

GREAT DECISIONS – PROSPECTS FOR PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

NOTE: All handouts (and then some) from this and other sessions that I have led can be found by using your browser and going to Vanderbilt.edu/olli/class-materials and scroll down to Great Decisions-Brentwood.

ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS AND SUCH

AQAP = Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

AQIS = Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent

ISIS = If you don't know by now, why bother?

PDPA = People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, socialist party founded in 1965 but collapsed in 1992 after the Soviet withdrawal.

Gulf War (1990-1991) = a war waged and won by a coalition of 24 nations, led by the U.S., against Iraq in response to their invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

Abdul Raziq = police chief on Kandahar Province and the U.S.'s man in Afghanistan. We provide him with arms, intelligence and equipment.

Abdullah Abdullah = Afghanistan's Chief Executive (but not president) since 2014 and a member of the resistance against the Taliban and Soviet occupation.

Afghan Taliban = began as a movement of Pashtun students and Mullah Muhammad Omar around 1994 at Islamic schools funded by Saudis. Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996-2001. Still waging guerilla warfare and instituting Sharia Law wherever it can. Omar died in 2013.

Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada = current leader of the Afghan Taliban

Muhammad Najibullah = last PDPA president of Afghanistan (1986-1992).

Al-Qaeda = militant Islamic organization founded by Osama bin Laden in late 1980's, and orchestrators of the 9/11 attacks.

Ashraf Ghani = President of Afghanistan since 2014, shares leadership with Abdullah. Ashraf is an academic who was chancellor of Kabul University.

Hamid Karzai = was President of Afghanistan from 2004-2014.

Hazara = a large ethnic Afghan group who speak mainly a Persian dialect and practice Shi'a Islam and face constant persecution.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed = Al-Qaeda member accused of being the principal architect in planning 9/11 attacks and has been held in Guantanamo since 2003. He also confessed to murdering Wall Street Reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002.

Mullah Akhtar Mansour = head of the Afghan Taliban from 2015 until killed by U.S. drone strike in 2016.

Operation Enduring Freedom = joint U.S. and U.K. operation in Afghanistan following 9/11 attacks to dismantle Al-Qaeda. It was later supported by NATO and Afghan troops.

Osama bin Laden (1957-2011) = a Saudi who was founder of Al-Qaeda and director of 9/11 attacks. Killed by U.S. Navy Seals in Pakistan in 2011.

Pakistani Taliban = a terrorist group concentrated on dismantling the Pakistan government in Islamabad.

Pashtun = the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan, also known as original Afghans. They are also the second largest ethnic group in Pakistan.

Robert “Bowe” Bergdahl = U.S. Army soldier held by the Taliban from 2009-2014. His capture and release sparked controversy. Donald Trump denounced Sgt. Bergdahl as a “dirty rotten traitor.” Bergdahl is expected to return to court for a pre-trial hearing on May 5, 2017.

Afghanistan Population = **32.5 million**
 Growth Rate = 2.32 Area = 252,000 sq miles
 Afghanistan Independence = August 1919
 Life Expectancy = 60

Age structure	
0–14 years	42.3% (male 6,464,070/female 6,149,468)
15–64 years	55.3% (male 8,460,486/female 8,031,968)
65 and over	2.4% (male 349,349/female 380,051)

Pakistan Population = **194.9 million**
 Growth Rate = 2.10 Area = 307,000 sq miles
 Pakistan Independence = August 1947
 Life Expectancy = 67

Age structure	
0–14 years	35.4% (male 35,475,647 / female 33,586,757) ^[1]
15–64 years	60.4% (male 60,766,105 / female 56,886,961) ^[1]
65 and over	4.2% (male 3,890,840 / female 4,325,538) (Jan. 2017) ^[1]

