

Afghanistan: US Policy and Post 9/11 Afghan War Scenario

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Abstract- The Afghan conflict poses several challenges: that of building up stability in a territory ravaged by three decades of conflicts, with a strong tribal identity, and where several external actors are involved; that of the adequacy of the law to deal with the current crisis; and that of humanitarian action conducted by actors with varying goals and methods who are all operating in the same context. The article profiles the genesis of the US policy and its execution in Afghanistan. It examines the US agenda in deposing *Taliban* regime and fixing in place a regime suiting to the US, her ends and interests, in South and Central Asia. In fact, it demonstrates how US imperial designs actually destabilised the region with little or no prospects of future peace and development. The US strives to drive advantage of Afghan conflict to her benefit regardless of ethical values set by the international standards. The article also furnishes how sophisticated military technology was employed to eliminate the *Taliban* and its splinter groups in and around Afghanistan. The massive American military operation made the *Taliban* to retreat and give way to a new government lead by US-backed Pashtun leader, Hamid Karzai, in December 2001. No matter country is showing no signs of peace even after one decade's old government of Hamid Karzai. High level of insecurity still reigns supreme in the country. The ill-will among the warlords persists thereby affecting the programmes of social and economic reconstruction. People's sufferings and miseries multiply and the US exercises its writ to deal with Afghanistan in the name of the "war against terror". The lack of security, economic development, effective rule of law, and coordination of effort stand in the way of sustainable progress in the country. These problems are interrelated, none of which can be addressed without simultaneously addressing the others.

Index Terms- al-qaeda, honeymoon, jihad, mujahedin, taliban

I. US POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

War against global terror is the dominant political reality of the twenty-first century. United States (US) is especially engaged in this war to arrest the disorder and trauma afflicting the entire world though the US Invasion of Afghanistan in the post-9/11 scenario is often termed to be motivated by expansionist designs.¹ It is perceived to be humanitarian in theory but imperialist in actual practice, for it forged 'sub-sovereignty,' in such states that hitherto, possessed' independent identity.² While as Afghanistan experienced Anglo-Russian rivalry for imperial ends in the 19th century, it registered, overt or covert, US-Russian

conflict on ideological grounds in the 20th century. However, the current US-*Taliban* conflict, *inter alia*, is thought to be governed by the factor of economic determinism and the US foreign policy agenda to access Central Asian resources through Afghanistan.³ Therefore, the decades-long Afghan crisis was a direct result of self-seeking interference by the two leading imperialist powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, during the Cold War era. Thus each superpower wished Afghanistan to remain within its own sphere of influence for specified political, economic and strategic interests. The clash of interest surfaced with US opposition to the growing Soviet influence in the region. It is reported that: "Despite formal denials, the United States launched a covert operation to bolster anti-Communist guerrillas in Afghanistan at least six months before the 1979, Soviet invasion."⁴ She provided some covert support to the *Mujahedin* (militant groups) to counter Soviet designs,⁵ and, at the same time transformed Afghanistan into her own sphere of influence. For their intended aggression against Soviet Union and intrigues in West Asia, Afghanistan was a base for them.⁶ For the purpose, she recruited local leaders and warlords as mercenaries to fight against the Soviet-backed Communist government in Afghanistan.⁷ The argument is supported by Afghan analyst Nour Ali. To quote him, "Following the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in late December 1979, hundreds of high ranking Afghan politicians and technocrats, including army officers entered into Pakistan with the hope of organising the needed resistance to oppose the invader in order to liberate Afghanistan."⁸ Regrettably, however, the US in collusion with Pakistan leadership exploited the situation to her exclusive and threefold illegitimate benefits: to promote US-friendly Afghan regime, to oppose the Red Army by using exclusively the very blood of Afghans against them, and to make Afghanistan a satellite if not an integrated part of Pakistan notwithstanding the sacrifices and the loss of Afghan sovereignty.⁹ To bolster anti-Soviet resistance, the US and Pakistan used the card of extremist religious ideology: "Predominant themes were that Islam was a complete socio-political ideology, that holy Islam was being violated by the atheistic Soviet troops, and that the Islamic people of Afghanistan should reassert their independence by overthrowing the leftist Afghan regime propped up by Moscow."¹⁰ The overall result was a brutal civil war manipulated by the two superpowers that drove six million Afghans from their homes. But finally it resulted in the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, and the prominence of most strong Afghan faction, the *Taliban*, on the Afghan scene by the mid 1990s. It also created a great hope for the fulfillment of US ends. J. W. Smith comments that "Afghanistan was also a US destabilisation and the covert US

