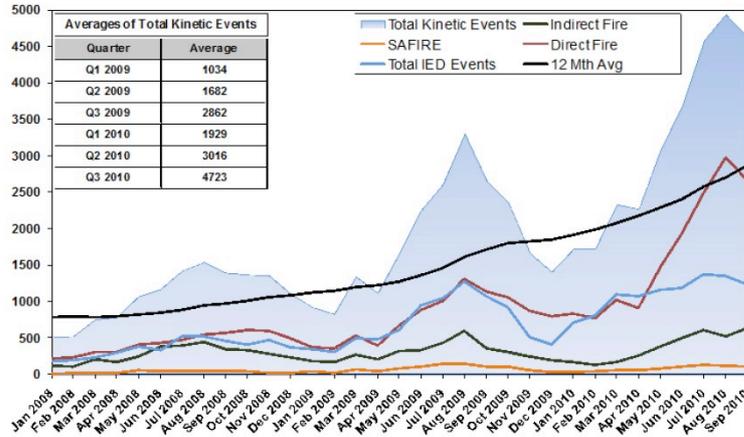
US troops and private military contractors in Afghanistan



Source: Defense Contractors in Afghanistan, Overseas Civilian Contractors, December 21, 2009.
<http://civiliancontractors.wordpress.com/2009/12/22/defense-contractors-in-afghanistan/>

9

CSIS CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES **Total Weekly Kinetic Events 7-08 to 9-10**

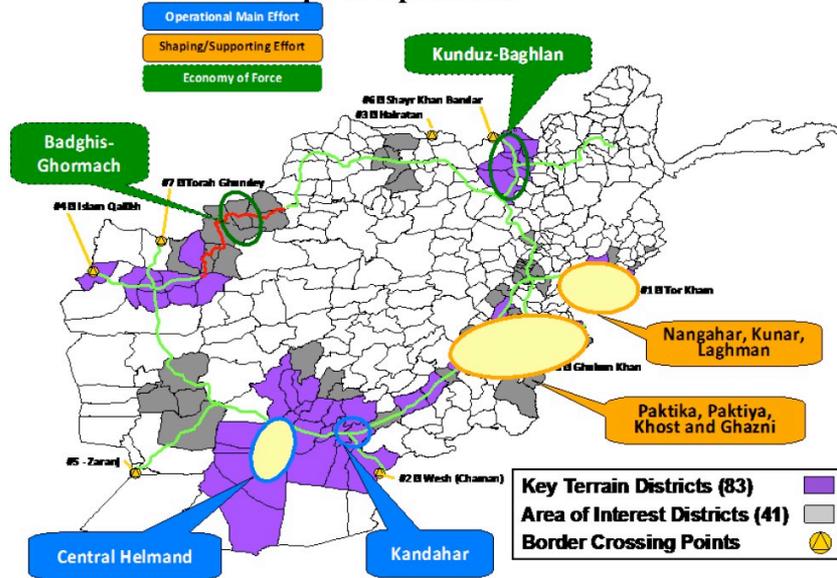


Kinetic Events (KE) include Direct Fire (DF), Indirect Fire (IDF), Surface to Air Fire (SAFIRE), Improvised Explosive Device (IED) events. IED events comprise IED exploded, IED found/cleared, mine strike, mine found/cleared, and tun-ins.

There have been increases in all methods of attacks, except IEDs, which were lower in August 2010 than they were in August 2009, and direct fire (DF) is increasing at a higher rate than indirect fire (IDF). This is possibly due to the amount of resources it takes to attack utilizing IDFs versus DF and IEDs. Overall kinetic events are up 300 percent since 2007 and up an additional 70 percent since 2009. Total kinetic events increased nearly 55 percent over the previous quarter and 65 percent compared to the third quarter, 2009, as Figure 12 below indicates. The overall increase was driven primarily by increased incidents of direct fire. Insurgent-initiated attacks also increased this quarter by over 60 percent, and direct fire attacks comprised the majority of this increase. The rise in violence is partly attributable to the increase in Coalition Forces and ANSF as well as greater operational tempo. The sharp increase in insurgents' use of direct fire attacks may be significant, as it suggests capacity limitations for the insurgents.