Taliban structure

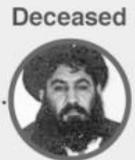
Taliban structure

The Emir

Mullah Hibatullah Akhunzada
 Ultimate authority on political, religious and military affairs.
 Head of Rahbari Shura leadership council



was the deputy of



Mullah Akhtar Mansour
 Ex leader, killed in drone strike in May 2016

was the deputy of



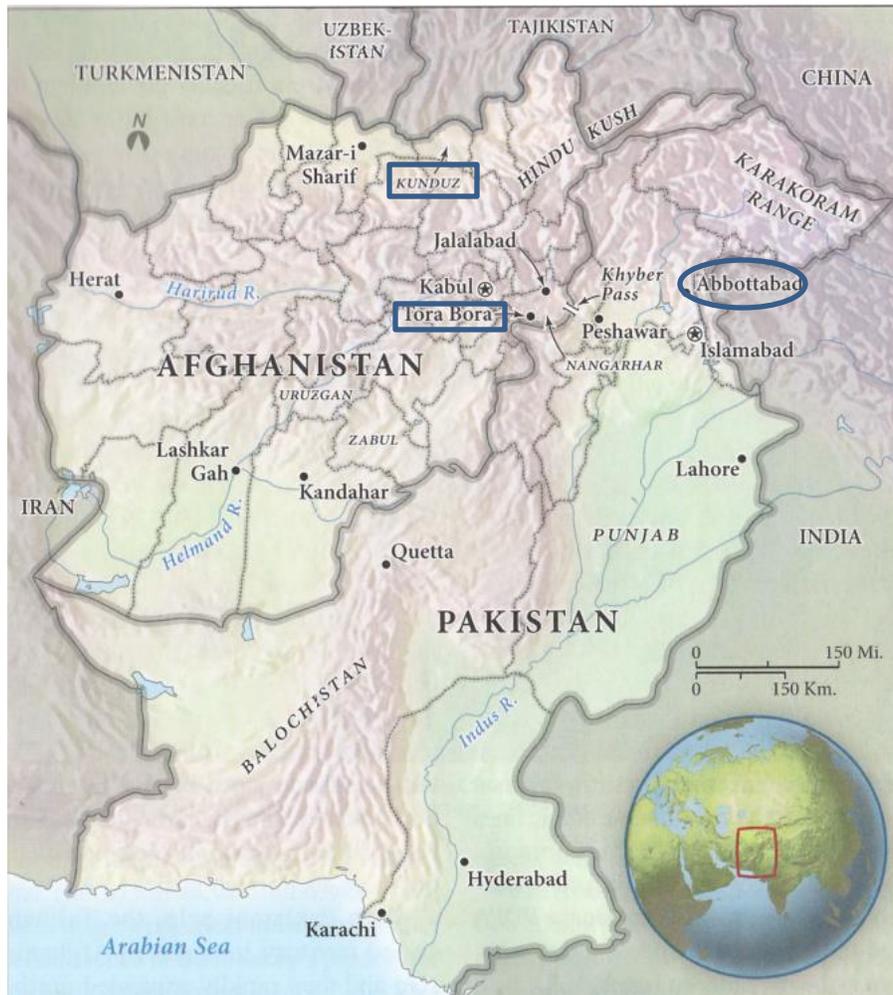
Mullah Omar
 Founder and ex leader, death announced in July 2015

Deputies

Sirajuddin Haqqani
 Military operational commander, Haqqani network



Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob
 Son of founder Mullah Omar



CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS:

October 2016 marked the end of the 15th year of virtually continuous military operations in Afghanistan following the attacks of 9/11. End of combat was supposed to happen in December 2014. The fight against the Taliban has made that almost impossible and some counterterrorism operations against Al-Qaeda.

Before the 1970s, Afghanistan was not always at war. There were decades of peace under King Zahir Shah. There were always major ethnic divisions: Pashtuns of the south and east, and Tajiks, in the north and west. In 1973, Shah's cousin, Muhammad Daoud Khan, staged a bloodless coup. In 1965 the PDPA was formed and overthrew Daoud in a coup in 1978. The PDPA aligned with the Soviets but in March 1979 the western city of Herat revolted and many Soviet advisers were massacred. The Carter and Reagan administrations supported the rebels, known as *mujahideen* (holy warriors) in their battle against the PDPA and the Soviets. So did the Saudis and Pakistanis. Thousands of Saudis would flock to the war, including Osama bin Laden.