intervention began long before the USSR sent in its troops to Afghanistan. It is to be noted that a country rapidly developing and moving towards modernisation was politically and economically shattered, almost two million Afghans were killed, the most violent and anti-American of the groups supported by the CIA are now the leaders of Afghanistan.”¹¹ The US policy triggered extremism by supporting and inculcating the religious frenzy among the *Taliban* and its splinter groups.¹² They created a monster which they wanted to fiercely fight the Soviets and used them for their own imperial interests.¹³ Indeed, the extremist religious ‘*jihadi*’ ideology nurtured under the CIA patronage and its training programmes.¹⁴ The end result was that the *Taliban* became hegemonic and used crude methods to Islamise Afghanistan.¹⁵ In a sense, it encouraged the growth of Islamic fundamentalism to frighten Moscow and of drugs to get Soviet soldiers hooked. The CIA even helped ‘Arab Afghans’ like Osama Bin Laden, to fight Soviets¹⁶ regardless of international covenants. It allowed the *Taliban* to rise to power and consolidate its control,¹⁷ and persuaded Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to recognise the *Taliban* as the sole regime in Afghanistan.¹⁸ The US provided substantial aid and assistance to the *Taliban* to sustain it and guarantee regional policy though such a policy is seen as the US proxy war in Afghanistan. More so, America’s professed commitment to support the United Nations (UN) peace agenda was thought to be highly flawed: “US support of the UN as the proper vehicle for a negotiated settlement of the Afghan conflict was undermined by congressional refusal to allocate funds for UN dues or the US share of peacekeeping expenses.” On top of it, the US always felt comfortable with the growing Pak-Saudi influence in Afghanistan. “Public statements by the State Department condemned such interference but never identified any party thereby, annulling the whole purpose of condemnation.”¹⁹ The peace settlements following the Soviet withdrawal were negotiated in the UN, though, yet the Afghans were always excluded from them which presupposes the US policy to derecognise the national Afghan government. In sequence, “no national Afghan government has emerged; the country was fragmented and no longer independent; its fate was in the hands of alien powers; all its social, political, and administrative services were abolished; the warring factions prevailed in the country” to the detriment of the regional peace and security. The simple reason was being the US-*Taliban* friendly policy. “Amnesty International refers to visits by *Taliban* representatives to the United States and that of the senior US State Department officials to Kandhar, including one immediately before the *Taliban* took over Jalalabad.” It further reports that “Senior *Taliban* leaders attended a conference in Washington in mid 1996, and US diplomats regularly traveled to *Taliban* headquarters.²⁰ Agence France also supports US-*Taliban* honeymoon while arguing that Robin Raphel, former US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, organised an intense round of shuttle diplomacy to facilitate the fulfillment of its UNOCAL project to optimise Central Asian resource and scuttle the Russian and Iranian monopoly on their production and trade.²¹ In fact, the *Taliban* movement was groomed by the Pakistani ISI and the US CIA with multiple geo-economic and geo-strategic interests.²²

Thus US policy, besides all else, aimed at building a 4.5 billion dollar oil and gas pipeline by a US led oil consortium