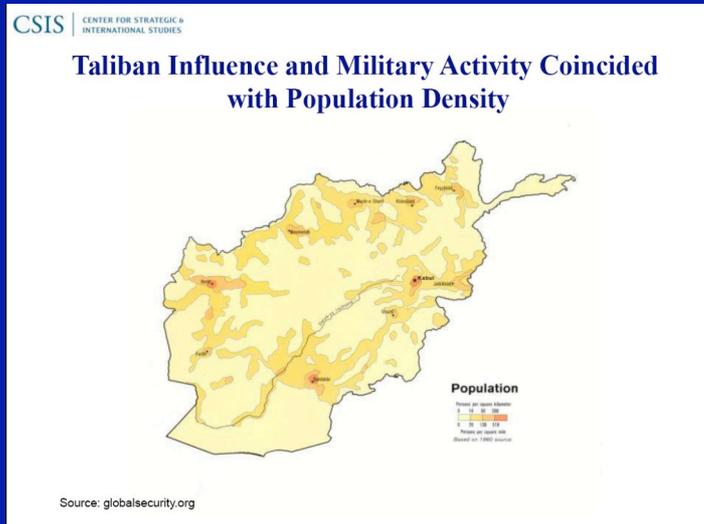
Source: Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Report to Congress in accordance with section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), as amended, November 2010, pp. 42 & 53.

CSIS CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES **ISAF Concept of Operations**



Source: Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Report to Congress in accordance with section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), as amended, November 2010, p. 45.

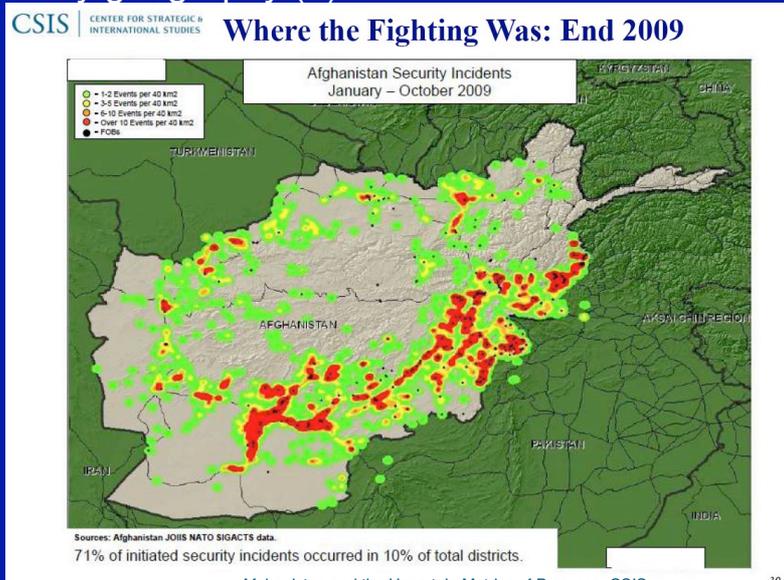
Military geography (1)



Source: Anthony Cordesman, *Afghanistan and the Uncertain Metrics of Progress*, CSIS
<http://csis.org/program/burke-chair-afghanistan/>

12

Military geography (2)

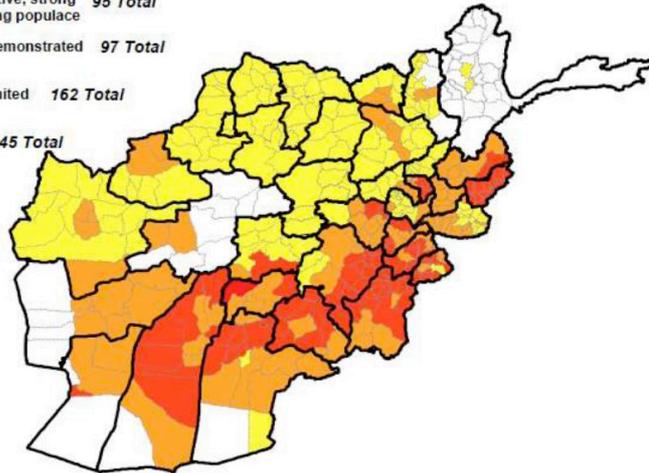


Source: Anthony Cordesman, *Afghanistan and the Uncertain Metrics of Progress*, CSIS
<http://csis.org/program/burke-chair-afghanistan/>

13

Insurgent Influence & Capability by District: 2009

-  RED: Insurgents are effective, strong capability and influence among populace **95 Total**
-  Orange: Insurgents have demonstrated capability **97 Total**
-  Yellow: Insurgents have limited capability **162 Total**
-  White: Not able to assess **45 Total**



Sources: Afghanistan JOIIS NATO SIGACTS data through 30 Sep 09.