By the mid 1980s, the Soviets were tired of the fighting and pulled out in 1989. With Soviets gone, the U.S. lost interest in Afghanistan but the Pakistanis did not. Enter the Taliban, from the Pashtun word for students. It formed under the lead of Mullah Muhammad Omar from Kandahar Province. The Pakistanis aided the Taliban, Omar was educated in Pakistan. By 1996, Kabul had fallen.

Osama bin Laden had returned from Saudi Arabia because he had become hostile toward both the Saudis and the U.S. since the Gulf War. Over the next 5 years, bin Laden's Al-Qaeda (Arabic for "The Base") launched several attacks against U.S. targets, including the U.S.S. Cole and embassies in Africa. As the Taliban rose, the U.S. and Pakistan drifted apart. Things boiled over after Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests which were a response to India's tests. The Pakistan government felt abandoned if not betrayed by the U.S. in its conflict with India.

After 9/11, the U.S. demanded that the Taliban turn over bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda leaders, which of course, they didn't, and Washington put pressure on Pakistan to cut funding to the Taliban. That also didn't work. In October 2001, so the U.S. and some allies began military operations called Operation Enduring Freedom. In just over a month, the Taliban lost Kabul. And a month later, it lost Kandahar, but bin Laden had escaped into Pakistan after nearly being killed in Tora Bora. The U.S. and allies kept very few troops in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2005. However, the Taliban were gaining strength in the Pashtun areas and these areas bordered Pakistan, especially in Quetta where they had formed their headquarters. "Officially," the Pakistani government could not find these leaders but they authorized U.S. drone strikes to take out Al-Qaeda and other terrorists in areas bordering Afghanistan.

There were so-called "good Taliban" (Afghan Taliban fighting only in Afghanistan) and "bad Taliban" (Pakistani Taliban fighting against the Pakistan government, but the distinction was blurry. In 2006, the U.S. and NATO launched operations against the resurgent Afghan Taliban. In 2009, newly elected Pres. Obama ordered a review of the strategy, but VP Biden was reluctant to commit a number of troops to a war that might go on forever. An additional 30,000 troops were committed but only through 2011, bringing the total to around 100,000. In 2009, Hamid Karzai was elected President of Pakistan.

In May 2011, a raid on the city of Abbottabad resulted in the death of bin Laden. Pakistanis were ticked that they hadn't been informed but there was belief that someone in the Pakistan government knew bin Laden was there and was being hidden – probably for a large amount of money. By 2013, much of the U.S. troop effort was focused on withdrawal. It continued in 2014 and in December, Operation Enduring Freedom ended and changed its name to Operation Freedom Sentinel with about 10,000 troops. The election in 2014 was complicated and ended up having two heads of state: Ashraf Ghani as President and Abdullah Abdullah as Chief Executive. You can imagine how well that works! 2014 also saw the release of Bowe Bergdahl and the controversy that brought with it.

In September 2015, the Taliban was at it again and controlled Kunduz and Helmand, one of the largest opium-producing regions. With U.S. and Afghan troops, Kunduz was taken back in two weeks of heavy fighting. Unfortunately, there was a U.S. gunship incident that struck a hospital and killed dozens of civilians.

In 2016, with advancements by ISIS in Afghanistan, the U.S. expanded operations. Also in 2016, a drone strike killed the new Taliban leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansour. It occurred in southwest Pakistan where no drones had been before. Mansour was replaced by Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, a religious scholar. By the end of 2016, there were about 8400 U.S. troops in place in Afghanistan. But wait! Secretary of Defense Mattis said on May 8, 2017, that he wants to send more troops to combat the Taliban.

So what are President Trump's choices? (1) maintain the status quo; (2) load up the troops again to at least 25,000; (3) reduce troops altogether and get out of Afghanistan and leave it to that country to do its own battles. **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**