across war-ravaged Afghanistan. The US energy diplomacy was indeed motivated by a couple of considerations: to minimise her dependence on Gulf imports, economise energy costs, marginalise Russian and Iranian trade monopoly of Central Asian energy resources, and provide the new-born Central Asian states the options with which to better bargain their energy resources.²³ *Taliban*’s initial success to ensure law and order seemed attractive to Washington.²⁴ It, therefore, supported the *Taliban* regime with the interest in economics of oil.²⁵ In early October 1996, UNOCAL was given the go-ahead from the new holders of power in Kabul to build a pipeline from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan.²⁶ It was proposed from Krasnovodsk on the Caspian Sea to Karachi on the Indian Ocean coast.²⁷ Besides UNOCAL, AMOCO, BP, Chevron, EXXON, and Mobile companies were jubilantly interested in exploiting Caspian oil, apparently at any human expense.²⁸ By December 1997, *Taliban* representatives were invited as guests to the Texas headquarters of Union Oil of California, (UNOCAL) to negotiate their support of the pipeline. UNOCAL had also given training to Afghan men in the skills required for pipeline construction, with US approval. UNOCAL commissioned the University of Nebraska to teach Afghan men the technical skills needed for pipeline construction.²⁹ Equally important was that the creation of a client state with Pak support was due to earn her regional leverage in Afghanistan. Strategic and economic interests, therefore, motivated US to be friendly with the *Taliban*.³⁰ As a result, Afghanistan prominently characterised the US planning of energy pipeline transmission corridors to world markets. Most interestingly, US wanted to push Afghanistan as “a prime transshipment route for the export of Central Asia’s vast oil, gas and other natural resources.”³¹ The Clinton Administration had foreseen that *Taliban* victory would act as a counterweight to Iran and explore new trade routes while by-passing Russian and Iranian traditional routes.³²

Till 2000, a great deal of optimism prevailed in US-*Taliban* ties, and US played the role of a clandestine partner in the new ‘Great Game’ with manifold objectives: to sway Iran; to expand its power beyond the Amu Darya; to control Central Asian energy resources; and to marginalise Russian influence in the South, and mainland China in the North West. The US intended placing in Afghanistan a government that could serve and watch dog US interests on the one hand and checkmate Russia, China, Iran, etc. on the other.³³ However, US took a u-turn with 9/11 tragedy and became hostile to the *Taliban* for its pro-*Al-Qaeda* stance and its refusal to handover to US, Osama Bin Laden, the main suspect in 9/11 catastrophe. Pursuant to this, the US with NATO support penetrated into Afghanistan, eliminated *Taliban* with military might and got economic sanctions ratified against Afghanistan in the UN. Thus the US engineered a punishing Iraq-style embargo of war-ravaged Afghanistan at a time when many of its 20 million people were starving and homeless.³⁴ In fact, the war against *Taliban* was long planned due to its growing indifference to US and quite conservative measures that it adopted to Islamise Afghanistan.³⁵ The 9/11 was nadir of the long-designed anti-*Taliban* US policy. The 9/11 provided US a pretext to cut across the *Taliban* and enforce its supremacy in a region which served her, a gateway to Central Asia and Eurasia.³⁶ It constructed military bases³⁷ in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the three of the former Soviet republics to purportedly guarantee security though to the great discomfort of

China and Russia. The US policy in Afghanistan was supported by every section of US. Shocked by 9/11 tragedy, the US ruling elite was quick enough to exploit it for a new global military crusade in the Cold War era. The US power elite solidly stood behind a global expansion of the US military role thereby subjecting the whole world to US imperialism.³⁸ In the process, the sovereignty of the nations was subjected great threat in all conflict situations³⁹ obviously due to the hegemonistic role of US with all means at its disposal.⁴⁰ In this view, US was seen carrying out a “world police” action in Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the name of global terror.⁴¹ The US presence in Afghanistan is justified as an act of war against global terror, which China, Russia, and other regional powers, look upon with suspicion and fear. They, as such, weave counter strategies to cut across the US designs in Afghanistan.

II. POST 9/11 US-AFGAN WAR SCENARIO

After 9/11 attacks, the US and NATO launched offensive in Afghanistan to punish the *Taliban* for harbouring and collaborating with the 9/11 attackers and coerce the regime into bringing those involved to justice. Subsequently, it was aimed at toppling the *Taliban* regime and instituting a pro-US regime in Afghanistan, though finally the US terminated the *Taliban* regime as an act of punishment.⁴² The US declared its “War on Terror,” against the *Taliban* and *Al-Qaeda* in and outside Afghanistan on 7th October 2001.⁴³ The operation began with air strikes against selected military targets, and later expanded to political and infrastructures to weaken the *Taliban* revolts.⁴⁴ In that, the US and NATO forces killed up to 5,000 Afghan civilians—almost double the number of civilians killed in the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the sudden collapse of the *Taliban* was surprising. On 9 November, the key northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif fell to Northern Alliance troops. The *Taliban* attempted to retreat south to the Kandhar region. Command and control, however, broke down catastrophically, and the retreat became a rout, characterised by a succession of defections. The massive US bombardment with the support of the regional powers resulted in the change of the *Taliban* regime by a new interim government in Afghanistan vide the resolution of the United Nations organised in Bonn (Germany) conference in December 2001.⁴⁶ It was followed by the setting up of a new government under Pashtun leader, Hamid Karzai, on 5th December 2001.⁴⁷ The new regime meant a return to the pre-*Taliban* era, when Northern Alliance⁴⁸ ruled most of Afghanistan. However, it was now regulated by the US-UN brokered agreements to ensure harmony among different warring factions, restore regional security and facilitate energy pipeline structure along Afghanistan.⁴⁹