Presidential elections August 2009 - collapse of Karzai international support

- incumbent Hamid Karzai won; against Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani
- UN and coalition recognition of massive fraud by Karzai
- Opponents decided to not contest planned run-off
- deal-making with warlords and controllers of block votes
- ethnic/regional issues
- Corruption as central issue of governance and politics revealed globally
- US and Australian interests
- Afghanistan and political future of allied coalition governments: Netherlands, ...?

Pakistan: the nuclear-armed Islamic “acronym” state

- origins (with Bangladesh till 1970) in the partition of British India as “a home for Indian Muslims”
- Punjab, Afghan border states, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan
- uneven and deeply unequal economic structure
- US ally in Cold War and GWOT
- succession of military dictatorships and ineffective civilian governments retaining strong feudal characteristics
- perceived enduring hostility and military imbalance with India justified development of nuclear weapons

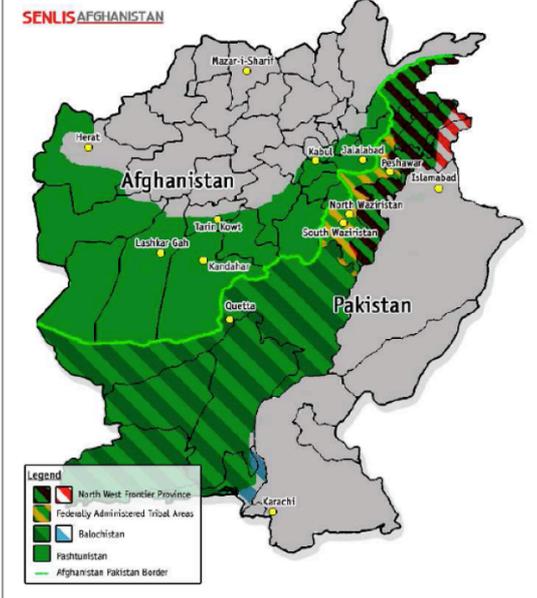
16

“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

17

"Pashtunistan" and Pakistan's Federal Administrative Divisions



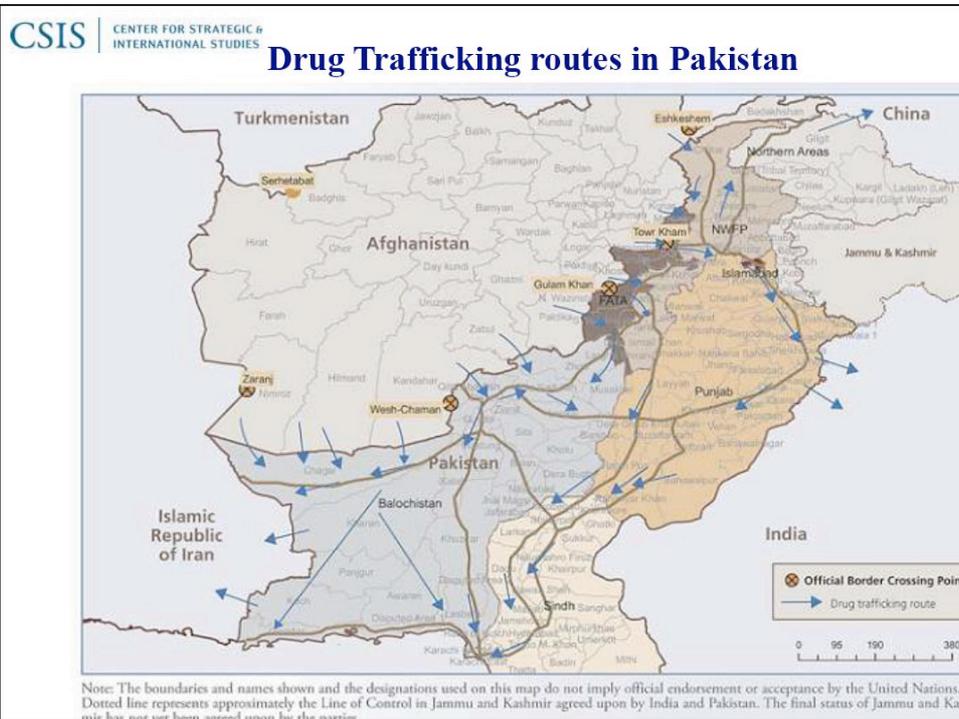
Senlis, "Stumbling into Chaos, Afghanistan on the Brink, November 2007, p. 26."