The collapse of the *Taliban* was probably a result of a number of factors. One was the synergy between US air power and Northern Alliance ground offensives and second was the inherent weaknesses of the *Taliban* as the *Taliban* was a loose coalition that had failed to grow out of its regional roots, and the third was that *Taliban* did not take recourse to guerilla warfare as was characterised of them against the Soviets.⁵⁰ However, with the collapse of *Taliban* resistance in Kandhar and the establishment of an interim authority in Kabul, most of Afghanistan entered a period of post-conflict reconstruction. For the US, however, the conflict continued, though its nature changed. The US described

its mission aiming at locating and destroying remaining pockets of *Taliban* and *Al-Qaeda* in Tora Bora, south of Jalalabad and elsewhere.⁵¹ More significant, however, was Operation Anaconda, on 2 March 2002, in mountainous area of the Paktia province in which top *Taliban* leadership excepting Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar was believed to be dead.⁵²

The US operations in Afghanistan were significant in many ways. First, bombing operations were conducted from CENTCOM’s base in Tampa, Florida: due to the advanced technology that allowed security agencies not only to video-conference the connections of local commanders, but to see the battlefield with ‘unparalleled situational awareness’. Second, the US ensured that the war is conducted to punish what they termed as ‘terrorists’ who threatened US with weapons of mass destruction.⁵³ Third, a real fear remained that September 11 would not be the last attack on American soil. Therefore, although conventional military operations might be fought elsewhere, asymmetric attacks could be conducted against the United States itself, as well as its allies. Therefore, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was launched in Afghanistan in 2003⁵⁴, and in that the enemy was not the Afghan people but the *Taliban* and *Al-Qaeda*. Thus President Bush stated that ‘America is a friend of the Afghan people’, and had compassion for their suffering in principle if not in practice. He assured to marginalise collateral damage which the US officials claim did not go beyond the killing of 1,000 Afghan civilians, though, in actual practice their number was substantially high and so was that of the refugees and displaced, which was complicated by food scarcity.⁵⁵ Though, Operation Enduring Freedom was launched with caution so that the coalition forces had fewer losses, which however, is diluted due to current enemy counter attacks.⁵⁶ But all this was readily justified in the name of what US strategists termed as the war for justice. Operation Enduring Freedom was evolving into a mature counter-insurgency force, operating mostly in the southeast and eastern parts of Afghanistan, while International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was confined to Kabul. ISAF had a muddled mandate and without the resources to carry it out, functioned as a nearly symbolic European presence in Kabul. A pilot program intended to coordinate OEF efforts with those of the provincial chieftains and the embryonic Afghan National Army, called the Joint Regional Teams,⁵⁷ was established in Gardez by mid 2003. By this time the Afghan National Army program was convoluted, and little progress had been made because of the inability of ISAF to support the task effectively. Moreover, infrastructural damage after three decades of war was another impediment to extending federal government control over the provinces. Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) were intimidated in insurgency areas, which had a spill-over effect in secured areas: the insurgents targeted NGOs in the southeast knowing that the organisations would pull out of the whole country if enough casualties were taken by aid workers. OEF operations against the insurgents were complicated by the sensitive matter of Pakistani territorial sovereignty and the volatile political situation in that country.⁵⁸ However, on the plus side, the insurgency was forced by OEF operations to alter its methodology, which in turn, made insurgent operations less effective.