94

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

21



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
- Baluchistan separatism as a constant
- The wild card: China
 - Moving Pakistan away from the US containment strategy
 - Central Asia initiatives,
 - warm-water ports
 - fear of Islamist contagion

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

24

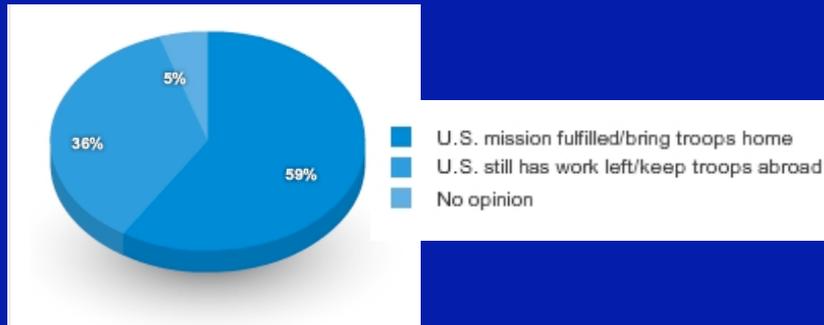
Public opinion and the war

- Summary data (updated frequently):
- *International public opinion on the war in Afghanistan*, Wikipedia
- Clear majorities against participation in the war in most OECD coalition countries
- Afghanistan policy brought down Netherlands government
- Why so silent in Australia?

25

Coalition public opinion: USA TODAY/Gallup Poll, 7-8 May 2011

- 59 percent of Americans agree that the "United States has accomplished its mission in Afghanistan and should bring its troops home."



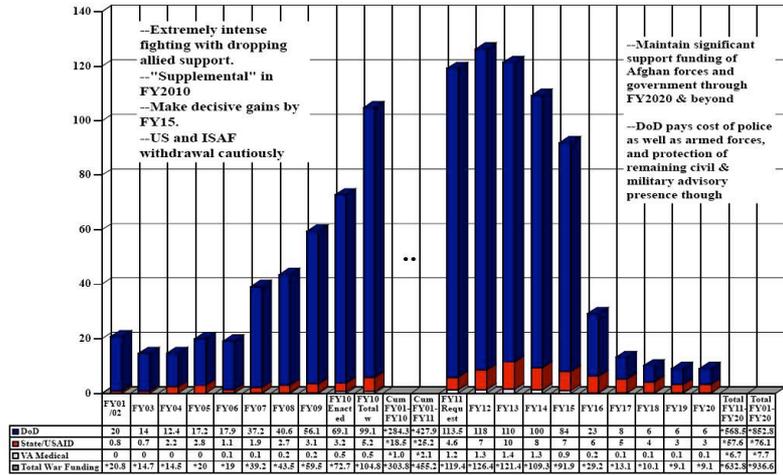
Poll: With bin Laden dead, is it time to end war? USA Today, May 10, 2011
http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-05-10-Afghanistan-mission-bin-Laden-troops-poll_n27atm

US Congress moves: The Afghanistan Exit and Accountability Bill

- Bipartisan Congressional support:
 - Introduced by Representatives Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Walter Jones (R-NC).
- The Bill, if passed, would:
 - Require timetable for handover to GoIRA
 - Require quarterly reporting of human and financial costs of the war
 - Require estimates of savings in the event of handover to GoIRA within six months (5, 10, and 20 year time periods)

27

The Future Cost of Underspending: Guesstimate of Annual and Cumulative Cost of "Worst Cost" Success in the Afghan War: FY2010-FY2020 (In Current SUS Billions)