The primary problem, however, was the embryonic nature of the interim and transitional Afghan governments and the possibility that fragile structure could be destabilised and toppled

before it could get to work. Connected to this was the questionable legitimacy of President Hamid Karzai. On the ground, Karzai was variously portrayed as a pawn of the United States or implicitly controlled by the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance exerted explicit control over Kabul and the associated political processes by dint of its 27,000 man military contingent in Kabul and its environs. There was no countervailing federal governmental coercive power in Kabul, let alone throughout the rest of the country. This power was in the hands of local leaders anti-*Taliban* chieftains “warlords.” Remnants of the *Taliban*, supported by the remnants of *Al-Qaeda*’s military forces, were by this time in the process of transitioning from a conventional guerrilla war to a low-level terrorist campaign, and the possibility of a return to the destructive post-Soviet era infighting between the chieftains existed in various locations, including Kabul.⁵⁹ In fact, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, *Taliban* and *Al-Qaeda* forces were constantly operating against the Afghan government and its Coalition partners. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s *Hizb-I Islami* Gulbuddin (HIG), still seeking to influence the brokerage of power in Kabul, and still mounts usually ineffective attacks on ISAF, OEF, and Afghan National Army forces wherever possible. Meanwhile, the *Taliban* appear to have shifted from guerilla warfare to pinprick terrorist attacks, usually in ethnically Pashtun areas in the southeast. In addition to provide training and equipment to both HIG and the *Taliban*, *Al-Qaeda* mounts its own limited raids on Coalition forces. These raids appear to employ the well-equipped remnants of *Al-Qaeda*’s ‘conventional’ formations which worked with the *Taliban* prior to 2001. Unlike HIG and *Al-Qaeda*, the *Taliban* are still trying to create a parallel government to garner popular support in Pashtun areas with the aim of retaking the country. However, the synergy of HIG, the *Taliban*, and *Al-Qaeda* has been unable to significantly influence the direction that the Afghan people are taking under the Karzai government.

Nevertheless, even after decades long Karzai’s government, situation in Afghanistan is unstable. Presently, the writ of President Karzai is confined largely to the Kabul proper. In the countryside, the regional power brokers, (warlords) and their provincial troops are restive⁶⁰, and are bent upon to throw Karzai’s government out of power.⁶¹ Most alarming are the whopping militant activities of the *Taliban* to strike back with greater vigour than before causing immense human losses and damages to infrastructure.⁶² In 2006 alone, over 4000 deaths were registered in Afghanistan including those of the civilians and foreign soldiers. Besides, southern part of Afghanistan in Helmand and Kandhar, the heartland of the *Taliban*, witnessed great deal of fighting and damage to infrastructure during the same year. The suicide attacks were on the rise despite constant US and Pakistan army strikes.⁶³ In a wave of violence, during 2006, the *Taliban* led militants carried out about 140 suicide attacks more than five times the 2005 number and 35 in 2007.⁶⁴ While some top *Taliban* leadership reported that: “The suicide martyrs and those willing to blow themselves up are countless.”⁶⁵ Meanwhile in summer 2008, the situation worsened to an extent that a sophisticated *Taliban* assault on a Kandhar prison freed 1,200 inmates, including 350 *Taliban* members. Violence in Afghanistan rose 40% from the previous year. Ambushes, suicide attacks, and targeted assassinations rose sharply. NATO reports that the *Taliban*’s presence is strongest in the Helmand,

Kandahar, Zabol, and Oruzgan provinces in southern Afghanistan, and is either significant or conspicuous in the Paktia, Khowst, Nangarhar, Konar, and Nuristan provinces in eastern Afghanistan. In many of these areas, the *Taliban* have usurped the traditional functions of a sovereign state, collecting taxes, maintaining order, and providing basic services.⁶⁶ In one single incident, a sophisticated *Taliban* suicide bomber killed 8 CIA employees on 30 December 2009, while 4 Canadian troops and a journalist died in a separate attack in Khost province.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, in 2010, the human cost of the conflict grew in Afghanistan and some 2,777 civilian deaths were recorded, an increase of 15% as compared to the previous year.⁶⁸ Since 2001, the security conditions across the country remained volatile with an increase in number of suicide attacks. On the whole, “the security at present is out of control, governance is limited and development is slow as a sequel of intermittent bomb explosions, suicide attacks and military encounters.”⁶⁹ Consequently, whole lot of population presents a deplorable lot as regards their resource, psyche, education, health care, economy, social organisation, political culture, etc. Moreover, the agony and discomfort to the Afghan population especially in southern and northern Afghanistan is not yet over. The process of reconstruction involving huge costs has not yielded desired results. It has correspondingly hampered the institutional growth in the country, and badly impacted the sectors of human security, healthcare, educational growth, and works of public utility. The spill over of *Taliban* actions has even reached to Pakistan proper with ruining blasts and suicide attacks killing tens and thousands of humans and damaging invaluable property assets. To restrict the *Taliban*, the Pakistan government has geared up all its forces in NWFP, Baluchistan, Waziristan, and other strong holds of the *Taliban*. Under a new Afghan stabilisation strategy, president Obama, besides other things, has sent 30,000 extra foreign troops to Afghanistan, reinforcing to the 68,000 US and 40,000 allied forces already in theater⁷⁰ to tackle the mounting violence and to uproot *Al-Qaeda*, *Taliban*, and other militant safe havens, though it seems to be a billion dollar question. Moreover, US has funneled well over \$10 billion in military aid to bolster Pakistan’s counter-terrorism capabilities in the volatile border regions with Afghanistan.⁷¹ In sum, the Afghan transitional government under Karzai had questionable legitimacy among the people, it is subject to coercion by better-armed entities, and is dependent on international forces in every way. Without security, there can be no reconstruction, and with no reconstruction there would be no nation-building, thus leaving Afghanistan susceptible to continued instability and penetration by international terrorism. The lack of security, economic development, effective rule of law, and coordination of effort stand in the way of sustainable progress in the country.

The foregoing discussion amply demonstrates that Afghanistan passed through difficult times over the past two centuries. The people in general are conservative in outlook due to tribal organisation. They are simultaneously sensitized to the Islamic faith; hence are resistant to every sort of change in the given religio-tribal structures which they hold dear to an appreciable extent. The level of development in diverse sectors is sluggish if not non-existent as is rightly said that the Afghans can be “coaxed to hell but can not be compelled to heaven.”⁷² The trend to industrial, transportation, communication, constructions and other fields was set in the mid-20th century. It was also manifest

in the educational and healthcare sectors. However, post-1978 period hampered the set trend due to recurring tribal infauds, conflicts and wars following the growth of fundamentalism and the multi-victor strategy of the US, NATO and Pakistan to root it out for regional and global peace and industrial, social and educational development. When and how for such a joint strategy can succeed depends on time and the mutual understanding among the contending parties and their neighbourly world including China, Russia, India and Iran.

A dialogue with the dissident groups is a must while keeping historical realities in mind. A large-scale military infusion of Western forces would place Americans in the same position that the Soviets found themselves in during the 1980s. In fact, outside soldiery will be an extensive and daunting undertaking. The history of the region shows that Afghanistan's fiercely independent and battle-tested Pashtuns are extremely resilient in resisting conventional armies. Time and again, Persian, Greek, Turk, Mughal, British, and Soviet invaders have been unable to subdue a virtually unconquerable people. Like the Soviet Union's ignominious departure from the region, US and NATO

troops, despite their sophisticated military gadgetry, could easily meet the same fate. Brute force solutions will not work in Afghanistan. Therefore, the effort should be to win the "hearts and minds" of the Afghans by addressing their problems, and satisfying their development-related needs rather than using force and perceiving about the exploitation of the regional resources.⁷³ It must be remembered that Afghanistan is not, Vietnam, Colombia, Bosnia, nor is it Kosovo. It has had three decades of prolonged conflict with devastating impact on every aspect of human life. Milosevic-style indictments will not work in Afghanistan, where almost everybody may be guilty of violating some Western-based law. A South African-style "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" would be the better tool. Afghanistan needs reconciliation, not a reprise of Nuremberg. Moreover, creating a stable government that is capable of providing for the basic needs of its people will be essential to containing *Al-Qaeda* and other militant groups in Afghanistan. Because the region is so interconnected that stability in one area is a necessary pre-requisite to stability in another.