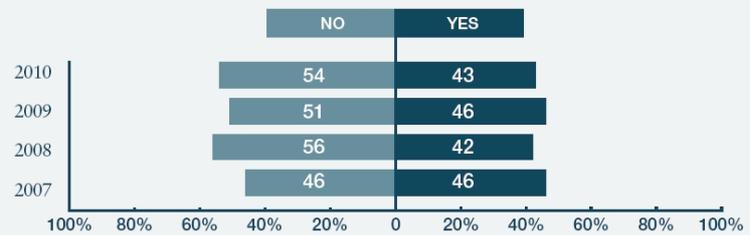
Source: Adapted by Anthony H. Cordesman from data in Amy Belasco, 'The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11,' Congressional Research Service, RL33110 CFS Report RL33188, July 16, 2010.

Source: Anthony Cordesman, 'Afghanistan and the Uncertain Metrics of Progress,' CSIS, <http://csis.org/program/burke-chair-afghanistan/>

Australian public opinion: majority against

Fig. 17: Military involvement in Afghanistan

Now about Afghanistan. Should Australia continue to be involved militarily in Afghanistan?



Source: Lowy Institute Poll May 2010, p. 13

Coalition countries looking for the exit

- Already left or announced departure date:
 - Netherlands: 2010
 - Canada: 2011 (2800)
 - Germany: 2011-2014 (4,900 troops)
 - Sweden: 2012-2014 (530)
 - Britain: start mid-2011 (9,000)
- Probable in near future:
 - France (4,000)
 - Italy (4,000)
- Australia: 2014? (1550)

30

International community and the management of conflict: paths

- coalition strategic options
- 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
 - can the coalition be an honest broker?
 - does dealing with “the Taliban” = return of international terrorist base
- the Pakistan conundrum

31

Majorities against the war? Why so silent?

32

Majorities against the war? Why so silent?

- Insulation of foreign policy and security policy from democratic pressures and public opinion
- Absent massive public mobilization, public opinion effects negligible
- Anxiety about terrorism
- Anxiety about future of Afghan civil society, especially rights of women and minorities
- “Responsibility to clean up the mess we have made”

33

Out of the war: policies for an Australian contribution to a sustainable peace in Afghanistan

1. Withdraw all Australian forces: completely, rapidly and unconditionally.
2. Move the United Nations towards a more balanced position.
3. Form like-minded country groupings to frame honest broker role in an international push for peace negotiations.
4. Deny sanctuary to terrorists through containment, leverage, criminalization of terrorism, intelligence and policing, and overt deterrence.
5. Declare ongoing aid commitment comparable to war effort– strictly conditional on civil rights compliance.
6. Build a peace agenda that includes the constitutional framework and borders of Afghanistan.
7. Pilot test legitimate alternatives to the opium war economy.
8. Get serious about democracy in Pakistan.

34

Useful resources

- Today's talk uploaded to Richard's *Talks and Presentations* page
 - <http://www.nautilus.org/about/staff/richard-tanter/talks>
 - email: rtanter@nautilus.org
- Richard Tanter, *Out of the war: eight steps to a sustainable peace in Afghanistan*, Austral Policy Forum 10-03A, 15 December 2010
 - <http://www.nautilus.org/about/staff/richard-tanter/publications>
- *Exiting Afghanistan: Challenges to transition*, Strategic Policy Forum, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 10 March 2011
 - <http://www.aspi.org.au/>
- Australia in Afghanistan Briefing Book:
 - <http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/australian-forces-abroad/afghanistan>
- Brian Toohey, *War leader*, Inside Story, 5 May 2011
 - <http://inside.org.au/war-leader/>
- *Afghan Journal and Pakistan: Now or Never?*, Reuters Blogs
 - <http://blogs.reuters.com/afghanistan>
 - <http://blogs.reuters.com/pakistan/>
- Anthony Cordesman, *The End State Fallacy*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2010
 - <http://csis.org/publication/grand-strategy-afghan-pakistan-and-iraq-wars>
- International public opinion on the war in Afghanistan, Wikipedia

35

This PPT available at

- <http://www.nautilus.org/about/staff/richard-tanter/talks/>