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- [24] To the north of Afghanistan is one of the world's wealthiest oil fields, on the Eastern Shore of the Caspian Sea in republics formed since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Caspian oil needs to be trans-shipped out of the landlocked region through a warm water port, for the desired profits to be accumulated. The "simplest and cheapest" pipeline route is through Iran but she is an 'enemy' of the US, due to its over-independence. The US government has such antipathy to Iran that it is willing to do anything to prevent this. The alternative route is one that passes through Afghanistan and Pakistan, which would require securing the agreement of the powers that be in Afghanistan, the Taliban. Such an arrangement would also benefit

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- [25] Pakistan Observer notes that the US government, wanted UNOCAL to build the oil and gas pipelines from Central Asian states to Pakistan through Afghanistan so that the vast untapped oil and gas reserves in the Central Asian and Caspian region could be transported to markets in South Asia, South-East Asia, Far East and the Pacific: Ishtiaq Ahmad, "How America Courted the Taliban," Pakistan Observer, 20 October, 2001: Cf. <http://www.pakobserver.net>
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- [27] Thomas Goltz, "The Caspian Oil Sweepstakes-A Great Game Replayed," Jinn Magazine, online, Pacific News Service, San Francisco, 15 October, 1997:Cf. <http://www.pacificnews.org/jinn>
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- [30] The War on Freedom: How and Why America Was Attacked, pp.49-50; Wall Street Journal, 23 May, 1997: Cf. <http://www.wsj.com>
- [31] New York Times, 26 May, 1997: Cf. <http://www.nytimes.com>
- [32] "US-UN Conspiracy Against the People of Afghanistan," Institute for Afghan Studies, 21 February, 1998: Cf. <http://www.institute-for-afghan-studies.org>
- [33] The War on Freedom: How and Why America Was Attacked, p.56; Eric Margolis, "US-Russian Crusade Against Osama Bin Laden," Toronto Sun, 4 December, 2000: Cf. <http://www.torontosun.com>
- [34] Since September 11, the United States has set up military bases housing more than 60,000 military personnel who were conducting temporary operations and exercises in about 100 countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, along with Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, and Bulgaria. While the mammoth European Installations have been cut back, Defense Department records show that the new operational mode calls military personnel away from home about 135 days a year for the Army, 170 days for the Navy and 176 days for the Air Force. For the Army, each soldier now averages a deployment abroad once every 14 weeks: Naked Imperialism: the US pursuit of global dominance, p.59,62; Los AnglesTimes, 6 January, 2002: Cf. <http://www.latimes.com>
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- [36] Naked Imperialism: the US pursuit of global dominance, p.65.
- [37] Istvan Meszaros, "Socialism or Barbarism," Monthly Review Press, New York, 2002, p.23.
- [38] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, p.xii.
- [39] "Socialism or Barbarism," Monthly Review Press, New York, 2002, pp.37-38.
- [40] Naked Imperialism: the US pursuit of global dominance, pp.36-37.
- [41] Carl Connetta, "Strange Victory: A Critical Appraisal of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War", A Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph 6, 30 January 2002, pp.7-8: Cf. <http://www.comw.org>
- [42] Frank A. Clements, Conflict in Afghanistan, California: Santa Barba, 2003, p.xxix.
- [43] Andrew Koch, "USA's strategy takes shape", Jane's Defence Weekly, 17 October 2001, p. 2: Cf. <http://www.idr.janes.com>
- [44] On 9/11, a catastrophe occurred which signaled unprecedented transformations in world order. So far, the confirmed death toll appears to be just under 3,000.
- [45] The War on Freedom: How and Why America was Attacked, p.17.
- [46] Conflict in Afghanistan, p.xxv.
- [47] The Northern Alliance evolved from the power struggle that ensued after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. The alliance was a grouping of disparate Mujahedin groups united against the Communist government. It came into being in 1992, disintegrated in 1993, and was resurrected in 1996 when the Taliban came to power. Ahmad Shah Masood, Karim Khalili, Atta Mohammad, Piram Qul, Sayyaf, and Mahqiq were the prominent leaders of this alliance: Conflict in Afghanistan, pp.181-182.
- [48] Mushtaq A. Kaw, "Restoring India's Silk Route Links with South and Central Asia across Kashmir: Challenges and Opportunities," The China and Eurasian Forum Quarterly, vol.7, No.2, pp.63-64.
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- [50] Jan Angstrom and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, Rethinking the Nature of War, London: Frank Cass, 2005, p.118.
- [51] "Strange Victory: A Critical Appraisal of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War," A Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph 6, 30 January 2002, pp.3-4: Cf. <http://www.comw.org>
- [52] Rethinking the Nature of War, p.119.
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